

Implementing Direct Democracy in the Netherlands: A Contextual Evaluation

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### **Abstract**

This research evaluates the case for implementing direct democracy in the Netherlands. The analysis and evaluation will use a contextual approach. It will be based on an analysis of the history of direct democracy in the Netherlands, the discourse used, the traditions it can be placed in and certain values within the Dutch society. Furthermore, theories within political philosophy will be used in combination with the findings to further assess what the dangers and benefits are in implementing this form of governance. The research finds that there is a need for a change in the political system, however implementing direct democracy within the current context is undesirable. It is advisable to the Dutch government to research other methods in order to gain the trust of the voters and close the gap between citizens and policy.

*Keywords: Direct Democracy, Referendum, Netherlands, Political Philosophy, Anti-Enlightenment*

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## **1. Introduction**

There is an ongoing debate in the Netherlands on whether to implement the referendum in order to assist the representative democracy. Could this be the way towards a 'real democracy' or is it a threat to the representative system? The referendum is a form of direct democracy, meaning that there is direct participation of citizens in democratic decision making (T. Schiller, 2019). Through direct democracy a government can assess the opinion of the people and try to implement this in their policy. However, whether they are obliged to is dependent on the form of referendum. In the Netherlands there was previously a system of advisory referendums. This means that the government is not obliged to implement the results of the referendum into policy. This has led to the problem that despite the results of the referendum, the government still pursued its own course of action. This could potentially lead to voter frustration and distrust of government. After only being available for approximately three years, the advisory referendum was abolished in July 2018, without consultation of the public.

Currently, there appears to be a lack of voter confidence in parliament and a gap between citizens and policy. There have been state commissions that have recommended using the referendum in order to tackle these problems. However, this research will showcase that implementing the referendum could be problematic. It could be a threat to minority groups within the Netherlands and a threat to the individual rights, values and freedoms of Dutch citizens.

Because of the debate and the advice to implement this form of public consultation, it is relevant to look at the situation in the Netherlands and evaluate the case for re-implementing the referendum. There currently does not appear to be enough literature that evaluates the referendum using the context of the Netherlands nor does there appear to be much literature

on the context of the referendum in the Netherlands in English. Moreover, current referendum discourse appears to be tied to anti-immigrant parties, this increases the importance of evaluating this form of governance and what its implementation would imply. Furthermore, the advice of the state commissions appears to imply that the Dutch parliament is in a dire situation where change is needed. The recommended change by these state commissions is the implementation of the referendum, therefore the evaluation of this situation and whether implementing the referendum as a tool of governance is advisable is of importance.

The battle for the referendum in current discourse symbolizes more than just the call for a new form of governing. Therefore, it seems essential to analyze the position of the referendum within Dutch society and discourse. Furthermore, the parties associated with wanting referendums seem to have changed over time, as previously mentioned it is currently dominated by anti-immigrant parties. Implementing the referendum will be symbolic as a win for these forms of parties. This poses the question whether this would be representative of the views of the Dutch society or whether implementing the referendum would currently represent things that the Dutch society is not in favor of. The support of these parties is also an indication that implementing direct democracy could be a threat to minority groups.

This research will evaluate the case for reimplementing direct democracy in the Netherlands.

The Netherlands has had an interesting relationship with direct democracy in the past which can shed light on the current attitudes of Dutch citizens and politicians towards this form of democracy and has to be taken into account in evaluating whether implementing this form of democracy into the current system is viable and positive. Because of this, this research will take a historical, philosophical and contextual approach but will also use make use of quantitative data in the form of a value survey. The structure of the research will be as follows. In section two the method of the research is discussed. This section will justify why

certain aspects are highlighted and why the specific approach used is applicable. In the third section the history of direct democracy in the Netherlands will be discussed, this will give further insight into how referendums have been used in the past and illustrate the history of the battle for and against the referendum. Section four will be an analysis of the discourse surrounding direct democracy in the Netherlands from the 1980's until now. This will give an indication of what implementing this form of consultation would symbolize and how it might be used if implemented. In section five the current battle for direct democracy will be put within a larger tradition, namely that of (anti-)enlightenment. Afterwards, in section six, a survey will be used to determine whether this form of democracy aligns with the values and opinions of the Dutch citizens or whether it would be misrepresentative of the views of the population. The survey used is the European Values Study (EVS) and the data used is from the surveys between 1999 until 2017. After analyzing the history, discourse, tradition and values, an evaluation will be made in section seven using this information and theories found in political philosophy. These theories will be related to the specific context of the Netherlands in order to evaluate whether the benefits outweigh the dangers. Finally, in section eight a conclusion will follow, based on the previously found information, on whether implementing direct democracy in the Netherlands at the present time is advisable. This research finds that although the referendum seems an answer to problems such as a lack of trust and a gap between citizens and policy, the negative aspects of implementing this tool of governance outweigh the possible benefits. Furthermore, the extent to which these benefits would be realized in the case of the referendum being implemented is debatable. Therefore, the advice is to not implement direct democracy in the Netherlands and instead search for other solutions to the problems the referendum purports to solve.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1 History and Discourse**

This research will be a contextual and multi-disciplinary evaluation of re-implementing direct democracy within the Netherlands. It will focus on the specific context of the Netherlands, with its history, discourse and values. Thus, it will not be an evaluation of the system of direct democracy on its own. As the Netherlands is the first democratic country in modern history to abolish the form of direct democracy that is the referendum (S. Hollander, 2019) there is reason to assume its history and context of direct democracy might be significantly different to those in other countries. This makes it important to know what exactly the context and the history is.

The research will begin by reviewing the history of direct democracy in the Netherlands. This will provide information on how it has been used in the past and how it fits within the Dutch political tradition.

This thesis will also examine the discourse surrounding direct democracy. Both the discourse of the proponents and the opponents will be analyzed at different points of time, as the discourse has changed over time. The discourse could also provide insight into how referendums might be used if a form of direct democracy is implemented. This further emphasizes the importance of analyzing the discourse if the purpose of the research is to evaluate whether implementing direct democracy would be a positive development.

### **2.2 Traditions**

Given that the evaluation requires context, the attitudes towards direct democracy are put in a wider context of ideological traditions. This is because the call for or against direct democracy does not exist in a vacuum. Instead it is tied to a tradition with multiple ideas and attitudes. In order to fully understand where proponents and opponents are coming from it is important to understand the tradition and the underlying thoughts. Within this paper the traditions chosen

to expand upon are the Enlightenment and the Anti-Enlightenment traditions. This is not to say that these are the only traditions it can be linked to, but they appear to provide a useful lens in analyzing the situation. It is not possible to include all possible influences and traditions within this research, but these traditions seem well suited for this analysis. The reason for this is that the traditions of (anti-)enlightenment encompass not only views on the political system but also on how society ought to function, whether for example individualism or collectivism should be the foundational value in society.

### **2.3 Values and attitudes**

As the loudest voices do not necessarily represent the majority of the people, nor does the representation in government truly represent the people (according to the state commission parliamentary system), it is important to look at what the attitudes of the Dutch people are through surveys that are more representative of the Dutch public. This research will use the European Value Study (EVS) to look at certain values and attitudes within Dutch society to see if implementing direct democracy would be a logical step, or whether the values attached to this form of governance do not align with the views of the Dutch citizens. The reason for using this specific data set is because it is a credible source for Dutch values and provides data over multiple points in time. Using these data sets it will be possible to look at changes and developments in political attitudes and values in time as different measures concerning direct democracy were implemented. As the data is being used to poll the general attitudes of the public as opposed to the different attitudes of social groups the data will not need to be controlled for other variables. It will solely take certain statements concerning values or policies and evaluate the overall response by Dutch respondents. One of the limitations of using this dataset is that the data is only collected once in several years. Because of this it is hard to link certain attitudes and answers to specific developments in politics. There are always multiple reasons why attitudes and values change over time, whereas this research will



try to couple it mainly to the developments in direct democracy. However, because the different points in time in which the surveys have been conducted line up with the development of direct democracy in the Netherlands, and the questions are relevant to this development, it can be assumed that this development has had an impact to a certain degree on the answers of the respondents. The questions used that are not related to the development of direct democracy but instead to the values of the citizens and how those might align with this form of governance do not seem to be impacted by this limitation. These values will assist the evaluation on whether direct democracy ought to be implemented as they give an indication to whether the values of direct democracy can be seen in the Dutch population. If the values of the Dutch population do not align with those associated with this tool of governance, that is an argument that the tool ought not to be implemented.

## **2.4 Evaluation**

The evaluation will take a philosophical approach, in which the situation will be analyzed using the information found in the previous chapters and using the thoughts of notable thinkers within the field of philosophy. Some of the philosophers used include Plato, Rousseau, Dewey and Mill. The focus will lie on the field of political philosophy as the notion of direct democracy is mainly a political matter. In the evaluation an attempt will be made to represent the ideas of proponents and opponents both in a fair manner that does justice to their line of thinking. Using these theories and ideas of philosophical thinkers the evaluation will be made whether it would be beneficial to implement a form of direct democracy in the Netherlands.

