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The Interreferendum Period:

An Analysis of the Development of Euroscepticism in the Netherlands between the European referenda in 2005 and 2016

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Introduction

In 1952, the Netherlands were among the founders of the European Community of Coal and Steel. The Dutch government supported European integration from the beginning and is seen as one of the most loyal supporters of the European Project. Pro-EU Dutch governments approved European policies with overwhelming support. Apart from some small critical notes in the middle of the '90s and early 2000s, especially situated around the enlargement debate and introduction of the Euro, the growing European integration and Dutch support for it had largely been unquestioned. Europe also played a minor role in the political and public debate.

The result of the European constitutional referendum in 2005 changed this situation however. While a majority of the Dutch parliament supported the proposed EU constitution, more than sixty percent of the Dutch electorate voted 'no'. Dutch politicians did not expect this and had to reconsider their positions on the question of European integration. Furthermore, Europe became a more important political and public matter after it had been overlooked for years and discussed in the parliament without much public attention or media coverage. The result of the referendum proved to be a disappointment for the political elite and showed a gap between them and the Dutch population.

In 2016, eleven years after the rejection of the constitution, the Dutch population voiced an expected 'no' in the referendum about the association treaty of the European Union with Ukraine. This referendum was not organised by the Dutch government, but by weblog *GeenStijl* (meaning: no manners) and two think tanks: *Forum voor Democratie* (Forum for Democracy) and *Burgercomité-EU* (Citizen committee EU). Their initiative *GeenPeil* successfully used a new law stating that a consultative referendum can be initiated by citizens if 300.000 signatures are collected within a certain amount of time. *GeenPeil* (meaning: no poll) surpassed this amount and gathered more than 400.000 signatures before the deadline.

One of the reasons for starting the *GeenPeil* campaign was to increase the influence of citizens within Dutch and European politics. Major European decisions, for example the plan to save Greece and the entrance of new member states, had been taken without the consultation of the Dutch population. *GeenPeil* therefore advocated for more (direct)

democracy, or as their slogan states to ‘save the democracy’.¹ The decision to pick the EU treaty with Ukraine was mostly pragmatic and used as an example of one of ‘those’ decisions that should not be taken that easily without consultation of the populace. In an interview, *Burgercomité-EU* even stated that they do not care about Ukraine, but that they just needed a case to obstruct the EU and weaken its relationship with the Netherlands, since a referendum about EU membership is not possible.²

Although after successfully initiating the referendum the *GeenPeil* organisation stated that they have no opinion and solely wanted to facilitate the referendum, the three initiating organisations all have expressed Eurosceptic statements and argued to vote ‘no’. Thus, the referendum was an expression of discontent with the undemocratic character of the European Union and its practices and concerned a much larger issue than just whether or not the Dutch government should sign the association treaty with Ukraine.

The different situations concerning the referenda in 2005 and 2016 illustrate that much has changed regarding Europe within a decade. Whereas before 2005 Europe was not a ‘hot’ topic, ten years later it is often debated and an initiative as *GeenPeil* can quickly gather almost half a million signatures, with help from the internet as a medium. It is not surprising that the past decade has been difficult for the European Union. After multiple Eurocrises, the financial troubles in Greece and the recent refugee influx, Euroscepticism has grown all over Europe. The Netherlands is no exception to this. The question is however, in what way Euroscepticism has developed in this ‘interreferendum’ period.

Problem Statement and Research Question

The problem that will be researched is how Euroscepticism has developed between the two referenda held in the Netherlands in 2005 and 2016. Have Dutch politicians and political parties become more Eurosceptic as a response to the overwhelming ‘no’ in the 2005 referendum? A lot of research has been conducted since 2005 about the constitutional referendum and the reasons why a majority of the Dutch population voted ‘no’, but studies about developments after 2005 are not as numerous, while it seems that Eurosceptic opinions have become more widespread due to the problems the EU faced and is currently facing. The

¹ GeenPeil, “Wat is GeenPeil? GeenPeil. Meer inspraak in een democratie van iedereen”, accessed 20 March 2016. <https://geenpeil.nl/missie/>.

² “Oekraïne kan ons niets schelen,” 31 March 2016, *NRC Handelsblad*, accessed 10 April 2016, <http://www.lexisnexis.nl>.

referendum in 2016 is a good indication of this development. This research aims to contribute to the current academic debate about Euroscepticism, especially in the Netherlands, using the following research question:

How has Euroscepticism developed in the Netherlands between the referenda in 2005 and 2016 concerning the European Constitution and the association treaty of the European Union with Ukraine?

Apart from answering this question, this research will try to answer several sub questions. The first one is why Euroscepticism has developed in such a way. How can we explain the findings from this research? The second question is if Euroscepticism has become more 'mainstream', accepted and moved towards the political middle. After the 'no' in the 2005 referendum, one would expect that political parties adopted more Eurosceptic and critical positions towards Europe in order to win back the support of the dissatisfied electorate, resulting in a more negative and critical discourse about Europe. Is this the case? The third sub question inquires whether or not Eurosceptic discourse has become more nationalistic. With the rise of the populist far right movements all over Europe, represented by the PVV party in the Netherlands, this will probably be true. The question is however if nationalistic thoughts within Euroscepticism are only limited to this party and its supporters or if they are also adopted by more mainstream parties and opinion makers. The last sub question addresses the role of the media. Do the media amplify Euroscepticism? As this research analyses newspapers articles, it is important to reflect on the role (print) media play in the shaping of Eurosceptic opinions.

Methods, Case Study and Outline

The development of Euroscepticism in the Netherlands will be mapped by analysing Dutch newspaper articles one month prior to the European elections of 2009 and 2014 and the 2016 referendum. These periods have been chosen since the debate about Europe usually increases before elections. It is also a point of reflection where the past, present and future of the European Union are evaluated. It could be argued that it is not fair to compare European elections with a referendum, but, as mentioned above, this referendum is initiated in order to have a say in European affairs as the EU is considered undemocratic by the initiators. The media coverage will therefore not be limited to the question whether or not a treaty with

Ukraine should be signed. The 2016 referendum is a point of evaluation and moment for Dutch citizens to give an opinion about the European Union with the Ukraine treaty as a case.

The chosen newspapers are the *NRC Handelsblad*, *De Volkskrant* and *De Telegraaf*. They each represent a certain political stance and attract a different audience and therefore should give an honest representation of the Dutch debate on European integration. The *NRC* is a liberal, progressive newspaper which is considered to be one of the leading opinion-making publications in the Netherlands. *De Volkskrant* also belongs to this category, but has a social-democratic tradition. *De Telegraaf* is the most read newspaper with a conservative and political right orientation and is comparable to an English tabloid paper containing a lot of entertainment news and sensational headlines.

The news articles from the newspapers in the three periods will be analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. All articles regarding European integration, the European elections and the referendum in a national context will be used. The analysis will not be limited to only articles concerning 'Euroscepticism' for two reasons. The first reason is that Euroscepticism is a counter narrative and only exists because of the process of European integration. Therefore, it is important to use all articles considering 'Europe'. Furthermore, if the research is limited to only articles about Euroscepticism, a judgment has to be made which articles belongs to this category and which does not, influencing the results and creating a certain bias. The qualitative research will focus on identifying themes, terms, words and frames, who said what, when and why. The quantitative research will consist of creating a database where data about the articles can be registered and the frequency of certain themes can be measured. This media content analysis will help to map out the development of Euroscepticism, its frame and discourse. More about the research methods can be found in chapter IV where the results will be discussed.

Before the development of the Euroscepticism in the Netherlands between 2005 and 2016 can be researched, a clear theoretical framework is needed to work with certain definitions and theories, place the research within the academic debate and put it within the Dutch and European context. First, Euroscepticism itself will be defined. For example, how it relates to nationalism and cosmopolitanism and how it has developed in Europe. This will be done in chapter one by researching existing literature about Euroscepticism, nationalism and cosmopolitanism. In order to research Euroscepticism, a clear definition needs to be

established. Chapter two will explain how Euroscepticism developed in the Netherlands before 2005 and after the ‘failed’ constitutional referendum. Using the existing literature about the reasons and motivation behind rejecting the European constitution, Eurosceptic themes to which these reasons belong will be identified to map the development in the case study. The last part of the literature will consider the role the media play when reporting about Europe, how they frame and influence the public debate and what their relationship is with Euroscepticism. This will be done in chapter three. Chapter four will show the results of the case study, analyse them and draw conclusions.

Answering the research question will pave the way for more research regarding Euroscepticism. If certain developments and shifts within Euroscepticism are found, more research needs to be done to answer why they took place. The results from this research could also help to make new policies in order to improve and reform the European Union and restore the support it has lost. The hypothesis of this research is that Euroscepticism has indeed become more prominent and moved toward the political centre over the years. More political parties have adopted Eurosceptic rhetoric in order to stay connected with their voters or to win new ones, i.e. European integration has become a party competition element. This is enhanced by the problems the EU has faced during the past decade.

Chapter I: What is Euroscepticism?

While researching the development of Euroscepticism, it is necessary to work with a proper definition of the phenomenon. To choose a definition it is important to know about the definitions which are used and discussed within the academic debate. The word Euroscepticism itself originated in the United Kingdom in the 1980s. The UK has a long tradition of opposing Europe, feeling culturally different and seeing the European continent as 'the Other'. Logically, this is where the first voices against European integration were heard. After the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, Eurosceptic opinions also increased on the 'Continent'.³

There are many definitions for Euroscepticism and reasons to name for its origin and rise. In short, Euroscepticism is the opposition against European integration and specifically against practices of the European Union. Later on in this chapter explanations and definitions will be given, but one by Hans-Jörg Trenz and Pieter de Wilde in their publication 'Denouncing European integration' is already worth mentioning, since it clearly illustrates the problem. They see Euroscepticism as a form of polity contestation. The European Union is a one-of-a-kind entity with an undefined *finalité*, this is in sharp contrast to the nation as a polity. This makes Euroscepticism probable, expected and gives it its reactive nature and unclear definition, since the process of European integration is also changing and has an uncertain future.⁴

Thus, Euroscepticism itself is a broad and not well defined matter. The aim of this chapter is to discuss different kinds of Euroscepticism and put them in perspective in order to choose or create the best definition to work with regarding the case study. This will be done by reviewing literature about Euroscepticism, its developments and its relation to nationalism and cosmopolitanism.

1.1 Definitions

Most of the research related to Euroscepticism concerns political parties and their policies regarding Europe. Scholars refer to this as party-based Euroscepticism. The majority of the

³ Robert Harmsen and Menno Spiering, "Introduction," in *Euroscepticism: Party Politics, National Identity and European integration*, ed. Robert Harmsen and Menno Spiering (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004), 16,17.

⁴ Hans-Jorg Trenz and Pieter de Wilde, "Denouncing European integration. Euroscepticism as reactive identity formation," *ARENA working paper*, 14 (2009): 3-5.

definitions and studies mentioned below also research this form. Since the database of the case study will mostly contain articles about political parties and their stance related to European politics, this is not a problem. The working definition should however also include non-political actors, for example the initiators of the referendum.

In 1998, Paul Taggart was the first to attempt to properly understand Euroscepticism and compared how it took a place within national party discourse in the then fifteen member states of the EU. Euroscepticism is a relatively new term and originated from journalism rather than political science. Taggart used a broad definition of what Euroscepticism is. In his opinion it is any form of opposition against the process of European integration, whether qualified, unqualified, contingent or outright.⁵

Two years later, Paul Taggart, together with Aleks Szczerbiak, specified this definition and made a distinction between two types of Euroscepticism: hard and soft. Hard Euroscepticism includes parties that are against their country's membership in the European Union and/or the current practice of European integration. Soft Euroscepticism however concerns parties that are not against European integration and the EU membership of their country. They however do not support certain policies, would like to see reduced integration and/or especially reject policies that conflict with national interests.⁶

The most substantial difference between hard and soft Euroscepticism is that parties who belong to the former category oppose EU membership and European integration out of principle, on the other hand the parties belonging to the latter do not have a principled objection. Taggart and Szczerbiak have been using this distinction ever since and kept researching Euroscepticism as part of the Opposing Europe Research Network. (OERN) However, they have slightly changed it over the years after continued criticism from other scholars.⁷

⁵ Paul Taggart, "A Touchstone of Dissent: Euroscepticism in Contemporary West European Party Systems," *European Journal of Political Research*. 3 (1998): 365.

⁶ Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak, "Introduction: Opposing Europe? The politics of Euroscepticism in Europe," in *Opposing Europe. The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism (Vol.1)*, ed. Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 1-15.

⁷ Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak, "Theorising Party Based Euroscepticism: Problem of Definition, Measurement, and Causality," paper presented at the 8th Biannual International Conference of the European Union Studies Association conference, Nashville, 27-9 March, 2003, 2,3.

The two main scholars who criticised Taggart and Szczerbiak's definition in the debate situated around 2002, are Petr Kopecky and Cas Mudde. In their opinion the distinction between hard and soft Euroscepticism did not do justice to the complex situation. Any kind of disagreement with any policy could be labelled as soft Euroscepticism and, as a result, parties which are essentially pro-European integration were also included as Eurosceptic. They also did not agree with the key distinction between hard and soft Euroscepticism, being in support for EU membership.^{8 9}

Both authors felt the need to give a more specific definition and show different positions and attitudes of parties regarding Europe in order to better understand the political situation in East-Central Europe. As a result, Kopecky and Mudde invented a typology with two dimensions having each a set of two opposites resulting in four ideal-types of party positions. The first dimension is 'support for European integration'. Europhiles support the general ideas of European integration, while Europhobes do not. The other dimension is 'support for the European Union' with EU-optimists supporting the practice and future of the EU, while EU-pessimist are not happy with the current state of affairs and seek change.¹⁰

The first ideal-type category is Euroenthusiasts, a combination of Europhile and EU-optimist. They believe in the ideas of European integration and that the EU can realise them. Europragmatists are both EU-optimists and Europhobes. They are usually parties with no ideological position towards European integration and do not support it or oppose it. However, they do support the practice of the EU as it is seen profitable or beneficial for their country. Parties with Europhobe and EU-pessimist opinions are Eurorejects, they reject both the ideas as the practice and future of the EU. Finally, Eurosceptics are those who support the idea of European integration, but not the way they are executed by the European Union. Thus, Kopecky and Mudde define Euroscepticism in the way it was originally used: a group supporting the principle of European integration, but who question the way it is organised or functions.¹¹

⁸ Idem.

