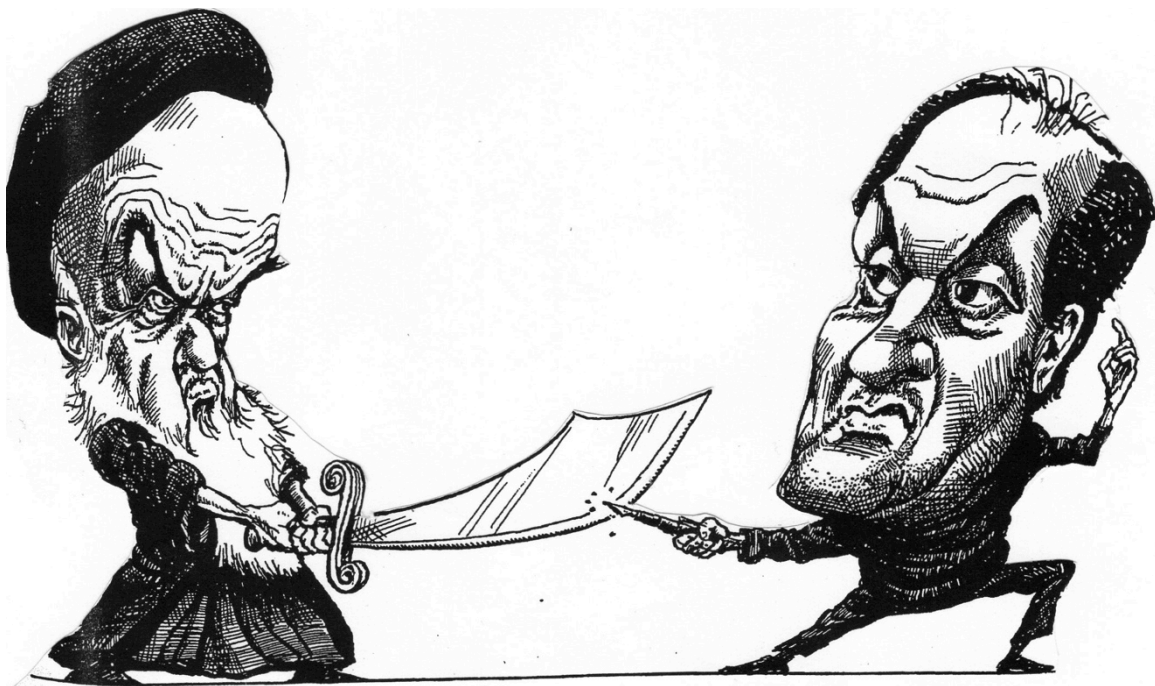


At the Crossroad

The Impact of the *Rushdie Affair* on the Framing of the Dutch and British
Public Debates on Immigrant Integration



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1 Introduction

1.1 Background and leading question

Inspired by the fact that the general attitude in the Netherlands towards migrants and Muslim immigrants in particular has significantly changed since the end of the twentieth century this paper examines the impact of the *Rushdie affair* on the framing of immigrant integration in the Dutch and British public debates.

Relations in the 1980s between ethnic minorities and the general mainstream in Britain and the Netherlands were managed by policies of multiculturalism. Such an approach to immigrant integration seemed to be the answer to the cultural diversity that resulted from post-war migration to both countries. In line with liberalist thinking, which centres around the idea of ‘freedom’ and the two closely interconnected notions of ‘tolerance’, understood as the acceptance of diversity, and ‘obligation’ as the duty to respect the rights of others¹, multiculturalism allows and even encourages minorities to preserve their own cultural heritage. As a policy approach, it believes in the controllability or manageability of cultural diversity by means of tolerating all cultures and treating them with respect. The underlying premise of multiculturalism is that peaceful integration can be achieved when people live together while maintaining at least part of their separate cultures. Both the Netherlands and Britain introduced the first set of multicultural ideas in their minority policies in the 1970s in order to curtail discrimination, and racism, and to countervail the upcoming tension and polarization in society.²

Long before ‘September 11th’ however, strategies for integration and immigration had become the subject of an ever more heated public debate. The attentive observant of Dutch affairs could notice a broader transition in the framing of immigrant integration already in 1989, when calls for an immigrants’ obligation to assimilate into the Dutch society became more frequent and when a second camp broke away from the traditional cultural framing of immigrant integration to frame the process in socio-economic, universalist terms. The two alternative approaches, ‘assimilationism’ and ‘universalism’, shared their scepticism towards the functional efficiency and the desirability of the existing multicultural approach. Presuming that it had once been truly accepted, the ideal of multiculturalism thus slowly fell into discredit in 1989. From the early 1990s onwards, neo-realism gained the upper hand. New realists criticized the former “progressive elite, which had dominated the public realm for too long with its ‘politically correct’ sensibilities, its relativistic approach to the

¹ Talal Assad, ‘Multiculturalism and British Identity in the Wake of the Rushdie Affair’, *Politics Society*, 18 (1990) Sage Publications, 474.

² Leo Lucassen and Jan Lucassen, *Winnaars en Verliezers. Een nuchtere balans van vijfhonderd jaar immigratie* (Amsterdam 2011) 84.

values of different cultures and its lax policies of toleration.”³ In contrast to multiculturalists, new realists insisted on the affirmation of the western secular liberal values over and against Islam and emphasized the importance of national identities. As a result, they advocated the “revival of Dutch patriotism and the reinvention of a Dutch *Leitkultur*.”⁴

Two sources of inspiration underlay the beginning of the framework transition in the field of immigrant integration in the Dutch public debate in 1989. The frame shift towards the universalist perspective, which focused on the socio-economic equity of immigrants in a viable welfare state, dates back to the publication of the document ‘Allochtonenbeleid’ by the Scientific Council for Government Policies (WRR) on 10 May 1989. The report attested huge backlogs in the civic and socio-economic realm of immigrant integration and attributed systematic attention to the necessity for immigrants to stand on their own feet instead of being dependent on government facilities. After 10 May, universalists instantly called for cut-backs in the public spending on culture and the preservation thereof. The Dutch print-media, and in particular the *Volkscrant*, changed their discourses and frequently framed immigrants as ‘citizens’ who are expected to participate in the labour market and in the educational system. Since the transition towards a universalist framework has already been subject of extensive research, amongst others by Peter Scholten⁵, this thesis concentrates on the second transition towards the neo-realist discourse and on its relationship with the *Rushdie affair*.

The *Rushdie affair* started in September 1988 with the publication of Salman Rushdie’s novel *The Satanic Verses* by the British publishing house Viking Penguin. British Muslim leaders immediately criticized the British-Indian novelist for having used historical themes to satirize Islam. Soon they issued a petition in which they campaigned against the publication of the novel. Three elements of the novel were considered exceptionally problematic and deeply insulting to any devout Muslim. *The Satanic Verses* portrayed the Prophet as a small time imposter, compared the wives of the Prophet to prostitutes, and used abusive terms to describe his companions.⁶ The remark by one of the novel’s characters: ‘Secular versus religious, the light versus the dark. Better you choose which side you are on’⁷ hit the spot. The *Satanic Verses affair* eventually became a matter of Islam versus Western civilization. The first symbolic protests against the publication of the novel took place in Bolton on 2 December 1988. Only the repetition of book-burnings in Bradford on 14 January 1989 however brought the desired media attention.

³ Baukje Prins and Sawitri Saharso, ‘In the spotlight: A blessing and a curse for immigrant women in the Netherlands’, *Ethnicities* 8:3 (2008) 366-367.

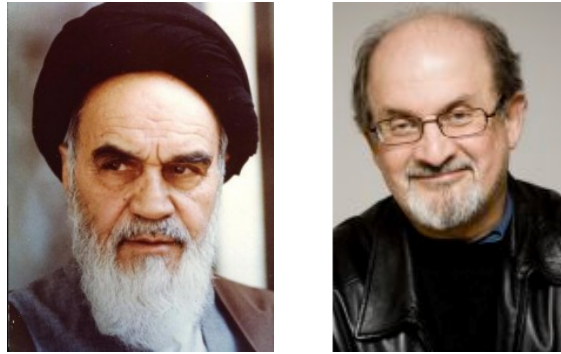
⁴ Prins and Saharso, ‘In the spotlight’, 366-367.

⁵ Peter Scholten, ‘Constructing immigrant policies: research-policy relations and immigrant integration in the Netherlands (1970-2004)’ (Dissertation, University of Twente 2008).

⁶ Ziauddin Sardar and Meryl Wyn Davies, *Distorted Imagination: lessons from the Rushdie affair* (London 1990) 186.

⁷ Sardar and Wyn Davies, *Distorted Imagination*, 191.

Illustration 1: Ayatollah Khomeini and Salman Rushdie



The photograph on the left shows the Iranian Spiritual leader Ayatollah Khomeini who - on 14 February 1989 - sentenced the British Muslim author Salman Rushdie (picture on the right) to death for having written the “blasphemous” novel *The Satanic Verses*. (Sources: Urban Titan, <http://urbantitan.com/10-cruelest-leaders-ever/ayatollah-khomeini-www-rompedas-blogspot-com/> (22-4-1989), and Boeken.blog.nl, [http://boeken.blog.nl/actueel/2011/04/12/contact-koopt-rechten-mem oires-rushdie](http://boeken.blog.nl/actueel/2011/04/12/contact-koopt-rechten-mem-oires-rushdie) (22-4-2012)).

The defining moment for an unprecedented global controversy followed on 14 February 1989 when the Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini, issued a fatwa (religious advice, juristic opinion). In his official statement, the spiritual leader called for the death of Rushdie “along with all editors and publishers aware of the book’s contents.”⁸ A series of extraordinary political consequences followed. While members of the European Community immediately reacted by calling back their ambassadors from Iran, Iran decided to break off its diplomatic relations with Great Britain. Several countries, amongst another 45 Muslim nations, announced that they had banned the novel but would not endorse the death sentence.⁹ Khomeini’s fatwa horrified and bewildered the West and aggravated a sense of political crisis whereby long existing prejudices and fears against the Islam and its believers intensified. Muslims became a marginalized minority group subject to structural harassments. Popular outrage entered the Netherlands on 3 and 4 March 1989 when thousands of Dutch Muslims entered the streets of Rotterdam, The Hague and Amsterdam to campaign for the ban of *The Satanic Verses*. The demonstrators burned copies of the novel or Rushdie puppets and in some cases voiced death calls against the British author. The Dutch Muslim protests came as a complete surprise and were perceived by the native population as extremely bewildering and aggressive.

The Dutch literature on immigrant integration tends to ignore the *Rushdie affair* and commonly fixes the Bolkestein Speech from 1990 as the beginning of the neo-realist discourse. In December 1990 Frits Bolkestein, the Dutch politician of the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), for the first time openly addressed the immigrant problem and claimed that the Islamic culture was inferior to the western world-view.¹⁰ His speech was followed by the so-called national minorities debate from September 1991, in which Bolkestein argued that “European civilization [...] is sustained by the values of rationality, humanism and Christianity, bringing with

⁸ Assad, ‘Multiculturalism and British Identity’, 220.

⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁰ Prins and Saharso, ‘In the spotlight’, 366-367.

them a number of fundamental political principles, such as secularization, freedom of speech, tolerance and the principle of non-discrimination.”¹¹ In their recent book two Dutch historians argued that the *Rushdie affair* served as a catharsis in the perception of minorities in the Dutch nation.¹² The authors illustrated how the controversy had removed the scales from the eyes of numerous Dutch intellectuals and eventually inspired a framework transition. This paper examines more closely the impact of the *Satanic Verses* controversy on the framework transition in the Dutch public debate on immigrant integration and compares it to the reaction in Great Britain.

Contrary to the Netherlands, it seems as if a permanent frame shift away from multiculturalism failed to appear in Great Britain in the 1990s. As the Commission on Multi-Ethnic Britain (CMEB) stated in their final investigative report *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* (2000) “a certain kind of modest, communitarian, ethno-religious multiculturalism [...] seemed to be rolling forward in the 1990s and the first few years of [the twenty-first century].”¹³ This is interesting because the British Muslim responses to the turmoil had been very strong and long-lasting compared to other European countries. Apparently, the long-term consequences of the *Rushdie affair* differed from country to country. Therefore, I decided to conduct a comparative case study between Great Britain and the Netherlands. The leading research question for this historical case study will be: **To what extent and for what reasons has the *Rushdie affair* led to a frame shift in the public debates on immigrant integration in Great Britain and the Netherlands?** I am particularly interested in the long-term effects of the incident. In that context, I want to find out whether the *Satanic Verses* affair can be fixed as the true turning point in framing the public debate on immigrant integration in the Netherlands, and how the apparently more moderate British reaction can be explained. A study on the impacts of the *Rushdie affair* is interesting as the event constituted the first major public clash between ethnic minorities and the cultural mainstream in the Netherlands in the post-colonial era. Additionally, the *Rushdie affair* of 1989 was the first event suggesting that Muslims “give religion rather than national origins a greater saliency in self-concepts.”¹⁴

¹¹ Prins and Saharso, ‘In the spotlight’, 366-367.

¹² Lucassen and Lucassen, *Winnaars en Verliezers*, 23.

¹³ Tariq Modood, ‘Is multiculturalism dead?’, *Public Policy Research* (2008) 84.

¹⁴ Tariq Modood, ‘British Muslim Perspectives on Multiculturalism’, *Theory, Culture & Society* 24:2 (2007) 187.

1.2 Theoretical framework

The concept of framing will stand central in my analysis of possible frame shifts in the public debates on immigrant integration in Great Britain and the Netherlands. This part provides an insight into the theoretical framework used in immigrant integration policies and academic research and at a later stage combines framework and boundary formation theories. Both theories link to a social constructivist discourse which will therefore be shortly explained in the next section.

Supporters of a constructivist view argue that social conditions do not inherently exist in the human mind but have to be constructed by “collective definition.”¹⁵ The social problem must not necessarily derive from a harmful condition but can be created independently thereof. Likewise, not all harmful conditions become a social problem. In fact, a social problem only appears when at least one, but in most cases a number of, persons claim a grievance and when this can be mobilized. Throughout history, immigrants have often been depicted as a social problem. This was especially the case in Europe, where countries, until the 1970s, refused to accept that they are *de facto* immigration countries. Immigrants were amongst others portrayed as a threat to the welfare state as “free riders”, as a threat to the homogenous nation with stable populations, or as a threat to the public safety.¹⁶ From a constructivist view, social problems are created by moral entrepreneurs who have an interest in changing the status quo. Moral entrepreneurs frequently use frames as a means to construct a social reality. Frames in this paper are defined as a series of claims which are “strung together in a more or less coherent way whereby some features of reality are highlighted and others obscured in order to tell a consistent story about problems, causes, moral implications and remedies.”¹⁷ By means of frames various properties of an entity or development can be structured under the same label - e.g. multiculturalism – “by virtue of the conventions governing the use of the concept and the conditions under which its innovation is justified.”¹⁸

Theoretical literature on immigrant integration provides the consolidated knowledge that is needed for a profound analysis of problem frames and potential frame shifts in the public debate on immigrant integration. Based on the structural-constructivist perspective the study at hand will examine the public debates on immigrant integration in terms of their ‘problem framing’. Such an approach largely neglects aspects dealing with the accuracy of the frames being used in the public debate but rather draws attention to the inherently selective and normative ways in which the public debate has framed immigrant integration. For this paper I have selected a set of three frames that are found in the theoretical literature on immigrant integration; multiculturalism, assimilationism and

¹⁵ Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, ‘Moral Panics: Culture, Politics, and Social Construction’, *Annual Review of Sociology* 20 (1994) 151.

¹⁶ Leo Lucassen, *The Immigrant Threat: the integration of old and new migrants in western Europe since 1850* (Urbana, 2005) 14-15.

¹⁷ Marlou Schrover, ‘Family in Dutch Migration Policy 1945-2005’, *The History of the Family* 14 (2009) 192.

¹⁸ Thierry Balzacq, ‘Enquiries into methods – A new framework for securitization analysis’, in: T. Balzacq (ed.), *Securitization Theory – How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve* (London and New York 2010) 14.

universalism. My framework selection is based on Peter Scholten's dissertation of 2008 which investigated the construction of immigrant policies in the Netherlands between 1970 and 2007.¹⁹ In his work, Peter Scholten referred to the assimilationist and multicultural frame models established in studies from Castles and Miller²⁰ and to a study from Koopmans and Stratham who added the universalist model to the framework.²¹

Assimilationism

Together with multiculturalism, assimilationism constitutes the most well-known model of immigrant integration. Rooted in classical sociology, "assimilationism 'names' and 'frames' immigrant integration mainly in cultural terms, focusing on how migrants adopt the culture of native society."²² This is linked to the concern for the viability of the national community and for the preservation of 'social cohesion'. Individuals of the subject population are assigned to groups that are frequently defined either in cultural or in ethno-cultural terms. The majority population is clearly contrasted with easily identified culturally deviant groups, which reveals the inherent dilemma in assimilationism. There is an increasing chance that cultural differences are not bridged but reinforced. In order to avoid such a reification of differences, immigrants are not defined as groups but assigned to social categories, such as the category 'newcomers'. Public discourse however tends to draw special attention to ethno-cultural groups. "In causal terms, immigrant integration is framed as a process in which social-cultural adaption is a condition for preserving national norms and values, and national institutions should be effective in terms of including migrants."²³ Richard Alba and Victor Nee have therefore defined assimilation in a 'processual' way as the "decline of an ethnic distinction and its corollary cultural and social differences."²⁴

Multiculturalism

Just like assimilationism, multiculturalism phrases immigrant integration in cultural terms. Groups are socially constructed on the basis of their racial, religious or ethnic traits. Both models share their focus on the nation-state. Conversely to the first model however, multiculturalism "stresses cultural pluralism and a more culturally neutral and open form of citizenship."²⁵ Consequently, the nation state is redefined or respectively recognized as a multiculturalist state. Multiculturalist theory points at the necessity for groups with different cultural backgrounds to be emancipated. Multiculturalism seeks to

¹⁹ Scholten, 'Constructing Immigrant Policies'.

²⁰ Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller, *Age of Migration. International population movements in the modern World* (London 1993).

²¹ Ruud Koopmans and Paul Statham, 'Migration and Ethnic Relations as a Field of Political Contention: An Opportunity Structure Approach', in: Ruud Koopmans and Paul Statham (eds.), *Challenging Immigration and Ethnic Relations Politics* (Oxford 2000).

²² Scholten, 'Constructing immigrant policies', 68.

²³ Ibidem.

²⁴ Richard Alba and Victor Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream – Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration* (Cambridge 2003).

²⁵ Scholten, 'Constructing Immigrant Policies', 68.

bridge cultural differences by means of two concepts; commonalities and tolerance. This means that individuals in the multicultural society are requested to search for commonalities. In cases where groups lack compatibilities, tolerance is seen as the solution to cultural diversity. From a multiculturalist way of thinking, the recognition of cultural diversity formulates the ambition to accommodate cultural pluralism. This in turn can sometimes only be achieved with differentiated policies for specific cultural groups in policy spheres like labour and education. From a normative perspective cultural diversity is seen as “a value in itself, that is a facet of the ongoing process of modernization and that government interference with cultures should be limited (tolerance) as it will determine the identities of members of cultural groups.”²⁶

Universalism

The universalist model, as established by Koopmans and Statham “contains a more liberal egalitarian view on immigrant integration.”²⁷ It avoids institutionalizing minority and majority cultures and “is more oriented at the individual, and its membership as a citizen of a (culturally neutral) society.”²⁸ It highlights the importance of rights and obligations that come along with the institution of citizenship and draws attention foremost to the social-economic and political-legal spheres of integration. In other words, universalism discusses immigrant integration in terms of an individual’s participation in colour-blind sectors such as education, labour, housing or health. Culture and religion on the other hand are assigned to the private realm and can therefore be widely ignored. Supporters of the universalist model of immigrant integration expect migrants “to be able to stand on their own feet as citizens of society.”²⁹ The host nation is required to provide for supportive conditions. A non-discriminative environment and inclusive education and labour institutions are crucial in a society that considers good citizenship and equality as core values.³⁰

Theories on boundary formation

My research paper combines the theory of frames used in immigrant integration policies and academic research with Richard Alba’s theory on boundary formation in the media. I argue that the concepts of multiculturalism and blurred boundaries are linked as they both allow immigrants to preserve and incorporate cultural elements of their minority culture and to be at the same time a member of the minority and the majority group. Likewise, the concept of strict boundaries strongly relates to the assimilationist model of immigrant integration. In both cases immigrants are expected to let go their own ethnical set of norms and values in favour of the host country’s majority culture.

Institutions such as the media can shape collective identities and notions of differences and like that establish boundaries in divergent domains such as religion, race, language, and citizenship.

²⁶ Scholten, ‘Constructing Immigrant Policies’, 68.

²⁷ Ibidem, 69-70.

²⁸ Ibidem.

²⁹ Ibidem

³⁰ Ibidem.

Such boundaries “separate the mainstream – the cultural, institutional core, inhabited largely but not exclusively by the ethnic/racial majority – from an ethnic minority group.”³¹ In 1969 the anthropologist Frederick Barth identified social boundaries as essential to ethnic phenomena. He argued that members of the same ethnicity would share a “subjective belief in common descent”³², a common history and a shared culture that contrasts them from other ethnicities. Ethnicity therefore offers the possibility to be used by individuals to distinguish themselves from others. Ethnicity as a boundary includes social and symbolic aspects and “is embedded in a variety of social and cultural differences between groups that give an ethnic boundary concrete significance.”³³ Building on Barth’s assumption, Richard Alba argues that ethnic minorities in all immigrant societies impose a social distinction between immigrants and natives, which in sequel becomes a sociologically complex fault line. Alba distinguishes between bright and blurred boundaries (called strict and blurred boundaries in this paper) to understand the ramification of the distinction between foreigners and natives. Depending on how a boundary has been institutionalized, immigrant minorities are less or more likely to achieve parity of life chances with their peer groups in the social mainstream. Strict boundaries involve an unambiguous distinction between the minority and the majority culture. In cases of strict boundaries, an individual clearly knows which side of the boundary he is on. If boundaries are ‘blurry’ however, multiple membership, for example those in the mainstream and the minority culture alike, is possible. Blurred boundaries involve “zones of self-presentation and social representation that allow for ambiguous locations with respect to the boundary.”³⁴ Alba holds that “the nature of the boundary affects the likelihood and the nature of assimilation.”³⁵ When the dominant boundaries in key domains are strict it means for immigrant integration that the majority society expects individual members of the ethnic minority cultures to undergo a conversion process in which they discard signs of former membership in the immigrant group and fully assimilate to the cultural, institutional core. Integration is eased if blurred boundaries dominate in key domains because immigrants are not expected to choose between their group of origin and the mainstream but can participate simultaneously in mainstream institutions and their own social and cultural practices. Blurred boundaries allow for intermediate, or hyphenated stages.³⁶ As scholars like Betty de Hart³⁷, Dienne Hondius³⁸, Leo Lucassen and Charlotte Laarman³⁹ have stressed, barriers do “not only transpire from the dominant society, they can also

³¹ Richard Alba, ‘Bright vs. Blurred boundaries: Second generation assimilation and exclusion in France, Germany, and the United States’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28:1 (2005) 24.

³² Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (New York 1968).

³³ Alba, ‘Bright vs. Blurred boundaries’, 22.

³⁴ Ibidem.

³⁵ Ibidem.

³⁶ Ibidem, 25.

³⁷ Betty de Hart, ‘Introduction: The marriage of convenience in European immigration law’, *European Journal of Migration and Law* 8:3 (2006) 251.

³⁸ Dienne Hondius, ‘De ‘trouwlustige gastarbeider’ en het Hollandse meisje. De bezorgde ontmoediging van Italiaans- en Spaans-Nederlandse huwelijken, 1956–1972’, *Migrantenstudies* 16:4 (2000).

³⁹ Leo Lucassen and Charlotte Laarman, ‘Immigration, intermarriage and the changing face of Europe in the post war period’, *History of the Family* 14 (2009).

emanate from (migrant) groups themselves, often linked to political, cultural or religious reasons.”⁴⁰ Those three reasons come back in Alba and Nee’s modernized assimilation theory which focuses on the one hand on the “attenuation of (perceived) cultural, socio-economic, ethnic or racial differences between groups”⁴¹ and on the other hand on the existing social distance between groups and the actual chances of meeting. Building upon this theory, I expect that political, religious, and cultural barriers but also institutional and social barriers determine the propensity to construct Muslim immigrants as a threat to the Western liberal society and the propensity to require an immigrant’s assimilation to the core cultural norms and values of the indigenous population.

Presuming that the *Rushdie affair* has generated a neo-realist framing of immigrant integration in the Dutch but not in the British public debate, I expect to find high institutional barriers, low levels of social interaction and a high social distance between the migrant and the indigenous population in the Netherlands but not in Britain. I also assume that Dutch residents perceived the existing cultural, ethnic or socio-cultural differences as more important and problematic than their British counterparts. In my explanatory part I will therefore compare my two units of analysis by concentrating on the four factors (1) colonial versus guest worker migration, (2) agency versus voice, whereby ‘agency’ stands for channeled and organized (re)presentation, and ‘voice’ for loose individual claims, (3) race relations versus cultural minorities, and finally (4) neo-liberal versus welfare states in order to see whether different outcomes can indeed be explained by social and institutional barriers, and by cultural, socio-economical and racial differences.

Applying theory

This study aims to find out to what extent the framing of the Dutch and British public debates on immigrant integration has changed as a result of the *Satanic Verses affair*. I will try to identify the presence of blurred boundaries and multicultural elements in contrast to the presence of strict boundaries and a call for an immigrants’ assimilation in the public debates on (Muslim) immigrant integration. Although the Netherlands and Great Britain both allowed for multiple membership in majority and minority culture before the affair, the intensity differed. To what extent did this remain the case after the Muslim protests?

For the actual analysis it is important to keep in mind that countries often developed their own form of multiculturalism. This is especially true for Britain. In the early years of large-scale post war labour migration to Britain, the British liberal elite had denied the existence of any problems related to immigrants and race. In the aftermaths of the first race riots at the end of the 1950s, this slowly changed. On the national level of politics, a clearly defined ‘Britishness’ with its core secular liberal values left no room for identity struggles. What was seen instead as the main political problem for class and for race was the problem of unfair discrimination or unequal treatment, which could not be

⁴⁰ Lucassen and Laarman, ‘Immigration, intermarriage’, 55.