### **3. History of Direct Democracy in the Netherlands**

#### **3.1 The first referendum**

As explained in the method section, the first part of this research will concern the history of direct democracy in the Netherlands. This history begins at the end of the eighteenth century when there was a rise of ‘the patriots’ (de patriotten). These patriots fought for a more democratic rule of the country. In cooperation with the French troops they announced a Batavian revolution on the nineteenth of January in 1795 (N.C.F. van Sas, 1989). The leaders of this new Batavian republic held the country’s first referendum by asking approval for a new constitution. This referendum was held in 1797 and the majority of people voted against this new constitution. This was followed by a coup half a year later, in 1798 by the radical Batavians. A few months later they held a new referendum concerning a new version of the constitution and this time the majority of people voted in favor of this constitution. Although this was a referendum, not all citizens could vote. Fewer than 140,000 citizens voted in this referendum, and around 414,000 citizens were allowed to vote. This was around 22 percent of the population (J. de Jong, 2018). Until the universal suffrage of 1917, this was the most universal voting right among citizens (H. H. Zwager, 1958).

The results of the referendum were mostly influenced by religious motivations. One of the main reasons that the state arrangement was accepted in the second referendum is because of the Catholics. In the first referendum many of them voted against the constitution but voted in favor of it in the second referendum because it gave them the possibility to use their local churches again (M. Barrois, 2018).

The Batavian Republic proclaimed the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (Verklaring der Rechten van den Mensch en van den Burger) in January 1795 in which they

claimed that everyone ought to have a vote in the legislative council of the entire society, either personal or through representation chosen by them (M. Everard, 1999). This brought about the first National Assembly that was chosen by the people in 1796. As such a groundwork has been laid that led to the system of representative democracy that is currently still used in the Netherlands.

After the previously mentioned two referendums one might expect that more referendums would follow, but the new form of government did not use the referendum as a tool of governing. In 1801 the Batavian Republic stopped using this form of public consultation (J. de Jong, 2019). Instead of national referendums, there have been local referendums. It is difficult to find data on local referendums from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, however in the time between 1912 and 2005 (the time of the next national referendum) there have been 115 local referendums on various topics (A. Nijeboer, 2005). This is an indication that local referendums were used in the history of the Netherlands but not to a great extent.

### **3.2 Attempts to implement direct democracy**

There have been two attempts to alter the constitution in order to allow the referendum as a democratic tool in the Netherlands in the time between 1994 and 2003 (A. Nijeboer, 2005). It was proposed to close the gap between citizens and politics. The first attempt tried to get a referendum that would allow citizens to vote about bills that are accepted in the second chamber of government and decisions by the provincial council or city council. This proposal was accepted in the second chamber of government but stranded in the first chamber in the infamous night of Wiegels in May 1999 where it just barely lost the majority vote (H.M.B. Breunese, 2013).

The second attempt was in 2001 when the Temporary Act on the Consultative Referendum (Tijdelijke referendumwet) was introduced. This temporary means to use a consultative

referendum was held in place from 2002 until it expired in February 2005. The referendum was not used in this short amount of time that it was available. There have been few attempts and those attempts did not make the threshold (W. Voermans, 2008).

### **3.3 The 2005 referendum**

It would only be 200 years after the first two referendums, in 2005, that the next national referendum would follow (J. de Jong, 2018). This referendum concerned the European Constitution. The referendum was not binding but advisory, however many members of parliament wished to respect the outcome of the referendum. Some scholars argue that this has been the first national referendum of the Netherlands, as they claim the Batavian Republic is a legal predecessor of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (A. Nijeboer, 2005).

In the 2005 referendum the majority (61.5%) of the Dutch voters rejected the European Constitution. The turnout was unexpectedly high at 63.3% (A. Nijeboer, 2005). According to Parlement.com, the parties that claimed to respect the outcome of the referendum, no matter their personal opinion were VVD, GroenLinks, D66, LPF and SP. Parties that wished to respect the referendum under certain conditions include the CDA and PvdA. There were also two parties that saw the referendum as non-binding advice that would likely not be respected, these were ChristenUnie and SGP. Interesting to note is that Wilders, who would later be a notable proponent of the referendum, was unclear in how this referendum should be treated according to Parlement.com.

### **3.4 Law Advisory Referendum**

In July 2015 the Law Advisory Referendum (Wet raadgevend referendum) took effect. This law would be the first permanent legislation concerning referendums in the Netherlands (J.J. Weevers, 2016). It allowed Dutch citizens to request an advisory, non-binding referendum if they disagreed with a certain law or proposal. The turnout for a referendum had to be above thirty percent, which according to some scholars was a flaw in the system as it caused one party to have two choices; either voting or not showing up, and the other party only has the choice to vote in order to make their voice heard (J.J. Weevers, 2016). This creates an imbalance in the system. If a referendum is held to abolish a certain proposition it can be unclear for those that are in favor of the proposition whether it is more beneficial to stay home or to vote.

### **3.5 Ukraine referendum**

In less than two months after the Law Advisory Referendum was accepted, the first referendum was in the making. This referendum, proposed by the new party GeenPeil, was held in April 2016 and concerned the EU association accord with the Ukraine. GeenPeil and the supporters of the referendum did not want the EU to associate with Ukraine. One of the reasons for this is that they were afraid that Ukraine would become part of the EU over time. GeenPeil also managed to frame the referendum as a vote for less or more influence of the EU even though this was not the question asked in the referendum (J.J. Weevers, 2016). The result of the referendum was valid and the voters against the association accord won. The turnout for this referendum was low, only thirty-two percent (Kiesraad, 2016). This might be due to low support for a referendum (on this topic) or it might be because not voting is a means for those against this referendum to make it invalid.

Despite this, the Netherlands still signed the association accord as the referendum was non-binding. In order to comply in part to the result of the referendum, prime minister Rutte managed to attach a part to the accord which would make sure that, among other things, Ukraine could not join the EU because of this (G. de Swarte, n.d.).

### **3.6 Law on Intelligence and Security Services referendum**

The second referendum since the introduction of the Law Advisory Referendum took place in March 2018 and concerned the Law on Intelligence and Security Services (Wet Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdiensten). This law would further the possibilities for Dutch intelligence and security institutions for gathering data. One of the measures included in this law, which created much opposition, is that intelligence services could now collect information of non-suspects. This is what gave it the name ‘sleepwet’ meaning dragnet-law as the indiscriminate collection of personal data of non-suspects is compared to a dragnet.

The initiative for a referendum was started by a group of students in Amsterdam and was popularized and made possible by Dutch television host Arjen Lubach (L. van Lonkhuyzen, 2017). It started with a question on the site Reddit and quickly got the support from privacy organizations, GeenStijl, Amnesty International and SP (the Dutch Socialist Party). Before the item by Arjen Lubach was aired, an average 4,500 people signed the petition every day and afterwards up to 22,000 per day.

The referendum was won with a small margin by the party against the law. Roughly forty-nine percent of voters voted against the law and roughly forty-six percent voted in favor of the law.

The support for having a referendum on this topic was significantly higher than the previous referendum. More than half of the Dutch population agreed that this topic was enough reason for a referendum, close to twenty percent of the people voting in favor of the law even agreed

with having a referendum (J. Kristof et al., 2018). This referendum had a turnout of fifty-two percent, according to the research by Kristof et al., one of the reasons for this might be that the voting for the municipal elections happened at the same time meaning that people were already going to vote. The high turnout and support for having a referendum might be an indication that this tool of direct democracy is gaining support in the Netherlands even though the government choose not to copy the result of the previous referendum into policy. This could have decreased support for a referendum as it might seem a referendum does not have the expected power if it does not result in policy.

According to the General Intelligence- and Security Service of the Netherlands (AIVD), there have been certain changes and guarantees incorporated into the law in order to satisfy part of the demands and worries showcased in the referendum. However, despite the referendum result, the law in question still went into effect.

### **3.7 The abolishment of the referendum**

On the tenth of July 2018 a proposal passed the first chamber of parliament that would abolish the law advisory referendum. Since the acceptance of this proposal it is no longer possible to request a referendum. The proposal passed the second chamber of parliament earlier with a small majority of seventy-six in favor and sixty-nine against (M. van Ast & E. van der Aa, 2018). In the first chamber of parliament it also passed with a small margin of forty senators in favor of the abolishment and thirty-five against. The socialist party, SP, proposed to have a referendum about the abolishment of the advisory referendum but this proposal did not get the necessary support. Only thirty-five members of parliament supported the proposal to have a referendum. Minister Kasja Ollongren of Home Affairs claimed the law advisory referendum did not bring what was expected. According to her the advisory referendum mainly caused confusion among the Dutch citizens as the parliament is not obliged to do anything with the results of the referendum (M. van Ast & E. van der Aa, 2018). This is in reference to the

previous two referendums where despite the referendum the laws and policies voted against still took effect. An action group called Meer Democratie (More Democracy) decided to go to court in the hope of forcing the parliament to host a referendum about this topic. However, after multiple court cases the judge ruled that the demand of Meer Democratie is outside the jurisdiction of the court (D. Mebius, 2018). This eliminated the last possibility for a referendum and means that the abolishment of the advisory referendum as a tool for citizens to influence governance is now definite. One of the parties receiving the most blame for the abolishment of the law is democrat party D66, who used to fight for the possibility of a referendum but now were part of abolishing it. Their stance is in line with the comment by minister Ollongren that the advisory referendum is too confusing, however they conclude from this that a binding corrective referendum would be the solution. They tried to propose a law for a binding referendum, but it has been retracted. The party claims it has been retracted because the left-wing parties GroenLinks and PvdA no longer support it (R. Jetten, 2018).