⁹ Petr Kopecky and Cas Mudde, "The Two Sides of Euroscepticism: Party positions on European integration in East Central Europe," *European Union Politics*. 3 (2002): 299,300.

¹⁰ Ibidem, 302-310.

¹¹ Idem.

Both the definitions of Taggart and Sczerbiak's and Kopecky and Mudde's and their ways to categorise Eurosceptic parties and groups have been often referred to and mentioned in the past decade of Euroscepticism studies. During the debate at the start of the 21st century, other scholars also tried to define Euroscepticism, but their definitions and theories were less successful. Sofia Vasilopolou, a political scientist who wrote her dissertation on Euroscepticism and the Far Right, offers another categorisation. Although this is a rather new definition and has not been debated much by other scholars, it is included in this paper since it gradually shows different stages and degrees of Euroscepticism.

Whereas Taggart and Sczerbiak divide Euroscepticism into two categories and Mudde and Kopecky explain it as one of the four attitudes towards Europe, Vasilopolou splits it into three types, namely: compromising Euroscepticism, conditional Euroscepticism and rejecting Euroscepticism. The difference between them is whether or not they support the principle, practice and future of the EU. Compromising Eurosceptic parties support the principle and practice of the EU, but reject further integration in the future. Conditional Eurosceptic parties support the principle of the EU, but not its current form. The last category, rejecting Eurosceptic parties, deny the principle, practice and future of the EU.¹²

The abovementioned definitions are all related to party-based Euroscepticism. Hans-Jörg Trenz and Pieter de Wilde, already briefly mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, use a broader definition. First of all, they are of the opinion that Euroscepticism always has to be linked to polity contestation. Since the European Union has neither reached a final form nor an agreement on how the EU should look like, what its competencies should be or even if it should exist, opposition against it is expected. This is in contrast with the nation as a polity for example, which has reached a final form and is not opposed. Secondly, they see Euroscepticism as a discursive formation and counter narrative denouncing European integration. Together these two arguments form their definition, "Euroscepticism is a discursive practice of political opposition to the EU-polity". An important notion in their definition is the contestation of the EU-polity and not policies. This means that opposing EU enlargement and the transfer of more competencies, powers and sovereignty to the EU is Euroscepticism, according to their definition, but that opposing certain EU policies is not.¹³

¹²Vasilopolou, Sofia, "Varieties of Euroscepticism: The Case of the European Extreme Right," *Journal of Contemporary European Research* 5 (2009): 3-23.

¹³ Trenz and De Wilde, "Denouncing European integration", 1-6.

Working Definition

The working definition for this research is based on the definitions and theories mentioned above. First of all, this paper agrees with Trezn and De Wilde that Euroscepticism is a form of polity contestation caused by the uncertainty of what the EU should be or become. It is also agreed that Euroscepticism is a counter narrative, a discursive formation and that it does not concern discussing policies, but the polity. Lastly, Euroscepticism can appear, as Vasilopolou states, in three forms that gradually become more 'hard', as Taggart and Szczerbiak would say, i.e. compromising, conditional and rejecting Euroscepticism. These forms support and/or reject the principle, practice and future of the EU, the polity.

This working definition enables this research to see in what way Euroscepticism has developed in the Netherlands. If a Dutch party in the 2009 election campaign proclaims that the EU should be more efficient by reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies, it will not be considered Eurosceptic. In case that this same party states in the 2014 European parliamentary elections that the EU should become more efficient by reducing its political powers, it will be considered Eurosceptic. Making this distinction, and keeping in mind the compromising, conditional and rejecting forms of Euroscepticism, the development of Euroscepticism can be illustrated in the most accurate way.

1.2 The Development of Euroscepticism

The amount of studies about Euroscepticism has increased over the years, especially after referenda, elections or treaties. Further European integration, protests against it and an increased interest in Europe within national public debates also contributed to this. Many studies only concern certain countries and large edited volumes have been published mentioning these country studies. Others focus on specific types of political parties and compare their development in multiple countries, such as the radical right. A third category looks at Euroscepticism on the European level, the role of the media and its political opportunity. The development of Euroscepticism as well as a selection of these comparative and theoretical studies will be discussed here to position this research within the debate and contextualise it. The studies related to the Netherlands will be talked about in chapter two and studies concerning the media in chapter three.

The term *Euroscepticism* was coined in the United Kingdom around the middle of the 1980s. It originally had a broad meaning and was used for any scepticism towards the European Union. The UK has a long tradition of opposing Europe. Important figures, such as Winston Churchill, are known to have reservations about European integration. Soon the word got a 'harder' connotation as opposition towards Europe and European integration intensified under the reign of Margaret Thatcher. It was used alternately with 'anti-marketeer', a term used for groups opposing the EEC membership at the 1975 referendum. British Euroscepticism has since the 1990s developed as quite dominant within British politics. It is represented by movements opposing the EU membership such as UKIP. This has led to the EU membership referendum in 2016.¹⁴

Since the Maastricht treaty in 1992 Euroscepticism also started to spread to other EU countries. This is because of several reasons. The first one is that the EU changed from an economic union focussing on a common market into a federal polity with increased political power on a supranational level. While Eurosceptic opinions consisted first of opposition to the market integration policy of the EU, the Maastricht treaty caused more protests defending the national community and interests. Through this treaty the countries transferred more powers and sovereignty to the EU.¹⁵ As a result of these major changes, the EU sought democratic legitimisation, reacting to the protests. The EU did this by promoting its legitimacy and trying to involve citizens by public referenda for example. However, instead of strengthening European integration with these public policies and actions, it resulted in more Euroscepticism as referenda were voted down. Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks speak in this regard of a 'constraining dissensus' period since 1991 instead of a 'permissive consensus', which the EU tried to achieve.¹⁶

As the EU tried to legitimise its new powers through referenda and other democratic reforms, European integration entered domestic politics. During the times of the EU as an economic union, European politics were largely an elite affair and not much of a public issue, but this changed too after 1992. European politics became increasingly important during national elections and entered the realm of party competition. European integration was the third most

¹⁴ Menno Spiering, "British Euroscepticism," in *Euroscepticism: Party Politics, National Identity and European Integration*, ed. Robert Harmsen and Menno Spiering (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004), 127-130.

¹⁵ Liesbet Hooghe, "What drives Euroscepticism? Party-Public Cueing, Ideology and Strategic Opportunity," *European Union Politics*, 8 (2007): 5-12.

¹⁶ Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, "A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus", *British Journal of Political Science*, 39 (2009): 1-23.

important issue within national party competition in 2003 in most Western European countries. The growing importance of European politics within the public debate and the voted-down referenda did not necessarily mean that the European public had become more Eurosceptical. Eurobarometer data prove that public support for the EU stayed the same. However, because of the politicization and legitimisation of European politics, European elites had to start sharing the European political arena with a public that was more Eurosceptical. This changed the European decision making and the role of European integration in domestic politics. Consequently, European Integration became a strategic opportunity for domestic political parties competing with each other, as European affairs had more political and public salience.¹⁷

The development of Euroscepticism since the Maastricht treaty described above is quite similar in all other EU countries, i.e. we can observe a growing importance of European integration within the public and political debate and more opposition against it as a result. It is clear however that every member state has its own unique development. Taggart and Szczerbiak make a distinction between three categories of EU-contestation within national party systems. The first category is systems with limited contestation. This means that within domestic politics all major parties are committed to European integration and do not use it as a party competition issue. In these systems Euroscepticism is a recent phenomenon and limited to the political periphery. Countries with such a system are for example the Netherlands and France. The second category that Taggart and Szczerbiak name is the open contestation system. This means that within domestic politics there are one or more major parties who have Eurosceptic views and use these within party competition. Examples of countries with such a system are, not surprisingly, the UK and Greece. The last category is constrained contestation. Euroscepticism is present within the political system, but it does not affect party competition much as Europe is seen as a 'necessary evil' by all actors. Taggart and Szczerbiak state that all post-communist countries, who have or had a strong wish to belong to the EU, have a system of constrained contestation.¹⁸

The question rises however if the three systems of contestation and the countries belonging to them as described by Taggart and Szczerbiak in 2008 still relate to the actual situation. New

¹⁷ Idem.

¹⁸ Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak, "Conclusion: Three Patterns of Party Competition over Europe," in *Opposing Europe. The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism (Vol.1)*, ed. Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 348-363.

right-wing and conservative governments in post-communist countries have created a new political situation in which contestation against the EU is no longer constrained. One could also argue that some Western-European countries have moved from a system of limited contestation to open contestation. Whether this is true for Netherlands will be investigated in this paper as the general development of Euroscepticism is researched.

Thus, both European integration and Euroscepticism entered domestic politics and public debates in the member states, which can broadly be divided into three categories of contestation. Recent studies of Euroscepticism are mostly related to the emergence and increased political importance of Eurosceptic, populist and nationalistic parties in different countries. Liesbeth Hooghe and Gary Marks describe how the populist parties have mobilized tensions that increased as more sovereignty was transferred to Brussels and national identities remained stable. Eurobarometer data showed that European citizens did not feel more 'European', while at the same time European integration was deepened and strengthened. This Europeanisation, combined with an already ongoing process of breaking down national borders, immigration and growing economic competition in a globalising world, created a society that is less congruent with these stable identities. Some citizens started to feel 'culturally threatened', especially those with less advantageous economic positions and an exclusive national identity. Populist parties mobilized these feelings and used cues stating that European integration is not compatible with the national identity and support of the nation and its institutions. This was done before with certain groups of immigrants and combined into a frame of closing borders in order to protect national interests and the national identity.¹⁹

National identity is a main source of Euroscepticism, but certainly not the only one. Three Belgian political scientists, Koen Abts, Dirk Heerwegh and Marc Swyngedouw, studied Euroscepticism in Belgium and identified three other main sources apart from national identity. Social distrust in other European citizens had the strongest effect on Euroscepticism in their research. As citizens trusted fellow EU citizens more, Eurosceptic feelings diminished. Distrust in the EU as institution also appeared as a main source in the sample. Ironically, the research showed that more knowledge about the EU made people in the sample more Eurosceptic. The last main source is utilitarian interest: the idea that the EU is 'useful'. Whether or not countries are benefitting from the EU had a minor impact on Euroscepticism, but individually benefitting from the EU reduced Euroscepticism. These four factors proved

¹⁹ Hooghe and Marks, "A Postfunctionalist Theory of European integration", 9-15.

to be major contributors, but also minor sources as political efficacy had influence. The various sources show that Euroscepticism is multifaceted and hard to categorise. The researchers concluded that it seems as if the EU is a screen onto which general feelings of threatened identity, power and interests are projected.²⁰

Thus, Eurosceptic and populist parties capitalized these sources and increased their influence and support. According to Hooghe and Marks putative economic ‘losers’, as they describe them, are especially attracted to these parties.²¹ The Belgian case study did not find evidence for this and only stressed low education as a correlation.²² One would expect then that after 2008, when the economic crisis started, the importance of economic concerns increased within Euroscepticism, but is this the case?

Francesco Nicoli researched the connection between electoral Euroscepticism and the economic crisis and concluded that there is only limited evidence, specifically looking at unemployment. In countries with high unemployment rates, such as Spain, electoral Euroscepticism did not increase, while in Denmark for example, a country with a good economy and low unemployment rates, Eurosceptic parties received more votes. Italy and France are the only two countries that confirm the correlation between higher unemployment rates and Eurosceptic votes.²³ Therefore the increase of Euroscepticism in the richer countries should be linked to the economic crisis in another way, for instance through the argument that Eurosceptic parties were not willing to support other EU countries.

In conclusion, Euroscepticism originated in the United Kingdom in the 1980s and spread to other European countries after the Maastricht treaty in 1992 as economic and political integration intensified and more sovereignty and powers were transferred to Brussels. As there was no consensus about how the European polity should look like and where political integration should end, a space for contestation as well as a counter narrative against European integration originated. This development was likewise strengthened by other developments that questioned national barriers, identity, sovereignty and economic interests.

²⁰ Koen Abts, Dirk Heerwegh and Marc Swyngedouw, “Sources of Euroscepticism: Utilitarian interest, social distrust, national identity and institutional distrust,” *World Political Science Review* 1 (2009): 1-21.

²¹ Hooghe and Marks, “A Postfunctionalist Theory of European integration”, 9-15.

²² Koen Abts, Dirk Heerwegh and Marc Swyngedouw, "Sources of Euroscepticism", 12.

²³ Francesco Nicoli, “Electoral Euroscepticism, turnout and the economic crisis: evidence from a 108- elections panel study across Europe” (Paper presented at the final conference of European election studies 2014, Mannheim, November 6-8, 2015).

The tensions originating from this were mobilized by new right-wing, mostly populist movements.