⁴¹ Ibidem.

tolerated from a liberal perspective. For most of the 1960s and 1970s, Labour and Conservative governments pursued the goal of assimilation for immigrants from a different ‘race’.⁴² The Conservative member of parliament, Enoch Powell, was one of the most “prominent catalyst in the xenophobic mood.”⁴³ In a certain sense, he marks the British counterpart to Frits Bolkestein. Like the Dutch politician, but nearly 20 years earlier in April 1968, Powell delivered a critical speech on immigrant integration at the annual general meeting of the West Midlands Area Conservative Political Centre in Birmingham. In his speech, the Conservative politician predicted a bloody conflict of American proportions between the white and the black members of British society before the end of the century if Britain would not start taking counteractions quickly. During the course of the 1970s and 1980s, identities came to be more elaborated in Britain. In 1978, prime minister Margaret Thatcher expressed in the course of a television interview “her sympathy with British people who feared they were being swamped by immigrants with a different culture.”⁴⁴ One year later, she became prime minister. Under her rule, the Conservative party crudely advocated assimilation. The ‘black’ culture in general and South Asian traditions and identities in particular were widely perceived as being so deviant from the British culture that they could never become part of modern Britain even though they were part of the common empire.⁴⁵ Immigrants were frequently referred to as cultural or ethnic minorities, an expression that even acquired the status of law in 1983.⁴⁶ By contrasting British minorities to British majorities the implicit claim was made “that members of some cultures truly belong to a particular politically defined place but those of others (minority cultures) do not – either because of recency (immigrants) or of archaicism (aborigines).”⁴⁷ In the face of unemployment, deprivation and urban crisis, which were all heavily connected with the nation’s ethnic minorities, the British government needed to adjust their policies. Since race riots had undermined the effectiveness of assimilationism and since the colonial migrants’ possession of the British citizenship excluded repatriation as another plausible option “there was nothing left but to try to inculcate civility and celebrate difference.”⁴⁸ From the 1980s onwards, Thatcher reasserted the old history of pluralist solutions to the problem of reconciling different cultural communities within a single polity and started to integrate cultural diversity into a larger process of administrative normalization. Multiculturalism became a widely accepted goal for British society. As the multicultural approach however was not chosen on the basis of ideological convictions but solely for practical reasons, Britain developed its very own form of multiculturalism. British multicultural policies in the 1980s were on the one hand rooted in neo-liberalism with its key notions of freedom, tolerance and obligation but on the other hand shaped around the static political concept of “being British”, meaning that immigrants

⁴² David Feldman, ‘Why the English like turbans: Multicultural politics in British history’, D. Feldman and J. Lawrence (eds.), *Structures and transformations in Modern British History* (Cambridge 2011) 286.

⁴³ Lucassen, *The Immigrant Threat*, 126-127.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, 284.

⁴⁵ Assad, ‘Multiculturalism and British Identity’, 468.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, 469.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, 467-468.

⁴⁸ Feldman, ‘Why the English like turbans’, 299.

were “*urged to identify themselves with ‘British culture.’*”⁴⁹ The British understanding of multiculturalism “echoed the pluralism of indirect rule of the empire”⁵⁰, and the political pluralist response to the British national and religious diversity of the nineteenth century when English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish folks were subjects to Westminster’s sovereignty. As a policy, multiculturalism allowed ethnic minorities to freely reproduce their own traditions as long as these would not contradict British core values. When unequal cultures clashed however, the conflicting elements of the inferior non-white culture had to be abandoned and replaced by the stronger and more developed British culture. Consequentially, the British understanding of multiculturalism has always been more conditional, and hence less tolerant and equalizing than the Dutch multicultural approach to immigrant integration. At the same time the ex-colonial subjects identified relatively easily with Britain. It is important to keep the different forms of multiculturalism in mind when observing the Dutch and British print-media for a frame shift in the debate on immigrant integration.

⁴⁹ Assad, ‘Multiculturalism and British Identity’, 467-468.

⁵⁰ Feldman, ‘Why the English like turbans’, 299.

1.3 Historiography

Immigrant integration and the Rushdie affair in the Netherlands

Dutch immigrant integration policies have become a quite popular research topic in recent years for a variety of disciplines such as political science, history, sociology and cultural anthropology.

For instance, in his dissertation paper, sociologist Peter Scholten analyzed changes in the frame characteristics in immigrant integration research and policies. His analysis testified significant policy changes in the early 1990s when the reframing of the nature of immigrant integration “raised the question of how policy could accommodate a constant influx of new migrants.”⁵¹ Upcoming doubts about the effectiveness of multiculturalism already started by the end of the 1980s and eventually brought about a shift in prioritization away from the socio-cultural domain and towards a socio-economic domain of integration, and away from emancipation more towards integration.⁵² In his dissertation, Scholten stressed that the government kept recognizing the multicultural status of Dutch society but pushed it significantly to the background, especially after 1993, when the former Minorities Policy became recalibrated and covered a more universalist type of policy framing.⁵³ A framework transition in the research domain started earlier. In the 1970s, immigrant integration research was mainly framed around the minorities paradigm and to some extent still around the guest worker paradigm. Other rival paradigms such as Marxist or nationalist perspectives on immigrant integration existed too but became marginal by the end of the 1970s.⁵⁴ Research aimed partly on the cultural emancipation of minorities within Dutch society and partly on the social-economic and political-legal position of migrants. Already in the 1970s “different actors often stress different facets of the position of migrants as central to integration.”⁵⁵ Even though the minorities paradigm remained in force it was seriously challenged by rivals in the 1980s. The most relevant rival paradigm, the ‘citizenship’ or ‘integration paradigm’, advocated the social-economic participation of migrants in order to reduce the cases in which immigrants became welfare-categories. The second rival paradigm was neo-realism, which “sought to eradicate alleged taboos surrounding the debate on social-economic participation of minorities and on the role of their social-cultural backgrounds.”⁵⁶

Claims that the predominant minorities paradigm and the multi-cultural character of the Dutch State became challenged by the rival ‘citizenship’ paradigm and a new so-called ‘neo-realist’ discourse in the late 1980s are supported by the historians Lucassen and Lucassen. In their recent book *Winnaars en Verliezers – Een nuchtere balans van vijfhonderd jaar immigratie*⁵⁷ the authors link this framework transition for the first time to the *Satanic Verses affair*, claiming that it had served as a

⁵¹ Scholten, ‘Constructing Immigrant Policies’, 83.

⁵² Ibidem.

⁵³ Ibidem, 95.

⁵⁴ Ibidem, 91.

⁵⁵ Ibidem, 5.

⁵⁶ Ibidem, 93.

⁵⁷ Lucassen and Lucassen, *Winnaars en Verliezers*.

catharsis for the perception of minorities in the Dutch nation.⁵⁸ According to them the global controversy had removed the scales from the eyes of numerous Dutch intellectuals who in the following voiced doubts about the functionality of multiculturalism. This in turn generated a debate on the socio-cultural position of immigrants which slowly anchored in the political sphere in the course of the next one and a half years. In December 1990, the Dutch liberal politician Frits Bolkestein openly addressed the immigrant problem, the presumed inferiority of the Islamic culture to the western world-view and gave rise to the cultural threat that Muslim immigrants would impose on the Dutch identity with its core liberal and secular values.⁵⁹

In his essay *Gemengde ervaring, gemengde gevoelens – De Rushdie-affaire; een besluit tot inmenging*⁶⁰, Stephan Sanders studied the *Rushdie affair* from a cultural anthropological and political perspective. In line with Peter Scholten and Lucassen and Lucassen, Sanders remembered that the *Rushdie affair* had woken up Western intellectuals and re-established the old-fashioned fierceness towards foreigners and the Islam. Intellectuals had perceived the controversy not as a small crisis but as a real conflict. Sanders further showed that the media coverage entailed true elements of ferocity since commentators had abstained from former nuances and suddenly formulated brisk conclusions in a dashing language. In a third step, Sanders impressively demonstrated that the principle of ‘cultural relativism’ had become problematic in the case of the *Rushdie affair*. The clash of two cultures in the same space whereby a third world country became the aggressor and the imperialist West had to defend the case of the victim⁶¹ had placed cultural relativists between the devil and the deep blue sea. They had to wonder how to defend the case of a Muslim author, when the postulate of cultural equality in fact establishes the rule not to intervene in other cultures, not to judge others but to stay within one’s own cultural borders, one’s own habitat. Stephan Sanders concluded his essay with the warning that the multicultural society threatened to become a society of home countries: not because of too many cultures living in one country, but simply because nobody had the guts anymore to play outside. (“*De multiculturele samenleving dreigt een maatschappij van thuislanden te worden; niet omdat er te veel culturen in één land verzameld zijn. Maar simpelweg omdat er niemand meer het hart heeft om buiten te gaan spelen.*”)⁶²

Immigrant integration and the Rushdie affair in Britain

Salman Rushdie possessed British citizenship and published *The Satanic Verses* in Britain first. The controversy started and ended on the island and it was Britain that suffered most from violence against bookstores. Thus, it is not surprising that there is ample literature available on Britain and the *Rushdie affair*.

⁵⁸ Lucassen and Lucassen, *Winnaars en Verliezers*, 22-23.

⁵⁹ Ibidem.

⁶⁰ Stephan Sanders, *Gemengde ervaring, gemengde gevoelens – De Rushdie-affaire; een besluit tot inmenging* (Amsterdam 1989).

⁶¹ Ibidem, 25.

⁶² Ibidem, 41.

One author who has dealt extensively with the concepts of multiculturalism and British identity in the wake of the *Rushdie affair* is Talal Assad. He showed that Khomeini's fatwa had aggravated a sense of political crisis in Britain which eventually led to a new political discourse on 'Britishness'. According to Assad, the controversy had served "to question the inevitability of the nation-state, of its absolute legal demands and its totalizing cultural projects"⁶³ and unraveled internal contradictions of liberalism - secularism versus liberal language of equal rights - which in consequence led to a perceived threat to authority and the concern "how a diverse population (a 'multicultural population') can be effectively ruled."⁶⁴

Two other British authors, Ziauddin Sardar and Meryll Wyn Davies, argued in their book *Distorted Imagination: lessons from the Rushdie affair* that the controversy reflected a genuine power struggle between supporters of modernism, who advocated, amongst others, a secular nation state, representative democracy, individualism, freedom of expression, personal liberty and rationality, and defenders of a traditional worldview, who wanted to maintain their beliefs and saw an integrated, holistic world of meaning.⁶⁵ During the controversy, Muslims had tried to rediscover their own visions of a desirable society, a process that was burdened "by the post-colonial idea of cultural relativism."⁶⁶ In the end, Sardar and Wyn Davies campaigned for a truly pluralistic world with genuine multiculturalism which could only start to exist when secularists would overcome "the intrinsic seeds of domination in the vision of secularism."⁶⁷

The political scientist Daniel O'Neill also used the *Rushdie affair* to reflect upon the British form of multiculturalism. In his article 'Multicultural Liberals and the Rushdie Affair: A Critique of Kymlicka, Taylor and Walzer'⁶⁸ O'Neill referred to Will Kymlicka who had remarked that the *Satanic Verses affair* "led people in the West to think carefully about the nature of 'multiculturalism' and about the extent to which claims of minority cultures can or should be accommodated within a liberal-democratic regime."⁶⁹ O'Neill criticized Kymlicka's, Walzer's and Taylor's defense of multicultural liberalism, which would "make allowance for minority cultural rights, while remaining simultaneously committed to a core set of individual rights incapable of being trumped in the name of the culture."⁷⁰ To strengthen his criticism he referred to Shabbir Akhtar who had explained that Muslims were at odds with "the limits of Britain's commitment to its policy of multiculturalism."⁷¹ Finally, O'Neill argued in defense of the British Muslim community. In the *Rushdie affair* Muslims had believed to act autonomously and in line with liberal principles when imposing external protections to their culture

⁶³ Assad, 'Multiculturalism and British Identity', 474.

⁶⁴ Ibidem, 475.

⁶⁵ Sardar and Wyn Davies, *Distorted Imagination*, 198.

⁶⁶ Ibidem. 277.

⁶⁷ Ibidem, 198.

⁶⁸ Daniel I. O'Neill, 'Multicultural Liberals and the Rushdie Affair: A Critique of Kymlicka, Taylor and Walzer', *The Review of Politics* 61:2 (1999), 219.

⁶⁹ Ibidem, 220. (O'Neill quotes again from Will Kymlicka, *The Rights of Minority Cultures* (Oxford 1995) 19.)

⁷⁰ O'Neill, 'Multicultural Liberals', 222.

⁷¹ Ibidem, 228.

(protection against blasphemy). What was perceived however by Muslims as an appropriate boundary of legitimate free expression, was seen in the western secular liberal tradition as a violation of individual autonomy. Hence, the *Rushdie affair* had shown that it was hardly possible to combine strong multiculturalism with the British type of individual rights-based liberalism.⁷²

The previous two sections demonstrated that there exists extensive literature already covering the *Rushdie affair*. What I could not find in any other source than the book *Winnaars en Verliezers* however, is the established causal relationship between the controversy and a framework transition in the Dutch public debate on immigrant integration. Since most literature refers to the Bolkestein Speech as the turning point in framing immigrant integration, it seems interesting to conduct further research on the basis of Lucassen and Lucassen's newly introduced claim. But there are more aspects which make the research approach of this paper interesting and unique. In contrast to Peter Scholten, the study at hand will not focus on the framing of immigrant integration in Dutch policies and academic research but on the framing of the Dutch public debate and how it changed in the late 1980s under the influence of the *Rushdie affair*. The media content analysis by Sardar and Wyn Davies lacked any reference to the Netherlands and the Dutch media coverage. The latter might be explained by the limited time frame that the authors had chosen for their examination of the Western media coverage. They only observed the debate *before* the Ayatollah's fatwa. As we learned earlier however, the open clash between Dutch Muslims and natives only occurred *after* the announcement of the death sentence. My media analysis will thus exceed Sardar and Wyn Davies' time period and cover all relevant Dutch and British newspaper and magazine articles from the entire year 1989. In addition, my analysis will concentrate on a related but different aspect of the affair. I am not so much interested in the arguments around the issue of the ban of *The Satanic Verses* in Western liberal societies, but instead would like to examine the impact of the novel on the framing of the debate on immigrant integration. Finally, I will compare the effects of the global controversy on the framing of immigrant integration in the public debate in the Great Britain and the Netherlands. In summation, I aim to enrich the existing literature in two ways. First of all, I try to give some insight in the overall impact of the *Rushdie affair* on the framing of immigrant integration. Secondly, I intend to list crucial contextual elements that seem to promote the foundation of anti-immigrant sentiments and make people call for immigrant assimilation to the cultural and institutional core of the receiving society.

⁷² O'Neill, 'Multicultural Liberals', 250.

1.4 Material and methods

Material

The chief sources to gauge public opinion and to answer my central research question: *To what extent and for what reasons has the Rushdie affair led to a frame shift in the public debates on immigrant integration in Great Britain and the Netherlands?* will be a selected number of Dutch and British national newspapers and weekly magazines. For the Netherlands, I have selected the national liberal-right business newspaper *NRC Handelsblad (NRC)*, the conservative popular and largest Dutch newspaper *De Telegraaf*, the conservative newspaper *Trouw* which is rooted in the Christian tradition, and finally *De Volkskrant* as a left-wing newspaper that caters to younger and more progressive readers. With the four selected dailies, I will cover the whole political spectrum and a broad readership reaching from the lesser educated to the highly educated.

For Great Britain I will examine only two national newspapers; the daily quality paper *The Guardian* as a center-left liberal newspaper and its sister *The Observer*, which is a Sunday newspaper. The limited number of British newspapers results from the inaccessibility of any other British newspaper in the Netherlands. Neither *Pro-Quest* - the Dutch internet database and archive for international and historical newspapers - nor any other Dutch archive maintained a collection of other British newspapers for my time period of interest. To balance out this shortage, I added three British weekly magazines to my data collection. For the choice of suitable weeklies, I took into account that *The Guardian* and *The Observer* both cater to a mainstream left readership. With the intention to include viewpoints from the whole political spectrum, I further selected the *Spectator*, the *Economist* and *Time International Magazine (Time)* for my research study. The *Spectator* principally focuses on two areas, politics and culture, and takes a conservative, right of the center editorial line. The *Economist* publishes weekly news and international affairs and targets highly educated readers, amongst others influential executives and policy makers. Its philosophy is more liberal than conservative and it has long been respected as "one of the most competent and subtle Western periodicals on public affairs."⁷³ Finally, the international edition of the *Time* caters mostly to Americophiles with middle or higher incomes. As a politically-oriented international, instead of purely British magazine, it provides an interesting outside perspective, adding another dimension to my research.

Since weekly magazines commonly provide more background information, I will also include three influential Dutch weeklies. I will observe *Elsevier*, which generally publishes right-wing opinions, *Vrij Nederland* as an intellectually left-wing magazine and finally *De Tijd* as another right-wing media source. For pragmatic reasons, I dropped two of the four Dutch newspapers after 11 March 1989. I considered it sufficient to focus on three weeklies and two dailies only to get grip of the

⁷³ Nathan Leites, 'The Politburo Through Western Eyes', *World Politics* 4:2 (1952) 159.

long-term framing and potential frame shifts in 1989. For the Netherlands I opted for the *Telegraaf* as a right-wing, and the *Volkskrant*, as a left-wing newspaper based on the grounds that these two newspapers have the highest circulation numbers and represent the two sides of the political spectrum. By using print-media sources from different perspectives, the possible bias of editors is taken into account. I used letters and reports to monitor the changing feelings and outbursts of public anger towards (Muslim) immigrants. In total, this research study will include 191 Dutch newspaper articles and 134 British newspaper articles, 41 articles from Dutch and another 36 articles from British weekly magazines.

Methods

Comparative studies often yield more insights than single case studies, at least when they are clearly structured and when their construction is explicitly defined. For my comparative approach I made a “triple choice: that of a subject, that of a unit, and that of the pertinent level of analysis.”⁷⁴ The framing of (Muslim) immigrant integration in the public debate constitutes the subject of my study. I will examine and compare the impact of the *Rushdie affair* on the framing and frame shifts in the public debate on immigrant integration in 1989 in the two geographical and political units Great Britain and the Netherlands. My units provide for the context, the actors and the audience in the debate.

A historical comparison between the Netherlands and Great Britain is interesting for a number of reasons. First of all, both countries are former imperial powers and share a liberal institutional tradition. After WWII, they both suffered from a labour shortage, which they met with migration from countries that have an Islamic tradition. In an attempt to manage the rising ethnic and cultural diversity, Great Britain and the Netherlands introduced a set of multicultural policies. Finally, both countries were largely affected by Muslim anger around the publication of *The Satanic Verses*. The many commonalities make a historical comparison viable. At the same time, Great Britain and the Netherlands deviate on one crucial factor. Contrary to the Netherlands, Great Britain did not witness a permanent frame shift towards a neo-realist discourse in their public debate on immigrant integration but stuck to its identity as multi-racial or respectively multi-ethnic Britain after 1989. According to the political scientist Thierry Balzacq, failed frame shifts “are outcomes worthy of investigation [...] because they enable us to explain why other moves were successful.”⁷⁵ A comparison between Great Britain and the Netherlands should thus allow me to identify the elements that are likely to explain why a frame shift appeared in one country but not in the other.

Prior to the pertinent analysis, this essay introduces a set of theories on social constructivism, on the framing of immigrant integration and on boundary formation between immigrants and the majority society. In Chapter 2, which will focus on the general newspaper coverage in the immediate

⁷⁴ Nancy L. Green, ‘The comparative method and post structuralism – new perspective for migration studies’, *Journal of American Ethnic History* 13:4 (1994) 4.

⁷⁵ Balzacq, ‘Enquiries into methods’, 47.

context of the Muslim protests and on the short- and long-term framing of the public debate on (Muslim) immigrant integration, I will combine the two methodological techniques of discourse analysis and content analysis. Discourse is defined as “‘bodies of texts [...] that bring [...] ideas, objects and practices into the world’”⁷⁶, and that enable or silence voices. The discourse analysis will offer a ‘thick description’ of the social practices that can be linked to the evolution and construction of frame shifts. A content analysis, on the other hand, has the aim “to throw ‘light on the ways [agents] [...] use or manipulate symbols and invest communication with meaning.’”⁷⁷ More specifically, the content analysis will allow me to detect the presence or absence of the model frames for immigrant integration in the materials under scrutiny.

The first part of my second chapter will hold the findings of my in-depth study of all published newspaper articles in the first weeks after the beginning of the Muslim campaigns. The first Muslim book-burning of *The Satanic Verses* in Great Britain took place on 2 December 1989 in Bolton. However, it was hardly discussed in the press. Only its repetition on 14 January 1989 in Bradford resulted in an extensive newspaper coverage and debate.⁷⁸ Consequently, I examined every single newspaper issue after 14 January 1989 in order to see how the affair played itself out in Britain in the immediate context of Muslim public action. The *Satanic Verses affair* only entered the Netherlands after Khomeini’s death sentence against Salman Rushdie and his publishers on 14 February 1989. The first Muslim protests that took place on Dutch streets date back to 3 and 4 March 1989. 3 March 1989 will therefore serve as the starting point for my in-depth examination of Dutch newspapers. A pilot study, which I conducted prior to my analysis revealed that the first wave of extensive newspaper coverage slowly ebbed away after 11 March 1989. This explains why my two in-depth studies end with that date. All in all, the first part intends to provide the reader with a broad overview about the general intensity of the newspaper coverage and about the first common reactions to the set of events by politicians, the Muslim communities, British and Dutch natives, by experts, journalists and ordinary citizens alike. The findings will be based on four practical questions: (1) How many articles have covered the *Rushdie affair*?; (2) Which topics dominated the immediate debate around *The Satanic Verses*?; (3) How many articles focused on British or respectively Dutch Muslims?; (4) How were Muslims and their actions portrayed and evaluated?

The second and third part of Chapter 2 will then concentrate on the framing of the public debate on immigrant integration throughout 1989. They will present the short-term and long-term media discourses first in the Netherlands and then in Great Britain. My framework analysis will be based on the study of all newspaper and magazine articles that linked (Muslim) immigrant integration or racial relations to the *Rushdie affair* and that were published between 14 January 1989 and 31 December 1989. In some rare cases, I included articles that did not relate to the *Rushdie affair* but

⁷⁶ Balzacq, ‘Enquiries and Methods’, 39.

⁷⁷ Ibidem, 51.

⁷⁸ Daniel Pipes, *The Rushdie Affair – The Novel, the Ayatollah, and the West* (New York 1990) 23.

which demonstrated well the perception of immigrants at that time. Occasionally, I also included articles which did solely link to the *Rushdie affair* but not to a debate on immigrant integration. This happened when I discovered a new crucial element in the development of the controversy, such as the series of bomb explosions from September 1989 in London. For the Dutch case, I further included a few articles that presented the party platforms in the context of upcoming parliament elections in September 1989 to see whether immigrant integration played a role in the election campaigns. I included those articles in the two graphs which give a general overview of the British and Dutch print-media coverage but not in the tables as they did not explicitly match my selection requirements.

For the study of the media frames being used in 1989, I have singled out three levels of analysis on which I think that the framing of immigrant integration in the wake of the *Rushdie affair* is captured. For each case study I account for (1) agents or respectively actors; (2) acts; and (3) context. The level of agents “concentrates on the actors and the relations that structure the situation under scrutiny”⁷⁹, whereas the level of acts is mainly interested in practices. Last but not least, frame shifts in the public debate arise out of a specific social and historical context. Consequentially, I will chronologically order the events, so that the reader may better understand who reacted to what, and when. Six practical questions shall help me to organize my research in a meaningful way: (1) How many articles covered the topic of immigrant integration in the context of the *Rushdie affair*?, (2) Who were the claim-makers?, (3) How were the articles framed?, (4) What were the claim-makers’ lines of reasoning?, (5) Did the framing change over time?, (6) To what extent can a potential frame shift be ascribed to the controversy around *The Satanic Verses*?

In my conclusion I will try to explain the more moderate reaction in Britain and to trace the contextual conditions that have caused or prevented a frame shift. To do so, I will use the methodological technique of process-tracing. Process-tracing is committed to causal explanations and hence focuses on the social mechanisms that brought a social phenomenon into being. It operates with qualitative data to unravel which factors are likely to explain more completely the outcome at hand. By means of process-tracing in a comparative case study between Britain, as a country where a frame shift failed to appear, and the Netherlands, where a frame shift could be stated, I should be able to identify the scope conditions upon which the Dutch frame shift rested. In practice, I will investigate a set of four contextual elements which I believe have had a large influence on the different outcomes between Great Britain and the Netherlands. Those are: (1) colonial versus guest worker migration, (2) agency versus voice, (3) race relations versus cultural minorities, and finally (4) neo-liberal versus welfare state. The table below gives a visual overview of the country-specific features with regard to the four contextual elements.

⁷⁹ Balzacq, ‘Enquiries into methods’, 35.

Table 1: Four contextual differences between Great Britain and The Netherlands in relation to immigrant groups in 1989

	Great Britain	The Netherlands
Migration	Colonial migration	Guest worker migration
Organization	Representation through agencies	Loose organization, individual voices
Social Qualification	Racial/ Ethnic minorities	Cultural minorities
Politics	Neo-liberal state	Welfare state

A caveat. I do not want to deny that I am trying to constitute a frame shift in the framing of the public debate on immigrant integration in the Netherlands as a result of the *Rushdie affair* without personally studying how the debate looked like before the incident. Instead, I relied on existing literature and assumed that the debate was framed in terms of multiculturalism. I cannot rule out with my research approach that a frame shift might have taken place earlier. A detailed analysis of the debate in the newspapers before 1989 would go beyond the scope of a master thesis. It may nevertheless be recommended for further research to have a closer look at how the debate played itself out before the controversy.

2 *The Impact of the Rushdie Affair on the Framing of the Public Debate on Immigrant Integration*

The second chapter illustrates to what extent the *Rushdie affair* has led to a frame shift in the public debates on immigrant integration in Great Britain and the Netherlands. This will be done in three parts. The first part starts with an overview of the complete print media coverage of the *Rushdie affair* in the first weeks after the Muslim protests on Dutch and British soil to get to know the topics that were discussed most at the beginning of the controversy. The second part then concentrates on the Netherlands and how immigrant integration came to be framed in the Dutch public debate after the Muslim protest marches on 3 March 1989. A first sub-section concentrates on the short-term framing of the debate, while a second sub-section elaborates on the long-term development of media frames. Part three is organized in the same way as part two, with the difference that it covers the development of the public debate in Great Britain. The reader will find that the immediate media discourse in the Netherlands entailed a number of neo-realist and anti-Muslim statements, which however ebbed away in the long-run. The British debate in contrast did not show any short-term or long-term frame-shift away from the multiculturalist approach to immigrant integration. Instead, it suggested the occurrence of a new debate on 'Britishness' and race-relations. In addition, British Muslims turned out to be far more integrated into British society and active in the public debate than their Dutch counterparts.

2.1 The immediate newspaper coverage of the *Rushdie affair*

The Dutch newspaper coverage in the first two weeks after the Muslim protests in the Netherlands

Illustration 2: Muslim protest marches in The Hague, 3-3-1989



About 5000 Dutch Muslim joined the protest march in The Hague on 3 March 1989. Most participants called for the ban of *The Satanic Verses* while a small minority went over to calling for Salman Rushdie's death, as the picture above shows. (Source: National Archive The Hague, Archive: Photo collection Anefo, Photographer: Anefo / Croes, R.C, number access: look access 2.24.01.05, component number: 934-4148, <http://afbeeldingen.gahetna.nl/naa/thumb/1280x1280/6a1b75e1-9bb0-1722-3fa5-9d671bd6d445.jpg> (22-4-2012)).

Prior to the qualitative discussion of the Dutch newspaper discourse, a quantitative overview of the newspaper angle between 3 and 11 March is given. The table below shows at a glance how many articles focused on the outplay and impact of the affair at home (internal affairs) and how many articles discussed the affair and its impacts on other countries (external affairs). In addition, table 2 indicates how many articles focused on Dutch Muslim reactions and in which way. Please note that the summation of all percentages does not necessarily amount to 100 percent. In some cases, the first half of an article focused on the outplay of the affair in other countries and then shifted its focus on the Netherlands so that one article was counted in both categories – internal and external affairs. In other cases, the newspapers simply discussed the content of the novel and therefore did not match any category at all.