### **3.8 State commission parliamentary system**

On January twenty-seventh 2017, the Dutch government initiated a state commission parliamentary system. This state commission was tasked to investigate whether the current parliamentary system is still satisfactory and whether it is future-proof. On the thirteenth of December 2018 this commission published their final report “Lage drempels, hoge dijken” (this translates to “Low thresholds, high dikes”, however the English version is called “Democracy and the Rule of Law in Equilibrium”). In this report, the commission claims that there is a flawed substantive representation in the Dutch parliamentary system and that this makes for a serious shortcoming. They furthermore claim that “The introduction of the binding corrective referendum can contribute to solving this problem and form a supplementation to representative democracy” (p.101). Substantive representation in this report means “that the political views of voters are reflected in the parliamentary debate, that



their interests are effectively represented, and that the outcomes of the democratic process align with what they expect and desire” (p. 102). Insufficient substantive representation can in turn lead to dissatisfaction among citizens and alienation from the parliamentary system. The state commission claims that within the current system there are times where the majority of parliament represents a minority group and a minority of parliament represents the majority of people. The introduction of a referendum can be seen as a tool to correct a parliamentary majority if it clearly deviates from most of the population. This idea given in the report by the state commission is in reference to the Russian political scientist M. Ostrogorski. The report suggests certain measures that would help protect against some of the dangers of a referendum, such as it only being able to request a referendum as a citizen and not as a political body as there would otherwise be a risk of a dictatorship of the majority.

On the twenty-sixth of June 2019 the governing cabinet released their stances on the advice from the state commission. Regarding the advice of a binding, corrective referendum their response is that they will not copy the advice, but instead will at a later point in time release their stance on a referendum after informing both chambers of parliament (p.20). Instead of implementing this tool of direct democracy, the cabinet aims to combat the problems addressed by the state commission through other means such as more voter influence on the forming of the cabinet and a youth parliament.

### 3.9 Summary

The referendum as a tool of direct democracy stood at the forefront of the beginnings of Dutch democracy. However, it has never truly been a tool that all people could use to influence government. In the time of the first two referendums concerning a constitution, not all people could vote and the constitution that the people truly wanted was never fully achieved. Instead, through the promise of being able to use local Catholic churches again a constitution was accepted that included aspects against which the people had tried to make their voices heard. In more recent history the national referendum is only used rarely, and the results have always been interpreted as merely advisory. Because of this, the interests of those who won the referendum have only been partially considered instead of respecting their democratic vote to a full extent. This has led to confusion and a loss of trust in the parliamentary system. In 2018 this loss of trust is further emphasized when, without asking the people, the law advisory referendum was abolished. It was no longer possible for the people to request a referendum. A state commission was initialized in order to analyze the functioning of the parliamentary system and advised, among other things, to install a binding corrective referendum, however the governing cabinet decided not to follow this advice and indicate that they will take a stance on this issue in a later time. They instead tried to correct the problems stated by the state commission through other means that would further the influence of the people on politics. In conclusion, the referendum has a history in the Netherlands of not being respected, especially in modern times. It is a tool that was only available in a small period of time and did not yield the results that either the people or the government wanted from it.

## **4. Discourse around direct democracy**

### **4.1 Method**

After analyzing the history of direct democracy in the Netherlands, this research will examine the discourse around direct democracy in the Netherlands. Analyzing the discourse around direct democracy can give an idea of how direct democracy will be used and by whom. Analyzing the discourse of those in favor of direct democracy will give further understanding of their position. Whereas the discourse of those against direct democracy will give an insight into the arguments against implementing this feature. Furthermore, it will become clear what themes are indirectly linked to this concept. The discourse is dynamic and has changed over time. The largest emphasis will lie on the current discourse, however this analysis will incorporate the discourse from the 1990s onwards. This will further the understanding of how attitudes towards implementing direct democracy have changed in Dutch society. In order to fully grasp the history of direct democracy in the Netherlands, its current position in Dutch society and the battle fought for it, a look has to be taken into the history of the discourse surrounding it. The discourse analysis will be conducted by analyzing newspaper articles and secondary literature.

### **4.2 The 80's**

Current discourse related to direct democracy can be traced back to the second half of the 1980's. In this time there was increasing support for political parties with strong negative opinions about ethnic minorities and asylum seekers. This was combined with a growing distrust in political institutions and politics, and a decrease in voter turnout. This contributed to a concern among the political elites about a widening gap with the public (A. Michels, 2007). One of the solutions proposed for this problematic gap between politicians and the public was to introduce the tool of a referendum. The themes already visible in this time

linked to support for direct democracy are negative emotions towards ethnic minorities and asylum seekers and a focus on the gap between citizens and politicians. Mainly the Centre Democrats were associated with this movement in the 1980's and 1990's (A. Michels, 2007).

#### **4.3 State commission Biesheuvel**

The cabinet Van Agt II (1981-1982), led by Christian democrats CDA, labor party PvdA and democrats D66 instituted a state commission that was tasked with researching how to enlarge the influence of voters on decision making in politics. This was mainly due to parties D66 and PvdA wanting to increase voter influence, according to the state website *de Nederlandse grondwet* (the Dutch constitution). This commission (state commission Biesheuvel) released their report in December 1985. In their report the state commission made recommendations concerning instituting referendums and other popular initiatives. Although the recommendations by the state commission were never implemented, they did influence the public debate. Even in 1996, ten years later, Willem Witteveen (PvdA) starts an article about referendums with a reference to the state commission. In many more articles throughout the nineties talking about the possibility for referendums, this state commission is mentioned.

#### **4.4 The 90's**

In the 1990s' the debate surrounding direct democracy developed further, leading to serious attempts to implement referendums as a tool for public consultation. As mentioned before, one of the trends in the debate concerning referendums was mentioning the state commission Biesheuvel. However, this was not the only state commission used in the debate. In 1993 commission De Koning advised once again to implement a referendum into the Dutch political system. However, the state commission was internally divided on this issue as two members were against this form of public consultation and four members were in favor of it

(Trouw, 1993). The commission members who were against implementing referendums belonged to the liberal party VVD and the Christian democrat party CDA. The commission's final advice for how referendums would function was similar to the suggestion by state commission Biesheuvel, with the exception that they recommend a higher threshold for signatures in order to request a referendum.

One of the largest themes in newspaper articles of this time that were analyzed is the gap between citizens and policymakers. There are articles that report that the majority of Dutch citizens wish to have more say in politics referring to the national electoral research of 1994 (Nationaal verkiezingsonderzoek 1994) by Dutch statistics bureau CBS. Many of the analyzed newspaper articles of this time highlight that referendums are a necessity in order to repair the Dutch political system. However, they also report on the dangers. Especially newspapers with a more Christian background put more emphasis on the dangers of implementing the tool of a referendum. This is in line with the stances of the Christian parties in parliament at this time. A reoccurring argument against the referendum is that it is a single-issue measure and could lead to confusion if it is not entirely clear. Dangers such as less protection for minorities are hardly reported on. This could be because of the previously mentioned increasing support for parties with a negative stance towards certain minority groups. This creates the sense that the discourse between 1990 and 1999 surrounding the concept of implementing direct democracy in the Netherlands was one of creating the hegemony that more means of direct democracy were a necessity. Among more leftist groups there was unease about the lack of implementation of any means of direct democracy by the cabinet despite several recommendations and a dire situation. However, even among leftist parties there was still division on this issue. Among Christian and liberal parties there was little support for referendums and direct democracy as they saw a danger in the usage of referendums. They did not assume that it would be implemented and used in a manner that was clear and helpful.

Newspaper articles presented the possibility of referendums as a positive development but with a critical footnote. However, this footnote for the most part lacked arguments for the protection of individual rights of minorities. Examples of the critique given are that it might lead to more conservative policy, that the referendum isolates a subject from the rest of the decision forming, and that it moves away from the parliamentary system.

#### **4.5 Nacht van Wiegel**

The increasing support for the referendum in the 90's led to an increase in support for the democrat party D66. This party entered a coalition in 1998 on the condition that the referendum would be implemented. The proposal got accepted in the second chamber of parliament but did not get the required two thirds of votes in the first chamber. The one vote that made a difference was that of Hans Wiegel (VVD). He went against the policy of his party because he was against the referendum. After the constitution change was rejected, D66 was forced to rethink its position within the coalition. The discourse surrounding this event was divided in the way each side framed the story. Some focused on the courage it required to go against the party and stand up for what you believe in. Whereas others focused on how his solo action put the cabinet in jeopardy. Important to note is that this proposition to change the constitution in order to allow a referendum got so much support that it had a majority in both the first and second chamber of parliament. This showcases the large support for the referendum at this time, although there was still opposition. The discourse was now influenced by this event in such a way, that some framed being against the referendum as an egotistical attitude whereas others framed it as courageous and staying true to your values.

#### **4.6 Temporary law referendum**

After the failed attempt to implement the referendum in the constitution in 1999, the political parties in favor of direct democracy had to find a new way to obtain this goal. A year later, the second cabinet of Kok presented a proposal for a temporary law referendum. This temporary law would last from 2001 until 2005. The largest contextual element of influence in the debate surrounding this proposal appears to be the previously failed attempt to change the constitution to allow for a referendum and the accompanying long debate (L.I.F. Cook, 2016). This also includes an argument that this temporary law would be necessary for the stability of the ruling cabinet, as the failure of the previous attempt created tension between multiple parties. The argument against this proposal by the left-wing parties GroenLinks and SP was that the thresholds for a referendum were too high. These high thresholds are mainly a result of the stance by PvdA and VVD, indicating that they want to preserve the representative democracy and do not want to govern through referendums. Criticisms of the proposal often focused on the undermining of representative democracy and that this would possibly not help, or even worsen, the gap between voters and policymakers. VVD was under heavy criticism as they claimed to be in principle against the referendum, however, would vote in favor of it as a compromise. However, whether they would vote in favor was also questioned due to the earlier mentioned Nacht van Wiegel. None of the main arguments of factions in parliament appear to directly reference the protection of minorities (L.I.F. Cook, 2016). Notable is that Pim Fortuyn, an important figure in Dutch political history, was in favor of direct democracy in order to break the “party cartel”, an argument that is used in the current day debate by Thierry Baudet.