1.3 Euroscepticism, Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism

How does Euroscepticism, as it is defined for this paper, relate to nationalism? Are Eurosceptic parties automatically nationalistic and vice versa? One of the sub questions of this paper is whether Dutch parties, as they expressed more Eurosceptic views, also became more nationalistic. In order to answer this, it is necessary to define what is understood by nationalism in this paper and how it relates to Euroscepticism. Furthermore, this paragraph will discuss what the relationship is between the mentality of supporting European integration and cosmopolitanism on the one hand and of opposing European integration and nationalism on the other hand.

The definition of nationalism itself has been often debated by many great scholars, such as Eric Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson, and in many scientific fields.^{24 25} For this research it is important to select a theory or definition that is useful regarding Euroscepticism. Montserrat Guibernau is offering such a theory in her article making a comparison between nationalism and cosmopolitanism. She argues that nationalism and cosmopolitanism, although they seem polar opposites, can be compatible in certain situations. Guibernau makes a distinction between two kinds of nationalism: non-democratic and democratic nationalism. The former is never compatible with cosmopolitanism as it is ethnocentric and supports policies or has ideologies denying human rights, social justice and undermining democracy. The latter can be compatible with cosmopolitanism as it promotes social justice, human rights, equality and deliberative democracy in order to achieve a peaceful world with equal opportunities. The word nationalism is usually associated with the non-democratic form and aspects like ethnocentrism, racism and fascism. Guibernau denounces this meaning and offers these two forms of nationalism. As the world is divided into nations and is not a cosmopolitan order, nationalism is naturally present and has to be specified. The concept of democratic nationalism offers a form of nationalism that supports cosmopolitan values and has no

²⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

²⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

ambition to strengthen the nation at the expense of others, but seeks working together with others.²⁶

Seen in this light, a comparison can be made with the European Union. European integration and Euroscepticism seem to be narratives opposing each other, but they can be compatible. As is mentioned in the first paragraph, there are different kinds of Euroscepticism with a different attitude towards European Integration. Compromising and conditional Euroscepticism do support European integration in some way, while rejecting Euroscepticism, does not. In this regard, rejecting Euroscepticism belongs to non-democratic nationalism as it does not want to work together on a European level, while the other two forms belong to democratic nationalism. As nationalism does have a negative connotation, especially within the media, this paper will only refer to the non-democratic form as described by Guibernau.

In paragraph 1.2. the rise and emergence of Eurosceptic and nationalistic parties is shortly mentioned, represented by for example the *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (PVV) in the Netherlands and *Front National* in France. They can be considered ethnocentric as they propose policies that deny constitutional and human rights to certain groups, mostly the Muslim population. The PVV tried to ban the Koran for example. Both parties also oppose EU membership nowadays and want to close national borders. They induced the tensions by pointing out an assumed danger through a more powerful Europe and the globalised world, feeling culturally threatened, not listened to and economically disadvantaged. Thus, non-democratic nationalism and rejecting Euroscepticism have similarities and are compatible. The case study has to prove in what way they are compatible and whether more parties have become 'nationalistic', using Guibernau's definition of non-democratic nationalism.

As non-democratic nationalism and rejecting Euroscepticism are similar, in what way are mentalities supporting European integration and cosmopolitanism comparable? Like nationalism, cosmopolitanism has many definitions and is used in various scientific disciplines. The field of political philosophy is most suitable for a definition of cosmopolitanism regarding European integration. At the end of the 18th century several philosophers, Immanuel Kant as most prominent one, formalised ideas about political communities other than the nation striving for perpetual peace, universal history and

²⁶ Montserrat Guibernau, "National Identity versus Cosmopolitan Identity," in *Cultural Politics in a Global Age: Uncertainty, Solidarity and Innovation*, ed. D. Held and H. Moore (Oxford: Oneworld, 2008), 148-156.

cosmopolitan justice. Nowadays, within political philosophy, the idea of cosmopolitanism, or new cosmopolitanism, is balancing between two extremes. On the one hand there is the cosmopolitan idea of striving for the end of the nation state. On the other hand, the integration of cosmopolitan ideas within the nation state is pursued. Both extremes can be found back in the debate about the future of the European Union. Federalists argue for a post-national state while Eurosceptic politicians opt for a union of countries working together. The current European polity balances between both ideas. Thus, the practice of European integration is driven by cosmopolitan ideas, although these ideas differ.²⁷

Trenz and De Wilde (2009) mentioned the unfinished nature of the EU and subsequent polity contestation as the cause of Euroscepticism. Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande, two scholars who researched cosmopolitanism, also recognize polity contestation, the debate what the competences of the EU should be and how it should act, as the main reason for the ‘European crisis’. They state that Europe needs to develop a new political vision of integration and reinvent itself to solve this. Beck and Grande propose a new form of cosmopolitanism, positioned between the two extremes, called cosmopolitan realism. This means that a country would still pursue its own interests, but tries to harmonize these with those of the larger community. For the process of European integration this would mean in practice to embrace diversity and national differences instead of erasing them. Beck and Grande also argue for further democratisation of the EU and solving the democratic deficit by creating a ‘cosmopolitan democracy’. This would mean to increase the influence of citizens by holding European-wide referenda. Furthermore, EU member should keep their veto right, but they can only use this in a group of other nation states.²⁸

Beck and Grande’s concept of cosmopolitan realism is one of the ideas that could solve the European crisis. It is clear that there needs to be some agreement on a cosmopolitan concept to finish the European project, before it is too late. The idea of the nation state is still a powerful notion and only an attractive and realistic cosmopolitan idea could convince citizens and politicians to reconsider this.

²⁷ Robert Fine, *Cosmopolitanism* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 4, 39-45.

²⁸ Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande, “Cosmopolitanism: Europe's way out of the crisis,” *European Journal of Social theory*, 10 (2007): 67-85.

Conclusion

Euroscepticism can be defined in many ways. It basically can be seen as the opposition to the current form and practice of the European Union. For this paper a working definition has been chosen that can show the development of Euroscepticism in different gradations, namely from compromising to rejecting Euroscepticism. Over the years Euroscepticism has increased as nation states transferred more sovereignty to Brussels and domestic politics and public spheres Europeanised. This meant that national identity, interests and sovereignty were challenged, leading to opposition. Whether that response is 'nationalistic' can be debated. Nationalism and Euroscepticism do not always go hand in hand, but especially with rejecting Euroscepticism and 'harder' forms of Euroscepticism, this would be the case. In the following chapters the developments of Euroscepticism in the Netherlands will be described with the theories and context mentioned above.

Chapter II: Euroscepticism in the Netherlands

The Netherlands has always been a country that perceived itself as an internationally engaged nation that needs international cooperation and trade to thrive. This view originated from the prosperous period of the Hanseatic league in the 14th and 15th century and the golden age in the 17th century when Dutch ships ruled the seas and traded with the East and West. Trading has been a key activity for the Netherlands as it consists of large wetlands without much resources. Although the influence of the Netherlands within the international economy and politics diminished during the 18th and 19th century, this view has persisted throughout history and is still present nowadays, for example, by the emphasis that is being put on learning foreign languages in school.

Taking its history and self-image into account, it is no surprise that the Netherlands was among the founders of the European Community of Coal and Steel. It supported the European integration project from the start. The continuous support for the European project has always been largely unquestioned and a strong ‘permissive consensus’ about Europe was present within Dutch politics. The surprising rejection of the European constitutional referendum by the Dutch populace altered this course however. It marked the beginning of a decade in which Dutch politicians had to re-evaluate the value, practice and legitimacy of the European Union. The reputation of the Netherlands as loyal EU-partner and internationally-oriented nation has been damaged as a result.

In this chapter these developments will be discussed more elaborately. First, the relationship of the Netherlands and the EU before the referendum will be described. In the second and third paragraph the ‘infamous’ referendum and its consequences will be analysed and explained. Finally, studies about Euroscepticism in the Netherlands after 2005 will be mentioned.

2.1 The Emergence of Euroscepticism in the Netherlands

Not only did the Netherlands see itself as an international oriented nation, it also put this into practice during the first decades of European Integration. From the 1960s onwards Dutch governments advocated for more supranational institutions, the so-called community-model, and were among the most pro-European countries. The Dutch politicians and elite did not act

on their own as is shown by Eurobarometer data. The support of Dutch citizens for European integration always peaked above the 70%, ranging among the most ardent supporting nations. Supporting the EU was a given fact and criticizing or opposing it did not occur. Robert Harmsen makes a comparison between European integration and the weather regarding this attitude. You may complain about it, but in the end one has to accept it, as it is something inevitable.²⁹

Euroscepticism in the 1990s

Thus, European integration was something one did not question and had to accept. Paragraph 1.2 described how after the Maastricht treaty Euroscepticism started to spread from the UK to other EU countries. The Netherlands is no exception to this development. Especially after becoming a net contributor to the EU in the middle of the 1990s, the value of European started to be questioned. The first Eurosceptic opinions were voiced by Frits Bolkenstein, the parliamentary leader of the VVD (Liberal-conservatives). He has been classified as an ‘un-Dutch Politician’ for his style of seeking conflict and sharp criticism, neglecting the famous *poldermodel* of making compromises and working together in good harmony. His main criticism was that the internal market should remain the core function of the EU. One should look pragmatically at further transfers of sovereignty and only support them when national interests are not harmed. In his opinion national interests should have a prominent place within Dutch EU policies. Furthermore, he believed that a European identity does not exist.³⁰

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Although Bolkenstein’s views would not be considered Eurosceptic in most definitions, the Dutch media and politicians labelled him as a Eurosceptic and criticized him for it. Paul Rosenmöller from *GroenLinks* (Green-Left) warned that if Bolkenstein’s ideas were followed, the Netherlands would slip away as ‘core country’ in Europe, another indication of the Dutch pro-European attitude.³² However, Bolkenstein was backed by another prominent VVD member and minister of finance, Gerrit Zalm, who also witnessed the growing Dutch contribution to Brussels. Ironically, Bolkenstein became a European commissioner in 1999

²⁹ Robert Harmsen, "Euroscepticism in the Netherlands: Stirrings of Dissent," in *Euroscepticism: Party Politics, National Identity and European Integration*, ed. Robert Hamsen and Menno Spiering (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004), 99-126.

³⁰ Idem, 103-108.

³¹ Gerrit Voerman, "De Nederlandse Partijen en Europese Integratie," in *Nederlanders en Europa: Het referendum over de Europese grondwet*, ed. Kees Aarts and Henk van der Kolk (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Bert Bakker, 2005), 55-57.

³² Robert Harmsen, "Euroscepticism in the Netherlands", 106.

and the VVD toned down their criticism. However, a situation was created in which criticism towards Europe was more accepted and could become mainstream.³³

In the same period Euroscepticism also emerged on the left side of the political spectrum. The SP (Socialist Party) entered the parliament in 1994. They did not support the European Union as they perceived it as a neo-liberal and capitalist project that was created by and for elites complying with business interests.³⁴ The SP was not against the idea of European integration however, but did not support the way it was executed. Together with other (extreme) left and communist parties in the EU, they published a declaration in 1999 calling for an ‘alternative Europe’ with more socialism, democracy and solidarity.³⁵

The Critical Turn

After the first wave of Euroscepticism, the Dutch parliament ratified the treaty of Nice with a great majority in 2000 and it seemed as if the Netherlands reached their normal situation of European permissive consensus again. However, shortly after, Pim Fortuyn, a new ‘un-Dutch politician’, entered the stage and sparked the Euroscepticism fire. After he was sacked as party leader by *Leefbaar Nederland*, he founded his own party, based on anti-establishment, anti-immigration and Eurosceptic stances, participating in the 2002 parliamentary elections. His persona, as a charismatic and populist leader, was unseen in Dutch politics and he soon gained popularity in the polls, appealing to a large group of discontent voters. He shared a lot of opinions about Europe with Bolkenstein and argued for a purely economic union with sovereign states respecting national interests and closed borders. He also shared some views with the SP as he saw Europe as an elitist project, not serving the public. Although Europe was not a dominant topic in his campaign, European issues fitted within his nationalistic and anti-establishment discourse.³⁶

Fortuyn was assassinated shortly before the elections in 2002. This shocked the Dutch society and probably helped his party, the LPF, to win 26 seats (almost 20%) in the parliament. The winning party, CDA (Christian-Democrats) formed a government with the VVD and the LPF. The electoral success of the LPF, the apparent anti-establishment sentiment in the Netherlands and the threat to lose voters on the right caused the VVD and CDA to emphasise a more

³³ Voerman, “De Nederlandse Partijen en Europese Integratie”, 57.

³⁴ Idem, 58.

³⁵ Kopecky, Mudde, "Two sides of Euroscepticism", 301,302.

³⁶ Harmsen, "Euroscepticism in the Netherlands", 116-120.

national dimension regarding Europe. Although European Integration was not a major topic in the 2002 and 2003 campaigns, both the VVD and CDA expressed concerns regarding the national identity, national interests and enlargement.³⁷ The VVD and CDA put these concerns into practice regarding the enlargement of the European Union. In the ‘strategic accord’ of the first Balkenende ministry the VVD, CDA and LPF agreed that if a country wished to enter the EU, it had to meet with the strict criteria set in Copenhagen. They maintained this position and even threatened to use a veto against certain countries. The CDA however toned down a bit and after many hours of discussion the Dutch delegation in Brussels argued for strict criteria for new EU countries, but would not use its veto.³⁸

The more critical approach of the VVD and CDA towards Europe was criticized by the PVDA (Social-democrats) and D’66 (progressive liberals). They warned of growing Euroscepticism, especially in the campaign for the European elections in 2004, using posters against the national sentiment of the VVD and CDA. It was clear that the once unbreakable pro-European consensus was starting to fall apart and that Bolkenstein’s once controversial remarks had become mainstream.³⁹ The success of the SP and *Europa Transparent*, a newly founded Eurosceptic party, in the 2004 European elections proved that the European landscape in the Netherlands was changing. Looking at the early developments of Euroscepticism in the 1990s, the ‘critical turn’ in the early 2000s and at the anti-establishment feelings that the rise of Pim Fortuyn had exposed, the result of the constitutional referendum could have been expected beforehand.⁴⁰

2.2 The European Constitutional Referendum

The political campaign preceding the referendum in 2005 about the European constitution showed no surprises. The parties that always had supported European integration were in favour of the constitution and highlighted particular aspects that were important for their voters. For example, the PVDA mentioned certain social rights that would be included and *GroenLinks* emphasised the sections about the environment. The only party that was not sure about the constitution at first was once again the VVD. Some party members stated that they rather had no constitution than a ‘bad one’. After these remarks and some discussion, the VVD fully supported the constitution as the principle of the free market was guaranteed. It

³⁷ Voerman, "De Nederlandse Partijen en Europese Integratie", 59-61.