Table 2: The Dutch newspaper angle in the time period between 3 and 11 March 1989

	<i>Volkskrant</i> (%) (N= 38)	<i>Trouw</i> (%) (N= 21)	<i>NRC</i> (%) (N= 31)	<i>Telegraaf</i> (%) (N= 13)
Rushdie affair as an external affair	29	33	39	62
Rushdie affair as an internal affair	61	67	45	38
Condemnation of Dutch Muslims who called for Rushdie's death	42	38	26	31
Main emphasis on Dutch Muslim reactions				
Emphasis on breach of law, aggression and hostility	0	5	10	15
Differentiation between radical and moderate Muslims	29	19	13	8

In the first two weeks after the Dutch Muslim protests in March 1989, all four Dutch newspapers responded to the turmoil with a relatively intensive news coverage. With a total of 38 articles the *Volkskrant* clearly led the debate, followed by the *NRC* with 31, newspaper *Trouw* with 21 and finally the *Telegraaf* with a total of 13 articles. The quantitative differences mirror general differences between the four dailies. As table 2 shows, the *Telegraaf* published not only the least amount of articles to the uproar but also dealt just marginally with the developments and consequences of the controversy at home. No more than 38 percent of its articles focused on internal affairs, meaning on the effects of the affair in the Netherlands. This stands in contrast to all other newspapers in which between 45 percent (*NRC*) and 67 percent (*Trouw*) of all articles discussed the consequences of the protest marches for immigrants in the Netherlands. Most of the *Telegraaf* articles treated themes such as to what extent freedom of speech deserved more protection than the individual feelings of a religious minority, or the impact of the publication of the novel on diplomatic relations between states. Only three times, the newspaper addressed the behaviour of Dutch Muslims, thereby emphasising that Dutch politicians and the Dutch population at large considered the mere incitement to murder an intolerable violation of Dutch norms and values and a breach of the Dutch legal order.⁸⁰ The three other newspapers sent the same message to their readers. Still, only 11 percent of all articles established boundaries and constructed a Muslim threat by highlighting Muslim aggression and propensity to violence. Half of the articles that presented Muslims as disproportionately aggressive and uncontrolled residents stemmed from the *NRC*, which clearly took the most suspicious stance towards the religious community. What caught my eye is not only the *NRC's* far more critical approach towards Dutch Muslims and the functioning of the Dutch multicultural society, but also their problematisation of Turkish Muslims in particular. No newspaper singled out Turks as the most radical and dangerous fellow residents except for the *NRC* where one comes across sentences such as:

⁸⁰ 'Geen smalende godslastering', *Trouw*, 10-3-1989, 4.

“ca. 4000 Dutch Muslims – most of them Turks- demonstrated in The Hague against the publication of Rushdie’s book *The Satanic Verses* and called for the author’s death”⁸¹, or “Two older and peaceful-looking Turkish citizens who have been living in the Netherlands for more than 20 years find it a pity that nobody dared to throw stones at the British Embassy.”⁸² The remaining three newspapers rather emphasized the Muslim majority’s opposition to the death sentence and to the rampant behaviour by some radical Muslim fellows. In numbers, 35 percent of all ‘internal affairs’ articles clearly distinguished between a minority of radical Muslims who supported the Ayatollah and the large majority of moderate Muslims who felt insulted by the book but obviated any illegal and undemocratic activities: “Not everybody thinks that Rushdie should be killed.”⁸³

The content of all four newspaper discourses became similar again in their discussion of growing racism and xenophobia within Dutch society as a feared long-term effect of the protest marches. On average 30 percent of the ‘internal affairs’ articles implicitly or explicitly expressed concerns that the campaigns had done damage to the Western attitude towards the Islam and its believers. Such worries were voiced and shared by natives and resident-aliens alike. The *Volkskrant* informed that the Moroccan Workers Committee (KMAN) worried that the controversy about the book could impede the rapprochement of different groups in Europe⁸⁴ and that the director of the Dutch Centre Foreigners (NCB), Mohammed Rabbae, feared that the incitements to kill Rushdie would exacerbate the existing prejudices about Muslims so that cohabitation might become more difficult.⁸⁵ *Trouw* quoted Hamzah Zeid, the bridge builder between Muslims and Christians, for his belief that the death calls had made people willing to fetch out of the dustbin of history everything that underlined the threat which would stem from the Islam.⁸⁶ According to the *NRC*, the chief of police in The Hague feared that Dutch citizens would take a more aggressive position towards foreigners and that all efforts to build up mutual respect and tolerance might have been destroyed by the *Rushdie affair*.⁸⁷

As a last point, I would like to stress that Dutch politicians in their first reaction responded moderately to the Muslim protests. They jointly opted for a dialogue with the Dutch Muslim community to elaborate on the freedoms and limits of the Dutch constitutional order to pacify the conflict and prevent further escalations. The political camp further agreed that the freedom to preserve one’s own culture usually ends when another’s freedom is violated. This would be the case with the death calls against Salman Rushdie.

⁸¹ ‘Demonstratie tegen Rushdie in Den Haag’, *NRC Handelsblad*, 4-3-1989, 1.

⁸² ‘Demonstranten eisen dood Rushdie’, *NRC Handelsblad*, 4-3-1989, 3.

⁸³ Ibidem.

⁸⁴ ‘Oproep tot moord op Rushdie wordt mogelijk vervolgd’, *De Volkskrant*, 6-3-1989, 1.

⁸⁵ ‘Moordoproep versterkt vooroordeel over islam’, *De Volkskrant*, 7-3-1989, 11.

⁸⁶ ‘Gezocht: een paar wijzen’, *Trouw*, 9-3-1989, 2.

⁸⁷ ‘Kamer praat vandaag over zaak-Rushdie’, *NRC Handelsblad*, 7-3-1989, 3.

The British newspaper coverage in the first weeks after the Bradford protests and the Ayatollah's fatwa

Illustration 3: Burning of the *Satanic Verses* in Bradford, 14-1-1989



Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* is burned by Muslims in Bradford on 14 January 1989. (Source: 'You Can't Read This Book: Censorship in an Age of Freedom', *The Guardian/ The Observer*, 12-2-2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2012/feb/12/cant-read-book-cohen-review> (23-4-2012)).

Similar to the previous section, the study of the British newspaper discourse begins with a quantitative overview of the newspaper angle and continues with the qualitative analysis of the British debate in the first few weeks after the Muslim protests marches in Bradford and Khomeini's invitation to homicide. For the same reasons as mentioned for table 2, the sum of the percentages does not necessarily add up to 100 percent.

Table 3: The British newspaper angle in the time period between 14 January and 11 March 1989

		<i>The Guardian</i> (%) (N= 95)	<i>The Observer</i> (%) (N= 18)
Rushdie affair as an <i>external affair</i>		51	17
Rushdie affair as an <i>internal affair</i>		47	78
Main emphasis on British Muslim reactions/behaviour	Emphasis on violence, aggression	1	0
	Emphasis on differentiation	4	22
	Emphasis on peaceful responses	12	22

In the first weeks after the Bradford protests but before the fatwa, the British newspaper discourse mainly revolved around the novel itself. The three interrelated questions, whether the categorical principle of freedom of speech should reign supreme, whether Britain's Muslim community legitimately campaigned for the ban of the book and whether the laws of blasphemy should be

extended to faiths other than the Christian occupied the debate. After 14 February, the death sentence and 'Iran' came to the foreground. 25 percent of the 'external affairs' articles in the *Guardian* focused on the Persian country and in particular, on Khomeini and Khomeini as international aggressors. The British playwright Harold Pinter requested the government to confront the Iran with the consequences of its intolerable and barbaric statement⁸⁸ and a *Guardian* editorial held that the "Iran had attacked 'the fundamental freedom for which our [British] society stands in the most flagrant and menacing way."⁸⁹ Further articles concentrated on general international relations and discussed topics like the response by the European Economic Community to the incitement or the erupting violence in foreign countries. One report in the *Guardian* even discussed the impact of the affair in the Netherlands, thereby alluding to the fear that Dutch Muslim reactions could negatively influence the image of the Islam and Muslim immigrants in the Dutch society: "Demands by Muslim immigrants in Holland for Mr Rushdie's death could inflame anti-immigrant sentiments in a country long proud of its tolerance towards others, Dutch politicians said yesterday."⁹⁰ Interestingly, the religious dimension played only a marginal role in the British newspaper discourse and the public debate at large. In his comment from 17 February 1989, the British journalist, biographer and sub-editor at the *Guardian* R.J. Hollingdale considered the religious difference accidental and the fact that "one state takes it upon itself to impose sanctions (if one can call murder a sanction) on residents of another state for acts performed within the boundaries of that other state"⁹¹ essential.

Unlike the *Guardian*, its sister the *Observer* directed 78 percent of all articles to the outplay of the affair at home and focused in particular on the status and scope of liberal values in British society. My content analysis revealed that the majority of claims raised in the *Observer* defended core liberal values. Eight out of 18 articles discussed whether Rushdie was right to publish a novel with such content. Except for two, all statements carried the same conclusion: Yes, he was! Columnist Blake Morrison defended Rushdie, citing him as a brave man, and criticized the British government for not forcefully sticking up for the author. According to Morrison, Rushdie meant to provoke but would certainly deplore a racist backlash.⁹² In two cases, claim-makers appeared slightly more reserved. Cardinal Basil Home, the leader of the Roman Catholic Church in England, for instance acknowledged the importance of the freedom of speech but still requested "authors like Rushdie to realize that freedom of speech had to go hand in hand with a sense of responsibility."⁹³ The *Guardian* discussed the scope of liberal freedoms too but came up with a wider scope of answers. In the British daily, voiced opinions ranged from "In every sentence, the whole content of the book, it's blasphemous and it's full of shit"⁹⁴ (Mr Quddus, Joint Secretary of the Bradford Council for Mosques) over "There can

⁸⁸ 'Writers rally to Rushdie as publishers rethink', *The Guardian*, 16-2-1989, 2.

⁸⁹ 'West closes ranks against Ayatollah', *The Guardian*, 22-2-1989, 1.

⁹⁰ 'Iranian terrorist squads 'plan French attacks'', *The Guardian*, 8-3-1989, 10.

⁹¹ 'Iran's step beyond state terrorism', *The Guardian*, 17-2-1989, 19.

⁹² 'The hazards of artistic daring', *The Observer*, 19-2-1989, 15.

⁹³ 'Library puts Rushdie book with porn', *The Observer*, 5-3-1989, 1.

⁹⁴ 'Rushdie in hiding after Ayatollah's death order', *The Guardian*, 15-2-1989, 1.

be no doubt about our concern over the Ayatollah's monstrous 'sentence' but underlying the momentous issues for Mr Rushdie and the Muslim community is the novel's assault on the feelings of Muslims. Are we committed, in the name of the freedom of literature, to defend this novel against those who think it should never have been published? The answer is yes but it is a reluctant and deeply troubled yes."⁹⁵ (J.P.Stern), to the opinion of the British government that "Freedom of speech and expression is a fundamental part of a free society and should not be interfered with from outsiders."⁹⁶ (Prime minister Thatcher).

A second theme that was covered by the *Guardian* and the *Observer* alike involves the British Muslim behaviour during the protests and British reactions to it. Interestingly, 11 out of 16 *Guardian* articles and four out of eight *Observer* articles that addressed British Muslim reactions stressed the Muslims' peaceful appearance and law-abiding response to the publication of the book and later to the Ayatollah's death order: "The public [is] relieved that Muslim leaders in Britain had been so explicit in their statements dissociating themselves from the view of the Ayatollah and that the great majority of Muslims turn out to be law-abiding citizens who are opposed to violent responses and illegal acts."⁹⁷ Both newspapers added that Muslim organizations actively engaged themselves to the conflict. This demonstrated that British Muslims were more organized than their Dutch fellows and that they used their good organizational structure to get involved in the debate for their own benefit. According to the *Observer*, the Islamic Society for the Promotion of Religious Tolerance for example issued a three-point peace formula which it said could end the controversy. The formula recommended publishers to insert a printed statement into all copies of *The Satanic Verses* to warn the readers that the novel should be "regarded not as faction, but as fiction, totally invented by Mr Rushdie's over-imaginative mind."⁹⁸ A *Guardian* article reported that "now virtually all mosques in Britain are involved in inter-faith dialogue."⁹⁹

The conciliatory newspaper discourse continued with a reproductive *Observer* article on the evolution of the *Rushdie affair* in Britain. Its content suggests that the media ignorance of early Muslim complaints had provoked the book-burnings. According to the authors Robin Lustig, Martin Bailey, Ian Mather and Simon de Bruxelles the affair developed as follows; Muslim religious leaders in Britain had warned the Muslim community that the book was not blasphemous under English law but under Islamic law. On the basis of that a number of British Muslims decided to set up an action committee which wrote to all Muslim Ambassadors in London calling for a ban. When Muslim activity remained uncovered by the British media, this led to growing frustrations among the Muslim campaigners. At this point, they got the decisive hint from a Northern English solicitor that a public book-burning would not violate British law but could possibly precipitate wider public attention. The

⁹⁵ 'By any other name', *The Guardian*, 17-2-1989, 21.

⁹⁶ 'West closes ranks against Ayatollah', *The Guardian*, 22-2-1989, 1.

⁹⁷ 'Howe slates Iran's 'menacing stance'', *The Guardian*, 22-2-1989, 6.

⁹⁸ 'Iran chaos on Rushdie apology', *The Observer*, 19-2-1989, 1.

⁹⁹ 'Spurn the book, spare the man', *The Guardian*, 27-2-1989, 39.

first Muslim book-burning in Bolton on 2 December 1988 followed. It was still ignored by the national press but its repetition on 14 January in Bradford finally brought the desired media attention.¹⁰⁰ In sum, the *Observer* article emphasized the peaceful intentions that Muslims had when they started their campaigns. At the same time it held the British media partly guilty for the escalation of conflict. The overall Muslim-defensive content found one small exception towards the end of the article, when the four authors adumbrated that peaceful actions could quickly turn into harsher responses and that Sher Azam, president of the city's Council for Mosques, had to prepare for an "extremely difficult job in promoting harmony."¹⁰¹ Altogether, my findings give away that the *Guardian* and the *Observer* acted as cultural brokers and mediators in the conflict. One single article that focused on the aggression and willingness of Muslims to execute the Ayatollah's order stands against 23 articles which sought to distinguish between radicals and moderates, to contextualize Muslim behaviour, to emphasise commonalities, and finally to stress the overwhelmingly peaceful character of Britain's Muslim community. The prominent message sent to the reader was well formulated in a quote from the *Guardian*: "In Britain many Muslims have tried to lessen the tensions. Islam, like Christianity, preaches compassion and tolerance, but many followers of both religions have failed to live up to the ideals."¹⁰²

What must not be forgotten is that British newspapers had not always been so mild towards Muslims. On 29 January 1989, Mukarram Ali from the Islamic Council had still blamed the British newspapers for their violent reaction to Muslim protest marches which had once again highlighted the deep-seated prejudice of some against Islam and Muslims.¹⁰³ It was perhaps the repeated Muslim accusations against the British media that made the *Guardian* and the *Observer* realize how much they actually influenced the behaviour of various societal groups and the shaping of public opinion. Knowing that they could, with their discourse choice, either contribute to a peaceful ending or bring about a shattering ending of the affair, they possibly felt urged to put oil on troubled waters with a balanced and mediating discourse.

What is striking for the British newspaper coverage is the strong Muslim participation. Britain's Muslim community was not only the object of the public debate in the *Satanic Verses affair* but got actively involved in the discussion. My analysis revealed that British Muslims participated as much as possible to present their own viewpoints and to contribute to a fruitful and vital discussion about the limits of freedom and tolerance, the rights and duties of Muslims in British society and the status and quality of race relations in multicultural Britain. They appeared as passionate demonstrators, authors of letters to the editor, spokespersons and Islamic experts, as law-abiding but determined citizens; in sum as politically- and socially-integrated immigrants. The way British Muslims engaged in the public debate demonstrates that Muslims had already been integrated before

¹⁰⁰ 'War of the word', *The Observer*, 19-2-1989, 15.

¹⁰¹ Ibidem.

¹⁰² 'Death threats and words to the should-be wise', *The Guardian*, 22-2-1989, 20.

¹⁰³ 'Media unfair to Muslims', *The Observer*, 29-1-1989, 34.

the start of the controversy, a situation which cannot be ascribed to the Netherlands. In the country on the continent, Muslims only started getting organized after the *Rushdie affair*. Along with their good organization, British Muslims also knew the limits of what was considered a legitimate form of protest. Instead of voicing incitements for murder, they restricted themselves to verbal campaigns against the publication of the novel and to legal book-burnings. Apparently, British Muslims realized the “distinction between outrage and the desire to annihilate books by banning them or authors by murdering them”¹⁰⁴ and were determined to attract attention only as law-abiding citizens. This stands in contrast to some Dutch Muslims who openly supported Khomeini’s death order. The two photos below, which were taken during the Muslim protests marches in the Netherlands and Great Britain, perfectly illustrate the different ways of protests.

Illustration 4: Dutch Muslims calling for Rushdie’s death in The Hague in March 1989 and British Muslim calling for the ban of *The Satanic Verses* in London in February 1989



On the pictures we see the differences between Muslim protest marches in the Netherlands and those taking place in Great Britain. The picture on the left shows Dutch Muslims calling for the death of Salman Rushdie ('DOOD AAN RUSHDIE'). The picture on the right portrays British Muslims who restricted themselves to campaigns against the book when they marched along Kensington High Street on a miserable, wet afternoon in February 1989. Their banners carried the slogans 'WITHDRAW THIS FILTH what's filthy can't be literature' and "MUSLIMS SEEK Redress Against Blasphemy". (Sources: 'Rushdie-affaire in Nederland', *Geschiedenis 24*, <http://www.geschiedenis24.nl/andere-tijden/afleveringen/2004-2005/Rushdie-affaire-in-Nederland.html> (23-4-2012)., and 'Memories of a crazy and dangerous time', *Beyond Hall 8*, 13-2-2009, http://beyondhall8.blogspot.com/2009_02_01_archive.html, (22-4-2012)).

The variety of standpoints by political claim-makers in the British debate were partly summarized by the *Guardian* columnist Ian Aitken. He wrote: “While Labour MPs try to appease Muslim militants and some Tory MPs accuse Rushdie of having abused his freedom, Britain’s extreme right, the National Front, jumps into the act and voices that they would like to see Mr Rushdie, his books and the howling hordes of Imams, Islamic and Ayatollahs he has stirred up [...] [to be] shipped back to the bazaars of the mystic East forthwith.”¹⁰⁵ It is worth mentioning that no less than twelve articles devoted special attention to the Labour party and their new bonding with Britain’s Muslim community. Most articles in that context insinuated that Labour MPs would just hop about “in an unseemly manner at the behest of this or that group of constituents whose voting power might threaten

¹⁰⁴ 'Poisoned utopia', *The Guardian*, 17-2-1989, 21.

¹⁰⁵ 'Harassed Channon rolls to a halt', *The Guardian*, 10-3-1989, 6.

their survivals as MPs.”¹⁰⁶ The criticism to Labour can be best understood from its context. Traditionally, Labour stood for trade unionism and universalism. When those two topics lost potency in the 1970s and 1980s, a number of “Labour local authorities used the issue of equal opportunity as a mechanism for widening their basis of support among ethnic minorities.”¹⁰⁷ This ideological transformation became especially visible in the wake of the *Rushdie affair* and was smartly used by rivaling parties to increase popular support. Complaints also came from traditional Labour voters who felt let down by “their” party.

Unlike Labour, the British government took a neutral position. They granted the Muslim community the right to protest and disassociate themselves from Rushdie’s book, while urging Muslims to respect the rule of law and to live within British laws and customs.¹⁰⁸ Given the Conservative’s affinity with assimilationism and remembering Thatcher’s boundary-drawing expressions at a time when she had not been Britain’s prime minister yet, it is remarkable that the government put everything into expressing their compassion and respect for the Muslim case instead of using the protests to renew old claims that immigrants with a different culture constituted a serious threat to the British native population. This mild government response suggests that the Thatcher regime feared that any further provocation could inflame race relations; a possibility that had to be prevented by all means. British history might explain why the Conservatives refrained from new anti-immigrant campaigns in the wake of the *Rushdie affair*. Great Britain, in contrast to the Netherlands, had had race riots before and had already experimented with outspoken anti-immigrant politics. In the 1950s, the (lower) white working class in areas of black settlements developed strong feelings of anger and aggression against the black immigrant population, which they blamed for housing problems and the deterioration of their neighbourhoods. Structural and organized violence soon became endemic and resulted in serious riots in August 1958. It took the police more than a week to restore order.¹⁰⁹ In the aftermaths of the events, policy makers and bureaucrats started to discuss the desirability of implementing a restrictive immigration act. In 1962, the conservative government introduced the Commonwealth Immigrants Act, which made immigration from colonies to mainland Britain more difficult. Despite efforts, the new restrictive act could not stop the inflow of immigrants, so that the xenophobic mood increased and new restrictive policies followed. One of the most prominent catalysts for anti-immigrant sentiments in the late 1960s was the “conservative member of parliament Enoch Powell, whose populist, anti-immigrant campaign made him extremely popular among many in Britain.”¹¹⁰ In the 1970s, the negative attitude towards coloured migrants persisted and migrants became increasingly linked to criminal problems. The resulting sense of ‘racial profiling’, exclusion and second-rate citizenship and the frequent harassment of black youngsters by the many prejudiced

¹⁰⁶ ‘Left takes liberties with Satanic Verses’, *The Guardian*, 20-2-1989 6.

¹⁰⁷ Feldman, ‘Why the English like turbans’, 298.

¹⁰⁸ ‘Hurd warns Muslims to abide by law’, *The Guardian*, 24-2-1989, 2.

¹⁰⁹ Lucassen, *The Immigrant Threat*, 125.

¹¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 126.

police officers led to a new outbreak of “large-scale riots in the inner cities of London and Birmingham in the first half of the 1980s.”¹¹¹ In reaction to the urban violence, the government designed new oppressive policies. When new riots were imminent to erupt in the wake of the *Rushdie affair* in 1989, the Conservative government reacted moderately, because earlier race riots had undermined the effectiveness of assimilationism. Last but not least, representatives of the religious camps such as the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church of England joined forces with the Muslim community by requesting the abolishment of the blasphemous laws. This is not surprising, given that the debate threatened their own religion and religious rights just as much. In the analysis of the Dutch case we have seen that the Dutch churches reacted and supported the Dutch Muslim community in their fight against blasphemy in a similar way.

With the Ayatollah’s invitation to homicide, the *Guardian* and the *Observer* started to frame the turmoil as an open confrontation of Islam with modernism and post-modernism, an open confrontation of Islam and Christianity and/or an open confrontation between Iran and the West. Robin Lustig, Martin Bailey, Simon de Bruxelles and Ian Mather from the *Observer* wrote for instance: “With the decree from the Ayatollah on Radio Teheran just before 2 p.m. news on 14 February 1989, began one of the most chilling episodes to engulf the world of culture in recent times. It encompassed a myriad of complexities: two great religions, Islam and Christianity; secularism versus religious orthodoxy; artistic freedom versus state power; pluralism and tolerance versus doctrinal certainty.”¹¹² The picture of a battle of cultures and faith was drawn by Muslim and native claim-makers alike. From the viewpoint of Robin Lustig and his colleagues not the Islam itself but rather the interpretation and implementation thereof constituted the root cause for the emerged cultural divide: “Rushdie sees questions [...]; Khomeini sees only certainties.[...] They may have been born into the Islamic world, but they have moved far in opposite directions, so that today they face each other across a yawning divide of alien cultures.”¹¹³ In contrast to the *Observer* journalists, Muslim claim-makers did not portray the clash as an internal Muslim conflict but as a conflict that would mirror the dominant categorical thinking in terms of Easternism and Westernism. They spoke up against the perceived tendency of European societies to present the Islam as underdeveloped, barbarian and old fashioned. In his letter to the *Observer*, the ordinary citizen Khan Yasamee held against Rushdie that “Mahound brings to memory the ignorance and ugly bigotry against Islam during the Middle Ages in Europe, for this word in ‘The Satanic Verses’ was one of the abusive names given to the Prophet of Islam by the people leading the Crusades to free the Holy Land from Infidel.” By doing so, Khan Yasamee continued, Rushdie would “deepen the impression in the Muslim world that anti-Islamic bigotry of the Middle Ages lies just below the skin in certain but powerful groups, with

¹¹¹ Lucassen, *The Immigrant Threat*, 128.

¹¹² ‘War of the Word’, *The Observer*, 19-2-1989, 15.

¹¹³ *Ibidem*.

vested interests, in modern and enlightened Europe.”¹¹⁴ A clear warning and angst-inducing prediction for the future stemmed from the influential author and philosopher Shabbir Akhtar who complained that the *Rushdie affair* had yet always been interpreted and reduced “to a simple neo-Victorian opposition between our light and their darkness” by every Western writer. Akhtar corrected that the controversy rather displayed a confrontation about fanaticism on behalf of God, fanaticism which was NOT the monopoly of the Muslim fundamentalists. He warned that it was unwise, “in a multi-racial society to allow our idolatry of art to obscure issues of social and political concern” and even prognosticated that Muslims would become the next Jews, meaning that they were the next group to be prosecuted and oppressed in Europe: “Whatever may be the truth on the score [that there is still a Western conspiracy against Islam] the next time there are gas chambers in Europe, there is no doubt who’ll be inside them.”¹¹⁵ What all claim-makers have in common is that they defended Muslims because they either denounced Western prejudices towards the Islam or emphasized the overwhelmingly peaceful character of Britain’s Muslims.

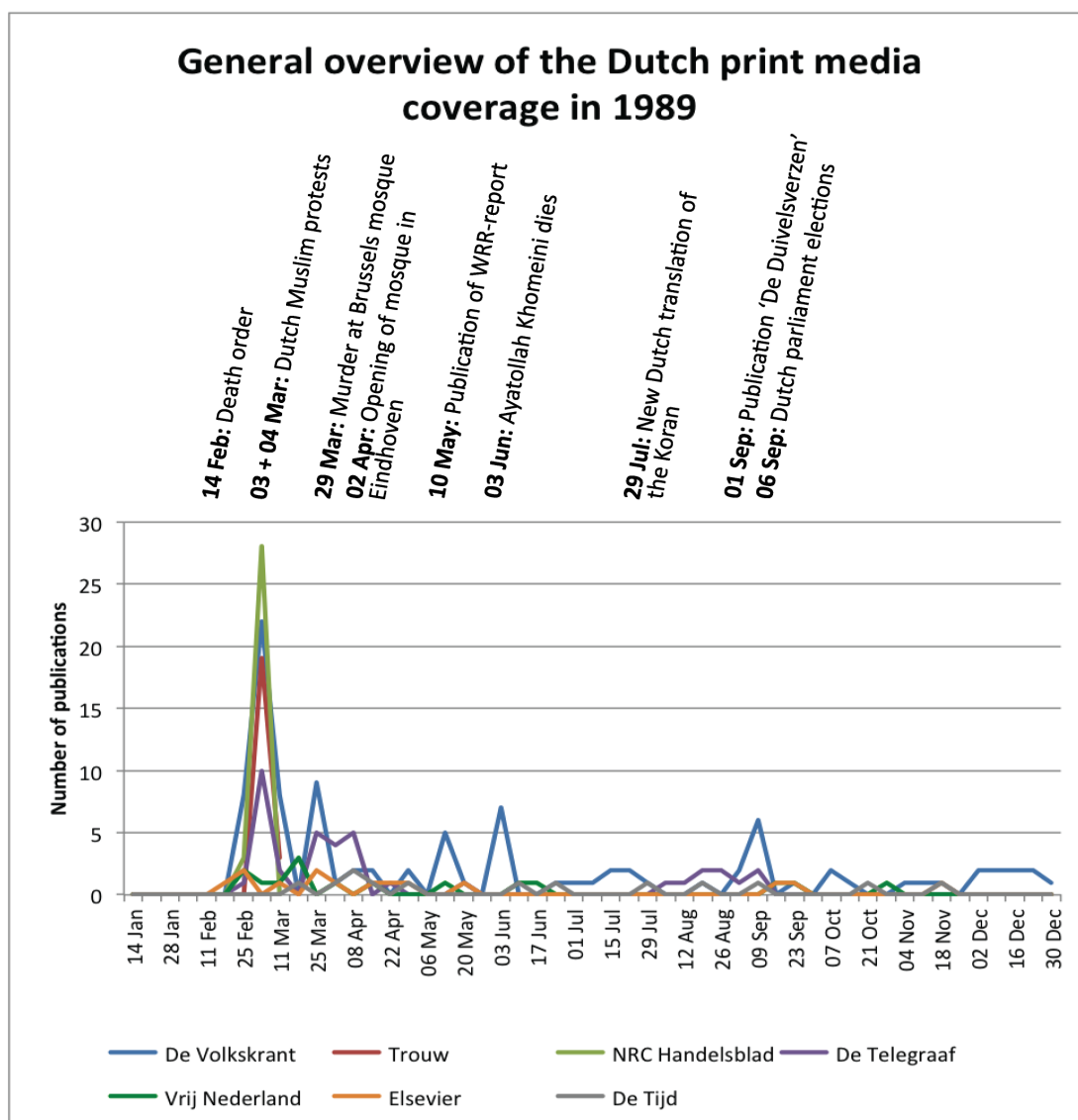
¹¹⁴ ‘Freedom to give offence’, *The Observer*, 26-2-1989, 38.