As this temporary law came to an end in 2005, left-wing parties PvdA and GroenLinks tried to keep the means of referendum. Coalition party D66 was in favor of this proposal but the rest of the cabinet were opposed to it. One of the often-heard criticisms was that during this

time the referendum was never used on a national level. This could have been due to the high thresholds for a referendum as there have been attempts to hold a referendum, most notably by the left-wing parties, but these have failed.

#### **4.7 2005-2015**

After the rise of Pim Fortuyn and his death in May 2002, right-wing anti-immigration populism would reach a new level of popularity (R. Koopmans & J. Muis, 2009). Fortuyn can even be argued to be the founder of Dutch anti-immigration right-wing populism (J. van der Staak, 2019). In the period between 2005 and 2015 there is a rise of politicians that would follow in his footsteps, most notably Geert Wilders and his party PVV in 2006. Other politicians were also forced to react to this new and popular movement. These populists changed the discourse surrounding direct democracy as the concept was now tied to politicians that had strong anti-immigration values and wanted to implement direct democracy to break up the political system. This turned stances in favor of referendums into a more extreme position in contrast to the previous situation where it was almost hegemony. The post-Fortuyn era is the first time that the debate around direct democracy was tied to a debate surrounding the position of minorities in the Netherlands. Both the party of Pim Fortuyn and the parties inspired by him gained a lot of support but also created a lot of opposition from other political parties. This is likely a cause for a declining support for referendums as many political parties refused to cooperate with the parties inspired by Fortuyn.

In 2013 an initiative was started by parties PvdA, GroenLinks and D66 to allow for an advisory referendum. This proposal passed with support from both left and right wing parties. Parties such as VVD and CDA were still opposed to this proposal. The proposal was accepted in April 2014 and took effect in July 2015.



#### **4.8 Law advisory referendum**

Soon after the law took effect enough signatures were raised to request a referendum. This initiative came from the newly founded party GeenPeil, which is in reference to the forum website GeenStijl. This website offers a platform for politically incorrect messages and videos. Some of the users were far-right supporters. The referendum they requested was about an EU association with Ukraine, but the discourse indicates that for a lot of supporters of this referendum it was also about being anti-EU. This discourse furthermore confused voters as they made it seem as if this association was a gateway for the Ukraine to enter the EU whereas this was not officially the case. This led to a discussion on whether the referendum is a good system to have in place. After the referendum was won by those against the association with Ukraine, voters felt abandoned by the Dutch government because it did not lead to the actions they demanded of it. When shortly afterwards in Britain the Brexit referendum passed this fueled the debate in the Netherlands on why referendums are not a good tool for governance. However, this also sparked support for a referendum for a Nexit, where the Netherlands would leave the EU as well. This movement was mainly led by PVV leader Geert Wilders.

The next referendum would be in March 2018. This referendum concerned the law on intelligence and security services. The new law would pose serious threats to the privacy of normal citizens. The referendum became a discussion between privacy and security. The question became to what extent the government would be allowed to invade the privacy of its citizens to ensure security and fight criminality. After the referendum was won by those against the new law, minor changes were made in the law that would ensure more privacy for Dutch citizens, but this still felt like the government did not do enough with the message given with the referendum.

#### **4.9 Current discourse**

The law advisory referendum was retracted in 2018 with the minimal majority in the second chamber of parliament and a small majority in the first chamber of parliament (M. van Ast & E. van der Aa, 2018). The retraction of the referendum was initialized by the coalition parties VVD, CDA, D66 and ChristenUnie. Socialist party SP proposed to have a referendum about the abolishment, but this did not get a majority. This caused a part of the Dutch population to feel passed over by the government in its decision making only furthering the gap between voters and policy which was the reason for having referendums in the first place.

Mainly D66 was heavily criticized for their decision to abolish the advisory referendum as they have been strong supporters of referendums in the past. They tried to justify this by stating that they are in favor of a binding referendum but against an advisory referendum.

In 2016 a political party was started called Forum voor Democratie (Forum for Democracy). This party was inspired by Fortuyn and are proponents of direct democracy. They have influenced the discourse by publishing intellectual papers and actively participating in the media. They are a far-right anti-immigration and anti-enlightenment party. They have tried to make direct democracy synonymous with the term real democracy. This terminology is also found in certain movements that recently fought for direct democracy such as the Dutch yellow vest movement (C. Arends, 2019).

Now that the most vocal support for direct democracy is coming from anti-immigration parties, the concept of referendums has been tied to it. This could be a reason why there is more opposition to direct democracy now than there has been before. In public discourse, being in favor of direct democracy can be associated to supporting the anti-immigration

policies of parties such as Forum voor Democratie or PVV. Furthermore, since Brexit and the Ukraine referendum, referendums can be associated to anti-EU values. This causes the tool to be evaluated in public discourse not as a tool itself but as a possibility for policies that can be controversial. The discourse might give an indication that if the tool would be implemented right now, the parties that have fought for the tool will try to use for anti-immigration and anti-EU ends.

## **5. (Anti-) Enlightenment tradition**

### **5.1 What is the (Anti-)Enlightenment?**

After analyzing the discourse surrounding direct democracy, it is possible to place the discursive battle surrounding direct democracy in a larger tradition. The Enlightenment is a movement from the heart of the eighteenth century, associated with political revolutions and ideals such as the French Revolution of 1789. Although the historical period of the Enlightenment has come to an end, as an intellectual and social movement the tradition set forth by the Enlightenment has no definite end (W. Bristow, 2010). The Enlightenment placed value in science and progression over religion and tradition, it put individualism over collectivism and gave us representative democracy and human rights. The anti-enlightenment in turn was a criticism of the Enlightenment movement and believed in a form of relativism. They believe there is no such thing as universalism and thus inequality is normal. Based on this view in anti-enlightenment theory, representative democracy which aims to protect the rights of all minorities, seems to be out of touch with reality.

### **5.2 (Anti-)Enlightenment thought**

In order to showcase the thought of the anti-Enlightenment movement, there will be a focus on two philosophers namely Vico and Burke. Giambattista Vico is seen as a forefather to the anti-Enlightenment tradition, representing its ideas even before the movement has started. Vico criticized the Enlightenment movement in its focus on the natural sciences over history. He theorized that studying historical facts gives us information about reality and thus should not easily be discarded as the Enlightenment tradition threatened to do (I. Berlin, 1985). Vico believed that the social world is in principle more intelligible than the natural world since it is the creation of man (W. J. Mills, 1981). Within Vico there is again the criticism that has been expanded upon earlier that this Enlightenment way of thinking is out of touch with reality and

is less intelligible.

Burke is a philosopher who is famous in part for criticizing the French revolution and has as such been labeled as a counter revolutionary. He is also at the origins of liberal conservatism—a form of conservatism that embraces certain liberal values (S. Lakoff, 1998). Lakoff notes that although Burke was critical of an aristocracy of birth, he was also critical of a notion of universal equality. Burke furthermore places importance in prejudices, especially if these have prevailed for a long time. This is an attitude that is visible in many current-day anti-Enlightenment movements. Even though many of Burke's ideas align with the anti-Enlightenment movements that are trying to make direct democracy into a possibility, Burke himself was very critical of this form of democracy. He believed this form of democracy would have too much power. Whereas kings never have complete power, a perfect democracy would, and this could potentially be dangerous.

Sternhell in his book *The Anti-Enlightenment Tradition* focusses mainly on identifying right-wing movements and parties as still following the anti-enlightenment tradition. However, this view is criticized as to some extent this same tradition can be seen in left-wing politics as well (G. Garrard, 2011). This shows us that the distinction between enlightenment and anti-enlightenment can at times be blurry. For instance, liberalism appears to have aspects of both enlightenment and anti-enlightenment traditions.

A common misconception is that the anti-enlightenment tradition fights for the past while the enlightenment tradition fights for the future. Instead it is best thought of as that both are fighting for a different future with an emphasis on different aspects. This second modernity for the anti-enlightenment movement is one that is not built upon the notions of universal rights or equality but one where the nation becomes of key importance (I. Maly, 2018).

### **5.3 Collectivism versus individualism**

The concept of direct democracy or the referendum is one of collectivism. It places the importance in the group rather than the individual. As a collective the decisions are made but at the risk of the protection of the individual rights. These individual rights are not protected against the tyranny of the majority within a direct democracy unless there are some external measures limiting the possibilities of the direct democracy. This concept of placing collectivism over individualism is one associated with the values of the anti-Enlightenment. This collectivist thought in the anti-Enlightenment tradition can be traced back to Rousseau who believed that the common good of the whole of society must always outweigh the rights of individuals to make their own choices. Rousseau has been credited the inauguration of the counter-Enlightenment despite having elements of Enlightenment within his political theory (A. M. Melzer, 1996).

This is in opposition to the individualist ideas of the Enlightenment with thinkers such as John Locke who believed that the individual rights of the people ought to be protected. The rights he specifically talked about were life, liberty and estate (property). These rights are natural rights according to him and stem from natural law. The reasoning he gave to protect these rights is that these rights could never willingly be surrendered in a social contract as it would go against the purpose of the state. The core aim in forming the state is the protection of these rights.