³⁸ Harmsen, "Euroscepticism in the Netherlands", 109-115.

³⁹ Voerman, "De Nederlandse Partijen en Europese Integratie", 60,61.

⁴⁰ Harmsen, "Euroscepticism in the Netherlands", 122,123.

was yet another confirmation how the attitude of the VVD towards Europe had changed during one decade: from a pro-European and federalist vision to a pragmatic stance with national dimensions.⁴¹

As expected, all Eurosceptic parties were against the constitution, naming the creation of a 'European superstate' and its negative effects for the Netherlands as their major reason. The LPF warned of the growing gap between the Dutch population and the European elite and the SP reaffirmed their views of the EU as a neo-liberal project not caring for its citizens. Furthermore, the Christian parties SGP and *ChristenUnie* disapproved the constitution as it did not refer to Christianity. Geert Wilders, who left the VVD and would later start the aforementioned PVV, warned that the constitution would lead to the access of Turkey.⁴²

The public debate about the referendum was intense and diversified. This was quite surprising since Europe had until then never seemed to be of interest to Dutch citizens, shown by low European election turnouts (around 30% in 1999 and 39% in 2004) and neither had it been covered much by the media. This time however, it was hard to miss the debate. It was all over the news and many events were organised. The fact that this was the first ever national referendum since 1796 may also have contributed to the 'hype', as calls for more direct democracy had been finally answered.⁴³

Arguments for or against the constitution were not the main topic in the debate, but whether it really was a constitution or not. According to the supporters, it was not really a constitution, but a treaty that would unify the other treaties that the countries had already ratified. The opponents then wondered why it was called a 'constitution' and what its use was if most aspects were already put to practice. The discussion became even more complicated as people opposed the constitution because in their eyes it did not include enough aspects, for example animal rights. Others opposed it because it would transfer too much sovereignty to Brussels.⁴⁴

On the 1st of June 2005 the Dutch populace finally casted a vote after weeks of heated discussion. The turnout was surprisingly high, 63%. This was significantly more than that of

⁴¹ Voerman, "De Nederlandse Partijen en Europese Integratie", 62,63.

⁴² Idem.

⁴³ Arjen Nijeboer, "The Dutch Referendum: Peoples' Vengeances," *European Constitutional Law Review*, 1 (2005) 399,400.

⁴⁴ Kees Aarts and Henk van der Kolk, "Inleiding," in *Nederlanders en Europa: Het referendum over de Europese grondwet*, ed. Kees Aarts and Henk van der Kolk (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Bert Bakker, 2005), 9-11.

the past European elections and only matched by national election turnouts. A total number of 61,5% of Dutch citizens voted 'no'. Considering the turn out and result, it was clear that the constitution was rejected. A major setback for the Dutch government which had calculated an easy win, only starting its campaign in the final stages of the debate, and which now found itself in a difficult situation to explain the result in Brussels. Jan-Peter Balkenende, the prime minister at that time, was disappointed by the result but also saw some positive aspects. He praised the high turnout, the public engagement with European issues and emphasised that it was not a 'no' against Europe, but against the constitution and certain contents.⁴⁵

Although Balkenende remained positive and the parties who supported the constitution accepted their defeat, a small political crisis was inevitable. The question was raised in The Hague, Brussels and the rest of Europe what had happened to the Netherlands and their unconditional support for Europe. Many scientists, opinion makers and politicians started their inquiries, trying to interpret the 'no'. A difficult task as the motivations and reasons for rejecting the constitution were very diverse and there was not a specific group or political stream opposing it. What could the 'no' mean? Another important issue that needed to be addressed was the apparent gap or disparity between the political elite and citizens. More than 80% of the parliament supported the constitution, but 61,5% of the electorate rejected it. Did this result show a gap? Moreover, had this disparity already been present for a long time or was it a recent phenomenon?

2.3 Explanations for the 'No'

Many researchers tried to answer these questions and explain why a majority voted 'no'. One of them is Jacques Thomassen, who looked at the support of the Dutch population for European integration over the past decades, asking whether there was a gap between the citizenship and the political elite. Could the 'no' be considered as an unexpected outcome or as the result of years of declining support for the EU and growing anti-establishment feelings? By means of comparing data of the Netherlands with other founding nations such as France and Belgium, he shows how levels of 'support for the European Union' and whether or not 'European integration is profitable' had been among the highest in Europe, but had declined since the middle of the 90's to a 'normal' level. The percentage of Dutch people that approved

⁴⁵ Kees Aarts and Henk van der Kolk, "Opkomst en Uitslag", in *Nederlanders en Europa: Het referendum over de Europese grondwet*", ed. Kees Aarts and Henk van der Kolk (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Bert Bakker, 2005), 183.

the 'functioning of democracy in the EU' also dropped, more than in other countries, to the lowest in the EU in 2004. A majority of Dutch citizens said 'yes' to the question whether European integration and EU enlargement went too fast, ranking in the middle. The last results are a good indication of the existence of the above mentioned disparity between the political elite and the people. This perception was not present in The Hague.⁴⁶

Henk van der Kolk and Kees Aarts conducted an extensive survey after the referendum in order to explain the outcome. Their first conclusion was that the group that voted 'no' was diverse and had many different motives, despite Balkenende's remarks that portrayed the 'no' voters as one group that still supported Europe, but not the constitution. Around a quarter of the survey participants did not have a particular reason for voting 'no', it just seemed better or the right choice. All other reasons were related to two main fears. The first fear that Aarts and Van der Kolk describe is the worsening of the Dutch social-economic position. It was supposed the constitution would have a negative effect on the Dutch economy, social security and living standard. Furthermore, many 'no' voters believed that the Netherlands were disadvantaged by the introduction of the euro and that it had made life more expensive. The second main fear was that a larger EU and more European integration would threaten the Dutch culture and identity. The recent enlargement and the possible entry of Turkey had fuelled this fear too.⁴⁷

Many of the main fears, specific motivations and general opinions about the European Union were interconnected. 'No' voters who for example named the possible entry of Turkey as the main reason would still vote 'no' if this had not been an option. This is related to the general opinions about the EU mentioned by Thomassen. Many 'no' voters who belonged to a category that did not support Dutch membership or where indifferent about it, voted no. This applies also to the majority which thought European integration went too fast. Moreover, looking at the correlation between the 2003 parliamentary vote and constitution vote, Aarts and Van der Kolk discovered another indication for the gap between the political elite and the Dutch electorate. A majority of the participants who voted for a party supporting the

⁴⁶ Jacques Thomassen, "Nederlanders en Europa: Een bekoelde liefde?", in *Nederlanders en Europa: Het referendum over de Europese grondwet*, ed. Kees Aarts and Henk van der Kolk (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Bert Bakker, 2005), 64-86.

⁴⁷ Kees Aarts and Henk van der Kolk, "Opkomst en Uitslag", 183-206.

constitution in 2003, voted 'no' in the referendum. Thus, there was a certain disparity between the opinion of the political parties and their supporters.⁴⁸

The Dutch government itself also wondered how the 'no' could be explained and ordered its scientific council, the WRR, to conduct a research. The council used the apparent chasm between political elites and Dutch citizens concerning EU policy as a starting point and researched why there is a problem with legitimacy for EU policies, how this can be improved and the gap reduced. According to the WRR, the EU has over the years gained more political powers and made important decisions that were not always greeted with much support by the Dutch population. Not being able to speak out about important issues, such as the introduction of the euro and the EU enlargement, resulted in the feeling of a 'democratic deficit'. The 2005 referendum was an opportunity for the Dutch citizens to finally show the Dutch government what they thought of these issues and express this feeling.⁴⁹ Arjen Nijeboer supports this observation. According to him, the Dutch voter linked other EU decisions, on which they could not vote, to the constitutional referendum. In that light, the 'no' is also a certain protest vote against both the 'undemocratic' nature of the EU and the Dutch government that did not allow referendums about for example the euro.⁵⁰

Not only the Dutch government, but also the European Commission initiated a research to find out more about the reasons behind the 'no'. The DG Communication conducted a survey, comparable to what Van der Kolk and Aarts did, as part of the Eurobarometer project on public opinions. The results show a different picture however, partially caused by the survey method. In the Eurobarometer survey, the participants were offered a list with potential reasons of which they could select multiple answers. 'Lack of information' was mentioned the most with 32%, followed by 'Loss of national sovereignty' (19%), 'Opposes the national government/certain political parties' (14%) and 'Europe is too expensive' (13%). In these results, the elements of other motivations mentioned above can be traced back, such as the economic concerns and the loss of sovereignty, identity and national interests. In addition, the protest vote against the government is present in these results. The most prominent reason, 'Lack of information', is not mentioned in the above described surveys however. It is interesting to see that one third of all no voters did not know what the constitution was about

⁴⁸ Kees Aarts and Henk van der Kolk, "Opkomst en Uitslag", 183-206.

⁴⁹ WRR, *Rediscovering Europe in the Netherlands* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), 9-13.

⁵⁰ Arjen Nijeboer, "The Dutch Referendum: People's Vengeances", 403.

exactly, lacked information, and voted ‘no’ because of that, instead of abstaining. A possible explanation could be related to the arguments of the ‘no’ campaign which had wondered why a constitution was needed if we already had other treaties. It also shows that many voters were sceptic about the constitution, and did not see any benefits. They might have put the famous Dutch down-to-earth mentality into practice.⁵¹

Thus, the vote against the constitution was based on various reasons and motivations and frequently resulted in a combination of them. Three main topics can be identified from these reasons and motivations. The first one is the ‘loss of sovereignty and identity’, as voters were afraid that the constitution would boost the shift of power to Europe thus threatening the Dutch influence, culture and identity. The second main topic can be described as ‘social-economic concerns’. Many voters thought that the constitution would have a negative effect on the social-economic position of the Netherlands. Moreover, the recent introduction of the euro and EU enlargement enhanced these concerns. These developments also contributed to the third main topic which can be defined as ‘the democratic deficit’. Many voters were not happy with the introduction of the euro EU and enlargement and never had had an opportunity to express their concerns. The referendum at last did offer this opportunity. This added up to the already existing image of an undemocratic EU.

These three topics will be defined more later on and used in the case study to help mapping the development of Euroscepticism. However, as mentioned above, not all reasons to vote ‘no’ fitted within these three topics. A substantial amount of the ‘no’ votes was to protest against the government, based on a certain feeling without a specific reason. Other ‘no’ voters thought the constitution was not covering enough or missed some aspects. A further question that arose after the referendum was whether or not a gap existed between the political elite and the electorate. In this regard, the numbers speak for themselves. More than 80% of the parliament supported the constitution, while 60% of the Dutch people rejected it. Furthermore, many of the people that voted for a party in 2003 that supported the constitution, rejected it in 2005. On top of that, a majority of the Dutch people thought European integration was going too fast. These numbers are clear indications that the political system did not represent a substantial amount of voters and that the disparity existed.

⁵¹ European Commission, *Flash Eurobarometer 172: The European Constitution: post-referendum survey in the Netherlands* (Brussels: TNS Opinion & Social, June 2005), 18, accessed 17 April 2016. http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl172_en.pdf.

Is the ‘no’ an expression of Euroscepticism? This question is debatable. The three different kinds of Euroscepticism can all be traced back in the ‘no’ vote. Some voters fully rejected European integration, while others did not agree with the practice (e.g. democratic deficit) or future (e.g. transfer of more sovereignty). Another part of the ‘no’ voters did support the principle, practice and future of the EU, but were of the opinion that this constitution was badly written or missed some aspects. Taking this into account, and considering the fact that a majority of the Dutch people was still in favour of European integration and the EU, the ‘no’ was not as Eurosceptic as it seems. It was clear however that European integration was put high on the political agenda, emerged as an important issue in the public debate and that politicians were forced to promote European integration in another way, to justify European decisions and to find ways to close the gap.

2.4 Euroscepticism after 2005

The topic of this paper is the development of Euroscepticism in the Netherlands after 2005 and will be described by way of analysing the coverage of three newspapers during European election or referenda periods. In this paragraph, the same development will be illustrated using Eurobarometer data and academic publications in order to create a framework and context in which the results of the case study fit.

Jos de Beus and Jeanette Mak, two Dutch political scientists, published a book in 2009 about ‘the European affair’ in the Netherlands. According to them, Euroscepticism in the Netherlands developed quite late and Dutch politicians should have been more prepared for the ‘no’, looking at for example the Fortuyn revolt. They also see Euroscepticism as a phase and inevitable development in a political and public space that is increasingly becoming Europeanised, with Eurosceptic opinions and protests becoming louder, eventually creating a normal debate about European politics, which is not perfect nor flawed, and with Euroscepticism taking its place in the democratic decision making.⁵²

Although after the ‘no’ one would expect that there was an increased Europeanisation of Dutch political and public debate, this was hardly the case. During the parliamentary elections of 2006 European integration was not debated much or used a political opportunity. Media coverage on European politics also did not increase. Furthermore, the turnout for the 2009

⁵² Jos de Beus and Jeanette Mak, *De Kwestie Europa* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 31,32.