¹¹⁵ ‘Whose light, whose darkness’, *The Guardian*, 27-2-1989, 21.

2.2 The Dutch public debate on immigrant integration

To place the Dutch public debate in the context of influential internal and external events and to visualize the development of the overall media interest in the topic of immigrant integration and the *Rushdie affair*, this section starts with a graph which outlines who reacted to what and when. Please keep in mind that the newspapers were published daily while the magazines were published only once a week. This explains for the quantitative differences between the Dutch newspapers and Dutch weekly magazines. Taking that into account, the graph shows that a strong media interest peaked in the first few weeks after the death sentence and the Muslim protest marches on Dutch soil and then slowly ebbed away over the months that followed. Only the *Volkskrant* kept concentrating on the topic of immigration to the Netherlands and consequently made more room for a debate on the quality of (Muslim) immigrant integration and potential amendments to integration requirements than the other media sources.

Graph 1: General overview of the Dutch print-media coverage in 1989



The integration paradigm in the Dutch public debate between 14 February 1989 and 11 March 1989

While earlier tables have covered the general media discourse of the *Rushdie affair*, the two tables in this second part of the chapter restrict themselves to display the short-term and long-term framing of immigrant integration in the Dutch public debate in 1989. Both tables include five guiding imperatives for the framing of immigrant integration in the public debate; (1) hostile + strict boundaries, (2) criticism towards multiculturalism, (3) multiculturalism + boundary blurring, (4) stronger multiculturalism, and finally (5) divided viewpoints - for articles that presented a debate between supporters of two opposing camps. The included tables facilitate the discovery of prominent frames that were used in the debate and visualize differences between the selected print-media. By designing individual tables for two specific time periods, I can moreover discover and display differences between the short-term and long-term reactions and the development of the public debate.

Table 4: Framing of immigrant integration in the Dutch debate between 14 February and 11 March 1989

	<i>Volks- Krant</i>	<i>Trouw</i>	<i>NRC</i>	<i>Telegraaf</i>	<i>Elsevier</i>	<i>De Tijd</i>	<i>Vrij Neder- Land</i>
	(%) (N =9)	(%) (N =7)	(%) (N =6)	(%) (N =2)	(%) (N =3)	(%) (N =0)	(%) (N =4)
Assimilationism/ strict boundaries (Immigrants need to adapt and act according to the Dutch code of conduct)	11	0	17	0	0	0	50
Criticism towards multiculturalism	22	0	17	0	33	0	25
Multiculturalism/ blurred boundaries ((Muslim) immigrants are welcome as long as obey the laws of the Dutch constitutional state)	33	57	33	100	33	0	25
Strengthened multiculturalism (Problems are a result of shortcomings in the implementation of multiculturalism)	33	43	33	0	0	0	0
Divided	0	0	0	0	33	0	0

The Dutch newspaper debate on immigrant integration in the first two weeks after the affair corresponded with the newspapers' general coverage of the *Rushdie affair*. With nine articles, the *Volkskrant* published again the most articles, followed by the newspapers *Trouw* and *NRC* and secluded by *De Telegraaf* with no more than two articles. The Dutch weeklies *Elsevier* and *Vrij*

Nederland published three and respectively four articles on the topic while *De Tijd* started its discourse only later on 18 March 1989.

Since all newspapers and weekly magazines confirmed a clash between Dutch Muslims and the indigenous populations over Salman Rushdie's novel it is not surprising that the controversy was used to criticize existing multicultural practices, even though the overwhelming majority of articles simply called for an improved version thereof. In total nine articles deviated from the dominant pro-multiculturalist mind-set and stroke a more hostile and boundary-drawing note. Three articles stemmed from the *Volkskrant*, two from the *NRC*, two from *Vrij Nederland* and one from *Elsevier*. My content analysis identified *Vrij Nederland* in an intra-Dutch media comparison as the most integration- and multiculturalism-sceptical medium. What is further striking is that all integration-sceptical journalists and Dutch intellectuals stem from the political left. The first and strongest criticism to the multicultural approach to immigrant integration thus came from the camp which was and still is frequently held accountable for the development of the 'multicultural drama'.

Immediately after Khomeini's fatwa, *Vrij Nederland* journalist and chief editor Rinus Ferdinandusse formed a critical opinion on Muslims in the western hemisphere and started advocating an assimilationist approach to immigrant integration. On 18 February, four days after the announcement of the death order but still before the Dutch Muslim protests, he reported of a shocked world that still had not recovered from the death order against Rushdie. Shocked, not only because of the content of the order itself, but also because of the Muslim response to it: "Rarely have I seen such a strong reaction to a current news fact! Mad people, angry people, scared people. Rough reactions. The most splendid but also the strongest reaction that I came across was: "'Nuke the mullahs'- down with the whole tangled mass, eye for eye. That's the language they understand. And regarding our 'own' Muslims: turban off, participating with us and otherwise out. I know, it is not possible, but anger searches for loopholes." ('*Zelden heb ik op een actueel nieuwsfeit zo 'n felle reactie meegemaakt. Kwade mensen, woedende mensen, bange mensen. Rauwe reacties, de mooiste maar heftigste die ik hoorde was: 'Nuke the mullahs' – plát met dat hele zootje, oog om oog. Dat is de taal die ze verstaan. En wat onze eigen 'moslims' betreft: tulband af, méédoen met ons en anders eruit. Ik weet het, het kan niet, maar woede zoekt een uitweg*').¹¹⁶ The same day, *Elsevier* published a critical article too. In their joint report, the sociologist and publicist Emma Brunt, journalist Paul Grijpma and journalist Coen van Harten argued that true immigrant integration could not start because of the Dutch 'wadding' of their ethnic minorities. With reference to the Moroccan-Dutch David Pinto from the Intercultural Institute (ICI) in Groningen the authors claimed that multiculturalist policies had hugged minorities to death ('*doodgeknuffeld*') and taken away every incentive for migrants to invest in their own integration into the larger society.¹¹⁷ Additionally, it would have been almost impossible to speak frankly about

¹¹⁶ 'De ayatollah drukt ons met de neus op onze vrijheidsrechten – kanttekeningen bij handtekeningen', *Vrij Nederland*, 25-2-1989, 8.

¹¹⁷ 'Doodgeknuffeld – Het mislukte minderhedenbeleid', *Elsevier*, 18-2-1989, 12-17.

integration problems without being called a racist. Even the press would not dare to write about grievances, in case the leader of the extreme-right Centre Party, Hans Janmaat, would seize on the opportunity. The Dutch professor emeritus for constitutional and administrative law from Rotterdam University, dr. S.W. Couwenberg, confirmed the Dutch tendency to deny complex socio-cultural problems: “Every discussion is clouded by racism, fascism and xenophobia and eventually avoided at all.”¹¹⁸ Towards the end the three *Elsevier* journalists still raised hope for change. They gave voice to the civil servant in the Amsterdam immigrant neighbourhood ‘*Indische Buurt*’, J. Beerenhout, who claimed that Dutch politicians had already started to change their way of thinking but would just not dare to talk about it in public yet.¹¹⁹ The article thus prepared the reader for a new public debate on immigrant integration in the near future.

Illustration 5: Rinus Ferdinandusse, Gerrit Komrij and Jan Blokker



Here we see the three Dutch integration-sceptics Rinus Ferdinandusse (*Vrij Nederland*), Gerrit Komrij (*NRC*), and Jan Blokker (*Volkskrant*) who, in the wake of the *Rushdie affair*, for the first time openly discredited multicultural policies and called for an immigrant’s assimilation to the Dutch cultural and institutional core. (Sources: ‘Rinus Ferdinandusse’, *Wikipedia*, http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rinus_Ferdinandusse (22-4-2012), and ‘Gerrit Komrij’, *P.E.N. Clube Portugues*, http://penclube.no.sapo.pt/pen_portugues/pps2006/vpps-gk.htm (01-05-2012), and ‘Jan Blokker’, *De Filmkrant* <http://www.filmkrant.nl/av/org/filmkran/archief/fk192/blokker.html> (22-4-1989)).

The first real integration-sceptical article in the Dutch newspapers appeared on 8 March 1989. In his letter to the *Volkskrant*, the Dutch citizen R.J. Kok wrote: “You live in the Netherlands so keep acting according to our rules of conduct: If you cannot, it seems only logical to me that you pack your luggage and leave to a country that tolerates your behaviour.” (*Je woont in Nederland en dient je naar onze regels te gedragen: kun je dat niet, dan lijkt het me logisch dat je je koffer pakt en vertrekt naar een land dat dat wel tolereert*).¹²⁰ The same day, *NRC*-columnist Gerrit Komrij took the Muslim protests to prove the failure of the much praised multi-racial, multi-cultural approach to immigrant integration. Tongue-in-cheek, the columnist formulated: “so much time and manpower has been invested in multi-lingual education and youth work for cultural, ethnical and religious fringe groups. And what is the fruit of all these efforts? The Dutch Muslim community mobilizes en masse and marches down the streets with raving outcries such as ‘Rushdie dead, Allah big’” (*Er werd een macht*

¹¹⁸ ‘Doodgeknuffeld – Het mislukte minderhedenbeleid’, *Elsevier*, 18-2-1989, 13.

¹¹⁹ *Ibidem*, 14.

¹²⁰ ‘Vreemdelingenhaat’, *De Volkskrant*, 8-3-1989, page unknown.

aan tijd en mankracht besteed aan meertalig onderwijs en jongerenwerk voor culturele, religieuze en etnische randgroepen [...] En wat is van dat alles de vrucht? De moslim-gemeenschap trekt en masse langs de straten, met woeste kreten als 'Rushdie dood, Allah groot'.¹²¹ Komrij continued that all the social work and the drivel about anti-racism had been for nothing; just lost effort and money. The Muslims, who had been living in the Netherlands for so many years already, had shown no sense of reason or tolerance. Like the three *Elsevier* journalists Brunt, Van Harten and Grijpma, Komrij did not hold the Muslims but the Dutch system responsible for integration failures. From the columnist's point of view, Muslims had learned from the Dutch society, the Dutch system, how they could best abuse the same system. "They call for bloodshed and gather around mass murderers in the security that they will never be arrested, prosecuted or expelled. We [the Dutch] gave them the stick with which they are hitting us now. We spoiled them as poor fellows and get them back as wolves." ('*Ze roepen om bloedvergieten en scharen zich achter massamoordenaars, want ze leven in de zekerheid dat ze niet zullen worden gearresteerd, niet vervolgd, niet uitgewezen. [...] We gaven ze zelf de stok waarmee we nu worden geslagen. We hebben ze als stakkers verwend en krijgen ze als wolven terug.*')¹²² Three days later, the Dutch journalist and columnist Jan Blokker likewise attacked the multicultural approach in his column in the *Volkscrant*. His preach started with the hostile remark that "one year ago, most Muslims had not emerged as international murderers yet."¹²³ Then it continued with the implicit question whether the *Volkscrant* should not have spoken up earlier against immigrants with no respect for the Dutch society and its cultural norms and values "instead of pretending that we are as lions between lambs on the way to the multicultural paradise" ('*in plaats van maar net te doen alsof we als leeuwen tussen de lammeren op weg waren naar het polyculturele paradijs*').¹²⁴ In a next step, Blokker shared with his readership that his personal study of the Koran had taught him that "what the angel Gabriel had whispered to Mohammed was nothing more and nothing less than a blueprint for an internecine dictatorship" ('*Wat de mohammed [...] werd ingefluisterd door de engel Gabriel was niet meer en niet minder dan de blauwdruk van een verpletterende dictatuur*').¹²⁵ Taking Blokker's word, he thus accused every believing Muslim, living according to the Holy Book, of being an aggressive despot. In that sense the *Volkscrant* column established clear impermeable boundaries between the 'violent and dangerous Muslim' and the Dutch native population. After his construction of the 'Muslim threat', Jan Blokker turned back to a more reconciliatory tone. In the second half of his column, he called all religions a much feared disease and granted Muslims the right to seek justice until the court of ultimate resort; at least as long as religion would still exist in the Dutch society and as long as Muslims would refrain from killing authors. Otherwise they had to return to the Orient immediately. In the week that followed, Blokker's column was not spared angry reactions. The

¹²¹ 'Opinion by Gerrit Komrij', *NRC Handelsblad*, 8-3-1989, 16.

¹²² *Ibidem*.

¹²³ 'Terug', *De Volkscrant*, 11-3-1989, 7.

¹²⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹²⁵ *Ibidem*.

Volkskrant reader J. Verdaasdonk responded to his portrayal of Muslims as international murderers and jeered that the threatened democrat Blokker could not, due to all his emotions, distinguish anymore between Sunnis and Shiites, liberals and conservatives, conservatives and fanatics, and between fanaticism and terrorism.¹²⁶

Despite the publication of nine multiculturalism-critical and/or strict-boundary drawing articles, partly written by well-known and acknowledged journalists like Jan Blokker or Gerrit Komrij, I cannot testify a real frame shift in the public debate on immigrant integration at the time that the affair was in full swing. The nine critical articles stood vis-à-vis 21 articles which testified that immigrant integration had not been achieved yet but which then formulated problem-solutions within the multicultural realm. Eight articles pleaded for an improved and less discriminatory set of multicultural policies and another thirteen articles called for the better explanation of the Dutch rules of conduct and of the constitutionally defined limits to the fundamental freedoms in a multi-cultural society. Claim-makers mostly welcomed cultural diversity and accepted the minorities' wishes to preserve their home cultures, except for when they cherished radical and fundamentalist ideas. In other words, multiculturalism was still given a positive spin in the Dutch media coverage. With a differentiated, balanced and fact-based framing of claims, many journalists, politicians, intellectuals and ordinary citizens joined force and counteracted against the rise of strict boundaries and the potential escalation of conflict. The prominent status of the three Dutch integration-critics could not change that.

The concrete content of proposed problem solutions to increase the success of multicultural policies varied depending on what the claim-makers saw as the root cause for existing integration problems. One camp, to which the Dutch government belonged, believed that the Muslims' unawareness of their rights and duties in a liberal multicultural society had generated the biggest problems. They called for better education in Dutch language, history, and notions of culture next to regular dialogues with minorities. As the *Volkskrant* reader Mrs Wietsma stressed in her letter to the editor such a dialogue had to be "an unsighted discussion with clean arguments instead of creating a mere antagonism between 'us Dutch' and 'them Muslims'."¹²⁷ A second camp held the existing discrimination and racism towards the Muslim resident population responsible for all the anger, despair and frustration, which eventually resulted in public uproar and violent eruptions in March 1989. The *Volkskrant* reader Mr Langewerf wrote for instance that "we lured Moroccans and Turks to do the dirty jobs for us, underpaid them and did not provide them with any future prospects. The emerging anger is very real. Rushdie's book serves as a fuse in a powder keg of aggression which was the result of century-long oppression."¹²⁸ As a logical consequence this second camp promoted the

¹²⁶ 'Blokker', *De Volkskrant*, 15-3-1989, 15.

¹²⁷ 'Walgelijk', *De Volkskrant*, 11-3-1989, page unknown.

¹²⁸ 'Vuil werk', *De Volkskrant*, 11-3-1989, page unknown.

improvement of social conditions, employment opportunities, proportionality and non-discrimination; in other words, universalist integration policies.¹²⁹

Dutch politicians appeared from the discourse-analysis as mediating actors. They held on to multiculturalist policies and promoted tolerance as a necessary condition for living together in a society in which different beliefs and worldviews coexisted. At the same time, they called upon Muslims to refrain from violence and to respect the Dutch rule of law. Dutch churches likewise supported policies of multiculturalism and even called for an improvement thereof. In defence of the Muslim community, Dutch church leaders advocated a law that would guarantee the equal treatment of minority and majority populations. According to the churches, Hindus and Muslims should have the same right to set up their own schools and to teach their own language and culture.¹³⁰

Contrary to British Muslims, Dutch Muslims hardly contributed to the Dutch newspaper debate on their own integration capacity but left it to the Dutch natives to speak up against or in defence of them. Only three times I could find a statement from a Dutch Muslim between 3 and 12 March 1989. Mohammed Rabbae, who raised his voice as the director of the Dutch Centre Foreigners (NCB) and therefore as a ‘professional’ Muslim, did not say more than that Muslims in the Netherlands had to obey the Dutch laws and seek justice in a democratic way.¹³¹ The Muslim bridge builder between Islam and Christendom, Hamzah Zeid from Utrecht, contributed slightly more to the debate when he reasoned that the Netherlands was too small for Muslims and the native Dutch population to stand adverse to each other. Mr Zeid was convinced that “everybody needs everybody. I know that it is possible: integration in a proper way with room for the preservation of one’s own identity. A Western Islam is possible.”¹³² Zeid’s argumentation stands in contrast to the strict boundary-drawing statement of the third Muslim claim-maker Mohammed Rasoel in his interview with a *NRC* journalist. As a Muslim, born and raised in an Islamic country before he moved to the Netherlands, Rasoel cynically complimented the West for standing behind the most fundamental human right, the freedom of opinion and expression. In the following, he referred to the shock that went through the Western world when Khomeini announced the death sentence against Rushdie and presented it as a clear sign for the ‘Dutch naiveté’. According to Rasoel, the Dutch population should have seen the event coming, could have known how much aggression and fanatic responses were inherent in the Islam. Instead however they were so afraid of the word ‘discrimination’ that they would choke in it. He recommended the Dutch to stop trying to find reasons and justifications for somebody’s actions and to simply accept that some people needed no reason for aggression. Finally, he summoned the Netherlands to wake up and learn about the outside world and to stop letting others tread on their toes. That would be the only way to survive.¹³³ Shortly after the publication of the *NRC*

¹²⁹ ‘Rushdie-zaak’, *NRC Handelsblad*, 9-3-1989, 9.

¹³⁰ ‘Ook lof van kerken voor moslims die hoofd koel houden’, *Trouw*, 11-3-1989, 10.

¹³¹ ‘Politie onderzoekt roep om dood van Salman Rushdie’, *Trouw*, 6-3-1989, 3.

¹³² ‘Gezocht: een paar wijzen’, *Trouw*, 9-3-1989, 2.

¹³³ ‘Agressie van islam vergt geen verklaring’, *NRC Handelsblad*, 6-3-1989, 8.

article, the subject ‘Mohammed Rasoel’ attracted a lot of publicity. The Netherlands wondered why a Muslim would take such a hostile stance towards his own religion and his fellow worshippers. The Dutch scholar in the fields of linguistics and critical discourse analysis Teun van Dijk suspected Gerrit Komrij to be behind the article and secretly confronted the *NRC* with his assumption. When the content of his letter leaked, the Dutch press did not attack Komrij but Van Dijk as an intellectual pariah. Eventually, the Dutch citizen Zoka van A. from Edam was convicted on 16 December 1992 by a Court in Amsterdam for having written not only the controversial newspaper article in 1989 but also the racist pamphlet ‘*De ondergang van Nederland*’¹³⁴ in 1990 under the pseudonym Mohammed Rasoel. Still, questions about Rasoel’s real identity did not disappear. In 2003, Van Dijk once again tried to prove in his essay ‘*De Rasoel-Komrij affaire. Een geval van elite-racisme*’¹³⁵ that Komrij had fabricated the interview. Even today, the real author behind the pseudonym Mohammed Rasoel has not been clearly identified. The only thing we can be certain of is that the text was not written by a Dutch Muslim, but by a Dutch intellectual who used the Muslim identity to plant and spread anti-Muslim sentiments in the Dutch society. For my own research it further implies that Rasoel’s claims cannot be counted as a Muslim opinion which leaves us with only two Muslim voices in the short-term newspaper debate. In an environment that lacked Muslim counter reactions, integration critics could easily establish strict boundaries and construct Muslims as a threat to Dutch cultural norms and values.

¹³⁴ Mohammed Rasoel, *De Ondergang van Nederland – Land der naïeve Dwazen* (Amsterdam 1990).

¹³⁵ Teun. A. van Dijk, *De Rasoel-Komrij affaire. Een geval van elite-racisme* (Amsterdam 2003).

The integration paradigm in the Dutch public debate between 12 March 1989 and 31 December 1989

Table 5: Framing of immigrant integration in the Dutch debate between 12 March and 31 December 1989

	<i>De Volkskrant</i>	<i>Telegraaf</i>	<i>Elsevier</i>	<i>De Tijd</i>	<i>Vrij Nederland</i>
	(%) (N=25)	(%) (N=15)	(%) (N=9)	(%) (N=10)	(%) (N=7)
Assimilationism/ strict boundaries (Immigrants need to adapt and act according to the Dutch code of conduct)	0	33	11	10	43
Criticism towards multiculturalism	0	13	0	0	0
Multiculturalism/ blurred boundaries ((Muslim) immigrants are welcome as long as obey the laws of the Dutch constitutional state)	92	53	56	90	57
Strengthened multiculturalism (problems are a result of shortcomings in the implementation of multiculturalism)	8	0	33	0	0
Universalism	60 (N=62)	0	0	0	0

Before I can start with the actual analysis of the long-term framing of the debate on immigrant integration in the year 1989, I need to state that the *Volkskrant* frequently framed the public debate in universalist terms. The number of articles that used the universalist frame even exceeded the number of articles that framed the debate in socio-cultural terms, so that they could not be ignored in this paper. As indicated in the introduction, 1989 witnessed two parallel transitions in the framing of immigrant integration; one that was socio-economically inspired and that appeared after the publication of the WRR-report in May 1989, and one that was culturally-inspired and that was connected to the *Rushdie affair*. Since this research study focuses on the impact of the *Rushdie affair*, and hence on the cultural dimension of the framework transition, I will not pay much attention to the universalist articles. Nevertheless, the reader should keep in mind that universalist frames became very prominent after May 1989. That table 5 reports of 37 universalist articles in the *Volkskrant* and zero articles in all other print-media sources is explained by the fact that the strong presence of universalist features only caught my eyes when I observed the *Volkskrant*. As I studied this newspaper last, I did not filter out the ‘universalist’ articles in the other four dailies and weeklies. To be able to compare the different print-media discourses, I calculated the percentages on the basis of N=25 for the *Volkskrant*.

Unlike the *Telegraaf*, the *Volkskrant* kept publishing a lot on the integration (problems) of ethnic minorities in the country. Table 5 immediately shows that immigrant integration appeared only as a marginal topic in the *Telegraaf* but as a central topic in the *Volkskrant*. The difference amounts to

ten articles more coverage in the latter. In qualitative terms the difference is still more striking. While relevant *Telegraaf* articles often merely reported the news, the *Volkscrant* used a variety of instruments to cover the topic, ranging from human-interest stories, interviews with experts, extensive reports and extracts from speeches. Besides that, the *Volkscrant* stuck to one single message, namely that immigrant integration and the multicultural approach in managing cultural diversity should be welcomed and at the most improved. From an inter-newspaper comparison the picture arises that the *Volkscrant* journalists tried to downplay problems by ignoring the emerging hostility towards (Muslim) immigrants in Dutch society. This was less the case for the *Telegraaf*, which frequently reported on growing anti-Muslim sentiments and implicitly wondered to what extent multicultural policies had fulfilled their task to manage cultural diversity and to pacify conflicts.

Besides such differences, all newspapers and weekly magazines had in common their predominantly Muslim-friendly, Muslim-defensive discourse. Strong assimilationist claims almost disappeared after the first few weeks of news coverage and earlier-made claims of such nature were strongly disapproved. On 17 March 1989, *Tijd* journalist Bert Bukman admitted to be surprised when he saw reasonable people suddenly starting to mock Muslims in the wake of the *Rushdie affair*. He criticised the sharpness of some comments and accused the media of agitation against Muslims. In that context he condemned the two *Volkscrant* journalists Henk Müller and Maurits Schmidt who had told a radical Muslim during their interview that he should leave if he could not support the democratic system ('*Ga dan toch*')¹³⁶, the *NRC* columnist Gerrit Komrij who had likened immigrants to wolves ('*We hebben ze als stakkers verwend en krijgen ze als wolven terug*')¹³⁷, and *Volkscrant* columnist Jan Blokker who had wondered why he should understand Muslims when they storm embassies, fight meaningless holy wars, burn books or send kill commandos via airplane.¹³⁸ Mr Bukman got the impression that Muslim actions neutralized the strong feeling of guilt which had put a taboo on saying anything else than that other cultures were wonderful in the Netherlands. Afterwards, he introduced two experts who asked the newspapers not to create an atmosphere of agitation ('*hetze-sfeer*')¹³⁹ and who assured that radicals would only form a small group in the Netherlands. One of the experts, professor emeritus for Islam and Muslim-Christian relationships, Sjoerd Van Koningsveld, criticized Jan Blokker for thinking in terms of 'us' versus 'them' or 'enlightened Westerners' and 'backward Muslims', and encouraged Dutch citizens to assist the Muslim community in building up religious and cultural institutions so that the group would not end up in a vacuum and break ties with the Dutch majority society. He also argued that integration should be voluntary and work with rewards.¹⁴⁰ Professor Glastra van Loon joined in and claimed in an *Elsevier* article from 25 March 1989 that the way the Dutch had stepped on the feelings of another culture in the name of the freedom of expression

¹³⁶ 'Jullie democratie zal jullie de nek breken', *De Volkscrant*, 7-3-1989, 11.

¹³⁷ 'Opinion by Gerrit Komrij', *NRC Handelsblad*, 8-3-1989, 16.

¹³⁸ 'Terug', *De Volkscrant*, 11-3-1989, 7.

¹³⁹ 'Na de moordoproep – De groeiende onverdraagzaamheid', *De Tijd*, 17-3-1989, 22.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, 23.

would attest western imperialism. He called for more tolerance and mutual respect and tried to encourage reconciliation with statements such as that the majority of Muslims would possess a high degree of cultural development whereas only a small minority of all Muslims would support radical attitudes (*'We moeten ons er rekening van geven dat slechts een minderheid van de moslims fundamentalistisch is. Islamitische volkeren hebben doorgaans een hoge graad van culturele ontwikkeling. Die bestaan niet allemaal uit dogmatische fanatici'*).¹⁴¹

Illustration 6: Meeting between minister Van Dijk, and Dutch Muslim authorities in The Hague, 3-4-1989



This picture shows the Dutch minister for the interior, Van Dijk, together with two Dutch Muslim authorities during their meeting in The Hague on 3 April 1989. By means of dialogue with the Muslim community, the Dutch government hoped to prevent further conflicts and the appearance of strong anti-Islam sentiments in the Netherlands. (Source: National Archive The Hague, 'Minister Van Dijk overlegt met moslimorganisaties over het boek van Salman Rushdie', Photographer: Bogaerts, Rob / Anefo, number access: 2.24.01.05, component number: 934-4319, <http://afbeeldingen.gahetna.nl/naa/thumb/1280x1280/cecd60e-5fe0-d5bd-fb3d-a5c67b6d5aad.jpg> (22-4-2012)).