Within the thought of radical enlightenment there are certain inalienable rights, such as universal human rights, that could never be violated. This is in direct conflict with the collectivism and relativism that is portrayed by the anti-enlightenment thinkers. There could be times in which violating the human rights of some could be in the interest of the many.

#### **5.4 (Anti-)Enlightenment today**

It may seem out of place to identify the battle for a democratic tool, not in the democratic tradition of enlightenment, but instead in its counterpart the anti-enlightenment. However, it undermines the universal protections and values that are present in a representative government and instead paves the way for a possibility to enforce the values of the anti-enlightenment. It comes thus at no surprise that one of the main proponents for direct democracy, Forum voor Democratie, has been identified as an anti-enlightenment movement (J. van der Staak, 2019). In turn we can see those politicians who are against implementing direct democracy appeal to the ideas and values of enlightenment. Thus, the battle for or against direct democracy is in part a continuation of the conflict between the traditions of enlightenment and anti-enlightenment.

## **6. Survey**

### **6.1 Usage of the survey**

Now that the history, discourse and the larger tradition have been analyzed, it is time to look at the values and attitudes in the Dutch society. This research will use the European Values Study (EVS) in order to see to what extent implementing a form of direct democracy would fit the values and opinions of the Dutch general public. The data used in this research will be of three different points in time; 1999, 2008 and 2017. The first point in time, 1999, will give us data on before there were any means of direct democracy in the Netherlands. However, this year a law would almost be accepted that would allow the usage of a referendum (see 3.2). So, it will give us information on a time in which politics were moving towards allowing a referendum though it was still rejected with a small margin. The second point in time, 2008, will give us information on a time in which there is no means of referendum and there will not be any for a several years to come. The third point in time, 2017, is a time in which referendums are a large theme in Dutch politics. The tool of an advisory referendum has become usable and has been used. As described in chapter 3, the results of the referendum were not implemented by the government leading to unrest and a loss of trust in politics. This point in time will thus give an insight into a time in which there were tools of direct democracy available and used however these tools were often ignored. Certain questions will only use the 2017 dataset as for the evaluation of the values in Dutch society only the most recent is applicable. This is because values and attitudes change over time and thus the values of 1999 would not necessarily say anything that relates to whether direct democracy is applicable to the values and attitudes of current day Dutch society. The data will consist of frequency tables and will not use control variables. This is because the aim is to measure the attitudes of the general public.



## 6.2 Questions 2017

The questions selected for this research that are only analyzed in the 2017 dataset are the following:

Question 6: *Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?*

v49: *Work is a duty towards society*

Respondents are asked to reply on a scale from one to five, with one being agree strongly and five being disagree strongly. The reason for selecting this question is that it conveys a value of collectivism over individualism. It measures whether the importance of a job is to serve society instead of the individual.

Question 32: *On this card you see a number of opposite views on various issues. How would you place your views on this scale?*

v103: A scale from one to ten. One being *Individuals should take more responsibility for providing for themselves*. Ten being *The state should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for*.

The reason for selecting this question is that it provides insight in to what extent people wish to see individualism or collectivism in terms of state provisions.

Question 34: *If you had to choose, which one of the things on this card would you say is most important?*

v110: *First choice*

Respondents are asked to choose between four different options. Option one is *maintaining order in the nation*. Option two is *giving people more say in important government decisions*. Option three is *fighting rising prices*. Option four is *protecting freedom of speech*.

The reason for selecting this question is to see what percent of people believe *giving people more say in important government decisions* is a top priority. This could give an indication on how important a means of direct democracy might be to the public.

Question 38: *Please look at this card and tell me, for each item listed, how much confidence you have in them, is it a great deal, quite a lot, not very much or none at all?*

v130: *Political parties*

v131: *Government*

The reason for selecting this question is that it gives insight to the trust in politics and the governing system. If there is little confidence in the government, it might be an indication that a change has to be made to the system.

### **6.3 Questions 1999-2017**

The variables analyzed from 1999 until 2017 are the following:

Confidence: Parliament.

Respondents are asked to rate their confidence in parliament on a four-point scale from “a great deal” to “none at all”.

The reason for selecting this variable is that it gives an indication whether the confidence in parliament has changed over time. There might be a change due to the actions by parliament concerning referendums.

Rate political system for governing country.

Respondents are asked to rate how satisfied they are with how the political system is functioning in their country on a ten-point scale with one being the lowest and ten being the highest.

The reason for selecting this variable is that the political system in 2017 was different from that of previous waves as there was a possibility for referendums. There could be a change in the response to this question based on the different system.

## 6.4 Findings

When asked whether work is a duty towards society 65,2% of the valid responses in 2017 indicate that they agree or strongly agree with this statement (see Appendix: Table 1). This could be an indication of a collectivist attitude within the Dutch society as work is regarded as important for the collective instead of for the individual by the majority. However, when asked about individual versus state responsibility for providing, the majority leans towards an individual responsibility (see Appendix: Table 2). This is an indication of individualism. However, there is a large spread between the responses, making it hard to draw concrete conclusions. Combined, these two tables appear to indicate a prevalence of both individualist and collectivist attitudes between different respondents. This divide is further emphasized when looking at the trust in government. 49,6% of the respondents claim to have quite a lot or a great deal of confidence in the government whereas 50,4% of the respondents claim to have not very much confidence or none at all (See Appendix: Table 3). It must be noted that the percentage of people that claims to have no confidence at all in the government is higher than the percentage of people having a great deal of confidence in the government (8,5% versus 3,2%). There appears to be a significant difference between the confidence of respondents in the government and their confidence in political parties. Of the respondents, 75,2% claim to have not very much confidence in the government or none at all (See Appendix: Table 4). Respondents were asked to choose which aim is most important to them, with a choice between four options. The options were; maintaining order in the nation, more say in government decisions, fighting rising prices and protecting freedom of speech. The aim *more say in government decisions*, is the least frequently chosen option with 11,3% of the responses (See Appendix: Table 5). The most frequently chosen option is *protecting the freedom of speech*. This could be an indication that the request for protecting civil rights is higher than the request for a more direct democracy.

Between 1999 and 2017 there have been some interesting shifts in attitudes towards parliament and the political system. In 1999 54,3% of respondents expressed having quite a lot, or a great deal of confidence in parliament. After 1999 there is a clear decrease in confidence visible. In 2008 only 46,9% of respondents expressed this attitude and this decreased further to 44,3% in 2017 (See Appendix: Tables 6 & 8). This means that there has been a 10% decrease in confidence in parliament between 1999 and 2017. The majority of the Dutch respondents appear to have little or no confidence in parliament since 2008. This decrease in trust in parliament could be correlated to the decrease of indicated satisfaction with the political system. On a scale from one to ten, one being the lowest and ten being the highest, respondents were asked to indicate their satisfaction with the functioning of the current political system. In order to clarify the data, different responses will be grouped together. Dissatisfaction is marked by scores from one to four, a neutral response is a five and positive responses will range from six to ten. Of the respondents of 1999, 75,9% were satisfied with the political system. A total of 11,5% were dissatisfied (See Appendix: Table 9). Of the measured years, this appears to have been the most satisfied. A sharp decrease in satisfaction occurred in 2008. The total of satisfied respondents was 60,6%, a decrease of 15,3% in 9 years. In 2017 there is both a rise in satisfied responses and in dissatisfied responses, as there are less people voting neutral (See Appendix: Table 7). This might be an indication of an increasing divide among Dutch citizens. In total 65,4% of the respondents in 2017 rated their satisfaction with a six or higher and 26,1% with a four or lower as opposed to 21,8% in 2008.

Both distrust in parliament and dissatisfaction with the current political system are at the highest they have been for two decades, indicating that there needs to be a change. However, there seems to be a large divide which complicates which measures must be taken.

## **7. Evaluation**

### **7.1 Summary**

After analyzing the context of direct democracy in the Netherlands, it is possible to evaluate this tool of governance and whether it is beneficial to implement it. First, the previous chapters will be summarized to get the full context. The Netherlands has a difficult history with referendums and direct democracy with various changing attitudes. A referendum stood at the forefront of the first constitution for the Dutch citizens. However, even though this referendum allowed more people to vote than would be possible for a long time afterwards, most people were not allowed to vote. The referendum eventually passed through the promise of being able to use local churches again instead of gaining support for the entire constitution itself. The negative vote for the first referendum concerning the constitution does not appear to have been taken into full account. Not taking the results of referendums or the advices to implement them into full account seems to be a trend throughout the entire history of direct democracy in the Netherlands. Several state commissions in the previous decades have been asked to research the functioning of the Dutch political system. Multiple times the advice has been to implement some form of direct democracy. The exact advice for how it ought to be implemented has varied. As the available tools in society have changed, such as the presence of the internet, the views on what the thresholds for a referendum ought to be have changed. However, more importantly, there have been multiple views on whether the referendum ought to be binding or advisory. Eventually, the Netherlands choose to implement advisory referendums with the consequence that the government could and would get away with not taking the outcome of the referendum seriously. This has likely led to a decreasing trust in the government and its political system and led to confusion among Dutch voters. Furthermore, the system of voting that was in place for the referendums also led to confusion as there were three options for voters to get the result they wanted; voting in favor, voting against or not

voting. Not voting became an option because of the threshold for minimum amount of voter turnout which could make the referendum invalid. Especially in recent years, both the concept of a referendum and the referendums that were held implied more than just the concrete matter at hand. The concept of referendums and direct democracy has been increasingly tied to populism and anti-immigration, or anti-EU values. Because of this, the first referendum in the time of the law advisory referendum was officially about an EU association with Ukraine but was implicitly a vote on the European Union itself. Because of the confusion caused by the referendums and for what causes they were implemented the Dutch government eventually chose, as the first democratic country in modern time, to abolish this tool of direct democracy already after a few years of implementing it. However, even after abolishing it, a new state commission advised the implementing of a binding referendum in order to maintain the legitimacy of the Dutch political system. To this day there is a battle for direct democracy, now fought mainly by right-wing populist parties, and a necessity for a change in the political system. However, this battle now represents more than just the referendum, it is now representative for a battle in favor of the anti-enlightenment tradition.