European elections was lower than the 2004 elections. Euroscepticism did increase however. Dutch political parties adopted more critical stands towards European integration, trying to stay in touch with their followers and avoid a second debacle. Eurosceptic parties were also on the rise as the results of the 2006 elections show.

While looking at the answers from a public opinion survey from 2008, it becomes clear that Euroscepticism not necessarily had grown in the Netherlands, but that there were more critical attitudes towards certain aspects of European integration. About 20% of the population was against the EU, while the other 80% was in favour or neutral. Moreover, the Netherlands are the country with the highest appreciation rate of EU membership. However, Dutch citizens are also the frontrunner regarding the rejection of European values and have the most negative image of the European Union. This apparent paradox is comparable with the attitude towards Europe within Dutch politics where an increasing pragmatic approach has replaced the ideologically driven support that slowly disappeared since the 1990s.⁵³

Thus, while Euroscepticism and Eurocritical attitudes became more dominant in Dutch politics as a reaction to the referendum's result and public opinion, the expected Europeanisation of the political and public debate did not happen. The credit crisis that struck the world in 2008 made European integration a more prominent issue however, as financial problems emerged in the Southern-European countries and the Euro was put under pressure. In two articles Adriaan Schout and Jan Marinus Wiersma, researchers from *Clingendael* (The Netherlands Institute for International Relations), analyse the European policies of the first and second government led by prime-minister Mark Rutte (VVD), the latter being still in charge at the time this paper was written, and describe how they dealt with the European crisis and challenges.

The first Rutte government was formed in 2010 between the CDA and VVD. Since they did not have a majority in the parliament, a deal was made with the populist PVV of Geert Wilders, who did surprisingly well in the elections, to support them on various issues. For EU affairs they would however rely on other parties in the parliament. Schout and Wiersma describe the attitude of the Rutte government towards the EU as paradoxical. On the one hand the Dutch government and politicians had never been so critical of the European Union. The more Eurosceptic sphere that was present in The Hague after the 2005 referendum was

⁵³ Ibidem, 9-11.

enhanced by the Eurocrisis and led to debates and proposals of renationalising some competences, lowering the EU budget and more national sovereignty. Moreover, a motion by the *ChristenUnie* to not transfer more sovereignty or make further steps towards a political union even reached a majority in the Dutch parliament. The government at the same time executed their '100% Union' policy, arguing that EU member states and candidates should comply fully with all EU rules, especially the 3% national budget deficit rule. If they did not comply, the Netherlands argued for sanctions and acted as the police officer of the EU. This attitude was not appreciated abroad. The European reputation of the Netherlands quickly went downhill, earning the title of 'most obstructionist country' from the *Financial Times*.⁵⁴

On the other hand, the Dutch government did not practice what they preached. While they were tough on countries that did not comply with the rules and proposed alternative plans to save the euro, in the end all the proposals from Brussels were accepted and ratified. They showed the new EU pragmatism by not showing a pro-European and constructive attitude, but practicing it. Furthermore, as the economic crisis progressed the Dutch government did not comply anymore with the EU rules themselves, such as the 3% rule. Thus, while the Netherlands acted tough and was critical of the EU practice, they agreed with all EU policies to save the euro and also did not meet their own criteria. Ironically, the first Rutte government resigned after some problems with the PVV concerning European matters.⁵⁵

The elections that followed were won again by the VVD and Mark Rutte who now formed a cabinet with the PVDA. The coalition had a majority in the parliament and was not dependent on other parties for support. Their attitude towards Europe was still critical, but framed in a more positive way. They described their plans as 'building bridges' between the Netherlands and Europe and focussed on reforming the EU. According to the Dutch cabinet, European policies should become more effective, modest and executed on the lowest possible level, i.e. there should be more subsidiarity. They also stated that 'the time of an ever closer union is behind us'. In short, the current competences and tasks of the EU should be reconsidered and certainly not expanded.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Iona Ebben, Adriaan Schout and Jan Marinus Wiersma, "De EU paradox van kabinet Rutte: Zowel voor als tegen." *International Spectator* 9 (2012): 416-420.

⁵⁵ Idem.

⁵⁶ Adriaan Schout and Jan Marinus Wiersma, "Britain and the Netherlands: Similar concerns but different approaches in reforming the EU," in *Renegotiation, Reform and Referendum: Does Britain have an EU future?* Ed. Adam Hug (London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 2014), 52-56.

This EU approach aimed at keeping the relationship with both Brussels and opposition parties in harmony. On the one hand, the Netherlands wanted to improve their reputation within Brussels and not isolate themselves. Their positive message of building new bridges and strengthening the EU by reform was received in a better way than the more critical tone and moral teachings of Rutte I. On the other hand, the emphasis on reform, more subsidiarity and stopping further European integration was also received well by the Eurosceptical PVV and SP. It answered their narrative of opting out and more referenda. However, once again they did not practice what they preached. The Rutte ministry agreed with all proposals from Brussels, continuing the paradox. The message of reform and subsidiarity was often not more than an impression that was created.⁵⁷

Thus, while the tone in The Hague was more critical towards the European Union, especially after the financial and subsequent euro crisis, the actual European decisions and votes were still pro-European and constructive. Eurobarometer data also show that the public opinion did not change much since 2005. In 2015, 25% of the Dutch citizens had a negative image of the EU. This resembles largely the European average. Around 18% of the survey participants were of the opinion that the Netherlands have a better future outside the EU, while 76% disagree and 6% had no opinion. The 25% and 18% roughly resemble the percentage of PVV and SP voters. It seems that a steady 1/5th of the Dutch population reject European integration. A large majority is positive or indifferent about the EU however, although some would argue for more reforms and democracy.⁵⁸

Conclusion

The development of Euroscepticism and the European integration debate can be divided into three phases. From the beginning of the European integration process in the 1950s until the middle of the 1990s there was a strong pro-European consensus in the Netherlands that was ideologically driven. The Eurosceptical remarks of Frits Bolkenstein and the SP during the 1990s marked the beginning of a transition phase during which critical attitudes towards the EU would become mainstream. At the beginning of the 2000s Euroscepticism became a normal phenomenon, fuelled by the rise of Pim Fortuyn and debates about the Euro and

⁵⁷ Idem.

⁵⁸ European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 84: Netherlands* (Brussels: TNS Opinion & Social, Autumn 2015), 5-12.

enlargement. The ideological approach was finally replaced as Dutch voters rejected the EU constitution in 2005. This marked the beginning of a third phase in which pragmatism towards EU policies was prominent. Enthusiasm about European integration within political circles also diminished. Although the Dutch citizens rejected the constitution and the Dutch governments under Balkenende and Rutte were fairly critical of the EU, the decisions that were taken on European policies still showed a pro-European and constructive attitude. Furthermore, public opinion data illustrate that, although the Dutch population has become more critical, the EU is still well supported. One could say that the debate about European integration is finally ‘normal’ with a place for criticism and Euroscepticism.

Chapter III: Euroscepticism and the Role of the Media

In this thesis the development of Euroscepticism in the Netherlands will be researched by analysing Dutch newspapers. In the first two chapters Euroscepticism and its specific development in the Netherlands were discussed. This chapter will focus on the media, in particular the written media, and the role they play regarding European politics. Since the newspaper articles will serve as the source material for the case study, it is important to know how the media, politics and the public debate are related and influence each other. Is Euroscepticism strengthened by the media? How does the media effect the public opinion? And what is the effect of the internet and online media on the public debate? These questions will be answered first concerning Europe in general and later for the Dutch situation in particular.

3.1 The Media, Politics and Citizens

The influence that media have on politics, voters and the society is undeniably great. One could even argue that developments regarding media and communication, such as the invention of the printing press in the 15th century, have substantially shaped the history of humankind. Without the media, having a public debate is impossible. Since only a few people experience politics personally, the media enable them to engage in it.⁵⁹ The fact that in dictatorial regimes, where the political engagement of citizens is not appreciated, the media are controlled by the state, confirms its importance within politics. The large amount of money that is spent on campaigns during elections in democratic systems is another indication.⁶⁰ Thus, political actors try to maximize their support by influencing or controlling media (content) and citizens engage in politics through it. This emphasises the meaning of a *medium* as something that connects.

The relationship between politics, media and citizens has changed significantly during the past century. Claes de Vreese, a Dutch political scientist who has published many articles about political communication and the media, mentions several interrelated developments that contributed to this. First of all, a professionalization of political communication took place. Political campaigns have changed from short, decentralized events driven by volunteers

⁵⁹ Trenz and De Wilde, "'Denouncing European integration'", 8.

⁶⁰ Claes de Vreese and Joost van Spanje, "Europhile Media and Eurosceptic Voting: Effects of News Media Coverage on Eurosceptic Voting in the 2009 European Parliamentary Elections," *Political Communication*, 2 (2014), 325-354.

handing out flyers to 'permanent campaigns' in which a team of professionals create and execute communication strategies, using polling data and new technologies to reach target groups. Communication techniques are consciously used in government and spin doctors are constantly working on them. Simultaneously, the (news) media also professionalized. Vreese describes three phases through which the news media increasingly professionalized. In the first phase political journalism can be summarised as 'issue reporting'. Journalist report in a neutral and respectful way about political issues and policies with political actors as their main sources. This changed into a phase of 'strategic reporting'. Politics are observed as a game, strategies to win elections and voters are highlighted and journalists are now experts with critical attitudes, pointing out controversies.⁶¹

The third phase of political journalism, which is still emerging, is called 'reflexive reporting'. As the name suggests, the media do not only cover stories about political actors and issues, but also reflect on their own role. The media acknowledge their own manipulative power. While reporting on a topic, the question is asked whether the media has covered the issue well and if it has created a fair image. The power of news on the campaign is also examined. Has it influenced the candidates and voters? Furthermore, media performances by political actors have become well covered subjects. The personality, public image and media appearance are all investigated. Meanwhile, the amount of stories about actual political issues has decreased.⁶²

The increasing importance of the television as a medium and its privatisation after the 1980s have contributed to this development. News has become a market. Public and private media are competing with each other and citizens are 'consumers' of news. As a result, the news has become less 'hard' and is more driven by commercial interest and popularity than producing objective and important news stories. At the same time, citizens are less engaged in politics, have lost (religious) ideologies and are prone to change parties rather quick. This also means that citizens can be influenced more by media as they do not vote according to party loyalty anymore. Citizens also distrust the media more due to the commercialisation, diversification and reflexive reporting. The TV is their main source of information about politics and

⁶¹ Claes de Vreese. "No news is bad news! The role of the media and news framing in embedding Europe," *Webpublication* 20 (2007), 6-9.

⁶² Idem.

newspaper readership has declined.⁶³ Claes de Vreese does not mention the presumably growing role of the internet as information source.

3.2 European Politics Media Coverage

The abovementioned developments have been researched concerning domestic politics. European politics however are a different case. There is no European public debate, virtually no political organisation, a lack of communication professionals and journalists often neglect the EU. The fact that the average European would have troubles naming at least one European MP or other political actor is a clear example of this. European politics play a minimal role in national news and are only covered at key moments around important decisions, usually affecting national interests, or elections and referenda. Claes de Vreese speaks in this regard about cyclical coverage. In some periods around pivotal moments it is well covered, but in 'routine periods', when European politics are functioning normally, coverage is minimal.⁶⁴

In chapter I it is described how domestic politics Europeanised and Euroscepticism originated as a counter narrative opposing it. Also within the public debate Europe started to play a role. European integration became an issue of party competition and the huge mobilisation potential around European issues started to be exploited.⁶⁵ One would expect to see an increase of media coverage on European integration after the debate about European politics normalised, but several studies show that the media coverage did not change much.⁶⁶ Coverage about European affairs also remained cyclical. The amount of key moments increased however as a result of the economic and migrant crisis. Furthermore, when European politics were covered, they were one of the most prominent topics in the news.

Thus, there is an absence of European news and public debate. European politics only appear in the national news around key moments and this situation has not changed after domestic politics increasingly Europeanised. Low turnouts for European elections also confirm that European politics are still not an important issue for citizens. One could ask whether this is the case because of the low coverage or the other way around. The answer is probably somewhere in the middle, but it does affect Euroscepticism. The invisibility of European politics is a factor contributing to the democratic deficit. The main reason for voting 'no' in

⁶³ Idem.

⁶⁴ Ibidem, 10-15.

⁶⁵ Trezn and De Wilde, "'Denouncing European integration'", 9.

⁶⁶ Claes de Vreese, "No News Is Bad News", 10-15.

the 2005 referendum, a lack of information, is a perfect illustration of this. Another contributing factor is the negative tone of European news. Most coverage is neutral, but when it has a certain evaluation, this is rather negative than positive. A possible explanation is that the media only report about key events, which often happen when a problem arises, such as financial summits about saving the euro.⁶⁷

Trenz and De Wilde also argue that the media are amplifiers of Euroscepticism, although they do not have an active role in it. Eurosceptic parties, as other parties, use the media to promote their opinions. In order to generate news value, they dramatize these opinions and apply what Trezn and De Wilde call a 'reactive identity formation'. They construct their narrative around the opposition of 'us' versus 'them', i.e. the Dutch population versus the European elite. European integration is pictured as a hostile environment.⁶⁸ This frame is hard to deconstruct for European integration supporters as a result of the invisibility of European politics and the negative tone. The perceived distance already positions EU as 'the Other'.