In March and April, three meetings between Muslim organizations and government representatives took place in The Hague. The Hague's Muslim organizations met the mayor to talk about the protests and to minimize the negative effects for Dutch Muslims¹⁴², while the minister for the interior, Van Dijk, came together with the representatives of eight smaller Muslim organizations and later with the National Islamic Committee (ILC), which was said to represent 90 percent of all Muslims in the Netherlands. The *Volkskrant* and the *Telegraaf* reported on the meetings in a similar way, stressing that Muslim organizations as well as the Dutch government authorities sought for compromise and welcomed dialogue as a means to solve tensions. While the mayor of The Hague and Van Dijk emphasized that the Netherlands gladly offers a home to various cultures, religions and freedoms as long as all residents would move within the boundaries of Dutch law,¹⁴³ the ILC and other Muslim organizations clearly dissociated themselves from bigoted demonstrations. The *Volkskrant* coverage

¹⁴¹ 'Tere gevoelens in de knel - Glastra van Loon en Van Boven over God en vrijheid van meningsuiting', *Elsevier*, 25-3-1989, 154.

¹⁴² 'Moslims praten zaak-Rushdie uit met gemeente Den Haag', *De Volkskrant*, 21-3-1989, 3.

¹⁴³ 'Van Dijk spreekt afzonderlijk met gematigde moslims', *De Volkskrant*, 22-3-1989, 3, and 'Moslims gewezen op onwettigheid van bedreigingen', *De Volkskrant*, 23-03-1989, 5, and 'Godslastering slaat ook op opperwezen moslims', *De Volkskrant*, 4-1-1989, 3.

stopped here, but the *Telegraaf* added a statement from an ILC spokesperson who felt threatened by a number of Dutch movements which would ever more often lump together common Muslims with a small group of extremists.¹⁴⁴ This suggests that hostility towards Muslims had grown stronger. The next sections will show that from mid-March onwards, the media discourse increasingly contained implicit and explicit hints towards racism and xenophobic attacks in the low country.

On 24 March 1989, the first Dutch Islamic primary school opened its doors in Eindhoven. The *Volkscrant*, just like the minister of Education, Mr Deetman, casted a positive light on separate education. The reader learned about the employment of Muslim and non-Muslim teachers and about the school's official accreditation which would guarantee its compliance with the Dutch legal order.¹⁴⁵ The *Volkscrant* further informed about plans for the opening of two more Islamic primary schools in Utrecht and s'Hertogenbosch but not that those plans were widely contested. The last piece of information stemmed from *Elsevier*. According to the magazine, the municipality council of Utrecht opposed the initiative on the grounds that this would separate Dutch and foreign schoolchildren and prevent them from communicating with each other. The Dutch liberal party VVD seemed to be hesitating too as they refused to position themselves without having investigated the cause and benefits first.¹⁴⁶ The two partly different contents in the *Volkscrant* and *Elsevier* illustrate well the slightly biased, less critical newspaper framing that turned out to be so characteristic for the immigrant integration discourse in the *Volkscrant*. After 12 March the left-wing newspaper started to silence the downside of the multicultural approach and worries among the Dutch populations concerning Muslim immigrants. It seems as if the newspaper intended to shape its reader's opinion in the direction of a welcoming, respectful and tolerant attitude towards ethnic and in particular Muslim minorities by indirectly denying that hostile attitudes towards migrants existed too.

On 29 March, the tragic murder of the Imam Abdullah al-Ahdal and his assistant Salem el-Benir in Brussels reached the Dutch news in no time. The incident was expected to stand in conjunction with the *Rushdie affair* and with the Imam's mediating remarks in a Belgian television program. The *Telegraaf* and the *Volkscrant* both portrayed Al-Ahdal as a man of reconciliation; somebody who saw the integration of migrants into the Benelux as the ultimate goal, and dialogue and compromise as a way to achieve it. Both dailies stressed that the brutal assassination, for which the Soldiers of God (*Jund Allah*), a pro-Iran Beirut organization, claimed responsibility had upset hundreds and thousands of Muslims in the Netherland. An article in the *Tijd* added that the large majority of all Muslims in the Benelux would share the Imam's liberal, propitiating views.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ 'Van Dijk praat met islamieten', *De Telegraaf*, 4-4-1989, 6.

¹⁴⁵ 'School met de Koran wordt nieuwe zuil', *De Volkscrant*, 24-3-1989, 7.

¹⁴⁶ 'School met de koran', *Elsevier*, 29-4-1989, 41.

¹⁴⁷ 'Een muur van stilzwijgen – Angst naar de moord in de moskee', *De Tijd*, 7-4-1989, 18-19.

Illustration 7: Opening of the *Fatih* mosque in Eindhoven, 2-4-1989



This picture was taken at the opening ceremony of the new *Fatih* mosque on 2 April 1989 in Eindhoven. It shows thousands of Muslims and curious Dutch citizens celebrating together the dedication of the new religious building in the city. What the picture hides is that not everybody welcomed the new mosque on Dutch soil. The building had been the target of malicious mischief prior to its opening. (Source: 'Eindhoven, 2 april 1989', ANP – *Historisch Archief Community*, Photographer: Paul Stolk, <http://www.anp-archief.nl/page/51941/nl> (22-4-2012)).

In April, the *Tijd* published an extract of the speech that was held during the dedication of the *Fatih* mosque in Eindhoven by the mayor and former minister of education Jos van Kemenade. In his speech, the member of the social-democratic party PvdA praised the opening of the mosque as an important symbol of freedom of worship but at the same time identified in particular three problems that had come along with cultural diversity; (1) the problem of big cultural differences (hereby referring to differences in behavior, in values, in societal relations, in interpreting and worshipping of social realities); (2) the large socio-economic gap between the Dutch majority society and ethnic minority groups; and (3) the problem that ethnic minorities lived concentrated in certain areas of a city. Afterwards, the mayor explained that the concept of culture was not static but developed with changing cultural and social contexts. Consequently, Van Kemenade wondered to what extent the preservation of an immigrant culture in a new socio-cultural context could be a desirable goal. From his point of view the preservation of immigrant cultures would not increase but decrease the chances for ethnic minorities to equally participate in Dutch society. A new policy could thus better focus on the provision of full-fledged socio-economic chances. At the same time, the mayor promoted mutual tolerance and respect for everyone's identity as an indispensable condition for a harmonious cohabitation.¹⁴⁸ Van Kemenade's viewpoint represents the general attitude of the social-democrats towards cultural minorities in the 1980s. As Lucassen and Lucassen illustrated in *Winnaars en Verliezers*, the PvdA had hoped that Turks and Moroccans would quickly adapt to the Dutch culture,

¹⁴⁸ 'De Grenzen van de Vrijheid – Culturele Minderheden in de rechtsstaat', *De Tijd*, 7-4-1989, 50-51.

but also expected the settled Dutch community to open the floodgates to the newcomers.¹⁴⁹ The *Volkskrant* reported on the opening of the *Fatih mosque* too and portrayed the event as one big celebration: “The whole atmosphere during the opening breath fraternization [...] and all speeches highlighted respect for each other’s cultures and religious identities.”¹⁵⁰ The reader learned about a common room in the mosque that was intended to be used as a crossroad of cultures, a room where the Dutch population could learn more about the background of the Islam. For the first time, the *Volkskrant* also mentioned that it was a difficult time for Muslims, considering the murders in Brussels, the growing Western hostility towards Muslims and their religion after the *Rushdie affair*, and the fact that some unknown offenders had attacked the new Dutch mosque prior to the official opening ceremony.

In sum, Dutch Muslims appeared once again as warm-hearted, approachable and commendable fellow residents in the two Dutch print-media. References to the Muslim community inviting visitation to learn more about their religion evoked the impression that Muslims did not want to separate but share their culture and ideas, and contribute to mutual understanding, respect and tolerance. Interestingly, the *Volkskrant* contrasted this positive portray of Muslim residents against signs of xenophobia, prejudices, fears and anger among the Dutch population. Like that the newspaper implicitly victimized the Dutch Muslim community and put the blame for integration problems on the Dutch majority society. The image of the ‘innocent Muslim victim’ did not arise to the same extent from the *Telegraaf* coverage. The newspaper refrained from reporting on well-integrated and reconciliatory Muslims and on racism, violence and anti-immigrant sentiments in the same text. Instead, it informed its readership about vandalism against Muslim institutions in separate articles. Two attacks against a mosque in Nijmegen¹⁵¹ and three assaults against the *Fatih mosque* were reported in total.¹⁵² No single *Telegraaf* article aroused fears and constructed Muslim immigrants as a threat. Still, my findings give reason to assume that Muslims were sometimes perceived as such by the indigenous population. References to an increasing number of assaults against Islamic buildings tell that anti-Muslim sentiments among some native citizens increased in the wake of the *Rushdie affair*, even though this is hardly reflected in the framing of the media debate on immigrant integration. My impression that the controversy favoured an integration-sceptical discourse in the Dutch society at large is strengthened by a *Tijd* article from 28 April 1989, in which the author Jet Kunkeler argued that people would, thanks to Muslim protest marches, finally speak up in public and say things which they hardly dared to think before the affair.¹⁵³

Especially Palestinian and Turkish Muslims were repeatedly linked to growing radicalization and failed integration by the media in the first weeks of March. It is therefore interesting that *Elsevier*

¹⁴⁹ Lucassen and Lucassen, *Winnaars en Verliezers*, 93-94.

¹⁵⁰ ‘Moskee geopend in sfeer van verbroedering’, *De Volkskrant*, 3-4-1989, 3.

¹⁵¹ ‘Nijmeegse moskee zwaar beschadigd’, *De Telegraaf*, 3-4-1989, 6.

¹⁵² ‘Eindhovense moskee wordt zwaar bewaakt’, *De Telegraaf*, 1-4-1989, 7.

¹⁵³ ‘Nederlands, desnoods onder dwang – Tijddebat: ‘Dit is een streep onder het oude migrantenbeleid’, *De Tijd*, 28-4-1989, 18.

came up with two human-interest stories that portrayed immigrants from exactly those two groups in April and May 1989. The human-interest frame tells a personal life story and concentrates on the emotions and the impact of a certain event on the life of a person.¹⁵⁴ As an antipode to all the bad rumors and accusations in times of Muslim book-burnings *Elsevier* presented well-integrated and law-abiding Dutch Muslims. The first article introduced the Turkish engineer Erdinç Türkcan who worked for the Dutch Energy Research Center (ECN) in Petten and ran the Dutch Islamic Foundation for Education and Upbringing (ISNO). The Turkish migrant and family father appeared as a socially and emotionally committed academic who used his free time to promote integration and to fight shortfalls and grievances of Turkish minorities in the Netherlands.¹⁵⁵

Illustration 8: The Turkish immigrant Erdinç Türkcan



This photo of Erdinç Türkcan accompanied the human-interest story in *Elsevier* magazine from 15 April 1989. It matches the content of the article, which presented Türkcan as a well-integrated Turkish immigrant. With his straight posture and his suit and tie the Muslim comes across as a civilized, educated and well-tended resident. One cannot imagine him on Dutch streets, calling for the death of Salman Rushdie. (Source: Dagtekening – Marijke Hilhorst spreekt met Erdinç Türkcan', *Elsevier*, 15-4-1989, 106-107).

The second human-interest story presented the Palestinian immigrant Finan Ghazal as a calm, patient, and non-violent Muslim, who possessed excellent language skills and had a job. From the article the entire Palestinian population arose as a perfect role model for immigrant integration. Palestinians in the Netherlands would embrace their home culture but not demand their own schools and mosques. They would not form enclaves but live widely spread in the cities so that they could interact with the Dutch natives.¹⁵⁶ The two human-interest stories gave Muslims a friendly and harmless face and consequently counteracted the construction of Muslims as a threat to the Dutch society.

In June, I found two more human-interest stories in the *Volkscrant*. Like *Elsevier*, the newspaper presented only well-integrated Muslims who tried to explain the Dutch native population the difficult emotional struggle that migration would naturally bring along; the struggle between two identities, two ways of living, between adapting to something new and the wish and moral obligation to keep the old identity.¹⁵⁷ Human-interest frames allow the journalist to indirectly take a side and transfer a moral message. In the aforementioned cases, *Elsevier* and the *Volkscrant* probably intended

¹⁵⁴ Dietram A. Scheufele, 'Framing as a Theory of Media Effects', *Journal of Communication* 49:1 (1999) 105.

¹⁵⁵ 'Dagtekening – Marijke Hilhorst spreekt met Erdinç Türkcan', *Elsevier*, 15-4-1989, 106-107.

¹⁵⁶ 'Wij vallen niemand lastig met onze cultuur – De Palestijnse gemeenschap in Nederland', *Elsevier*, 20-5-1989, 31-33.

¹⁵⁷ 'Migrant kan zelf het best zijn problemen verwoorden', *De Volkscrant*, 12-7-1989, 6.

to enhance respect for the Dutch Muslim community and to generate a better understanding for a migrant's wish to preserve at least parts of his traditional culture.

In July, I once again stumbled across hints for growing xenophobia in Dutch society. The Dutch-Surinamese candidate for the green-left party, Ellin Robles, raised her voice in the *Volkskrant* to speak up against inequalities, discrimination and racism which had become ever more visible in the public space and in particular in the four biggest cities Utrecht, Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague.¹⁵⁸ The politician remarked that the Netherlands was not a tolerant country but “a country with notorious ideas of inferiority against Surinamese, as the descendants of slaves, and against ‘Achmed’ for other reasons.”¹⁵⁹ The Professor for Christian ethics, Mr ter Schegget from Leiden University, likewise addressed the Dutch tendency to feel superior towards other ethnicities, thereby implementing the interesting thought that the occident could learn much from the orient. He criticized that most Westerners stepped back from religion especially when they had to fight for religious convictions. From his point of view, the incident from March rubbed in that Western tolerance had ended in cynicism towards their own values and in disinterest towards the values of others. As a result, he wondered whether the Dutch would not be better off with a set of commonly recognized norms and values that connected them as a community, just like the Koran would connect all Muslims. In Ter Schegget's article liberal Western societies appeared as the victims of their own modernization process. To ‘heal’ their society, the academic recommended the Dutch population to look at the East and at Muslim communities to remember and re-appreciate the old norms and values of communal life. What is so special about this article is that it imposed a reverse hierarchy; one whereby the West should learn from the East. This goes against the dominant tradition of prejudiced Western interpretations of the Muslim world and the Islam as backward and uncivilized and as a threat to Western civilization at large.

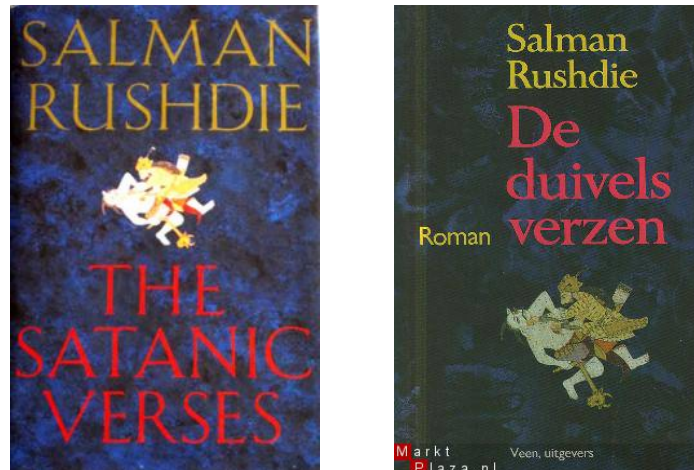
On the occasion of the publication of the new modern Dutch translation of the Koran, the *Volkskrant* interviewed its translator Frank Leemhuis. Leemhuis emphasized the peaceful nature of the Islam and falsified the common assumption that the holy book was backward and strict. He explained that Dutch Muslims would often consider those customs as extremely Islamic that could not be found in the Koran.¹⁶⁰ The new translation should consequently help to erase such misperceptions, so that Dutch Muslims could become more moderate and the Dutch society more open towards the Islam and its believers.

¹⁵⁸ ‘Ellin Robles verfoeit term ‘etnische minderheden’, *De Volkskrant*, 5-7-1989, 6.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶⁰ ‘De Koran moet je horen’, *De Volkskrant – Het Vervolg*, 29-7-1989, 2.

Illustration 9: The English and the Dutch book cover of Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses*



On the picture above we see the cover of the first edition of *The Satanic Verses*, published in 1988 by the British publishing house Penguin, and the cover of its first Dutch translation, *De Duivelsverzen*, released in 1990 by the publishing house 'Veen' in Utrecht. (Sources: 'The Satanic Verses', *Time Entertainment*, 12-4-2012, <http://entertainment.time.com/2011/01/06/removing-the-n-word-from-huck-finn-top-10-censored-books/slide/the-satanic-verses/#the-satanic-verses> (15-5-2012), and Markt Plaza, Rushdie, Salman; *De duivelsverzen*, <http://boeken.marktplaza.nl/literatuur/Rushdie-Salman-De-duivels-verzen-12468808.htm> (15-5-2012)).

The first and only *Volkscrant* article that informed about a Muslim offense links to the publication of the Dutch translation of *The Satanic Verses* on 1 September 1989. Together with the *Telegraaf*, the *Volkscrant* reported on the decision taken by the two department stores 'De Bijenkorf' and 'V&D' to not sell *De Duivelsverzen* on the grounds that the V&D had received a threatening letter from the unknown group 'Followers of the Revolutionary Justice Organisation'. Both newspapers established no larger boundaries but pointed out that the ILC had openly opposed the release of such threats.¹⁶¹ Five days later, the *Telegraaf* falsified the presumed reappearance of violent Muslim actions. A small article alluded that the threatening letter had most likely been a joke by schoolchildren. This had become clear when the composer(s) of the first letter sent a second letter with the original first message and another message declaring the disintegration of the organization on the grounds of "educational obligations" ('*schoolverplichtingen*').¹⁶² Muslims had thus never opted for illegal or illegitimate means after their protests in March.

With the publication of *De Duivelsverzen* the discussion about the *Satanic Verses controversy* in the Dutch print-media came to a close. Up till then I could not find enough evidence to testify a culturally-motivated frame shift in the public debate on immigrant integration. Calls for the assimilation of immigrants had come up but could not manifest themselves on a long-term basis. To control the validity of my statement, I carefully examined the election campaigns around the parliament elections of 6 September 1989. I reasoned that a possible frame shift in the debate should be reflected in party platforms and general election campaigns. If Muslim protests had led to strong anti-Muslim or anti-immigrant sentiments and to repeated calls for assimilationist policies, political

¹⁶¹ 'Winkels zien af van verkoop boek Rushdie', *De Volkscrant*, 1-9-1989, 3.

¹⁶² 'Dreigbrief over Duivelsverzen wellicht grap van scholieren', *De Telegraaf*, 6-9-1989, 3.

parties had certainly set the topic on their political agendas. To my surprise, no *Telegraaf* article on the election campaigns addressed the topic of immigrant integration, ethnic minorities or potential integration problems.¹⁶³ According to the populist newspaper, ideas and visions concerning the environment, the labour market, and welfare occupied the political agenda.¹⁶⁴ My observation of the *Volkskrant* articles led to slightly different findings. This newspaper presented ethnic minority problems as part of the election campaigns but emphasised that integration was discussed in socio-economic terms. Apparently, the political debate addressed disadvantaged neighbourhoods, high poverty and unemployment rates and shortcomings in education and language proficiency. Prime minister Lubbers for instance acknowledged that the existing minorities policies did not lead to sufficient results and were to be amended with special focus on the three aspects: social integration, admission policies, and anti-discrimination.¹⁶⁵ In other words, immigrant integration was at the most framed in universalist terms, a trend which started already in May 1989 after the publication of the WRR-document ‘*Allochtonenbeleid*’.

One day after the national elections, the *Volkskrant* announced the election results. To the surprise of many, the extreme-right Centre Party with its leader Hans Janmaat had won one seat in the Dutch parliament.¹⁶⁶ Two days later three more articles dealt with the topic ‘Janmaat’. They informed that on average three percent of all voters in the four biggest Dutch cities had voted for the CP mainly because of the party’s delusive election campaigns. None of the articles introduced growing xenophobia, confrontations between native and foreign residents, or the Muslim reaction in the wake of the *Rushdie affair* as possible motive for the CP’s election success. Another two weeks later, an article in *Vrij Nederland* asked the reader not to ignore the election of Janmaat but to understand the outcome as a red lamp on the dashboard, telling that something was wrong.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ ‘Verkiezingsprogramma’s van de partijen die vertegenwoordigd zijn in de Tweede Kamer’, *De Telegraaf*, 26-8-1989, 25.

¹⁶⁴ ‘En nu verder’, *De Telegraaf*, 18-8-1989, 9.

¹⁶⁵ ‘Nederland moet rekenen op voortgaan immigratie’, *De Volkskrant*, 2-6-1989, 6.

¹⁶⁶ ‘Winnaar Lubbers kann blijven regeren’, *De Volkskrant*, 7-9-1989, 1.

¹⁶⁷ ‘Gedachten op dinsdagochtend – Janmaat op het dashboard’, *Vrij Nederland*, 23-09-1989, 2.

Illustration 10: Hans Janmaat



The picture above shows Hans Janmaat, the leader of the Dutch extreme-right Centre Party (CP). The politician, who liked to stress that the Netherlands was no country of immigration, managed to gain one seat in the Dutch parliament elections on 6 September 1989. *Vrij Nederland* interpreted the election results as a warning signal that anti-immigrant sentiments had grown stronger after the *Rushdie affair* and/or the publication of the WRR-report. (Source: 'Hans Janmaat in 1980', *VPRO Radio Archive*, <http://weblogs.vpro.nl/radioarchief/2007/10/11/hans-janmaat-in-1980/> (24-4-2012)).

Politicians, official institutions, and most of the Dutch intellectuals and journalists held socio-economic problems such as an immigrant's low educational attainment, language problems and his dependency on welfare institutions accountable for upcoming tensions between the majority population and ethnic minority groups and in consequence for the CP's election success. On the basis of my content analysis, I can thus only conclude that cultural and religious differences have at the most marginally influenced the changing, more hostile attitude towards Dutch ethnic minorities. It seems as if the controversy around *The Satanic Verses* had led to a short intensive turmoil but not to a true frame shift in the public debate on immigrant integration. Still I feel that a conclusion which tells that it was not the *Rushdie affair* but socio-economic problems which brought long-term damage to the perception and portray of Muslims and other ethnic minorities is too short-sighted. To me it seems as if the Dutch political elite and the Dutch print-media had secretly agreed to remain silent about the conflict potential and actual conflicts that arose out of cultural differences. Columnists like Jan Blokker or Gerrit Komrij, but also a few ordinary citizens in their letters to the editors at least introduced a cultural dimension to the integration problem. But what could have caused the media's and politicians' preference for a universalist framework? One potential explanatory factor is that universalism allows for concrete problem-solutions. Solving problems in the field of civic integration is much easier than solving problems that arise out of different worldviews and which touch the very core of a person's identity.

Despite of the dominant universalist framework, a few articles kept adding a cultural dimension to immigrant integration problems, such as the very different but interesting *Volkskrant* article from 5 October 1989. It links to the claims that were made in *Winnaars en Verliezers*; namely that the Dutch left had been wrongfully accused of being responsible for the multicultural drama and the electoral success of Janmaat.¹⁶⁸ In his letter to the editor, the religious and cultural psychologist Frank Kemper explained such accusations with the revival of neo-liberalism which generally opposed

¹⁶⁸ Lucassen and Lucassen, *Winnaars en Verliezers*, 13.

state interventions. From Kemper's point of view, the discovery of growing unemployment and crime rates among immigrant populations but also deficits in the field of education and language proficiency had demanded new, harsher measures and invited politicians to blame the left and the Dutch minorities for the failure of integration. What had to be held against neo-liberal accusations however was that ethnic minorities belonged to the weakest groups in society and lacked the socio-economic basis necessary to develop and flourish on their own. In other words, Kemper argued that civic participation had less to do with an immigrant's willingness to integrate but rather depended on the opportunity structure which would either allow an immigrant to integrate and climb up the social ladder or withhold such possibilities. With reference to his own research findings, the psychologist introduced the cultural-historical factor as a guiding imperative for the appearance of xenophobia. In his own study he found xenophobia to be highest amongst isolated elderly, who saw the homogeneous neighbourhood culture, of which they were part of, disappear ('*De afkeer van buitenlanders was het grootst bij geïsoleerde ouderen, die de homogene buurtcultuur, waarvan zij deel uitmaakten hebben zien verdwijnen*').¹⁶⁹ Kremer concluded that the voting behaviour of those elderly people was not in particular the fault of the left, even less the fault of the 'soft sector' and not at all the fault of the ethnic minorities themselves.¹⁷⁰

An October article in the *Tijd* countered anti-Muslim sentiments in a different way. The weekly magazine told the success story of Turkish migrant children who managed to enter Dutch universities and colleges of higher education. The integrated migrants commonly preserved and cherished their Turkish cultural background while participating perfectly in the Dutch mainstream society. Like that the author demonstrated that integration and the preservation of one's own cultural identity can be combined¹⁷¹ and that multiculturalism is not necessarily bad and unsuitable for the integration of immigrants into a new society.

In November, the rabbi of the Dutch Israelian Church association warned in his letter to the *Volkscrant* that a loss of identity would create a lot of confusion and provoked an individual's withdrawal from the larger society. The lost individual would run the risk to find refuge in the secured identities of extreme nationalism and totalitarianism. As a result, Dutch educational institutions could better welcome the different traditions as autonomous and valuable and approach the carriers of such traditions in a positive and constructive way ('*In onze pluriforme maatschappij houdt dit in, dat onderwijsinstellingen de verschillende tradities als autonoom en waardevol moeten aanvaarden en de dragers van die traditie positief en constructief moeten benaderen*').¹⁷²

The media coverage ended with a serial on Dutch ethnic minorities. Between 29 November and 22 December, the *Volkscrant* published twice a week an article which discussed a certain aspect of immigrant integration. My study of the whole series did not lead to new interesting findings. Most

¹⁶⁹ 'Harde aanpak minderheden wint ten onrechte terrein', *De Volkscrant*, 5-10-1989, 19.

¹⁷⁰ Ibidem.

¹⁷¹ 'Een moeizame klim – Turkse studenten in het Nederlands Hoger Onderwijs', *De Tijd*, 20-10-1989, 60-62.

¹⁷² 'Kritiek op hoofdzoekjes vorm van dubbele moraal', *De Volkscrant*, 11-11-1989, 21.

articles, six out of eight, were framed in universalist terms, whereby socio-economic problems such as the high unemployment rates among foreigners, frequent school drop-outs, insufficient knowledge of the Dutch language and moderate housing were constantly reappearing topics. The articles commonly took a neutral approach. They addressed existing problems and in the following introduced a range of opinions concerning root causes and problem solutions. The interested reader who followed the whole serial learned about the many facets of immigrant integration and migration. He learned about the costs and benefits of human mobility for both the migrants and the receiving society. The neutral approach gave the reader the possibility to make up his own mind.

Sub-Conclusion

Illustration 11: Cartoon on the *Rushdie affair* in the Dutch newspaper *Trouw*



This cartoon was published on 7 March 1989 in the newspaper *Trouw*. It shows the Ayatollah with a Dutch dictionary, trying to ask the two pedestrians on the right in 'polite Dutch' for fire. With the lighter Khomeini wants to burn *The Satanic Verses*, which he holds in his left hand. The two Dutch citizens on the right respond with the comment: 'So this is integration'. In the scene on the left, the cartoon shows a Dutch Muslim carrying a banner which says: "*Rushdie doot!*" (*Rushdie dead*). The word 'dead' is hereby misspelled with a 't' (*doot*) instead of a 'd' (*dood*). The Dutch man to his right corrects this mistake.