## **7.2 Dangers of Direct Democracy**

The field of political philosophy has a longstanding debate on what the best form of government is and in what situation. This part will look at what political philosophy has to say about the dangers of implementing direct democracy and how that could relate to the situation in the Netherlands.

Plato's *Republic* is one of the earliest accounts in philosophy that has talked about a democratic system. Plato lived in Athens in which there was a form of direct democracy, however only a small amount of people could vote. Plato's Socrates was famously critical of

this system. He believed that it would be wiser not to make policy based on the opinions of any citizen but instead to have (philosopher) kings. Rulers that know what they are doing and are wise. He compared this to a ship of state (Book VI: 488a-489d). In order to correctly navigate a ship it is best to use a skillful navigator, which would be a philosopher in the case of the state. To let all the sailors, who overestimate their knowledge of sailing, govern will not help the ship sail in the right directions. Therefore, to let all the citizens decide on the policies made by government is not necessarily going to lead the government in the right directions. This argument is based on the fact that direct democracy allows for laymen instead of experts to decide on policy. When holding referendums in the Netherlands this same criticism applies. All citizens will be allowed to vote on certain laws even though they might not have adequate knowledge of it. This might produce policies that are not in the best interest of the state or its citizens. This is one of the things feared by Dutch political parties that are in favor of the European Union as they think a referendum might cause the Netherlands to have to leave the EU even though these parties think being part of this union is beneficial to the Netherlands. It also reminds of the view of Hegel that the course of history is or ought to be leading towards freedom. However, whether letting the people rule instead of experts might not contribute to this aim of freedom as their decisions can infringe on the freedoms of others.

One of the benefits of representative democracy is that if executed correctly, there is a possibility for minorities to be represented in government. This can make sure that their interests are listened to and their individual rights are protected. Implementing direct democracy bypasses this form of protection as policy is made on majority rule. John Stuart Mill described this in his concept of tyranny of the majority. In his book *On Liberty* Mill analyses a trend that tyranny of a government is combatted by having the people rule. This, in his opinion, is in discourse wrongly attributed to self-governance. He says that it is not the people governing themselves, but instead individuals being governed by a majority. Whereas

self-governance seems to be a positive aim, this newfound tyranny can cause new forms of oppression. This view has a parallel in Dutch discourse surrounding direct democracy. Those in favor of referendums influence the discourse by implying that the current form of government is not the will of the people and therefore is some form of tyranny. They then imply that in order to get rid of any form of tyranny the people ought to rule themselves through referendums. In current discourse by Dutch parties in favor of direct democracy there is little mention of this not meaning that individuals rule themselves but instead that every individual is ruled by the majority. This will not further the individual rights of people; in fact the opposite is applied as the individual rights are no longer fully represented. However, Dutch proponents of direct democracy do not want a full direct democracy, instead they want to implement it into the already existing structure of representative democracy. The question then arises whether this will provide enough protection for individual rights. Some parties might argue that having checks in place that prevent human rights or the rights in the constitution to be violated through a referendum is enough protection for the individual rights of minorities. However, every individual is still at risk of some form of tyranny from the majority. Furthermore, we have seen in contemporary times that the battle for the referendum has been tied to far-right anti-immigration parties. This could be an indication that they might try to boycott laws that would further the positions of minority groups. Even though this would then not directly lead to a decrease in the freedom of this groups, it does hinder the progression of their position in society. Dutch society can be argued to still have remnants of their colonial past in their attitudes, judicial system and the like. Hindering the progress of creating more equality could therefore be seen as a significant problem for minority groups.

At the core of a correctly functioning direct democracy is the supply of information to the citizens. If the information provided to them is inadequate for judging the situation it cannot be expected that letting the people vote will lead to a correct policy. With the wide usage of



the internet in the Netherlands, false information is easily spread. Furthermore, sometimes the discourse surrounding a referendum can suggest a different meaning to the referendum than is actually the case. In both the Netherlands and other countries, fake news and false information is becoming an increasing threat to the supply of information to the voters. Sometimes the government can also have reasons to withhold certain information from the public even though they would need this information to make an informed decision. In the case of the referendum about security and intelligence services, it is likely that the average Dutch citizen knows less about certain threats to society than the government. Because of this they might think that in the matter of privacy versus security, privacy could be more accounted for. They can however not properly make this estimation if they are not properly informed on the dangers and the importance of increased security. This new law came at a time that there was an increased threat of terrorism for the Netherlands, of which the Dutch government knows more than the citizens do.

There is also a symbolic issue with allowing direct democracy in the Netherlands. As the movement is currently dominated by right-wing anti-immigrant parties, allowing the referendum as a means of governance might be seen as endorsing the views of these parties. The battle for direct democracy since the rise of Pim Fortuyn has become so associated with the battle against immigrants and enlightenment traditions that it becomes hard to separate these two. Therefore, allowing the referendum will likely be seen as a victory and acknowledgement of these movements. This could lead to resistance of parties in the enlightenment tradition and of citizens that are opposed to the ideas of these anti-enlightenment parties.

Another issue is that both the tool of a referendum and the results of referendums might not in actuality have the support of the majority and represent their views. In the Netherlands voters choose for parties instead of specific policies. This means that a voter can have all kinds of

different motivations to vote for a certain party. Because of this, election results cannot easily be paralleled with support for direct democracy. As it is unlikely that the current parties in favor of direct democracy will form a majority in parliament by themselves, it is hard to conclude a majority support for implementing direct democracy. If there is not a majority in support of the referendum, it might be a better option to find other solutions to tackle the problems which allowing for a referendum would attempt to solve. Furthermore, with the past referendums it has been unclear whether the winning vote was also the attitude of the majority of people. This is because the voter turnout differs from the full population. Those that are strongly against the law which the referendum concerns are more likely to go vote. Whereas those in favor of the law could also strategically not vote in the hope that the voter turnout is so low that the results are illegitimate. Unless there is a mandatory system of voting, questions can be raised as to whether it represents the majority of people, especially in a system where non-voting can be strategic.

### 7.3 Benefits of Direct Democracy

Even though there are dangers to implementing direct democracy in the Netherlands, there are also good reasons for doing it and certain benefits that the Netherlands can gain from it. As multiple state commissions have already stated, there is a notable gap between citizens and policy within the current political system. This gap is not viable for long term functioning and legitimacy of the government. Within the field of political philosophy there have been numerous thinkers that have expanded on the idea of legitimacy of government and the position of direct democracy in a ruling system.

According to the view of political philosopher Rousseau, the only legitimate form of government is one of direct democracy. He writes that the moment a people allows itself to be represented, it is no longer free and even no longer exists. Representative democracy is thus not only a bad system according to his theory, it is in fact a contradiction in itself as representation and freedom or autonomy are incompatible. However, Rousseau was still very critical of a democratic state. He thought it would only be viable in a small state but also thought this state would inevitably be usurped by larger nation-states which would cause it to lose its democracy. He even went as far as to write “If there were a people of Gods, they would govern themselves democratically. So perfect a Government is not suited to men.” (The Social Contract, Book III: Chapter 4). In using direct democracy to rule a government one gets rid of the danger of private interests of the rulers. When using a representative government, or almost any other government than direct democracy, there is a risk that the people that make and execute laws have a private interest in mind. By using the entire population to rule, Rousseau expects this danger to be gone. The reasoning proposed by Rousseau is one that can be seen in both the parties against and in favor of the referendum. Those in favor of direct democracy use his arguments of it being the only real democracy and that it must be used to defend against the private interests of politicians. Whereas the people

against referendums use the reasonings Rousseau gave that it would be good, however not viable in practice.

For the American philosopher Dewey, democracy as a way of life is needed for individual self-development and growth. Using his theory and applying it to the Netherlands would give the impression that by implementing direct democracy, all the citizens will be stimulated to discuss and think about political matters. Furthermore, direct democracy could be used to fight oppression. For Dewey an important requirement for implementing direct democracy would likely be that the education must be scaled accordingly. He has called schools the ‘churches of democracy’ and if the Dutch government is to implement direct democracy, they ought to further the democratic values and thinking in the schools as to prepare the citizens for their newfound responsibility. However, upon implementing this new education system it could be criticized to be indoctrination of certain ideals above others. How to structure this democratic education would become a new item of discussion. Before, there has been the mention of protection of minorities, however Dewey is one of the many philosophers that pinpoint an oppression of a majority by the wealthy few. By furthering democracy in the political sphere, there might come a democratic attitude in other spheres such as in companies which could further the position of the workers. This could possibly increase equality in the Netherlands. Interesting about this idea is that it is mostly associated with left-wing political theory such as Marxism, whereas the battle for direct democracy in the Netherlands is currently dominated by parties that are associated with right-wing politics.