One of the key moments when European politics do get attention is during European elections. This is one of the main reasons why these periods have been chosen for the case study. Claes de Vreese and Joost van Spanje researched the 2009 European parliamentary elections and looked at the effect of the news media coverage was on Eurosceptic voting. They concluded that the media do affect Eurosceptic voting. When voters were exposed to more negative evaluations, the likeliness of voting Eurosceptic increased. The same counts for framing the EU as beneficial, i.e. positive evaluations. In such cases a voter was less likely to vote Eurosceptic. They also found out that in countries where the campaign was the most negative, the Eurosceptic parties relatively gained the most ground. De Vreese and Van Spanje also prove that the media amplify Euroscepticism. It is however hard to blame the media for it since it is their job to cover what is being said. Eurosceptic discourse is prominent in public debates in many countries, this is echoed and attracts more voters.⁶⁹

De Vreese and Van Spanje analysed TV and newspaper coverage for their research. This paper will also analyse newspapers. The increasing influence of online media and the internet should not be neglected however. Especially the social media are important players in shaping

⁶⁷ Idem.

⁶⁸ Trezn and De Wilde, "Denouncing European integration" 1-21.

⁶⁹ Claes de Vrees and Joost van Spanje. "Europhile Media and Eurosceptic Voting", 341-343.

the public debate nowadays. Research about their role within the media, politics and citizen triangle is limited nonetheless and their effect is not yet clear. In researches from the early 2000s Television news has been named as main source of information for European citizens and a declining readership of newspapers is mentioned. For the younger generations the internet has replaced the TV as main source of information now. This does not necessarily mean that the traditional media (TV and newspapers) are losing ground. Both TV news stations and newspapers are actively using social media to share their articles and broadcasts. In this regard, analysing only traditional media for researches is still representable, although social media are becoming more prominent. In fact, all news articles used for this case study are accessed online.

Asimina Michailidou, a political scientist who also focusses on political communication, acknowledges the lack of research about online media. She states that it appears that online and social media are instruments that amplify EU contestation.⁷⁰ They have been a driving force behind several Eurosceptic campaigns in various countries and enabled them to rapidly mobilize voters, spread their views and gain momentum. The *GeenPeil* campaign is a clear example of this. Without the internet it would have been nearly impossible to promote their initiative, receive media attention and reach more than 400.000 signatures. Social media also form a new public space for contestation as critical opinions can be easily spread in comment sections on news websites or social platforms such as Facebook.

For her research Michalidiou analysed online media coverage of the 2009 elections and the Eurocrisis (2010-2013) in 14 EU countries looking at both the content of the articles as the comments of readers. She selected the most popular online media and found out that most of them belong to traditional media. The results of Michalidiou's research are also similar to those concerning the traditional media. More than half of the articles relate to national interests and seven out of ten focussed on the political elite. The most featured actors are national politicians or politicians active in the national politics of another country. This is no surprise as many articles concern the national interest. The visibility of European institutions, such as the ECB, increased a bit however as the crisis progressed, but the datasets are mostly dominated by technocratic and political elite actors in a national frame. Aspects as democratic decision making as part of European integration are rarely covered. This technocratic

⁷⁰ Asimina Michailidou, "The Role of the Public in shaping Media Contestation: Euroscepticism and Online News Media" *International Political Science Review* 36 (2015): 325.

hegemonic discourse goes virtually unchallenged as frames are constantly repeated. Such a discourse, strengthened by repetitive framing, amplifies democratic deficit concerns and Euroscepticism.⁷¹

Hence, the cyclical and national confined way of reporting about Europe can be found online too, mostly because it relates to the same articles of traditional media shared online. An important difference between online and offline media is that readers can easily access related articles on certain topics online and quickly gather more knowledge. Commenting on them by readers is also an important difference. Comment sections have become an extra part to read, a place for discussion and even news itself in several occasions. Michailidou found that in all countries the content of the comments is similar. Comments are often critical towards the European Union, but do not mention a specific cause. Michailidou calls this 'diffuse Euroscepticism'. The reactions of the public are furthermore not dependent on the journalistic frame. The separate national online public spheres are unified as they refer to the same events and have the same, often diffuse Eurosceptic, opinions.⁷²

3.3 Dutch Media & European News

In the Netherlands the media have often been accused for the low levels of interest and participation in the European debate and held accountable for the gap between politicians and voters concerning European affairs. Various studies indeed provide evidence that in the Dutch media relatively less attention is paid to European politics than in other EU countries. This once again addresses the dilemma whether the media do not report much on Europe because of the low interest levels or whether there is no interest in Europe because there is not much media attention. The truth is probably somewhere in between, but numbers also show that the situation is changing. In 2004 53% of the Dutch population were of the opinion that there should be more media attention for European politics and this number increased to 66% in 2007. Meanwhile, EU media attention also slightly increased, especially during the 2005 referendum.⁷³

Media attention is still limited nonetheless, coverage is cyclical and reports mostly relate to national actors, although half of them have a European referential frame. This situation is

⁷¹ Ibidem, 326-332.

⁷² Asimina Michailidou, "The Role of the Public in shaping Media Contestation: Euroscepticism and Online News Media", 324-366.

⁷³ De Beus en Mak, *De Kwestie Europa*, 107-111.

therefore similar to the general one. De Beus and Mak acknowledge these developments in their publication *De Kwestie Europa* (The European Question). They emphasise the role that the media play in setting the agenda and shaping the European debate with their frames and reports. Instead of further researching the role of the media, they inquired to what extent the Dutch written media are aware of it and follow certain policies when reporting about Europe. An interesting finding is that commercial interests play an important role in not covering Europe. The newspaper market has become increasingly competitive and as news about European politics does not sell well, they are often neglected. These financial limitations also affect the way and frequency journalists report about European affairs. The majority of the Dutch newspapers can only afford one correspondent in Brussels who also covers Belgian politics and NATO news. This wide range of topics makes Brussels a place for skilled parliamentary journalists who refrain to press conferences and press releases for information as their time is limited. This superficial coverage does not help in making European news more 'attractive' and contributes to the already existing technocratic discourse and frame.⁷⁴

De Beus and Mak also asked whether the journalists felt responsible for the negative image of the European Union. Most journalists stated that they did not feel responsible for it and that it is their job to stay objective, to inform the reader, but also to offer stories with 'news value' and thereby capture the reader's attention. As European news is often considered boring or too complex by journalists and their audience, it does not fulfil these criteria. On top of that, a *Telegraaf* correspondent explicitly mentioned that 'it is ridiculous that the media should promote a European feeling'.⁷⁵ De Beus and Mak wrote their book in 2009. It is likely that European news has become more prominent over the years as more people advocate for this. Besides, its news value has increased due to the Eurocrises.

The first European issue that dominated the Dutch media was the 2005 European constitutional referendum. It is important to note that this debate was set in a national context, with national actors and an element of national party competition. Nevertheless, the value of European integration and the constitution were debated intensively. As the case study analyses the media coverage of the campaigns prior to the European elections and referendum in 2009, 2014 and 2016, the following paragraphs will describe how the 2005 campaign was covered.

⁷⁴ Ibidem, 111-125.

⁷⁵ Idem.

Jan Kleinnijenhuis, together with Janet Takens and Wouter Atteveldt, wrote about media coverage concerning the referendum in 2005 in the publication of Aarts and Van der Kolk. The title, “*Toen Europa de dagbladen ging vullen*” (When Europe started to fill the newspapers), indicates how European Politics have become more important in the media. Kleinnijenhuis researched Dutch written media one year prior to the referendum. The research period is quite long since voters start to form opinions on a certain topic quite early. This also enabled Kleinnijenhuis to compare media coverage in the campaign period, the last two months, to coverage in the ‘normal period, the other ten months. The amount of articles concerning the referendum was already substantial in the early period and concentrated around key moments, such as the definite decision that the referendum would be held. In the last two months the amount of articles increased as the referendum date came closer and there was a structural presence of the topic. The most discussed theme in the research period was the campaign itself, followed by the euro, enlargement (e.g. possible entry of Turkey) and the internal market. Themes relating to the constitution itself only followed after.⁷⁶

The ‘yes’ campaign received more attention than the ‘no’ campaign in both periods. In the first ten months 77% of the articles were dedicated to the supporters of the constitution and in the last two months this dropped slightly to 62%. Moreover, from the ten most mentioned political actors, nine belonged to the supporters of the constitution. Looking at these numbers, one would say that the ‘yes’ campaign had a great advantage and should have won, but when the content of the articles is studied, other conclusions can be drawn. Most news about the ‘yes’ campaign had negative evaluations. Supporters of the constitution contested each other, openly criticized Europe or had different opinions about European policies. The ‘yes’ campaign neither worked together nor did they have a unified and powerful message. This ‘clumsy and failed’ campaign was exposed by the media using a strategic frame and became one of the main talked about issues. The ‘no’ campaign on the other hand could easily reject the often contradicting arguments of the ‘yes’ campaign and received more media attention as their support grew.⁷⁷

In what way did the media influence the referendum and the result? It is evident that the image portrayed by the media of a divided and unsuccessful ‘yes’ campaign contributed to the

⁷⁶ Jan Kleinnijenhuis, Janet Takens and Wouter Atteveldt, “*Toen Europa de dagbladen ging vullen*,” in *Nederlanders en Europa: Het referendum over de Europese grondwet*, ed. Kees Aarts and Henk van der Kolk (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Bert Bakker, 2005), 123-144.

⁷⁷ Idem.

no vote. Why would one vote for a constitution of which the merit and purpose is debated by its supporters who also criticise each other and Europe? In this regard, the media are partly responsible for the 'no' by making the problems in the 'yes' campaign their main topic. Whether they feel responsible for it is already answered. The media do not feel responsible for their influence in the public debate and simply want to write articles that inform, entertain and sell. A chaotic and problematic 'yes' campaign fulfils all these criteria.

Conclusion

Looking at the connections between the media, European citizens and European politics, one could say that the European Union has a communication problem. There is no European public debate and European wide media are not popular. European politics are only discussed in national media around key events and pivotal moments focussing on national political actors. The repetitive framing, cyclical reporting and negative tone of the media all feed Eurosceptic sentiments. They are therefore powerful actors who shape the public opinion about Europe and set a certain tone. As media are driven by commercial interests rather than political ideologies, it is unlikely that this will change soon. Further Europeanisation, democratization and federalisation would be the only solution, creating a different political reality to report on. As Europe currently faces multiple problems and receives widespread criticism, this development will probably not happen soon however.

Chapter IV: Euroscepticism in the Interreferendum Period

The first chapters described theories regarding Euroscepticism and created a context in which its development in the Netherlands after the referendum in 2005 can be understood. The development itself has also been broadly illustrated in the chapter 'Euroscepticism in the Netherlands'. After the Fortuyn revolt and especially following the clear 'no' in 2005, the ideologically driven support for the European project by most Dutch political parties turned into a pragmatic and often paradoxical attitude of both criticizing and supporting the EU. The parties responded in this way to their (potential) voters who turned out to be more sceptical of the European project. Although a relatively high number of the Dutch population supported the principle of the European union and economic integration, the level of democracy, enlargement and bureaucracy were contested. Thus, both the Dutch politicians and population looked at Brussels with ambiguous thoughts.

This chapter will challenge this broad development and complement it by analysing Dutch print media coverage during three periods in 2009, 2014 and 2016. In the first paragraph, the methods of this research are specified. The following paragraphs will treat each research period individually and present the results. The final paragraph will compare the results of the three periods and illustrate the development of Euroscepticism in the Netherlands in the interreferendum period.

4.1 Methodology

To illustrate the development of Euroscepticism in the Netherlands between the referenda of 2005 and 2016 the content of three newspapers in three periods has been analysed. The selected periods are a month prior to the European elections in 2009, 2014 and the referendum in 2016 and concern the following dates: The 4th of May until the 4th of June 2009, the 22nd of April until the 22nd of May 2014 and the 6th of March until the 6th of April 2016. Election periods have been chosen as they are a point of evaluation where the principle, practice and future of the European Union are discussed by parties as they reformulate their positions.

The three selected newspapers are the *NRC Handelsblad*, *De Volkskrant* and *De Telegraaf*. They all represent a different political orientation and journalistic style, which results in a balanced representation of the news. The three newspapers are also the most popular and most

read print media, both on- and offline, and proved to regularly contain the most articles related to the topic after a short trial run. In the media chapter the importance of the TV as news medium and the rise of the internet are mentioned. One could question why these two media are not selected instead of newspapers. The first reason is practical. Newspaper articles can be accessed in online databases and researched more easily without transcription. Secondly, content wise newspaper articles are better suitable for research as they contain critical articles with in-depth analyses and political actors are more precise and careful in the message they are sending as the written word can be revised.

The newspaper articles were accessed using *Lexis Nexis*, an international online media database.⁷⁸ For each date the three newspapers were searched using the terms ‘European Union’, ‘EU’ and ‘European Elections’/ ‘Referendum’ translated into Dutch. All articles containing at least one of these terms appeared and were then screened asking the following questions: Does the article concern European Union politics? Is it discussed in a national context or by national political actors? If both questions were answered positively, the article was included in a database using *Microsoft Access*. For each article specific information was noted: the title, date, newspaper, topic, theme and actors. Also practical information related to the analysis was included for each entry, such as to what degree it was useful for the qualitative research, if it could be used as a reference and other notes or remarks. The database served two purposes. In the first place for the quantitative research related to the role of the media and information about most discussed themes and actors. Secondly, to easily trace back the articles for the qualitative research.

A total of 280 articles have been analysed which can be found back in the annex. All articles were written in Dutch. Quotations from the articles in the analysis have been translated from Dutch to English by the author. The main focus of the analysis was the content. Which topics are discussed, by who and when? Apart from the media content analysis, the discourse and narratives were also studied. How is one talking about European integration, which terminologies are used and is a certain frame dominant in the discussion? The last part of the analysis is the role of the media itself. How do they report on European politics and are they promoting a certain view? The articles were treated as historical sources on which the history of Euroscepticism in the Netherlands is based.