With the drawing, the cartoonist emphasized the bad integration of the Dutch Muslim community into the Dutch society in 1989. For the scene on the left, he selected the language aspect to illustrate that Muslims were hardly taken seriously in the wake of the *Rushdie affair*. The Dutch man completely ignores the meaning of the slogan 'RUSHDIE DOOT' because he is so distracted by the misspelling of the word 'doot'. The cartoon thus stresses that their linguistic deficiencies prevented Muslims from having their claims recognized by the Dutch indigenous population. In the scene on the right, the cartoonist demonstrates the ambiguity of Muslim integration. On the one hand, the Ayatollah tries to adapt to the Dutch society by asking for a lighter in Dutch. On the other hand, he asks for the lighter to burn *The Satanic Verses*, which shows that he does not grant the freedom of speech to the author. With this scene, the cartoonist thus wonders to what extent Muslims are willing to integrate to the Dutch core norms and values. From the cartoon, the reader gets the impression that the existing social and institutional differences between Muslims and Dutch natives are too big to be considered members of the same group. (Source: 'Tom in zwart-wit', *Trouw*, 7-3-1989, 11).

Dutch magazine and newspaper discourses on the *Rushdie affair* and immigrant integration did not differ much from each other. Especially in the months February and March when the affair was in full swing, all media showed a serious interest in the events and discussed the conflict potential that rested in culturally diverse societies. The perceived growing radicalization of Dutch Muslims triggered fears that Muslim anger would turn into physical force. Consequently, politicians, Dutch intellectuals, journalists and ordinary citizens alike responded to the protest marches and to Muslims in general with widespread opposition. After a few weeks the media interest slowly ebbed away and (Muslim) immigrant integration became a topic that was only occasionally addressed. My content analysis of the long-term debate in the Dutch print-media exposed a divided coverage which lacked a clear leitmotif. Many articles remained vague, meaning that the media did not clearly single out the root(s) of a certain problem and the consequent best problem solution(s). The critical reader was left with the impression that the topic is too sensitive for a journalist to take a clear position, too complicated for a

black or white coverage and too complex to filter out the appropriate problem solution(s). Hostility, ignorance, and a lacking willingness to integrate seem to partly explain why immigrant integration had failed but for all three causal factors the media refused to name a chief culprit. Instead, the set of all articles held the Dutch majority and the Muslim minority population equally responsible for the societal split. The Dutch were not as tolerant as they would often claim, and immigrants would not always embrace the new culture as much as they could and should. The debate on the *Rushdie affair* and immigrant integration divided the public and left the reader with only one certainty; the complexity of the issue demanded problem-specific approaches, meaning concrete solutions designed for specific conflict groups and conflict areas. My content analysis illustrates that some conflicts had their genesis in cultural clashes, while others were caused by socio-economic problems or by prevailing prejudices and xenophobia. No single approach to immigrant integration would be capable of sorting out all the problems. This might explain why universalist, multiculturalist and assimilationist claims coexisted in the public debate in 1989. Despite the presence of neo-realist claims in the print-media discourse my research findings do not allow me to fix the *Rushdie affair* as the starting point for the framework transition towards neo-realism in the early 1990s. In 1989, most articles still took a pro-multiculturalist stance and the number of articles that framed immigrant integration in cultural terms was anyway too scarce to speak of a true frame shift. If I can speak of any framework transition it would be one towards universalism because an immigrant's non-participation in the socio-economic domain, his dependency on government facilities but also the inaccessibility of Dutch societal institutions became prominent topics of debate after May 1989. Since the *Rushdie affair* actuated frustrations in the cultural-religious and not in the socio-economic vein it is difficult to fix the controversy as the genesis for a frame shift towards a universalist discourse on immigrant integration.

Even though I negated the transition towards an assimilationist discourse as a direct effect of the *Rushdie affair*, I have enough evidence to claim that the controversy established the fertile soil on which later claim-makers like Bolkestein could easily plant their ideas. Shortly after the protest marches in March 1989, some journalists started to murmur about culturally-based tensions between newcomers and Dutch natives, especially in the bigger cities. This suggests that the frame shift towards a neo-realist discourse was already lurking around the corner in 1989, waiting for the right moment to surface. *Elsevier* even explicitly linked the start of a new discourse which would eradicate all alleged taboos surrounding the debate on the role of a foreigner's social-cultural background to the *Satanic Verses controversy*. The magazine wrote: "People have had enough. For fifteen years they have been patient. Now they say: we have done enough. The *Rushdie affair* has made a lot of mischief."¹⁷³

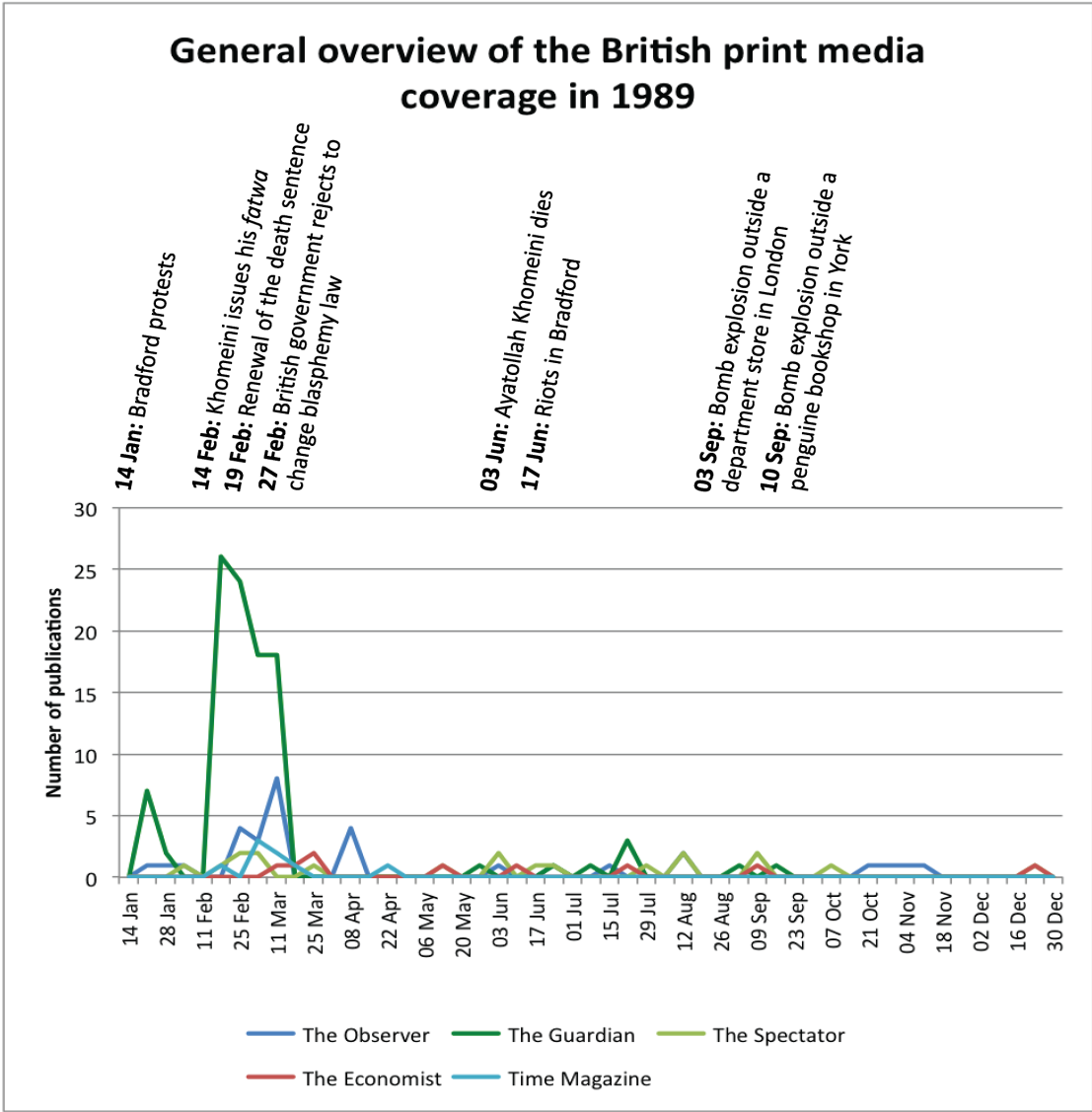
¹⁷³ 'Een loper op de trap – Het knagende onbehagen in de oude volkswijken', *Elsevier*, 23-9-1989, 30.

To conclude, *the Rushdie affair* allowed existing fears and anti-immigrant or anti-Muslim sentiments to become public. The Dutch Muslim reaction to the publication of the novel gave neo-realist claim-makers a concrete cause to address problems and to raise doubts about the suitability of the multicultural approach for facilitating integration. In addition, it increased the receptiveness for a more sour note in the debate on immigrant integration in the Dutch society at large. Growing fears and scepticism towards Muslims among Dutch natives reduced the likelihood for integration-sceptical claim-makers to be called a racist.

2.3 The British public debate on immigrant integration

Similar to the second part of this chapter which captured the development of the Dutch debate, this third part starts with a visual overview on the British media coverage of the *Rushdie affair* and immigrant integration. The graph below highlights the magnitude of media interest at certain points in time, and in relation to a set of important events influencing the development of the debate. Again I would like to remind the reader that the *Guardian* is a daily newspaper, while the *Observer* and the three political magazines are published once a week. This must be taken into account when comparing the media discourses with each other. The graph shows that the *Guardian* covered the Bradford book-burnings, while the *Observer* and all British weekly magazines did not. It also shows that the overall media interest quickly accelerated with the Ayatollah’s death order. The broad media interest slowly ebbed away again between 25 March and 8 April. Neither the Bradford riots in June nor the series of bomb-attacks in September could generate a large media debate again.

Graph 2: General overview of the British print-media coverage in 1989



The integration paradigm in the British public debate between 14 January 1989 and 11 March 1989

My discourse and content analysis is preceded and supported by two tables providing a quantitative overview of the British short-term and long-term framing of immigrant integration in 1989. They enhance the identification of prominent frame choices and of the dominant British attitude towards their Muslim immigrant population. The inclusion of one table for each time period further serves the discovery of differences between the short-term and long-term reactions and allow me to say something about the development of the public debate throughout the entire year 1989.

Table 6: Framing of immigrant integration in the British debate between 14 January and 11 March in 1989

	<i>The Guardian</i> (%) (N=24)	<i>The Observer</i> (%) (N=10)	<i>The Spectator</i> (%) (N=5)	<i>Time Magazine</i> (%) (N=5)	<i>The Economist</i> (%) (N=4)
Assimilationism/ strict boundaries	0	10	0	20	0
Criticism towards multiculturalism	4	0	0	0	0
Multiculturalism/ blurred boundaries	42	50	80	80	100
Improved multiculturalism	29	40	20	0	0
Defence of Liberalism	25	0	0	0	0

My search for articles discussing the topic of immigrant integration in the context of the *Rushdie affair* between 14 January and 11 March 1989 resulted in 34 newspaper and 14 magazine articles. My content analysis revealed that claim-makers typically supported multiculturalism as a policy approach. The existing approach, mark you – the British form of multiculturalism with its hierarchical order in case of value contradictions - was promoted by half of the *Observer* articles. An additional 40 percent of the *Observer* articles captured demands for an improved version of multiculturalism; one that would grant true tolerance, cultural equality and respect. This makes a total of 90 percent supporting the culture-tolerant integration paradigm. The percentage of *Guardian* articles either in favour of existing policies or in favour of a more emancipated and tolerant version of multiculturalism amounted to 71 percent. 80 percent of the *Time* and the *Spectator* articles and even 100 percent of all articles found in the *Economist* framed the debate in multicultural terms and supported existing minorities policies. Last, but not least, 20 percent of the *Spectator* articles demanded amendments to strengthen the multicultural approach. No more than two articles came up with a more hostile and boundary-drawing discourse towards the British Muslim community; one was found in the *Observer*, and one in the *Time*. What is also striking is that no single article in any of the three British weeklies responded

directly to the Bradford book-burnings. The magazine discourses started on 4 February in the *Spectator*, on 11 February in the *Economist* and only on 17 February 1989 in the *Time*.

In the media I could find clear statements on what Britain expected from its Muslim population. On 21 February, the *Guardian* journalist Hugo Young published for example an extensive commentary on the status of other races in British society. He alluded to the British standards which would reflect part of Britain's conscious policy of absorption without duress and in the following stressed the necessity for the obedience of law by every native and immigrant member of the community. Law would be, together with the principle of mutual tolerance, the precondition of life amid British cultural diversity. Even though Young acknowledged that there was still a lot of informal discrimination, especially towards Asians, and that ethnic minorities and their problems received markedly little attention by the present government, he pointed out that this could never justify any offence to the Western political sensibilities that would protect all British residents.¹⁷⁴ Similar claims could be found in the *Spectator* issue from 18 February 1989. Like Hugo Young, the unknown *Spectator* journalist admitted that the British majority society had contributed to the segregation and radicalization of their Muslim community but likewise did not accept that as a legitimate excuse for their protests. He argued that the British Muslim community had "the right to the protection of the law, but not to special protection. [...] The price of living in a tolerant society is that the laws of that society must sometimes take precedence over the customs of a particular group within in."¹⁷⁵ Prior to these claims, the author had remarked the conflict potential that would result from the fact that Britain's Muslim community led an isolated life in a cold and often hostile alien environment with values they found hard to understand. It is argued that many Muslims would lean in their bewilderment to "one school of Islamic thought – fundamentalism, by far the predominant school amongst Muslims in Britain – which seems to provide answers to all questions. [...] There is [...] a wide scope – which may be exploited one day- for a conflict between the laws of the state and Islamic religious law."¹⁷⁶

Likewise, the British government warned Muslims to respect British laws and customs. They manoeuvred carefully. On the one hand, they felt urged to clarify what they expected from the Muslim community in order to prevent the much feared escalation of conflict. On the other hand, they did not want to cause offence with unreasonably harsh warnings to a community that has yet always abided the law. A speech by the Home Secretary Douglas Hurd demonstrates how the government sought to restore peace. The politician started with the compassionate words that it was not "easy for ethnic minorities to adjust [...] to a way of life very different from the one which they have left behind"¹⁷⁷ and then carefully stressed that a fluent command of English, respect for the rule of law, freedom of speech and expression and a toleration of different opinions were crucial in a multi-ethnic society. At

¹⁷⁴ 'Terrorising the guardians of liberty', *The Guardian*, 21-2-1989, 19.

¹⁷⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁷⁶ 'Satanic Sentence', *The Spectator*, 18-2-1989, 5.

¹⁷⁷ 'Hurd preaches non violence to Muslims', *The Guardian*, 25-2-1989, 2.

all times, Hurd tried to convince Muslims that it would be in their own interest to fulfil the government expectations by emphasizing that no minority could thrive if it tried to isolate itself from the mainstream British life. His speech ended with the conciliatory statement of hope that “the leaders of Britain’s Muslim community will share this view, given the tradition of mercy and forgiveness, enshrined in Muslim belief and practice.”¹⁷⁸

Illustration 12: Margaret Thatcher and Douglas Hurd



Here we see a picture of the British prime minister Margaret Thatcher and her Home Secretary Douglas Hurd who, in the wake of the *Rushdie affair*, advocated policies of conservative pluralism and envisioned to make Muslims good British patriots but at the same time sought to mediate the conflict with words of compassion in order to not inflame race-relations. (Sources: ‘No Such Thing as Society: a good time to ask what Margaret Thatcher really meant’, *The Telegraph*, 27-9-2010, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/columnists/charlesmoore/8027552/No-Such-Thing-as-Society-a-good-time-to-ask-what-Margaret-Thatcher-really-meant.html>, (23-4-1989), and ‘Rt. Hon. Douglas Hurd’, *BBC Radio 4 - Desert Island Discs*, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/features/desert-island-discs/castaway/d69d5508> (23-4-1989)).

Just like the government, Salman Rushdie emphasized in his statement in the *Observer* his full respect for the religious feelings of all people while calling for the true and unrestrained commitment to the principle of freedom of thought and expression within the British territory. The controversial author further warned that the battle lines had spread from India to Britain and made clear that he expected Britain to take a clear stance against fundamentalism and in favour of liberal values and freedoms, arguing that “the giving of offence cannot be a basis for censorship, or freedom of expression would perish instantly.”¹⁷⁹

In the British weeklies, I found numerous articles which distinguished between Islamic fundamentalism and the moderate Islam and which asked from the reader to not merely talk down the Islam to a hostile, aggressive and dangerous religion. The *Economist* presented a powerful Islam that lived in the hearts of one billion Muslims and underlined that the direction and implications of its religious impact would solely depend on how an individual chooses to practice his faith. Like all living religions the Islam would not be overall good or bad. It shaped Muslims’ “aspirations, colours their discontents, gives simple people the courage to throw off tyrannies, and sometimes puts new tyrannies in place of old.”¹⁸⁰ While the moderate majority should be left in peace, radicals had to be told by everybody in defence of western values, especially the British government, that terrorism

¹⁷⁸ ‘Hurd preaches non violence to Muslims’, *The Guardian*, 25-2-1989, 2.

¹⁷⁹ ‘Choice between light and dark’, *The Observer*, 22-01-1989, 11.

¹⁸⁰ ‘Still Islam, not Waslam’, *The Economist*, 11-2-1989, 15-16.

would never allow for compromise.¹⁸¹ *Time* journalist Smith shared such a viewpoint. He wrote: “Granted there is a need in the West for greater sensitivity to Islamic concerns, so also is there a need to deny trespass to intruding zealots [...] determined to inflict intellectual and sometimes physical terrorism on the rest of the world.”¹⁸²

In the *Economist* issue from 25 February 1989, I found a unique interpretation of the Muslim campaigns. One author read the controversy as a sign that the “Islam has begun the long tradition to seeing itself in context, to being willing to be disagreed with – to open mindedness.”¹⁸³ On the one hand, the unknown author warned that the Islam was still young and indignant enough “for that transition to be interrupted every so often by a call for a return to the old purities”¹⁸⁴ but on the other hand, he stressed that there was reason to be confident that the Islam would eventually find its way towards liberalism and secularism. According to the article, the Islam was just on the edge to see that Western political and cultural values would not tyrannize and “destroy religion, so long as it is a religion that prefers to persuade.”¹⁸⁵

What turned out to be a crucial factor in the outplay of the affair and its impact on the public debate about immigrant integration was that British Muslims massively engaged in the debate themselves. My findings display that Muslims frequently raised their voice as mediators and cultural brokers not only in the print-media but also in inter-faith dialogues, meetings with government officials or on British television.

Illustration 13: Muslim woman with a British flag



The picture presents a young Muslim woman with a headscarf and a Union Jack. This scene visualizes the British Muslims’ tendency to preserve their Muslim tradition while trying to embrace the British culture with its liberal freedoms. They want to integrate into the British society. (Source: ‘British Muslims after 7/7’, *The Guardian*, 6-7-2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/jul/06/british-muslims-disenfranchised-july-bombings> (23-7-1989)).

Numerous Muslim leaders immediately reacted on the announced death sentence. *Time* held that many Islamic clerics were offended by Khomeini’s pronouncement, regarding it as vengeful and contrary to

¹⁸¹ ‘The author and the ayatollah’, *The Economist*, 18-2-1989, 14.

¹⁸² ‘Hunted by An Angry Faith’, *Time International*, 27-2-1989, 6-11.

¹⁸³ ‘If Rushdie is killed’, *The Economist*, 25-2-1989, 14.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibidem*.

Islamic teachings of mercy.¹⁸⁶ The Secretary of the Bradford City Council for Mosques, Mr Quddus, said that he would fully support the Ayatollah's statement but in the following added that "in this country, as good Muslims, we do not want to take the law in our hands; we want to be good citizens."¹⁸⁷ A *Guardian* article informed that: "MODERATE Muslims leaders who claim to reflect the majority view of the UK's 1.5 million community, yesterday spoke out against Ayatollah Khomeini's repeated call for the assassination of Salman Rushdie."¹⁸⁸ Finally, the president and the vice-president of the Merseyside community appealed to their Muslim brothers and sisters to "keep calm in these difficult days and exercise self-restraint and discipline."¹⁸⁹ The *Observer* introduced Edward Said who wished to see mutual approximation and the mixture of cultures on condition that the fundamental rights or freedoms remained untouched. The Palestinian-American literary theorist reminded the reader that the contemporary world consisted largely of hybrids and immigrants so that there was "no pure, unsullied, unmixed essence to which some of us can return, whether that essence is pure Islam, pure Christianity, pure Judaism or Easternism, Americanism, Westernism."¹⁹⁰ According to Said, the controversy had proven that most British citizens were still unprepared to deal with such complicated mixtures. The task would be to stir Islamic narratives into a stream of heterogeneous narratives whereby fellows from the Muslim world would need to add that they "cannot accept the notion that democratic freedoms should be abrogated to protect Islam [since] no world culture or religion is really about such violence, or such curtailment of fundamental rights."¹⁹¹ The numerous placatory and violence-opposing statements by Muslim claim-makers had a calming effect. They demonstrated the British majority population that they would not have to fear an escalation of conflict in the near future. At the same time, Muslim claim-makers clarified that they would not stop protesting before they had achieved their goals. In their campaigns, Muslims repeatedly stressed that they felt treated unequally. Sher Azam, president of the Bradford City Council for Mosques complained: "We have a petition signed by thousands of people, yet we have not received a single positive response. 'Why is it that the law in this country gives protection to Christianity but not to Islam? Is that justice?'"¹⁹² Khan Yasamee added that "Salman Rushdie has deepened the impression in the Muslim world that anti-Islamic bigotry of the Middle Ages lies just below the skin in certain but powerful groups, with vested interests, in modern and enlightened Europe."¹⁹³

¹⁸⁶ 'Hunted by An Angry Faith', *Time International*, 27-2-1989, 6-11.

¹⁸⁷ 'Death threat wins support', *The Guardian*, 15-2-1989, 3.

¹⁸⁸ 'Muslim leaders shun Rushdie death call', *The Guardian*, 21-2-1989, 4.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹⁰ 'Rushdie and the whale', *The Observer*, 26-2-1989, 14.

¹⁹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹² 'War of the word', *The Observer*, 19-2-1989, 15.

¹⁹³ 'Freedom to give offence', *The Observer*, 26-2-1989, 1.

Illustration 14: Sher Azam and Edward Said



Sher Azam, president of the Bradford City Council (left picture), and the Palestinian-American literary theorist Edward Said (right picture) are only two of the many moderate Muslim claim-makers who got involved in the debate on Muslims and British race-relations. In the course of the *Rushdie affair*, they expected British Muslims to be good citizens but to fight with democratic means against their discrimination and increasing racial attacks. From the British society the Muslim authorities demanded more respect and tolerance and that Muslims would be granted true equality. (Source: ‘Rediscovering Islam’, *BBC news*, 22-4-1989, http://www.bbc.co.uk/bradford/lifestyle/faith/personal_index.shtml (23-4-2012), and ‘Schock für alle Ewigkeit’, *Gesellschaft Qantara*, <http://de.qantara.de/Schock-fuer-alle-Ewigkeit/4067c143/index.html> (2-5-2012)).

The overall impression that I got from my newspaper observation of British Muslims was that they were truly angry, insulted and upset but not ‘untempered’ or aggressive. This might explain why so many native claim-makers quickly expressed feelings of compassion for Muslims and consequently began to act in their defence. The strongest calls for more equality and an enhanced form of multiculturalism came from Labour politicians and from representatives of other religions. The Jewish *Guardian* journalist Melanie Phillips named British multiculturalism an illusion. She argued that minority cultures were under permanent threat by the majority culture because plurality and the desire for separateness had never been truly granted to them. Other supporters of Britain’s Muslim community complained that ethnic minorities were not protected against discrimination and racism or that the British understanding of multiculturalism ranked the British mainstream culture superior to minority cultures.¹⁹⁴

The dominant multiculturalism-friendly and balanced media discourse, in which Muslims were urged to respect the boundaries of British law but for the rest mostly praised for their exemplary democratic behaviour, found three exceptions. In his critical comment in the *Guardian* from 17 February 1989, the journalist W.L. Webb interpreted the *Rushdie affair* as a confrontation between existential Christian modernism and Islamic fundamentalism; between a community “which knows the price of everything and the value of nothing [...] [and the] passionate intensity of people who do believe no price too high to pay for obedience to the will of Allah as interpreted by his Imam.”¹⁹⁵ In sequel, he disqualified multiculturalism as an effective approach to manage cultural diversity. The British form of multiculturalism would allow immigrants to establish a “precarious citizenship, while surrendering as little as possible of their own religion and culture.”¹⁹⁶ This would only guarantee further confrontations in the future. The key problem was that “we [the British] have a rough idea of coexistence of course, whose rules are followed when more dangerous games can’t be got away with,

¹⁹⁴ ‘Beyond the threat’, *The Guardian*, 25-2-1989, 22.

¹⁹⁵ ‘The Imam and the Scribe’, *The Guardian*, 17-2-1989, 21.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibidem*.

but it's tended to depend fairly heavily on other political constructs like the Berlin Wall. No one quite knows how it works when the protagonists, close neighbours in fact, turn to look at each other with a wild surprise and discover their dismaying proximity and incompatibility."¹⁹⁷ The second critical text got published in the *Observer*. In his letter to the editor, the Religious Education teacher Mr Knowles explained that British teachers had up to the present day ignored many developments in modern Islam out of respect for it as a 'religion'. The reaction of Islam to *The Satanic Verses* had however given him food for thought. It would probably be time to reassess the presentation of Islam in RE classes. Children should learn the truth, namely that it was in the name of Islam that the Ayatollah had organized the murders not just of thousands of his political opponents but of members of other faiths or that other Muslims had attempted to impose Sharia law on non-Islamic people.¹⁹⁸ The last multiculturalism-critical article stemmed from the *Spectator* journalist Richard West. On 4 March he wrote that the newspaper photograph of a Muslim burning Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* "instantly took on an epoch-making significance."¹⁹⁹ According to West, the picture illustrated "the end of the Sixties era, what used to be called the Permissive Society, the liberal, free-thinking sexually tolerant, multi-racial ethos preached to us over the years by the *Guardian* and the *Observer*, the Church of England bishops, the Arts Council, and most of our authors, notably Salman Rushdie."²⁰⁰ In the following, he directed the angle to Bradford where races were just as separate as they had been in the Fifties, and where Pakistanis would not master the English language and stick to their own kind. Interestingly, West refrained from blaming the immigrants and from evoking the impression that Muslims were either incapable or simply unwilling to integrate into British society. Instead he defended Asian immigrants and held British politicians accountable for integration problems. The British government would have first welcomed all the immigrants, despite of the warning that Asians "would prove the least adaptable, bringing with them political and religious differences", and then "made Britain an unacceptable home to them with their liberal revolution in the 1960s."²⁰¹ In sum, Richard West portrayed an England that had lost its values and needed to recover its identity. Immigrants would only know into what to integrate and how when the receiving society had determined its identity. In other words, he called for a new debate on 'Britishness'; one that fits the changing ethnic composition of British society.

My analysis showed that the British debate on immigrant integration was guided largely by a debate on the "idea of 'freedom' – 'to choose one's faith, to choose one's political allegiance, to speak freely, to meet, argue demonstrate and to play a part in shaping events."²⁰² Shortly after the first book-burnings in Bradford, a number of British intellectuals and politicians came to realize shortcomings in

¹⁹⁷ 'The Imam and the Scribe', *The Guardian*, 17-2-1989, 21.