An important benefit of implementing direct democracy is that it might decrease the gap between citizens and policymakers and further the trust in politics. As been mentioned before, this is an issue that in the past has already led to state commissions advising the implementation of a referendum. However, given the history of direct democracy in the Netherlands, where results are often to a certain extent ignored, it could only lead to increased

trust if the referendum is binding. If the referendums will be advisory as has been in the past, it could add to the idea that the government is not listening to their citizens and that making your voice heard as a citizen is useless. Furthermore, by allowing a binding referendum the Dutch government will express trust in their citizens. Whereas the recent history concerning referendums has given the impression that they do not necessarily trust their citizens, which could lead to less support for the government. Showcasing trust reciprocates trust from the public and distrust breeds distrust (P. Sztompka, 2000) therefore allowing a binding referendum is a sign of trust that could be beneficial to the position of the government in the eyes of the people. However, referendums and direct democracy are not the only ways to combat the gap between citizens and government and to increase trust in government. The government is in a position that it needs to act in order to combat these problems but allowing for binding referendums is not the only option.

#### **7.4 Preventing Dangers**

As established by now, implementing direct democracy offers certain benefits but brings dangers with it as well. The question now arises whether there are ways to implement direct democracy while accounting for these dangers in a manner that offers the same or similar benefits.

One way to prevent some of the dangers is to influence the discourse and hegemony surrounding direct democracy. By steering it away from anti-immigrant and anti-enlightenment values, these values will not be reinforced and legitimized upon the implementation of the referendums. Furthermore, it might be possible to influence the discourse in such a manner that implementation of direct democracy can be used to further the rights of individuals within the Dutch society. This would mitigate or even eliminate some of the dangers lurking within direct democracy in the current state. However, this is not an easy task.

Another concern is that implementing direct democracy will lead to policy that is not the most advantageous to Dutch society. It might be possible to mitigate this by implementing limitations for referendums and furthering democratic education. By limiting referendums, it can be possible to make sure that the public cannot vote on issues that would require experts. However, this poses the problem that the government would then not display the trust needed in the public, which could cause distrust in government (P. Sztompka, 2000). Limiting referendums thus does not seem to be the best solution if the aim of having this tool is to increase trust in politics. Furthermore, if the aim is to decrease the gap between citizens and policy then limiting what they can vote on and when this is legitimate could cause citizens to not feel like the gap is decreasing. Instead, they might feel like their influence is severely limited, putting more emphasis on the extent to which they cannot influence policy.

Furthering democratic education might seem like a useful measure to implement in the long term. However, in the short term it is hard to realize giving further education to all the citizens eligible to vote. Even if all the Dutch citizens are given democratic education to such an extent to fully comprehend the issues on which they are voting, they might still be presented with false information. This false information could lead the citizens to vote in such a manner that does not fully reflect what they actually want. To my current knowledge there is no means of making sure the citizens are not presented with any false or misleading information yet. It seems impossible to ask of every citizen to be an expert in every issue they vote on to such an extent that they can identify and dismiss information that is misleading or false. Furthermore, even if they had this knowledge then there is still the problem that a referendum can be associated with certain other problems that are not directly the aim of the specific referendum.

In conclusion, there does not seem to currently be a manner in which direct democracy can be implemented in the Netherlands while fully preventing all the possible dangers. However,

some of the dangers can be limited. An example of an effective method to limit certain dangers that direct democracy would pose is influencing public discourse and hegemony so that the tool will become mostly associated with furthering the rights and freedoms of individuals. This will not fully take away the dangers of the tool, nor will it guarantee anything for the future as discourse is dynamic. However, it will offer some needed protection. The more a government will try to ensure safety by limiting the effects of this tool, the less beneficial effect it will have. To gain trust from the public, a certain trust must be given to the public.

## 7.5 Advice

Through the advice of state commissions and analyzing the situation in the Netherlands, it seems clear that a change in the political sphere is either necessary or welcome. The proposed measure of direct democracy that is analyzed here might be one way to tackle the current problems with trust in government and the gap between citizens and policy. However, implementing direct democracy brings dangers and problems with it and the effects of implementing it are debatable. Given these dangers, problems but also benefits, the question must be raised whether it is advisable to implement direct democracy within the context of Dutch society.

Whether direct democracy is beneficial is in part based on which values are deemed more important than others. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that the advice will only be based on the specific Dutch context and cannot easily be applied to other contexts and countries. This advice is also based on the current situation and discourse in the Netherlands, which is bound to change over time. Furthermore, any inclusion of predictions of what might happen if direct democracy is implemented is speculative even though it is informed by history, context and philosophy. It is impossible to state with certainty what will happen, it is only possible to make a prediction of the possibilities.

One of the dangers proposed is the possibility of oppression. When looking at the theory proposed by Mill, it becomes evident that there is a possibility within this system of direct democracy for the majority of people to oppress minority groups. This would be a serious threat to the rights and liberties of citizens in the Netherlands. What makes this threat applicable to the specific context is that in the current situation the discourse is mostly dominated by anti-immigrant and anti-enlightenment parties. This could imply that there is an aim to use the tool of referendum to further a political agenda that would possibly infringe on the rights of certain minority groups. There are multiple ways in which an attempt can be



made to limit this possible effect. There is a possibility of influencing the discourse in such a way that the referendum and direct democracy will be associated with furthering rights of minorities as a collective. However, this poses the problem that after implementing the tool, the discourse can shift and the possibility for using the tool to infringe on the rights of others is still there. Another possibility is to limit on what issues a referendum can be used.

However, referendums can be used to signal a message other than what it officially is about. Furthermore, limiting the uses of a referendum displays a form of distrust in the public which could lead to discontent and lesser trust in government. A third option to limit this danger is to have advisory referendums instead of binding referendums. This would mean that the government can still choose not to implement the result of the referendum. This system has previously been in place, however it led to confusion and discontent by citizens as they felt they were not taken seriously. The results of referendums in the Netherlands have rarely led to the results wanted by the winning group.

Besides oppression of specific minority groups there is also an argument made that every individual is being oppressed by the majority of people. This counters the benefit that proponents of direct democracy might give that it would further self-governance. Instead of self-governing, the majority of people will decide on the policy that is applicable to the individual.

In conclusion, although the implementation of direct democracy within the context of the Netherlands might at first seem as a solution to some of the problems it is facing, the dangers outweigh the benefits. Accounting for these dangers in a way to limit or eliminate them seems to limit the positive effect of implementing direct democracy. Furthermore, there does not appear to be sufficient indication that within the current situation these dangers can be accounted for to such an extent that the tools of direct democracy will not pose a threat to the Netherlands, its governing system and its citizens. There is currently not enough support for

this system and its values to justify this possibly dangerous means. As such the advice of this research is to search for means in which the positive effects might be reached in another way than implementing a means of referendum. The government might need to show their trust in the public and take public consultation more seriously but in the current state it is arguably not beneficial to take this form of public consultation.

## 8. Conclusion

This research evaluated whether reimplementing direct democracy in the Netherlands would be advisable. The analysis made use of history, discourse, a value survey and political philosophy to see whether the referendum is a means that should be applied to solve certain problems that the Dutch political system is facing. The main problems that a referendum would aim to tackle are a gap between citizens and policymakers and a lack of trust in government. However, this tool of direct democracy comes with dangers and problems of its own. It is worth looking into whether these problems outweigh the benefits and whether the tool fits in the Dutch society given its values and history. The discourse surrounding the referendum could give an indication of how it will be used if implemented and what implementing the referendum would symbolize.

The historical analysis showcased that, although the referendum played a crucial role in gaining the constitution in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the history of the referendum in the Netherlands is recent. One of the themes throughout the usage of the referendum in the Netherlands is that the message given by the referendum is often not taken seriously or adhered to. The referendums in the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century passed eventually through a promise concerning the usage of churches instead of adhering to the concerns that were raised in its initial dismissal. In recent times the outcomes of referendums have only led to small changes instead of the aimed results by the winning party. The advisory referendum has been abolished in 2018 with no public consultation and the Netherlands is the first democratic country in recent times to have done so.

Analyzing the discourse surrounding direct democracy in the Netherlands showcases that support for a referendum has been ongoing since the 1980's using multiple forms of discourse by different parties. For a long time, issues such as protection of minority groups were

ignored in the discourse. The interests of minority groups became more relevant after the rise of Pim Fortuyn, who influenced the political debate with a more radical stance on immigration and minorities. Before Fortuyn, there was a form of hegemony that a referendum would be a good addition to the Dutch democratic system, though dangerous to the principles of representative democracy. It was almost implemented but because of an individual straying away from the party policy it was abandoned during the nacht van Wiegel in 1999. Recent discourse surrounding direct democracy is dominated by anti-immigrant political parties and heavily associated with anti-enlightenment values. Implicitly endorsing these principles of anti-enlightenment and justifying the cause of these parties should be done with caution. Analyzing the Dutch values through the European Values Study gives an indication that the Netherlands is divided in their stance towards enlightenment. The amount of support for anti-enlightenment values suggests that some changes to the political system are desired, however the support does not appear as widespread to justify large changes. However, the extent of change that would be desired and acceptable is a matter of speculation and opinion. Based on the interpretation of the data within this research, the conclusion is drawn that implementing direct democracy within the Dutch political system might give too much weight to the smaller part of Dutch society that favors re-introduction and through its symbolic value might not be representative of the current Dutch values in society.

However, the data analyzed also demonstrates that distrust and a lack of confidence in Dutch politics is high to the extent that changes to the political system ought to be made in order to maintain its legitimacy. Even though the data seems to indicate that a change has to be made, it also appears to indicate that the majority of Dutch citizens hold individualistic values.