⁷⁸ Lexis Nexis, <https://www.lexisnexis.nl/>.

4.2 The European Elections in 2009

The main theme that dominated the selected media one month before the elections was the unpopularity of European politics, the invisible election campaign and the inability or unwillingness of the political actors to change this. The general disinterest for the European union was repeatedly emphasised. A NRC journalist wrote on the day of the elections that if someone had not been following the news closely, he or she probably missed the campaign. The same journalist also refers to the political reaction after the failed attack aimed at the royal family on the 29th of April 2009 as an illustrative moment. All parties decided to suspend their European elections campaign for a week after the attack, but probably only the inner circle of the politicians would have known that it had already started.⁷⁹

An exemplary research, confirming the disinterest, was published a week before the elections and repeatedly reported on in the newspapers. A communication scientist looked at the behaviour of viewers when European elections or European politics appeared in Dutch TV programmes. He showed that when the topic changed to Europe, many viewers switched to another channel. The *NOS Journaal* for example, the most watched Dutch news programme, lost between 200.000 and 300.00 viewers within a minute.⁸⁰ This research was mentioned in several other articles in the following days and became a symbol for the opinion of the average Dutch citizen towards the European elections. An article published in the *Volkscrant* on election day is another clear example. A referendum in Tilburg about the construction of a large shopping mall was more popular than the local elections.⁸¹ It was clear that Dutch citizens were not enthusiastic for the European elections. The expected low turnout and the general opinion of European politics as something boring and complicated were often repeated. On top of that, many Dutch citizens were also sceptical of European politics and did not support more European integration. This was the main conclusion of the *21minuten* opinion poll. A broad majority supported the principle of the EU, economic integration and European cooperation when tackling climate change, but enlargement, free labour migration or a transfer of more sovereignty were greeted with critical reactions.⁸²

⁷⁹ “De strijd die niet was,” 4 June 2009, *NRC Handelsblad*, accessed 14 May 2016, <http://www.lexisnexis.nl>.

⁸⁰ “Europa? Zappen!” 30 May 2009, *De Telegraaf*, accessed 14 May 2016, <http://www.lexisnexis.nl>.

⁸¹ “Winkelcentrum trekt meer kiezers dan Europa,” 4 May 2009, *De Volkskrant*, accessed 13 May 2016, <http://www.lexisnexis.nl>.

⁸² “Nederlanders raken maar niet gesteld op Europa,” 27 May 2009, *NRC Handelsblad*, accessed 15 May 2016, <http://www.lexisnexis.nl>.

The lack of interest in European politics and limited knowledge of the EU are clearly interconnected with the growing criticism of European integration. The *NRC*, *Telegraaf* and *Volkskrant* published various articles to both explain the unpopularity and criticism. The conclusion is often the same: Dutch politicians have failed. In an interview with the *Volkskrant* former D'66 (*Democraten '66*; progressive liberals) leader Laurens-Jan Brinkhorst states that it is not Europe that fails, but the Dutch politicians. They have been unable to tell the voters why European integration is important for the past 30 years. He adds that international and European national matters are often neglected in The Hague, and when the European parliament is mentioned, it addresses its expenses or corruption.⁸³ In a *NRC* interview SP campaign leader Van Heijningen also points at the Dutch politicians: “The silence regarding Europe in the past years has been disastrous. Our slogan is ‘Less Brussels’, but since this is already the case on the street, it is hard to get people excited to vote.” In the same article, *ChristenUnie* campaign leader Shahied Badoella agrees with Van Heijningen. “After the referendum, the parties in the political centre (CDA, PVDA, VVD) have avoided the debate about Europe. (..) In this campaign we did not achieve more than where we stopped after the referendum.”⁸⁴

Thus, instead of putting European integration high on the political agenda as a response to the disappointing ‘no’ most political parties avoided a debate about European integration and failed to stress its importance, contributing to Euroscepticism and the image of Brussels as a distant, bureaucratic power. The invisible campaign and appointment of unknown national and European members of parliament as frontrunners did no help in sparking a vivid debate either. It showed the low value political parties attach to the elections. Meanwhile, the campaign itself was also not focussed on European issues, but dominated by national interests. A statement from VVD frontrunner Hans van Baalen summarises the campaign atmosphere: “I’m going to Brussels as a Dutchman representing Dutch interests.”⁸⁵ Many parties argued for a smaller Dutch contribution to the EU budget and a better representation of Dutch interests in Brussels. The EU was pictured as too ‘expensive’ and the European budget had to be reduced. Other main themes were once again enlargement (the possible entrance of

⁸³ “Nederlandse politiek te laf voor Europa,” 16 May 2009, *De Volkskrant*, accessed 14 May 2016, <http://www.lexisnexis.nl>.

⁸⁴ “Opnieuw wil ‘Europa’ niet swingen,” 3 June 2009, *NRC Handelsblad*, accessed 15 May 2016, <http://www.lexisnexis.nl>.

⁸⁵ “Hét Nederlands Belang,” 27 May 2009, *De Telegraaf*, accessed 15 May 2016, <http://www.lexisnexis.nl>.

Turkey and whether Romania and Bulgaria joined too soon) and reshaping the European Union into a less bureaucratic and more effective organisation.

The positions of the political parties could be globally divided into three camps. D'66 and *Groenlinks* were the only parties saying 'yes' to Europe without reservations, arguing for more European integration and solving problems on a European level. They openly contested the national oriented debate, although they also framed their plans for Europe as beneficial for the Netherlands. The SP and PVV, founded by Geert Wilders, clearly said 'no' to Europe. The SP opposed the current Union as a neoliberal and capitalist organisation dominated by lobbyists and business interests and wanted 'less Brussels'. The PVV only supported European Integration on an economic level. They argued for just one commissioner, of European affairs, and all other affairs should be arranged on a Dutch level. One of their main issues was enlargement. Turkey could never enter the EU as it is an Islamic country.

Between the clear Europhile positions of D'66 and *GroenLinks* and the Eurosceptic and Europhobe stances of the PVV and SP, all other parties placed themselves with a more ambiguous view on European integration. The slogan of the Christian parties CU and SGP, operating as a joint party, was 'working together yes, superstate no'. They opted for less involvement of Brussels on various levels, but also wanted more cooperation regarding the environment, corruption and human trafficking. For the VVD and CDA 'eurorealistic' was the keyword. European integration is essentially good, it brought peace and prosperity, but one has to be realistic and pragmatic in times of crisis. Europe should work with a smaller budget, less staff, less 'rules' and at the same time increase cooperation concerning immigration, criminality and the internal market. The PVDA did not want to cut the EU budget, but spend it 'differently and in a modern way'. This means more money for innovation and less for agricultural subsidies.

Looking at the debate before the elections, it is clear that criticizing the European Union and blaming Brussels had become mainstream. Especially the CDA, PVDA and VVD presented themselves as more critical. Brussels was no longer 'sacred' for these parties.⁸⁶ The appearance of the populist and Eurosceptic Pim Fortuyn and Geert Wilders (PVV) and the disappointing 'no' made the political middle parties reconsider their European views. Former minister of foreign affairs Ben Bot phrased it as follows in a *Telegraaf* article: "Only D'66

⁸⁶ "Brussel is niet meer heilig," 3 June 2014, *De Volkskrant*, accessed 18 May 2016, <http://www.lexisnexis.nl>.

and *GroenLinks* dare to plead for a strong Europe. The others allow themselves to be pushed into a Eurosceptic direction by the negative stories of the PVV and SP. Being afraid to lose votes, they betray themselves.”⁸⁷

4.3 The European Elections in 2014

As in 2009, the 2014 European elections campaign coverage was not centred around political issues related to European integration. The fact that both politicians and voters were not interested in them was the main topic. Once again, the three newspapers described a quiet, low budget campaign without inspiration, TV programmes reporting on the elections scoring less viewers and the expected low turnout. A *Volkskrant* journalist accurately portrayed the campaign as a ‘cocktail of fatigue, disinterest, lack of knowledge, aimlessness and flip-flopping.’⁸⁸

More than in 2009, the media interviewed politicians, published critical articles and highlighted researches examining why Euroscepticism has flourished and who can be held accountable. The answer in 2009 was the politicians themselves. In 2014 the same conclusion was drawn with more certainty. One of the most named explanations how politicians amplify Euroscepticism is the ‘blaming Brussels’ attitude. For various European problems, rules and decisions, Brussels is blamed, although the parliament is partly or fully responsible for it. By not taking this responsibility, it looks as if the Dutch parliament has no influence in Brussels, it has less national sovereignty and the EU acts on its own as a distant power. Citizens perceiving this image, feel that they are not heard, as their representatives are not heard, contributing to the democratic deficit and the image of the EU as an elitist power not listening to citizens. Many articles in the sample described the ‘blaming Brussels’ phenomenon. The NRC wrote about a government research naming it as one of the main reasons for Euroscepticism and it was also one of the main conclusions of a TV programme which was mentioned repeatedly in various other articles analysing the troublesome EU relationship in the Netherlands.^{89 90}

⁸⁷ “Het is de schuld van Brussel,” 16 May 2014, *De Telegraaf*, accessed 17 May 2016, <http://www.lexisnexus.nl>.

⁸⁸ “Alsof het plan was de kiezer het bos in te sturen,” 22 May 2014, *De Volkskrant*, accessed 17 May 2016, <http://www.lexisnexus.nl>.

⁸⁹ “Politici dragen zelf bij aan wantrouwen Europa,” 24 May 2014, *NRC Handelsblad*, accessed 18 May 2016, <http://www.lexisnexus.nl>.

⁹⁰ “Boeman Brussel,” 9 May 2014, *De Volkskrant*, accessed 17 May 2016, <http://www.lexisnexus.nl>.

Another explanation for Euroscepticism that was often named in the articles is the incongruence between opinions in The Hague and actions in Brussels. National politicians act tough on Brussels and propose Eurosceptic policies, while party fellows in Brussels have different opinions and often vote counter wise. This ‘The Hague-Brussels schizophrenia’ deceives the voter as they vote as a party says one thing, but does the other. Another aspect contributing to this ‘schizophrenia’ is the practice of European parties in the European Parliament. The CDA claims to be against a federal Europe, but for the EVP, their European party, federalism is a goal. Furthermore, the VVD and D’66 disagree on a lot of issues, but join the same European party (ALDE). This hypocrisy contributes to more Euroscepticism and especially to the democratic deficit as the voter’s wish is not respected.

Thus, politicians blame Brussels for issues they are actually partly or fully responsible for, complaining they have no influence in Brussels to defend national interests. On top of that, when they have a voice or vote in Brussels to change this situation, they often do not practice what they preach. The selected media pointed out that the political parties also have intention to change this situation. Apart from highlighting the silent campaign, the fact that parties send their ‘b-team’ to Brussels was often repeated. One cannot expect to have a lot of influence in Brussels, if inexperienced and unknown politicians represent you. A research showed that from the 11 selected EU countries, the Dutch MEP’s and commissioners were the least experienced and had the lowest political status.⁹¹ Former Dutch (prime) ministers or party leaders rarely enter European politics. This is not beneficial for the Dutch influence or defending national interests. It also contributes to the creation of Brussels as ‘the Other’ as the average citizen does not know any European political actors. Besides that, Dutch parties also send their most Europhile party members and seasoned Eurocrats to the European parliament, strengthening the Brussels-The Hague schizophrenia.

Blaming Brussels was omnipresent during the campaign. An anti-EU or ‘less Europe’ frame full of negative evaluations was dominant. The campaign was so negative that VNO-NCW, an organisation representing employers and companies, felt the need to start an own campaign promoting the value of the EU and European integration as positive evaluations were rare.⁹² In the media the pro/anti and more/less Europe dichotomy was criticized as the reality is more

⁹¹ “Het is niet zo slim om een B-team naar Brussel te sturen,” 17 May 2014, *De Volkskrant*, accessed 18 May 2016, <http://www.lexisnexis.nl>.

⁹² “Werkgevers en bloc in de bres voor Europa,” 5 May 2014, *De Volkskrant*, accessed 16 May 2016, <http://www.lexisnexis.nl>.

complex. Besides, politicians as prime minister Mark Rutte opted for a debate more focussed on issues, although they also often refrained to it. It is clear that national interests once again were the most important theme. During a TV debate all frontrunners, D66 and Groenlinks were absent however, stated that they wanted sovereignty and power back from Brussels.⁹³ Also the government supported this view. One day before the elections Mark Rutte announced that he wanted to talk to other European leaders soon about less competencies for the EU, presenting a 5-point agenda.⁹⁴ Other themes that were discussed were still enlargement (Turkey), migration (labour migration from Eastern Europe and boat migrants) and especially the financial situation of the EU.

Regarding party positions not much had changed since the last elections, although all parties were slightly more critical and sceptical. D'66 and *Groenlinks* were the only parties that argued for more European integration. D'66 envisioned a powerful EU with a unified foreign policy and European taxes. In the polls they scored well with their clear Europhile stance. D'66 leader Alexander Pechtold slightly undermined this reputation however by stating that the EU should make a step to the side instead of forward. The SP and PVV still positioned themselves as the protest vote against Europe, but the PVV increased their scepticism. Although the PVV still supported economic cooperation and the euro in 2009, they now opted for leaving the EU and Eurozone.

The large parties in the political centre still had ambiguous stands of arguing for less European integration, but also supporting more European integration on certain issues. The PVDA, CDA and VVD all wanted less European competences for some issues, a smaller budget and a reduction of commissioners and bureaucracy. However, the PVDA promised to fight for a EU that creates more jobs, the VVD for trade and the CDA envisioned a EU as a mean to solve international problems. Their flip flopping on various issues, the hypocrisy of acting different in Brussels and belonging to more Europhile European parties were often pointed out by opponents and the media. They were also accused of not putting enough energy in the campaign since a low turnout would be beneficial for them as new voters would be attracted to the clear messages of D66 and the PVV.