¹⁹⁸ 'Teachers should take Islam at face value', *The Observer*, 2-4-1989, 34.

¹⁹⁹ 'The jewel in the crown of India – Richard West visits the city where Rushdie's book was first burnt', *The Spectator*, 4-3-1989, 20.

²⁰⁰ 'The jewel in the crown of India', *The Spectator*, 20.

²⁰¹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰² Assad, 'Multiculturalism and British Identity', 465.

the British multicultural approach to immigrant integration and quickly initiated a new debate on liberalism, which split the British society into two camps. As strong supporters of the Muslim case, British Labour and religious institutions wanted to see the blasphemy law either extended to other faiths²⁰³⁺²⁰⁴ or completely repealed.²⁰⁵ Salman Rushdie, like many other authors, publishing houses and the British government rendered an homage to liberalism and repeatedly announced that expanding the blasphemy law to embrace Islam would not be the right way to tackle the affair.²⁰⁶ The *Observer* columnist Ian Aitken and his colleague from the *Guardian* W.L Webb were among the strongest defenders of the freedom of speech and the harshest critics of the British Labour party. Aitken commented that the *Satanic Verses affair* had caused the left to take liberties away and called the suggestion by the Labour politician Max Madden to expand the laws of blasphemy outrageous. Webb spoke of confused left-thinking people.²⁰⁷

The integration paradigm in the British public debate between 12 March 1989 and 31 December 1989

Table 7: Framing of immigrant integration in the British debate between 12 March and 31 December 1989

	<i>The Guardian</i> (%) (N=8)	<i>The Observer</i> (%) (N=6)	<i>The Spectator</i> (%) (N=6)	<i>Time Magazine</i> (%) (N=2)	<i>The Economist</i> (%) (N=5)
Assimilationism/ strict boundaries	12.5	17	17	0	20
Criticism towards multiculturalism	0	0	0	0	0
Multiculturalism/ blurred boundaries	25	33	50	100	60
Improved multiculturalism	50	33	17	0	0
‘Britishness’	12.5	17	17	0	20

My search for articles that related to topics about immigrant integration and the *Rushdie affair* resulted in no more than 14 newspaper and another 13 magazine articles for the time period between 13 March and 31 December 1989. The overall coverage in the British print-media was thus meagre.

Similar to the months January till March, the majority of articles framed immigrant integration in multiculturalist terms, meaning that an immigrant was welcomed to preserve his home culture as long

²⁰³ ‘Judgement on Salman’, *The Guardian*, 18-1-1989, 23.

²⁰⁴ ‘Left takes liberties with Satanic Verses’, *The Guardian*, 20-1-1989, 6.

²⁰⁵ ‘Confusion clouds the bitter bigotry’, *The Guardian*, 25-1-1989, 2.

²⁰⁶ ‘Minister refuses Muslim redress against Rushdie’, *The Guardian*, 28-2-1989, 2.

²⁰⁷ ‘Left takes liberties with Satanic Verses’, *The Guardian*, 20-1-1989, 6.

as values would not conflict with core British values. As table 7 shows 25 percent of all claims in the *Guardian* and 33 percent of all claims in the *Observer* articles supported the British form of multiculturalism to manage cultural diversity. The percentage was found to be even higher in the weekly magazines. 50 percent of all *Spectator* articles, 60 percent of all *Economist* articles and all *Time* articles were written in support of the existing policies. In addition, half of all *Guardian* articles, 33 percent of the *Observer* articles and 17 percent of the *Spectator* articles included calls for a strengthened multicultural approach. Only four out of the 27 articles entailed immigration or multiculturalism-sceptical statements. A caveat: It proved difficult to assign especially *Spectator* and *Time* articles to my specific categories because they often lacked a vision for problem solutions. It frequently remained unclear whether the claim-makers preferred amendments to existing practices over the implementation of a completely new, stricter integration approach. Since claim-makers in both magazines carefully distinguished between radical and moderate Muslims I assigned the articles in cases of doubt to the multicultural category on the basis of their balanced and mediating style.

The first larger mediating *Spectator* article after 11 March disproved the common prejudice that immigrant integration had caused the decay of English cities. For the second time Richard West reported from a British city and came up for the British Muslims without denying that integration problems would exist in the UK. This time, the *Spectator* journalist called from Birmingham, the city with the biggest Muslim community in Britain. Birmingham had once been the pride of the British Empire and in the 1950s transformed into a “horrible, so violent [city] with people using foul language and homosexuals flaunting themselves.”²⁰⁸ From the article the reader learned that the decline of Birmingham started concurrently to the arrival of immigrants from all over the former Empire which is why people attempted to link the two processes as cause and effect. With reference to the cities of Liverpool and Glasgow Richard West managed to adjust such false assumptions: “The worst of all our cities, Liverpool, has fewer immigrants. Glasgow, which until recently was another disaster area has only a tiny proportion of Commonwealth immigrants. [...] The troubles of Birmingham are due not to its mixed community but to the equality of its local government.”²⁰⁹ Hence, the article countered common misperceptions and defended British resident aliens instead of constructing an ‘immigrant threat’.

On 2 April *Observer* columnist Michael Ignatieff laughed about his colleagues who had written that at last things were getting back to normal. Nothing would be back to normal yet. With the question in mind how ethnic relations in multi-cultural Britain could be improved, Ignatieff promoted toleration and introduced ‘freedom’ as a contestable concept. He explained: “How a free society marks the limits of freedom will change with time. [...] [freedom] is not sacred. To live in a liberal society is

²⁰⁸ ‘Third-Rate rule in the second city – Birmingham is suffering the effects of another construction boom’, *The Spectator*, 25-3-1989, 20.

²⁰⁹ *Ibidem*.

to fight over the meaning of freedom constantly, as we have been doing over the *Rushdie affair*.²¹⁰ From the author's point of view, force, as a means to change the opinion of human beings, should be replaced by persuasion and the two rival camps should abandon their conviction that god or respectively reason would give them a monopoly of truth.²¹¹ Altogether, Michael Ignatieff would like to see the multi-ethnic character of the British society reflected in the implementation and interpretation of fundamental freedoms in Britain. He campaigned for true multiculturalism, one that granted to its resident aliens tolerance, respect and equality. The picture below visually supports Ignatieff's claim that Muslims and British native citizens both embraced the values of a free and open society but simply had a different understanding of the scope and implication of the same freedoms so that they needed to sit down and find a shared meaning of the word 'freedom'.

Illustration 15: 'Muslims to protest against Sharia law'



This photograph shows four British Muslims in London protesting against Sharia law and supporting free speech, democracy and freedom of belief and expression. It is those values over which the British native and the Muslim alien population clashed in the wake of the *Rushdie affair* and which demanded a new definition; one that is be appropriate for a multi-racial British society. (Source: Cosmodaddy, 'Muslims to Protest Against Sharia Law', 5-1-2010, <http://www.cosmodaddy.com/tag/islam-4-uk/> (22-4-2012)).

More pro-multiculturalist claims emerged in the context of the debate on the change of the British blasphemy law. Between April and May I found two proposals for the extension of blasphemy laws to all faiths²¹²⁺²¹³ and one request for the complete abolishment of such laws.²¹⁴

Time only marginally addressed the topic of (Muslim) immigrant integration. Still, it accounted for the most extensive and multifaceted article I could find. The article started out with the claim that the furore over Salman Rushdie and *The Satanic Verses* had strengthened the old Western stereotype that the Islam would be an intolerant and violent religion. Afterwards it highlighted the

²¹⁰ 'Defenders of Rushdie tied up in knots', *The Observer*, 2-4-1989, 13.

²¹¹ 'Defenders of Rushdie tied up in knots', *The Observer*, 2-4-1989, 13.

²¹² 'Protect religion from bullies', *The Observer*, 9-4-1989, 38.

²¹³ 'Clashes erupt at Rushdie protest', *The Observer*, 28-5-1989, 1.

²¹⁴ 'Letters: Teachers should take Islam at face value', *The Observer*, 2-4-1989, 34.

many problems that resulted from the transformation of British society into a multi-faithal, multi-cultural society. The author Emily Mitchell contrasted Europe's Muslims who widely embraced their religion as a "bridge to ancient culture and tradition and [as] a buffer against the excesses of modern civilization"²¹⁵ against a fringe of native Britons who felt attracted by blatant chauvinism and against many old-line Europeans who would feel animosity and discontent on a number of specific race issues.²¹⁶ In a next step, Mitchell demonstrated how innumerable small and big matters rankled as divergent cultures came in contact in a society which would not grant cultural equality to its minority population. She informed that only a few British public schools had changed their lunch menus to dietary laws or set time aside for Muslims to pray to Allah. Unlike Roman Catholics or Jews, Muslims were also denied substantial government support for their own institutions. By contrasting the discriminatory behaviour of the British majority society against the huge effort Muslims had made to improve their own integration and emancipation Mitchell generated compassion for Britain's Muslim community. She wrote: "In the past, isolation, while bolstering the faith, kept the faithful hidden in cultural enclaves. Now, [...] British Muslims have been elected to town councils and are making their voices heard. [...] Three decades ago, the Muslims were Europe's new arrivals, looked on with resentment and suspicion. [...] No longer are Europe's Muslims willing to remain guests who are reluctantly permitted to take only a few steps inside the doorway. [...] Efforts, large and small, are under way to try to address conflicts of belief and practice."²¹⁷ Only towards the end, Emily Mitchell admitted that the *Rushdie affair* widened the gulf that interfaith conferences and seminars had sought to bridge earlier.²¹⁸ All in all, the article brought to the foreground the racial disadvantages that existed in Britain. It uncovers the contradiction of government policies to race relations and shows that the Conservatives had implemented multicultural policies purely for practical reasons and not because they had welcomed ethnic and cultural diversity so much. With her article, Emily Mitchell indirectly criticised the half-hearted and compromised implementation of multiculturalism in Britain and campaigned for true respect, emancipation and tolerance.

²¹⁵ 'All God's Children', *Time International*, 17-4-1989, 50-51.

²¹⁶ 'All God's Children', *Time International*, 17-4-1989, 50-5.

²¹⁷ *Ibidem*..

²¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

Illustration 16: ‘A reader’s guide to Thatcherism’



The cartoon above displays grim and furious left-wing reactions to Margaret Thatcher’s position in the *Rushdie affair*. In the course of the controversy, the Conservatives became accused of being self-serving conspirators who would destroy the best of England and who refused to cleanse Britain of the filth of imperialism and discrimination of the Asian race. (Source: ‘A Reader’s Guide to Thatcherism’, *Standpoint*, January/February 2010, <http://standpointmag.co.uk/node/2515/full> (23-4-2012)).

The prominent pro-Muslim discourse continued with an *Economist* article on the county-council elections of May 1989. In one sentence the reader could find the information that the Conservative candidate Abdul Bhikha managed to increase his vote from 657 to 2,048 with his platform in opposition to Salman Rushdie’s *Satanic Verses*.²¹⁹ Apparently, Muslims chose for democratic actions in the form of party membership and competition in elections to achieve the ban of the novel. His candidacy for the immigration-sceptical Conservatives further suggests that Muslim tried to change party politics and party standpoints from within.

On 22 May 1989, a few weeks after the *Satanic Verses* agitation had disappeared from the front pages, the *Guardian* gave Tariq Modood, the Hon. Research Fellow at University College, Swansea, the opportunity to reflect on the development of the *Rushdie affair* in Great Britain. Modood used this chance to create compassion for Britain’s Muslims and their campaigns and to improve the position of ethnic minorities in British society. He invited the reader to interpret Muslim actions as a response to the British brand of assimilationalism, accompanied by social exclusion and racial discrimination. The British philosophy of race relations, Modood argued, would only know two races, the white and the black race. Hereby, the black race was portrayed as the “potentially revolutionary underclass politically attracted to all the radical and libertarian tendencies in white society.”²²⁰ According to the Research Fellow, this feature of British historical institutionalism had forced Muslims to do something shocking in order to gain the desired media space. To prove his argument, he pointed at the human being’s tendency to hold on most fiercely to his historical identity when it comes under attack. To encourage integration, Britain would need to allow their immigrants to have “lines of continuity and space to create centres of their own excellence.”²²¹ Only people who felt secure in their individual identities and ability to control the nature and pace of change would eventually adapt with confidence and become truly bi-cultural.

²¹⁹ ‘Local elections – Counting it up’, *The Economist*, 13-5-1989, 16-17.

²²⁰ ‘Alabama Britain’, *The Guardian*, 22-5-1989, 16.

²²¹ *Ibidem*.

Expectedly, not all claim-makers in the British media discourse took such a strong stance in defence of Muslim actions and in favour of multicultural policies. In her letter to the *Spectator* Mrs Fitzgerald from London wrote for instance that Christianity, as opposed to Islamic culture, “allows for an essential separation between the secular and the religious which the latter, being an all-embracing prescription for everyday life, does not.”²²² The weakness of Islam as a religion would lie in its inadaptability to change. Fitzgerald praised the traditional ties and disciplines of Asian family life but could not accept the preservation of minority cultures when the outcome would lead to an event like the *Rushdie affair*. She argued: “The personal liberty and freedom of thought and expression, essentially Christian-inspired values, are worth paying a high price for (even, regrettably, to the extent of preserving Salman Rushdie’s life) in the face of the tyrannous alternative, which tends to prevail in all societies dominated by Islam.”²²³ One week later, the *Spectator* journalist Paul Johnson held that the *Rushdie affair* had a shattering effect on previously peaceful race-relations for it had created a more racial attitude than any other single publication in British history. Still, Johnson did not join boundary-drawing tendencies. Instead he asked all parties involved to compromise over Rushdie, so that the author could “come out of hiding, and sensible people can sit down and decide how we can avoid such a demeaning and costly row in future.”²²⁴

Similar to the Dutch coverage, the number of articles reporting of violent outbursts and confrontations within the Muslim community and between British Muslims and members of the white majority society increased over time. On 17 June 1989, the *Observer* and the *Economist* talked about 200 teenagers (100 according to the *Economist*)²²⁵ in Bradford who had broken away from an otherwise peaceful demonstration against author Salman Rushdie, shouting ‘Rushdie must die’.²²⁶ According to the *Observer*, the Asian youngsters began smashing shop windows and vehicles in the city centre, threw bottles and stones at police officers and occasionally made forays against whites before they could be arrested by the police. Later the young Asian offenders “blamed the trouble on taunting by crop-headed white youths.”²²⁷ According to the police, the incident had nothing to do with the demonstration but was a result of ‘heat and the young element of letting off steam’.²²⁸ Subsequent articles however demonstrate that race-relations in Bradford deteriorated further after this incident. According to the Church of England “the sight of ‘brown lager louts’ in Bradford, who peeled off from a peaceful demonstration in June to run amok among shoppers, brought howls of white rage in the letters pages of the Bradford Telegraph and Argus.”²²⁹

A *Guardian* article from 20 June 1989 made clear that Muslim protests kept continuing after six months and that the whole debate had hardly changed over time. Home Office Minister Patten still

²²² ‘Western quality’, *The Spectator*, 3-6-1989, 24.

²²³ ‘Western quality’, *The Spectator*, 3-6-1989, 24.

²²⁴ ‘When the cursing had to stop’, *The Spectator*, 19.

²²⁵ ‘Britain- Setting themselves apart’, *The Economist*, 22-7-1989, 27-28.

²²⁶ ‘Rioting erupts at Bradford Rushdie demo’, *The Observer*, 18-6-1989, 2.

²²⁷ *Ibidem*.

²²⁸ *Ibidem*.

²²⁹ ‘Faith, the cross and the crescent’, *The Observer*, 6-8-1989, 6.

granted the Muslim community every right to protest but no right to abuse such freedom whereas Labour kept stressing that one could not impart blame on all Muslims. Sher Azam from the Bradford Council of Mosques repeatedly pointed at the peaceful nature of Muslim campaigns. While official claim-makers did not move from their initial positions there is evidence that the British population at large had become more hostile and anxious towards Muslim fellow residents over time. People in non-Muslim communities were said to be more bewildered and angered than they had been in the beginning of the affair.²³⁰

On 5 July 1989 the Justice and Home Affairs Editor of the *Guardian*, John Carvel, announced that the British government had finalized to reject a change of the blasphemy law. The attached government statement is interesting. Like many times before, Patten assured that the government could understand how insulting Rushdie's novel had been to a deeply-held faith. For the first time however, the minister added that the British society would leave no room for separation or segregation. While Muslims were not expected to lay aside their traditions, their heritage, their faith; they were very well "expected to put down new roots, deep roots in a new community and that would not mean severing the old."²³¹ It seems as if government actors were about to lose their patience and inclined to impose stricter requirements with assimilationist elements on Britain's Muslim community.

In the *Guardian* issue from 22 July I found the first and only human-interest story for the British media coverage. It told the success story of the Labour party member Mohammed Ajeeb who was believed to have a real chance to become the first Muslim MP in Britain. The article stated that Ajeeb had been the Lord Mayor of Bradford and the first Asian mayor in the community history. Discrimination had once driven him into the active engagement in community work and since then he encouraged other Muslim community members to "develop a commitment, take an interest, and play their part in local life."²³² It was clear that Mohammed Ajeeb embraced multiculturalism from his earlier initiatives. As the mayor of Bradford he had gained attention by condemning the headmaster's scorn for multicultural education.

²³⁰ 'Bishop seeks end to Satanic demos', *The Guardian*, 20-6-1989, 3.

²³¹ 'Blasphemy change rejected', *The Guardian*, 5-7-1989, 4.

²³² 'Commons hopeful who exploded myth', *The Guardian*, 22-7-1989, 4.

Illustration 17: Mohammed Ajeeb



Here we see the former Muslim mayor of Bradford, Mohammed Ajeeb, who was thought to have a good chance to become the first Muslim MP in Britain. While he eventually never got elected into British Parliament, he was still awarded the Order of the Empire CBE in 2001 for his bridge-building engagement. (Source: 'Bradford Trouble was predictable', *BBC news*, 18-2-2003, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/1430809.stm (22-4-2012)).

The *Guardian's* positive and warm portrayal of Mohammed Ajeeb strengthened the impression that the majority of British Muslims were moderate and politically and socially committed residents who tried hard to reduce the gap between the British majority society and the Muslim minority society. An *Economist* article of the same day underlined this too. It informed that Muslims had gained a new assertiveness that rampaged through stereotypes and exposed contradictions. Since the *Rushdie affair* Muslims were no longer willing to accept discrimination and the fact that the 'ignorant British police' never reacted on racial attacks, which were said to have doubled in 1989. Like so many other articles that I found in the British media discourse, the *Economist* article victimized the British Muslim community and created antagonistic feelings for the seemingly intolerant, discriminatory and racist British majority society.

By the end of July, in the context of loose talks about Muslim votes threatening 60 or more Labour seats, the *Guardian* discussed Islamic policies and ambitions in the *Rushdie affair*. Building up on the three immigrant integration models that were introduced in the theoretical chapter, the requirements of Thatcher's Conservative government marched upon the characteristics of the assimilationist model, while Labour requirements came close to the theoretical approach of multiculturalism. The Conservatives appeared from the newspaper articles as brisk defenders of traditional British race relation policies. They expected immigrants to integrate into and actively participated in the British mainstream culture by showing respect for "the framework of laws, freedom, rights and obligations under which we [the British] live', a good grasp of English, [...] a sound and detailed grasp of British history and Britain's part in the world history."²³³ Labour on the other hand amended their party platform and became a strong advocator of egalitarian multiculturalism. The party revised for instance its historical distaste for aided Church of England schools and started to back up state-funded Jewish and Muslim schools. Tory, like Labour, linked to the multicultural approach. Their traditional value-oriented agenda which built upon "the importance

²³³ 'Muslim row 'hits 10 Labour seats', *The Guardian*, 22-7-1989, 4.

of their faith, their families and high standards of behaviour²³⁴ made the Tories a natural defender of value plurality and of the Muslim case.

From July onwards the topic of violence became a pressing issue again. The *Observer* informed about a series of fire-bomb attacks against British bookshops selling *The Satanic Verses*.²³⁵ One bomb exploded on 3 September outside the Liberty's department store in London where until recently there had been a Penguin bookshop. A passer-by was injured. Another bomb explosion took place outside a Penguin bookshop in York while similar devices defused on the same night in Guildford, Nottingham and Peterborough.²³⁶ The repeated reports on bomb attacks and violence illustrate that the initially peaceful Muslim campaigns had approximated a more violent shape over time. One might expect that the long duration of protests and its ever more violent character had been met with a stronger boundary-drawing or at least sentencing media discourse. But this is not what happened. The numerous references to Muslim aggression were not attached to critical comments at all, neither by newspaper journalists nor in the letters to the editor.

The British coverage of the topic on immigrant integration in relation to the *Rushdie affair* ended with an *Economist* article from 23 December 1989. The authors of the article described a world that was growing smaller. People had become more mobile and dreamt of putting poverty and oppression behind by starting a new life in a richer and freer land. As a result, adoptive lands were urged to decide how many and which migrants they wanted to absorb, but also to make up their minds about what to ask from the newcomers once they arrived. According to the authors European immigrant integration in the past had "generally worked well when immigrants wanted to fit in"²³⁷; when they wanted to assimilate. Present-day newcomers however would come from farther afield, and often in large numbers so that they felt little need to adapt to their new land. That this could lead to difficulties, namely when cultures clashed, had been visible in the *Rushdie affair*. Although the authors assumed that "tomorrow's immigrants would be harder to assimilate than yesterday's"²³⁸ they still promoted assimilation as the ultimate goal. At the same time they stressed that they would not expect immigrants "to abandon their religion, or even their headscarves, turbans or yarmulkes [...] [but to] accept as a minimum the laws and values of their adoptive land."²³⁹ In other words, the authors implicitly called for the continuity of the British form of multiculturalism which required the renouncement from traditional values when unequal cultures clashed. Eventually, the authors even strongly welcomed immigration: "Given a chance, immigrants can add new sparkle to old nations; they bring vitality, energy and enterprise. That is why the stronger nations [...] will be those that have successfully adapted to this latest wave of immigrants."²⁴⁰

²³⁴ 'Britain – Setting themselves apart', *The Economist*, 22-7-1989, 27-28.

²³⁵ 'Shop fears grow over Rushdie', *The Observer*, 9-7-1989, 9.

²³⁶ 'Secret date fixed for Rushdie paperback', *The Observer*, 24-9-1989, 1.

²³⁷ 'The stranger at the door', *The Economist*, 23-12-1989, 9-10.

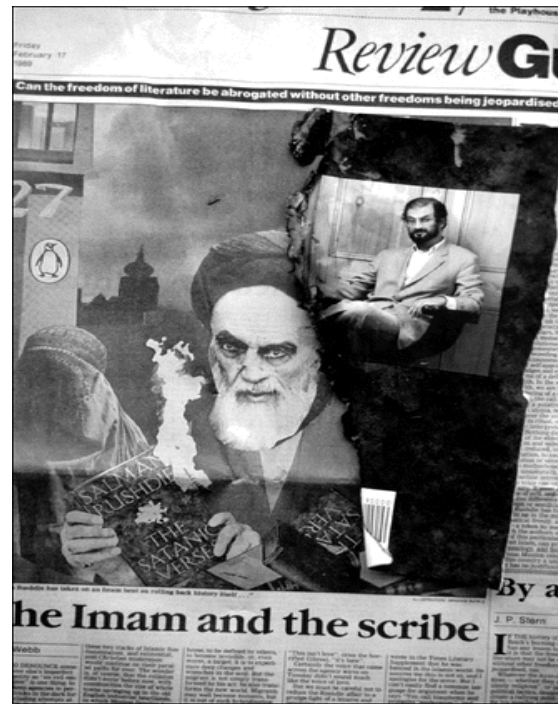
²³⁸ *Ibidem*.

²³⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.

Sub-Conclusion

Illustration 18: Cartoon on the *Rushdie affair* and the scope of the principle of freedom in the British newspaper *The Guardian*



The picture above stems from the *Guardian*. It displays the fury caused by the content of Salman Rushdie's novel in the Muslim world. The illustration shows Khomeini burning the allegedly blasphemous book, a completely veiled Muslim woman, and a mosque in the background. The Muslim figures and building are framed by a picture of Salman Rushdie on the right and the symbol of 'Viking Penguin' on the left. On top of the picture we can read the question: 'Can the freedom of literature be abrogated without other freedoms being jeopardised?' This question is characteristic for the public debate on immigrant integration in the wake of the *Rushdie affair*. After the Muslim book-burnings and continuing campaigns against the novel, the British society started doubting about the correctness of their treatment of ethnic minorities. In the course of the year, the British debate increasingly included calls for the revision of 'Britishness'. The new British identity should take the changing ethnic composition of British society into account. New race relations policies should be governed by the question how a multi-cultural British population could be effectively ruled. (Source: 'Naming the Unnameable', *The Guardian*, 2008, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03064220802542820> (24-4-2012)).

Quantitatively and qualitatively, I found few differences between the British magazines and newspapers. All my sources hardly addressed the topic of immigrant integration and if they did 66 percent of all articles framed the topic in cultural terms, meaning in favour of existing or extended multicultural policies. The meagre coverage in combination with the prominent multicultural framework tell that the *Rushdie affair* did not generate a new public debate on immigrant integration in Britain and eventually a frame shift thereof. The British print-media increasingly reported on Muslims resorting to violence in their campaigns against the publication of the allegedly blasphemous novel. Some articles also spoke of a serious damage done to previously good race relations. Still, I could not observe a framework transition towards the construction of a Muslim threat. While Muslim assaults against symbolic targets like bookshops, were left widely uncommented, I kept finding statements that emphasised the need in Britain for greater sensitivity to Islamic concerns and for a more egalitarian version of the existing multicultural approach to immigrant integration. My findings

revealed that the *Rushdie affair* formed a catalyst for ethnic minorities in Britain to vent their anger about the way the British mainstream society had treated them throughout the years. A relatively big number of British native residents joined the debate and confirmed that British race relations mismatched the ideal of a multicultural society. To show the validity of Muslim complaints they introduced a set of examples illustrating the existing discrepancies between multicultural theory and multicultural practices. Some articles warned that British society had to either change its race relations policies or prepare for violence and disruptions.

While many British citizens ensured that they could understand the grievances of the Muslim community and even expressed feelings of regret and shame for the behaviour of the white majority society towards the Asian minority groups, the governing Conservative party under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher remained silent and refused to admit any failures, short-comings, and contradictions in the implementation of multiculturalist policies. Instead, they endlessly repeated their feeling of distress for Muslim anger and their expectations from Muslims and all other ethnic minorities to integrate and actively participate in the mainstream society. The reluctant government reaction can be explained by the Conservatives' ideological affinity with assimilationist policies and the concept of 'Britishness'. With their campaigns against the novel, British Muslims started to politicize their religious beliefs which threatened the British secular identity. The fact that they based their demands on core liberal values and principles – the freedom of worship, the freedom to protest, the principle of mutual tolerance and respect for each other's worldviews – gave the British government little latitude to decline their demands. Muslims could not be sentenced on the basis of liberal arguments. The government was thus caught in a deadlock position, which barely left room for sentencing statements. Thatcher could not stop the Muslim campaigns without eroding the very nature of British identity, its core liberal values and fundamental principles. Taking that further, Muslim protests unravelled internal contradictions of the British form of multiculturalism and of liberalism; secularism versus the liberal language of equal rights. The *Rushdie affair* thus urged Britain to redefine their British identity with the question in mind how a multi-cultural population could be effectively ruled. At the same time it gave British Muslims the opportunity to show their alliance to the core British culture and to demonstrate what good citizens they were.