Direct democracy seems to rely mostly on collectivistic values, as do the proponents of implementing this form of governance in the Netherlands. However, because the Netherlands is so divided in their values that a change in policy to increase support for the government

faces the problem that it might have to include both individualistic and collectivistic values to represent the will of the people.

Using the theories in political philosophy within the Dutch context, certain dangers posed by the implementation of direct democracy are exposed. It becomes apparent that given the discourse and the political system in question, the rights of individuals are not necessarily benefitting from this change. In contrast, it could lead to discriminatory symbolism and policy, and is a threat to minority groups. A proposed benefit would be that the people are further concerned with self-governance, however it can be argued that instead of self-governance it is rather an oppression of the individual by the many. The argument that policy in the Netherlands, upon implementing direct democracy, will represent the views of the majority of the people is also put into question. Given the examples the Netherlands has with direct democracy, it is not necessarily the majority of citizens that win referendums.

Furthermore, the outcome of the referendum in some cases is influenced by factors beside the official aim of the referendum. Finally, majority rule is also not necessarily the best form of governance. It loses representation of minority groups and is ruled by people that are likely not experts in what they are deciding about.

The conclusion drawn in this research is that, although a change is needed in the political system of the Netherlands, implementing direct democracy is not the best way to do so. In its current state, there are not enough means to protect against the dangers that it would pose. Furthermore, it would symbolize views that are not necessarily representative of the Dutch society. It would be advisable to the Dutch government to analyze other options to increase trust and voter influence. If the tool of the referendum is still to be implemented, it would be advisable to take certain measures. The first example of a measure that ought to be implemented is influencing the discourse and hegemony in order to change the symbolism and predicted usage of the referendum. Secondly, the referendum ought either to be binding

or to be listened to in order to not further decrease trust in politics and government. Thirdly, it ought to be analyzed whether there is a way to make sure that the outcome of the referendum is representative of the Dutch society, which has not been the case in the previous system for referendums. Lastly, if possible, certain measures are to be taken that protect the rights of individuals and minority groups, while not coming at the cost of trust. However, it is hard to conceive of such a measure.

There are certain limitations to the research and evaluation conducted. Regarding the section about history, an attempt was made to use as many sources as possible that were reliable, however the history offered here is limited and, in some ways, incomplete. However, it is unlikely that access to further sources would greatly change the analysis. The discourse analysis, similarly, could have surveyed more sources in order to reach conclusions that are as objective as possible, but it is unlikely that this would have a large effect on the conclusions that have been drawn. Finally, the attempt of analyzing the values within the Dutch society does not necessarily fully represent the values that are actually present. This is because assessing values through a limited number of questions is debatable and some values cannot be assessed through direct questions. It does however give a usable indication of the values, but more research into these values is needed. The traditions in which the discourse has been placed are not the only traditions that are present, and the issue is more complex than just a continuation of the discursive battle between these traditions. However, they appear to be important traditions in understanding the context and movements. In the evaluation some political philosophy is used, however, it was mostly focused on Western philosophy, featured mostly white male philosophers and does not necessarily represent contemporary philosophy. Furthermore, the concepts used from philosophy are only explained at a basic level and are more nuanced than the form explained in this research. The theories from the philosophers used stem from different contexts than the context in which they are applied in this research,

thus the research would benefit from philosophers that have theories rooted in the context of current day Netherlands. However, the theories used can still be valuable in evaluating the case for direct democracy. Lastly, an attempt was made to research this topic in as unbiased a manner as possible, however, it can be argued that the conclusions drawn from this research are influenced by the previously existing views of the researcher. An attempt was made to limit this to the furthest extent possible.

Further research in this topic is needed. The history of direct democracy in the Netherlands does not yet have enough sources that are up to date with recent developments. It would also be helpful to have new philosophical theories that take the specific context of the Netherlands in consideration. Furthermore, more research is needed in the assessment of the discourse surrounding direct democracy in the Netherlands, especially with its recent ties to discriminatory views. How Pim Fortuyn influenced the debate and why current parties in favor of direct democracy are often linked to his ideas is also a topic that ought to be further explored.

Most importantly, there needs to be more research into other ways than the referendum to combat the problems that implementing the referendum was meant to solve. It is important that there will be measures to counter these problems, even though the referendum does not appear to be the solution. The advice for not implementing the referendum should thus not be confused with advice to continue with the same system. Rather a core outcome of this research is to preclude further study of the referendum as a solution to the pressing problems of political trust and participation – the benefits here are at best limited. We need to end the debate on the referendum and focus efforts on developing new tools to address these problems.

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## Appendix

**Table 1: Work is a duty towards society (2017)**

*work is a duty towards society (Q12D)*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	agree strongly	394	14,5	15,6	15,6
	agree	1256	46,2	49,6	65,1
	neither agree nor disagree	549	20,2	21,7	86,8
	disagree	272	10,0	10,7	97,6
	disagree strongly	62	2,3	2,4	100,0
	Total	2533	93,1	100,0	

**Table 2: Individual versus state responsibility of providing (2017)**

*individual vs. state responsibility for providing (Q32A)*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	individual responsibility	171	6,3	6,9	6,9
	2	202	7,4	8,1	15,0
	3	368	13,5	14,8	29,7
	4	340	12,5	13,6	43,4
	5	371	13,6	14,9	58,3
	6	364	13,4	14,6	72,9
	7	284	10,4	11,4	84,3
	8	215	7,9	8,6	92,9
	9	63	2,3	2,5	95,5
	state responsibility	113	4,2	4,5	100,0
	Total	2491	91,5	100,0	

**Table 3: How much confidence in: government (2017)***how much confidence in: government (Q38Q)*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	a great deal	79	2,9	3,2	3,2
	quite a lot	1139	41,9	46,4	49,6
	not very much	1029	37,8	41,9	91,5
	none at all	210	7,7	8,5	100,0
	Total	2457	90,3	100,0	

**Table 4: How much confidence in: political parties (2017)***how much confidence in: political parties (Q38P)*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	a great deal	31	1,1	1,3	1,3
	quite a lot	580	21,3	23,6	24,8
	not very much	1451	53,3	59,0	83,8
	none at all	398	14,6	16,2	100,0
	Total	2460	90,4	100,0	

**Table 5: Aims of respondent: most important (2017)***aims of respondent: most important (Q34)*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	maintaining order in nation	851	31,3	33,8	33,8
	more say in important government decisions	285	10,5	11,3	45,2
	fighting rising prices	350	12,9	13,9	59,1
	protect freedom of speech	1029	37,8	40,9	100,0
	Total	2515	92,4	100,0	

**Table 6: How much confidence in: parliament (2017)***how much confidence in: parliament (Q38G)*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	a great deal	79	2,9	3,0	3,0
	quite a lot	1082	39,8	41,3	44,3
	not very much	1167	42,9	44,5	88,8
	none at all	293	10,8	11,2	100,0
	Total	2621	96,3	100,0	

**Table 7: Satisfaction political system (2017)***satisfaction political system (Q42)*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	not satisfied at all	134	4,9	5,2	5,2
	2	117	4,3	4,5	9,7
	3	198	7,3	7,6	17,3
	4	229	8,4	8,8	26,1
	5	222	8,2	8,5	34,6
	6	437	16,1	16,8	51,4
	7	626	23,0	24,1	75,5
	8	471	17,3	18,1	93,6
	9	132	4,9	5,1	98,7
	completely satisfied	35	1,3	1,3	100,0
	Total	2601	95,6	100,0	

**Table 8: How much confidence in: parliament (1999 & 2008)***Confidence: Parliament*

EVS-wave			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1999-2001	Valid	A great deal	46	4,6	4,6	4,6
		Quite a lot	494	49,3	49,7	54,4
		Not very much	402	40,1	40,5	94,9
		None at all	51	5,1	5,1	100,0
		Total	993	99,0	100,0	
	Missing	Don't know	10	1,0		
	Total		1003	100,0		
2008-2010	Valid	A great deal	50	3,2	3,3	3,3
		Quite a lot	660	42,5	43,6	46,9
		Not very much	658	42,3	43,5	90,4
		None at all	145	9,3	9,6	100,0
		Total	1513	97,4	100,0	
	Missing	Don't know	36	2,3		
		No answer	5	,3		
		Total	41	2,6		
	Total		1554	100,0		

**Table 9: Satisfaction political system (1999 & 2008)**

Rate political system for governing country						
EVS-wave			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1999-2001	Valid	Bad	8	,8	,8	,8
		2	7	,7	,7	1,5
		3	26	2,6	2,6	4,1
		4	74	7,4	7,4	11,5
		5	127	12,7	12,7	24,1
		6	240	23,9	23,9	48,1
		7	363	36,2	36,2	84,2
		8	141	14,1	14,1	98,3
		9	12	1,2	1,2	99,5
		Very good	5	,5	,5	100,0
		Total	1003	100,0	100,0	
2008-2010	Valid	Bad	34	2,2	2,2	2,2
		2	29	1,9	1,9	4,1
		3	94	6,0	6,1	10,2
		4	179	11,5	11,6	21,8
		5	271	17,4	17,6	39,4
		6	412	26,5	26,7	66,1
		7	403	25,9	26,1	92,2
		8	111	7,1	7,2	99,4
		9	8	,5	,5	99,9
		Very good	1	,1	,1	100,0
		Total	1542	99,2	100,0	
	Missing	No answer	2	,1		
		Don't know	10	,6		
		Total	12	,8		
Total			1554	100,0		