The legality of Muslim actions might also explain the strong support for the Muslim case in the British media discourse. Especially in the beginning, there was only a small basis for an anti-Muslim discourse. The basis grew bigger with the series of bomb-attacks against British department stores and bookshops, but as we know, the frame shift failed to appear also then. My research findings fall short in answering why the discourse never became more hostile also after the occurrence of violence. I can only assume that the white majority society was honestly convinced that Muslims would only act that way because they had been discriminated and oppressed by the British majority population for so long. In order to not add fuel to the fire, they then kept being silent, waiting for the controversy to slowly ebb away.

To conclude, the *Rushdie affair*, which started out as Muslim protests against a book, barely damaged the image of Muslims in British society, but harmed the image of the white majority population. The latter was found guilty of racism, oppression and discrimination against in particular Asian immigrants. The established feeling of guilt among the British society became so strong that they did not even revolt against Muslim bomb attacks and other forms of violence that increased from June onwards. Eventually, the *Rushdie affair* evoked a debate about British identity and the proper appreciation of the place of art, religion and ideas in an ever more ethnically diverse society. During the affair Islamic voices addressed domestic issues such as the absence of a law against religious discrimination. Like that Muslims have given religion and ethnic diversity a new prominence in British multicultural policies which precede the British form of conservative pluralism.

3 Conclusion

This thesis tried to answer to what extent and why the *Rushdie affair* led to a frame shift in the public debates on immigrant integration in Great Britain and the Netherlands. My analysis of the British debate brought to the forefront that the controversy had generated an explicit debate on ‘Britishness’ and an implicit debate on immigrants and immigrant integration in Britain. For the Dutch public debate in 1989 my findings displayed in the first place a framework transition towards universalism. The frame shift became especially visible after 10 May 1989 when the WRR published its report on the status quo of the civic and socio-economic integration of Dutch ethnic minorities. I also found some first strong calls for the assimilation of immigrant populations, especially in the weeks when the affair was in full swing. The assimilationist framework could however not yet establish itself on a continuing basis so that the *Rushdie affair* cannot be fixed as the starting point for the frame shift towards neo-realism in the Netherlands. My findings rather suggests that the *Rushdie affair* gave the ramification for the successful framework transition towards neo-realism that followed one year later in 1990.

From my observation of the Dutch and British media discourses I learned that neither the Netherlands nor Great Britain had granted true parity of life chances to its resident aliens in 1989. In both countries discrimination existed in the public and private sector meaning that the multicultural principles of tolerance, emancipation and proportionality had never been implemented entirely. With the *Rushdie affair* ethnic minorities became highly visible, first with their protest marches and campaigns for the ban of *The Satanic Verses*, but soon later with their grievances and integration problems that resulted from discriminatory minority policies (Great Britain) or the insufficient realization of potentially good policies (The Netherlands). In the Netherlands discrimination was found to exist especially in the socio-economic terrain; in the fields of labour, education and housing, whereas in Britain it often played itself out in the private terrain too, with racial attacks and physical aggression against visible minorities.

In Britain the *Rushdie affair* became a mechanism for ethnic minorities to vent their anger about the way British mainstream society and British policies had treated them. Muslims started to raise awareness about the prevailing discrimination of Asian minorities and the partly racist nature of Thatcherism. Consequently, British Muslims came in the focus of guilt by the British property classes. British Muslims further demonstrated that they were not opposed to modernity. Basing their arguments on the modern liberal principles of equality and the right to freedom of worship, they were only opposed to those features that undermined or clashed with core Muslim traditions. British intellectuals seem to have understood that and consequently aligned with the Muslim community. Newspaper articles massively pointed at the existing discrepancies between Britain as a truly multicultural and Britain as a racist and discriminatory society. Only the Conservatives remained silent and refused to discuss their potentially wrong understanding of race issues. All in all, the *Rushdie*

affair generated awareness for the changing ethnic composition of Great Britain and the consequent need to redefine the British identity. Except for the British government British native claim-makers avoided explicit calls for the socio-cultural adaption of immigrants to the British cultural and institutional core, in short assimilation. Instead, Asians were presented and presented themselves as victims of the British majority society and their belief in the superiority of their own stock. Voices for more tolerance and respect, and for the creation of blurred boundaries, which would allow for zones of self-representation and social representation, became louder over time. This corresponded with the multicultural approach to immigrant integration, so as I expected, I cannot confirm a frame shift in the British debate on immigrant integration.

For the Dutch public debate my findings revealed that the *Rushdie affair* activated a discussion about the necessity for (Muslim) immigrants to assimilate to the Dutch majority society for the purpose of national cohesion. The two newspaper columnists Gerrit Komrij (*NRC*) and Jan Blokker (*Volkskrant*), and *Vrij Nederland* journalist Rinus Ferdinandusse came out as the most critical claim-makers. In their columns, they established strict boundaries and called individual Muslims to undergo a conversion process in which they discarded signs of former membership in the immigrant group and would assimilate to the cultural institutional core. A couple of days later however, such claims were met with a chorus of outrage by other journalists, consulted experts or ordinary readers. As a result, explicit calls for assimilation quickly stopped. While the neo-realist discourse could not manifest itself in the long-run, universalist claims slowly started to dominate the debate, especially after 10 May when the WRR called for a more activating approach towards the participation of Dutch immigrants in societal institutions as education and the labour market. My discourse analysis shows that it was not cultural differences but socio-economic shortfalls which were blamed for the appearance of anti-immigrant sentiments and integration failures. At first sight, the *Rushdie affair* and the framework transition towards universalism seem to be two unrelated phenomena. The *Rushdie controversy* pointed at religious differences and a potential clash of cultural norms and values while universalism focuses on socio-economic shortfalls and classifies as a culturally-neutral approach. Still, one might wonder whether the WRR-report had generated the same debate and even a frame shift towards universalism if Dutch Muslims had not burned Rushdie puppets and copies of the novel and if they had not called for Rushdie's death in March 1989. Putting it differently, it could be that the Muslim protest marches had made the Dutch population at large look at what went wrong with immigrant integration in general and Muslim integration in particular. Only then they found a whole set of socio-economic problems which eventually came to be so heavily debated in the course of the year. One could hence argue that the *Rushdie affair* implicitly induced the transition to universalism.

Even though I could not prove a lasting frame shift towards neo-realism in the Dutch public debate in 1989 I still noticed a certain transition into that direction. Some requests for assimilationist policies, next to reports on vandalism against mosques, the election success of Janmaat, and finally references to isolated immigrant communities and xenophobic feelings among Dutch native residents

indicate that anti-immigrant sentiments had grown over time. The key contribution of the *Rushdie affair* was that the controversy made people dare to talk openly about their grievances, fears and anger concerning the presence of resident-aliens in their cities. It erased the taboo to speak frankly about failed integration and existing problems with foreigners. Based on that one can argue that the *Rushdie affair* prepared the fertile soil into which later integration-critics such as Bolkestein, Fortuyn or Scheffer could easily plant their demands for the socio-cultural adaptation of immigrant to Dutch norms and values.

Now that we know how the controversy played itself out in the Netherlands and in Great Britain, and what the impact of the *Rushdie affair* was on the framing of the public debate on immigrant integration one question still remains: *How can the apparently more moderate reaction in Britain be explained?* Four contextual elements seem most suited to explain why the *Rushdie affair* affected two similar western-liberal societies so differently. These are (1) colonial versus guest worker migration, (2) agency versus voice, (3) race relations versus cultural minorities, and finally (4) neo-liberal versus welfare state.

3.1 Colonial versus guest worker migration

In the 1950s labour shortage on mainland Britain was widely met by workers from the ex-colonies India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.²⁴¹ Soon, the first large Muslim communities developed on the British island; the largest in Birmingham with about 100,000, in Bradford with about 80,000, and in East London with about 50,000 Muslims residents. In 1989 there were about 1.5 million Muslims in Britain²⁴², mostly colonial migrants from Pakistan and India, and 50,000 Muslims from Arab nations.²⁴³ Under British rule Pakistan and India had been forced to undergo a strong economic, linguistic, political and cultural transformation in the direction of British culture. Although 'Britishness' presupposed the notion of tolerance, every cultural element of the non-white and inferior culture that could not in some way be accommodated with the superior British culture had to be dismissed by the conquered society. The British imperial rule in times of colonization worked to Britain's advantage when the country absorbed thousands of colonial migrants from their former colonies after the WWII. Thanks to the former management of race relations "the social and cultural difference between migrants from former colonies and natives in the 'motherland'²⁴⁴ were small. This in turn facilitated their integration into the British society and made identification by the native population easier. By the time that *The Satanic Verses* were published in Britain, Muslims had already been widely integrated into the British society.

²⁴¹ Muhammed Anwar, *Race and Politics* (London 1986) 465.

²⁴² 'Radical minority feared the most', *The Guardian*, 16-2-1989, 2.

²⁴³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴⁴ Lucassen and Laarman, 'Immigration, intermarriage', 63.

As subjects of the British state, Muslim colonial migrants had been entitled to participate in politics. For that purpose they had quickly established a set of communal institutions that represented the Muslim community to the government and to the indigenous population at large, and that mediated the relationship between the immigrants and the native population. In his study 'Race and Politics'²⁴⁵ Muhammed Anwar demonstrated that nonwhites had been increasingly organized and involved in British party politics already in 1966. Throughout the years ever more migrants joined the major political parties and ran for office in local and national parliament elections. While a small number of immigrants managed to gain a seat in British Parliament, a significant amount of ex-colonial migrants succeeded in being elected to local (city) governments.²⁴⁶ Another factor which demonstrates the British Muslims' high level of integration relates to Imams in British mosques. According to the *Guardian* Muslims avoided the "common practice of importing mullahs straight from Pakistan or Bangladesh who don't speak English or know British ways."²⁴⁷ Instead they educated religious teachers within their community as a symbol of their willingness to integrate and of their respect for their resident country. Finally, British Muslims were often well educated, which furthered their level of integration. Especially Pakistanis, who were said to be the most educated Muslim group, seemed more accessible than members of other Muslim groups who often led an isolated existence and shied away from official institutions.²⁴⁸ My own research findings illustrate the positive effects of their advanced political mobilization, and societal organization and integration. During the *Rushdie affair* Muslims commonly channelled their voices and had them expressed via Muslim spokespersons or larger institutions such as the Imams and Mosques Council. Other articles introduced Muslim mayors, or Muslims members of political parties, running for office in local elections with campaigns against the book. In other words, Muslims knew the rules of the game and used all democratic means to achieve their goal while demonstrating how good citizens they were.

In comparison with British Muslims, Dutch Muslims arrived in the Netherlands almost 30 years later²⁴⁹ and had hence less time to adapt and integrate into Dutch society. Like in the British case, their movement was primarily labour driven. Recruitment agreements were signed with Turkey in 1964, with Morocco in 1969, and with Tunisia in 1970.²⁵⁰ As the Netherlands thus drew their new workforce from the Mediterranean bonds were lacking between the Muslim guest worker migrants and the Dutch indigenous population. While the Dutch had not yet studied and normalized the specific cultures of their newcomers, the latter could not speak the new language, had no idea of the societal structure and did not possess the Dutch citizenship necessary for the active and passive participation in Dutch politics. This all hampered their integration. While British Muslims commonly arrived with

²⁴⁵ Anwar, *Race and Politics*, 466.

²⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

²⁴⁷ 'Spurn the book, spare the man', *The Guardian*, 27-2-1989, 39.

²⁴⁸ 'Radical minority feared the most', *The Guardian*, 16-2-1989, 2.

²⁴⁹ Muslim colonial migrants from Pakistan and Bangladesh predominantly migrated to Britain in the 1950s and 1960s whereas the significant bulk of Dutch Muslims arrived not before the 1980s and 1990s when family reunification became the main motive for Muslim migration to the Netherlands.

²⁵⁰ Andrew Geddes, *The Politics of Migration and Immigration in Europe* (London 2003) 105.

their whole families in the 1950s and 1960s, Muslim migrants to the Netherlands predominantly moved alone with the intention to work, earn money and return to their families in their home countries after a couple of years. Dutch Muslims had thus little reason to invest in their own integration. The sojourning nature of Dutch Muslim migration only changed with the oil crisis in 1979 and the closure of European borders to labour migration. With the arrival of immediate family members like spouses and children migration came to be seen as a permanent event and integration became a necessary condition. The different conditions and circumstances of Dutch guest worker migration in comparison to British colonial migration had larger impacts on the internal organization of Dutch Muslims. While British Muslims were commonly well organized in all kinds of organizations, their Dutch fellows frequently appeared from the media discourse as a loosely organized minority group. According to the *NRC* Dutch Muslims felt less connected to Muslim organizations. Their central meeting point was the mosque and their contact persons were the Imams. But since migration was for a long time seen as a temporary event there were no moderate Dutch-Muslim Imams. Instead Dutch Imams had been recruited from foreign countries and lacked Dutch language-skills. As a consequence, they could not represent the Muslim community in domestic affairs. This became a serious problem in the wake of the *Rushdie affair*, where Muslims had almost no chance to defend and explain themselves. Even though the media and the Dutch government tried to introduce and address official representatives of the Muslim community one can call into question whether those really represented the interests and viewpoints of residing Muslims. The loose organizational structure in addition to language barriers prevented Dutch Muslims from participating in the Dutch debate on immigrant integration and from defending their feelings and actions. Thus, when comparing the general level of immigrant integration in terms of linguistic, political and socio-economic integration, British Muslims had done much better and were to a larger extent integrated in the British society by the time that the *Satanic Verses affair* emerged. Dutch Muslims on the other hand clearly constituted a fringe group in the Netherlands in 1989. Their political mobilization started only with or respectively after the *Rushdie affair*, which had painfully taught them the importance of agency in contrast to voice.

Not burdened enough by their ethnic background which complicated their proper integration into Dutch society, the Dutch government – though with good intentions - added some extra barriers. As they expected the guest worker migrants to return to their home countries after a couple of years they designed policies which would facilitate return migration. Immigrant policies stimulated migrant groups to keep themselves apart from the Dutch mainstream society and to preserve their cultural identities and internal group structures.²⁵¹ It is thus not surprising that the Muslim community hardly interacted with the Dutch indigenous population and often lived in some kind of a ‘parallel society’. At the same time, this contextual element encouraged the development of stereotypes, prejudices and

²⁵¹ Scholten, ‘Constructing Immigrant Policies’, 79.

xenophobia among the Dutch native population against minority groups and might explain the quick rise of anti-immigrant and in particular anti-Muslim sentiments after the protest marches in 1989. It seems as if the *Rushdie affair* had given Dutch residents finally a legitimate reason to express feelings of fears and anger and to speak up against the growing alienation of their neighbourhoods without being called a racist.

3.2 Agency versus voice

In Britain, the well-organized British Muslim community had soon started to hold the national media accountable for the book-burnings. They argued that the media's ignorance of their initially peaceful and exclusively oral campaigns against the publication of the novel had left them no other choice than to select more drastic means to gain media space. In other words, if the British press had captured the initially modest Muslim campaigns, Muslims had possibly never opted for book-burnings and the whole controversy had not grown that big. The heavy burden of such accusations might explain the prominent shift towards a mediating discourse in the British print-media debate from mid-February onwards. The British press was given an enormous responsibility for the future development of the affair in Britain. At the same time, Ayatollah Khomeini increased the conflict escalation potential with his death order against Rushdie. My assumption that the Muslim accusations had a significant impact on the development of the British media discourse is strengthened by a comparison of my own findings with those of Sardar and Wyn Davies. The results of their study of the Western media debate between the Bradford book-burnings and the announcement of the fatwa exposed a biased news coverage. The two authors found that of the published articles in British national newspapers half a dozen articles stemmed from Muslims, "compared to acres and acres of pro-Rushdie, anti Muslim venom produced by Jenkins and other 'tolerant secularists.'"²⁵² My own research, which covered the whole year 1989, has shown that the exclusion of Muslims from the media debate did not last very long. I found that Muslims soon started to contribute to the British print-media debate, especially after the announced death sentence; that is when the analysis by Sardar and Wyn Davies stopped. This suggests that the British media indeed changed their discourse after having been held responsible for the escalation of conflict. As the Dutch print-media had not been burdened by similar accusations they possessed more latitude for a critical and denunciating response. In addition, British Muslims from the colonies were British subjects so that their repatriation was no option. The British society thus had to achieve the appeasement of conflict within the borders of their own mainland territory in 1989. As guest worker migrants, Dutch Muslims could in theory be expelled from the Netherlands; a fact that invited claim makers to utter statements such as: "Assimilate, or leave!"

British Muslims did not join the death calls against Rushdie except once, when members of an Asian Youth gang in Bradford uttered such a request. The observed media discourse showed that Muslims,

²⁵² Scholten, 'Constructing Immigrant Policies', 210.

although devout in their faith and feelings and offended by what they've been told Rushdie had written, remained law-abiding citizens who were opposed to any illegal act.²⁵³ They had even opted for the act of burning the novel on the basis of the fact that book-burnings were not in opposition to British law. In other words, British Muslims wanted to gain appreciative media attention and popular support for their case. They knew that they could only succeed by legal actions. In comparison with British Muslims, Dutch Muslims seemed rampant. Without releasing any advance notice of their anger over the book, they surprised the Dutch population with enraged protest marches and clearly audible death calls against Salman Rushdie. Dutch Muslims thus did not distinguish between outrage and the desire to annihilate books or authors by murdering them.²⁵⁴ With their unorganized and provocative protests they created strong antagonistic sentiments among the Dutch indigenous population, while British Muslims were frequently seen as victims themselves by the British native population.

3.3 Race relations versus cultural minorities

Peter Scholten explained in his dissertation that immigrant integration is a value-loaded notion and often connected to the "specific normative conceptions of the nation-state."²⁵⁵ Nation-building legacies largely influence and consequently explain a country's definition of migrants and its specific approach to immigrant integration. For this reason I will briefly introduce some relevant aspects of British and Dutch history that might illuminate why the British responded more moderate to the protest marches than some Dutch did.

An important factor is the shape of each country's multicultural approach to immigrant integration. The British form of multiculturalism has its roots in two concepts. Firstly, it is based on British identity in the sense that it advocates the two fundamental organizing principles toleration and freedom. Secondly, it relates to the imperial management of race relations and the old history of conservative pluralism which combines the two features 'incorporation' and 'governance'. Contrary to Britain, the Dutch form of multiculturalism did not impose any cultural hierarchy but promoted equality within the boundaries of the law. In the Netherlands multiculturalism was seen as the continuity of the successful pillarisation principle. This principle developed out of the assumption that political, economic and social conflict could be addressed and pacified best through emancipation, social mobilization and compromise, thereby stressing the importance of mutual toleration. Dutch multiculturalist policies allowed to some extent for the maintenance of one's own cultural heritage, emphasized the plurality and equality of cultures and expected societal members to tolerate and respect each other. Great Britain in contrast, always anticipated the eruption of conflicts in their culturally and ethnically diverse society and consequently integrated protectionist strategies in cases that their own culture would clash with another one's worldviews. These differences might explain

²⁵³ 'Howe slates Iran's menacing stance', *The Guardian*, 22-2-1989, 6.

²⁵⁴ 'Poisoned utopia', *The Guardian*, 17-2-1989, 21.

²⁵⁵ Scholten, 'Constructing Immigrant Policies', 5.

why the Dutch had been so shocked and emotional in their reaction to the Muslim protests. The March demonstrations destroyed their 'naive' belief that a culturally diverse society could be appeased and managed purely by granting 'mutual tolerance', 'respect' and 'equality' to ethnic minority groups. The Netherlands had to learn the hard way that some cultural norms and values might be incompatible with each other so that the almost unrestricted allowance for the preservation of culture is doomed to backfire some day.

A second closely-related factor supports my argument that the country-specific designs of multicultural policies significantly influenced the development of the affair in both countries. Long before the arrival of Muslim migrants to the Netherlands, religious rights were granted to the Dutch citizens by their national law. The state was obliged to treat all citizens and all religious and non-religious organizations equally and to financially support religious needs. In addition, the law demanded at least two institutions to choose from on the social and religious terrain. Summing up, the Dutch constitutional order encouraged, facilitated and subsidized to some extent the maintenance of cultural and religious diversity.²⁵⁶ In the 1970's religion and culture emerged as principal markers over colour and race so that immigrants from the Middle East or Arab countries came to be referred to as Muslims instead of Turks or Moroccans.²⁵⁷ Simultaneously the Islam emerged as a fifth pillar in a society that was traditionally divided along confessional lines into religious and secular blocs and subcultures.²⁵⁸ As a predecessor of the Dutch pillarisation principle, the Dutch form of multiculturalism inextricably linked to religious diversity. This was less the case in Britain where multiculturalism was directed at preventing and solving problems of racism. The British equalities framework respected and celebrated ethnic and black minorities and consequently promoted their movement from the margins to the centre of public identity formation. Faith however was not considered to be part of the black-white racial dualism."²⁵⁹ Religious diversity was tolerated but as a private matter confined to the home sphere.²⁶⁰ To conclude, the British population traditionally thought in terms of races and race relations whereas the Dutch population traditionally thought in terms of cultural minorities. This might explain why the religious background of the protestors was emphasised in the Netherlands and why Dutch claim-makers started to mobilize an assimilationist discourse after the eruption of the cultural-religious conflict, whereas the British populations focused on discrimination and racism and started a debate on British race-relations and British identity.

²⁵⁶ Anja van Heelsum and Sjeff van Stiphout, 'Integrated Report on Media Content – The Netherlands', EURISLAM Workpackage 2 (Amsterdam 2010) http://www.eurislam.eu/var/D6_Integrated_report_on_media_content.pdf (14-5-2011) 14-41.

²⁵⁷ Lucassen, *The Immigrant Threat*, 3.

²⁵⁸ Schrover, 'Pillarization, Multiculturalism', 332.

²⁵⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁶⁰ Modood, 'British Muslim Perspectives', 188.

3.4 Neo-liberal versus welfare state

Differences in the engineering of British and Dutch social policies constitute the fourth and last potential determinant of the countries' deviating responses to Muslim protest marches in 1989. While Britain had become a strong neo-liberal state under Thatcher-rule, the Netherlands operated a classical welfare state.

In the wake of the modernization process in the course of the twentieth century, the Dutch population left the management of risks and uncertainties to bureaucracies in order to achieve greater individual security. Foucault's concept of the pastoral state closely relates to that. The French philosopher and social theorist argued that the pastoral state "exercises its power to ensure the health and welfare of its citizens."²⁶¹ 'Biopower', which refers to the state endeavouring to control the personal lives of its citizens, should enable the bureaucrats to create order and to eliminate all threats to social stability.²⁶² In exchange for social security, people were willing to forego such a degree of freedom.²⁶³ As members of a unified and supportive community, Dutch citizens were expected to observe the rules and to contribute to the community's well-being. In this communitarian-organic variant of the welfare state "there [was] a great temptation to view weak social groups in medical terms of 'sickness' and 'infection'."²⁶⁴ With the emergence of the welfare state, "the image that migrants are a potential threat to welfare states as 'free riders' who only receive and do not contribute has firmly taken root."²⁶⁵ In the Netherlands, the largest share of Dutch government spending went into the socio-economic sector. The state authorities also subsidized immigrants to help them to participate in Dutch society and eventually in the labour market. The high government spending on social welfare generated high expectations for the success of government incentives. Consequently, all effects of such spending were monitored thoroughly. If no success or improvement could be booked in time, strong criticism emerged and somebody was needed to put the blame on. When in May 1989 the WRR-report confirmed that Dutch ethnic minorities depended disproportionately on the Dutch welfare state system, amongst others because of their educational shortcomings, high unemployment rates, and insufficient knowledge of the Dutch language, Dutch Muslims, along with other ethnic minorities, became increasingly "problematized and categorized as alien and unproductive members of society."²⁶⁶ Due to the Dutch engineering of social policies, Muslims and other ethnic minorities had always been under strong scrutiny by state agencies, the media and the Dutch population at large so that political, socio-economic but also cultural differences were noticed easily and perceived as problematic. This explains again why the *Rushdie affair* and the publication of the WRR-report could

²⁶¹ Ben Golder, 'Foucault and the Genealogy of Pastoral Power', *Radical Philosophy Review* 10 (2007) 157-176.

²⁶² Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Cambridge 1989), and idem, *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Ithaca, NY, 1991).

²⁶³ Leo Lucassen, 'A Brave New World: The Left, Social Engineering, and Eugenics in Twentieth-Century Europe', *IRSH* 55:2 (2010) 271.

²⁶⁴ Ibidem, 294.

²⁶⁵ Lucassen, *The Immigrant Threat*, 15.

²⁶⁶ Ibidem, 296.

cause so much upheaval and generate a large debate on immigrant integration with tendencies for a frame shift towards a neo-realist and certainly towards a universalist discourse in 1989.

Immigrants in Great Britain had never been under such strong scrutiny. As a neo-liberal state Great Britain institutionalized a more class-dependent variant of socialism. The key attitude was that “social problems such as inequality and poverty were caused primarily by an unjust capitalist system.”²⁶⁷

While the state had to provide a non-discriminative environment and inclusive education and labour institutions, the individual member of society was expected to stand on his own feet and to be responsible for his or her socio-economic participation. Since the British government did not spend much money on their immigrant population but on the contrary rather profited from their additional workforce, the British government and the population at large cared less about an immigrant’s level of integration. As long as things would not go terribly wrong in the sense that the public order was disturbed, the state felt no need to control the personal lives of its citizens or to make sure that Muslims would perfectly integrate into the British majority society. Even if social, cultural or political distances existed, they had never been monitored or presented as problematic. The British population never desired the integration of immigrants as much as the Dutch did and consequently remained rather calm and stick to their multicultural policies after the Muslim protests against the publication of *The Satanic Verses*.

To conclude, my research findings contributed to the existing literature on the *Rushdie affair* in two ways. On the one hand, my study results manifest the *Rushdie affair* as an event that cleared the way for later integration critics to implement their neo-realist ideas in the Dutch public debate. The controversy removed the old taboos to criticize immigrants and to assert integration failures, and made people receptive for neo-realist ideas. In a certain way the *Rushdie affair* also served as an important test or respectively role model. Dutch intellectuals like Blokker, Komrij or Ferdinandusse formed integration-critical pioneers who had shown others with their provocative columns that critique on immigrant integration could be voiced in the meanwhile. With their articles, they encouraged other immigration critics like Bolkestein to appear before the public. On the other hand, this study revealed that the legacy of the past has a significant impact on the integration process of migrants in Europe. Earlier colonial relations of the receiving societies with the sending society facilitated the absorption of Muslim immigrants. In the case of the *Rushdie affair* the far-reaching integration of Britain’s colonial Muslim community prevented a frame shift in the British public debate on immigrant integration towards assimilationism. In addition, my findings suggest that language and educational deficiencies, unemployment and dependency on welfare institutions, lacking social and political participation, high institutional barriers, and a weak organizational structure burden and often completely prevent the interaction between the resident alien population and the indigenous

²⁶⁷ Lucassen, *The Immigrant Threat*, 295.

population. Higher crime rates for the immigrant population formed an additional obstacle to boundary-blurring and shifting. Missing interaction means that compassion, mutual respect and tolerance is difficult to develop. The external group will rather be seen as the alien and potentially dangerous other, which provides the perfect footing for the establishment of stereotypes and prejudices. That in turn favours polarization. Once a 'parallel world' has manifested itself in a given society it is difficult to dissolve the strict boundaries and to achieve cooperation. The Dutch example gives reason to assume that the less Muslims are civically integrated into their new societies the more problematic and threatening are cultural differences in the eyes of the native population. Dutch Muslims had quickly given up on aggressive calls and large scale public campaigns against the publication of the book while British Muslims had not. Still Dutch Muslims were stigmatized and aggregated much more than their British counterparts who even received compassion.

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