⁹³ "Lijsttrekkers willen macht uit Brussel terug," 5 May 2014, *De Volkskrant*, accessed 16 May 2016, <http://www.lexisnexis.nl>.

⁹⁴ "Rutte wil snel afspraken over minder taken EU," 21 May 2014, *NRC Handelsblad*, accessed 17 May 2016, <http://www.lexisnexis.nl>.

The 2014 campaign showed that European politics is still a difficult issue. Many parties rather neglect European integration as it is a complicated issue that is becoming increasingly important, which is hard to explain in Eurosceptic times. When parties are forced to debate about Europe in election times, they talk negatively about Brussels, act tough on the EU and do not take responsibility for it. In reality, most parties support all proposals in Brussels and are in fact pro-European. Besides that, they also do not put effort in communicating European politics or defending national interests better, looking at the invisible campaigns and considering the fact that parties send their most pro-European colleagues to Brussels having a personal Eurocratic agenda. Thus, the gap between what is said and done increases Euroscepticism and the democratic deficit.

4.4 The EU-Ukraine Association Treaty Referendum in 2016

The referendum regarding the association treaty with Ukraine received less media attention than the elections in 2009 and 2014. Especially in the beginning of the research period the news had been dominated by the refugee deal between the EU and Turkey first and then the terrorist attacks in Brussels. One week before the referendum the topic could not be avoided however. Apart from the content of the association treaty and whether to vote yes or no, the debate was mainly centred around three issues.

The first one is the referendum law. The *GeenPeil* campaign was the first initiative that successfully used this law. Although the imitators emphasised their wish for more (direct) democracy, many people in the media criticized the law however stating they do not need this. Representatives are chosen every four years who decide about complicated matters, such as a 300 pages long association treaty, in order for citizens to not have to. The referendum was also called expensive. Opponents were strengthened by the fact that the referendum commission awarded subsidies to various doubtful initiatives, the most symbolic being the 50.000 euro awarded to print toilet paper with arguments to vote ‘no’.⁹⁵ The toilet paper was often mentioned to stress the redundancy and ridiculousness of the referendum. Jelle Brandt Corstius, a Dutch TV presenter, called it ‘the most expensive joke ever’.⁹⁶

The minimum turnout of 30% needed to make the referendum valid was the second issue. The turnout condition triggered strategic voting as people supporting the treaty could also express

⁹⁵ “Referendum”, 19 March 2016, *De Volkskrant*, accessed 19 May 2016, <http://www.lexisnexis.nl>.

⁹⁶ “Ja”, 2 April 2016, *NRC Handelsblad*, accessed 19 May 2016, <http://www.lexisnexis.nl>.

their opinion by abstaining from voting in order to keep the turnout low. It put yes voters in a difficult position whether to vote yes or not to vote, hoping for a low turnout and risking a win for ‘no’. The turnout became more important than the result in this way. The flaw in the referendum law was pointed out by many politicians, opinion makers and columnists opting to change it. It also resulted in a doubtful ‘yes’ campaign that hoped for a low turnout and voters to stay at home.⁹⁷ The referendum that should promote more democracy ironically lead to people not doing their democratic duty.

The third issue was a controversial interview with *Burgercomité EU*, one of the referendum initiators, in the NRC. The *Burgercomité EU* founders stated that they did not care about Ukraine, but needed a case to sabotage the relationship between the Netherlands and the EU and increase Euroscepticism, ultimately culminating in a ‘Nexit’ referendum.⁹⁸ It led to widespread criticism of politicians and columnists calling the referendum fraudulent as signatures were collected under false pretences, abusing the referendum law. D’66 leader Alexander Pechtold called it a ‘heavy blow’ for the people who signed the petition.⁹⁹ The incident added up to the already existing image of the referendum as a waste of money, a ‘joke’ and ‘non-democratic’.

Although the referendum law and voting turnout were the main issues covered, the content of the treaty also received enough attention. As in 2005 with the constitutional referendum, both the ‘yes’ and ‘no’ camp explained the meaning of the treaty in their own way. According to the opponents the treaty paved the way for EU membership of Ukraine. The supporters however stated that association treaty was focussed on trade and international cooperation underlining that the EU signed similar treaties with non-European countries as Chile. The ‘no’ campaign reacted to the trade argument that there is already a lot of trade between the Netherlands and Ukraine and a treaty is not needed. Besides that, corruption and the problematic situation of human and animal rights in Ukraine should be reasons to not work together. The ‘yes’ campaign acknowledged this situation, but told in response that the treaty aims at improving human rights and battling corruption.

⁹⁷ “Ja-kamp moet hopen op veel thuisblijvers,” 2 April 2016, *De Volkskrant*, accessed 19 May 2016, <http://www.lexisnexis.nl>.

⁹⁸ “Oekraïne kan ons niets schelen,” 31 March 2016, *NRC Handelsblad*, accessed 19 May 2016, <http://www.lexisnexis.nl>.

⁹⁹ “Referendum onder valse voorwendselen georganiseerd,” 2 April 2016, *NRC Handelsblad*, accessed 19 May 2016, <http://www.lexisnexis.nl>.

The above mentioned arguments were also heard in the debate between political actors. This debate was mainly held between the parties who profiled themselves as Europhile (D'66) and Eurosceptic (SP, PVV) in the past years. All other parties, who were often moving on the Europhile/Eurosceptic scale, were forced to show their true colours and say 'yes' or 'no' to the treaty. They could not hide between ambiguous attitudes of supporting EU decisions, arguing for less European integration and blaming Brussels. As the parliament had already voted on the treaty before, these parties were backing their initial support for the treaty. It put them in the uncomfortable position to defend a pro-European stance. Their solution to this was simple, they remained silent. Especially the CDA and VVD did not actively campaign and avoided media attention.¹⁰⁰ The PVDA and VVD, who formed the Rutte II coalition, were criticized for their absence. The Rutte ministry itself also was not much involved in the debate. It only issued a statement that the treaty was a trade agreement and would not lead to membership. The Dutch government failed to show the merit of the treaty and the need to help Ukraine, making the same mistake as with the constitution in 2005. A specialist from Carnegie summarised it as follows: 'No Dutch courage for Ukraine'.¹⁰¹

The referendum turned out to be the perfect example of the problems related to European politics that appeared in the 2009 and 2014 campaigns. The parties in the political middle who appeared as critical of the EU in the media, especially during elections, all voted in favour of the treaty and were unwilling to openly back their choice. A clear example of the hypocrisy and pragmatic attitude of saying one thing and doing the other. Looking at this political practice, the wish for more democracy is understandable as the electorate is not listened to and politicians fail to communicate their actual opinions. However, the referendum did not prove to be a 'celebration of democracy' as the *GeenPeil* campaign proclaimed and certainly was not the way to solve the deficit either. By stating that they do not care about Ukraine, the *Burgercomité EU* undermined the referendum and misused the law as signatures were collected under false pretences. Furthermore, the minimum turnout put the yes voters in a difficult position, leading to not voting as a democratic expression. Thus, to improve the democratic deficit Dutch politicians should be more honest and open about their European policies and change the referendum law in the process.

¹⁰⁰ "Bij het CDA is het wel erg stil," 30 March 2016, *NRC Handelsblad*, accessed 19 May 2016, <http://www.lexisnexis.nl>.

¹⁰¹ "Referendum gaat niet over Nederland," 6 April 2016, *De Volkskrant* accessed 19 May 2016, <http://www.lexisnexis.nl>.

4.5 Euroscepticism in the Interreferendum Period

Chapter III briefly described the development of Euroscepticism after the constitutional referendum. It pointed out how after the constitutional referendum opposition to the EU became mainstream in the Netherlands following a short transition phase since the Fortuyn revolt. The findings of this research confirm this image. Especially the three large parties in the political centre changed their unconditional support for the EU based on ideology to a pragmatic and ambiguous attitude of both opposing and supporting the EU, often working with a double political agenda. The CDA, VVD and PVDA responded in this way to the public Euroscepticism that the constitutional referendum exposed. Furthermore, the middle parties were afraid to lose voters on the left and right to the PVV and SP who had politicized Eurosceptic feelings. Only, D66 and *GroenLinks* maintained their pro-European position and profiled themselves as the alternative for Europhile voters.

Many researched articles described how European politics are often considered boring and complex. In chapter I, II and III it is mentioned how the lack of information, knowledge and interest contributes to Euroscepticism. Although Dutch politicians are aware of it, they make no effort to change this situation. Many politicians rather avoid talking about European politics as the voters are not interested in it. Besides, when it is an element of party competition, many parties cannot offer an alternative for the clear messages of D'66 and PVV. Furthermore, when European politics need to be discussed, in election periods for example, Dutch politicians spread misinformation portraying a different reality. In debates the main issue is whether parties want more or less European integration. The majority of Dutch parties argue for less integration and propose a EU with less competences and sovereignty working with a smaller budget. These proposals are unrealistic and offer the voter false hope. In particular, since MEP's are part of European parties and simply do not have the influence or power. The fact that the VVD and D'66 propose different policies but are part of the same European party is a clear example of this different reality.

On top of that, Brussels is often blamed for decisions that Dutch politicians are partly or fully responsible for. The EU is depicted as the distant, elitist superpower acting on its own, although the Netherlands and Dutch politicians are an integral part of it. This contributes to the distorted European political reality and creates a vicious circle of Euroscepticism. Politicians blame Brussels and take over the Eurosceptic narrative of some citizens to win votes, the Eurosceptic citizens receive a confirmation of their thoughts and get more critical

and politicians respond likewise. Meanwhile, despite the critical opinions and Eurosceptic proposals, when European decisions have to be made in The Hague or Brussels a majority votes pro-European. This hypocrisy strengthens the democratic deficit and does not help in closing the gap between the elite and citizens.

Looking at the development of Euroscepticism, one could say that communication regarding European politics is a big part of the problem. Politicians have long neglected to communicate the value of European integration and when Euroscepticism arose, they continued to do so. Instead of offering a counter narrative that showed the worth of the EU and explained its functioning, most politicians created a pseudo reality using a negative narrative in a Eurosceptic frame. The fact that Politicians can create this flawed image of European integration without being criticized is the result of the complexity of the ever evolving European project. Trenz and De Wilde described how Euroscepticism is a form of polity contestation due to the unfinished nature of the EU. The situation in the Netherlands proves this. In the current Eurosceptic climate, agreeing on a definite form of the polity and solving the problems that Euroscepticism addresses at the same time, form a dilemma. To make the EU more democratic and reform it, more sovereignty and competences needs to be transferred to Brussels. A first step to solve this dilemma would be for politicians to take responsibility for their European decisions and improve their communication. The way the referendum on Ukraine was treated, does not give much hope however.

Apart from Trenz and De Wilde's polity contestation, which is the core of EU opposition, the working definition of Euroscepticism in this paper also incorporated the theory of Sofia Vasilopolou. She described different gradations of rejecting the principle, practice and/or future of European integration. Based on what is said during the election campaigns, the majority of Dutch parties would be Eurosceptic and fit in one of Vasilopoulos's categories. With their 'less European integration' message, the PVDA, VVD and CDA balance between the compromising and conditional Euroscepticism category. They openly reject the future of a stronger EU and often criticize its practice. However, looking at the casted votes and government decisions, the three parties can still be considered pro-European on most issues, joining the likes of *GroenLinks* and D66. The PVV, SP and Christian parties do practice what they preach. The Christian parties remained within the comprising Euroscepticism category rejecting the future of European integration. The SP is still conditional category rejecting its

practice and future. The PVV moved from conditional to rejecting Euroscepticism also opposing the principle.

Nationalism or National interests?

Thus, in the interreferendum period the Netherlands have become increasingly critical of the EU, although the political message is more Eurosceptic than the political practice. Has nationalism also become more prominent? In chapter I nationalism is defined as ethnocentric, opposing international cooperation and not respecting human rights using the definition of non-democratic nationalism by Montserrat Guibernau. In this regard, only the PVV of Geert Wilders fulfils these criteria. They moved from supporting economic cooperation to totally rejecting European integration, arguing for closed borders and leaving the Eurozone.

All other parties do not belong to the non-democratic category as they support working together on a European level. National interests however are an essential part of the European policies of Dutch parties. When Bolkenstein argued for better defending national interests in Brussels in the 1990s, he was almost ostracized. A similar statement now would not have an impact. In the researched election periods the dominance of the national frame is undeniable. A cosmopolitan frame of debating the benefits of European integration for Europe is rare. National interests have replaced cosmopolitan ideals over the years, but the message and practice differ once again. In Brussels, Dutch MEP's belong to European fractions working with European policies benefitting Europe in a cosmopolitan reality, often forgetting national interests.

Media

Chapter III described how the media can amplify Euroscepticism. They do this by only covering EU politics around key events in a national context, using negative evaluations and strategic reporting. Besides, journalists do not feel responsible for 'feeding' Euroscepticism as they simply report on what is happening in the political and public sphere driven by commercial and public interests. To what degree did the researched media confirm this image and contribute to Euroscepticism?

As only articles relating to European integration in a national context have been analysed, it was not possible to observe if the coverage of EU politics in a European context was neglected or underrepresented. Due to the limited size of the sample, around 100 articles in

the elections periods and 77 in the referendum period from three newspapers, the negative tone of the media could also not be proven. However, as most articles often had a neutral evaluation or contained both positive and negative evaluations, the research indicates that the negative tone of the media might not be as dominant.

Thus, neglecting news on Europe and a negative tone could not be proven, but when examining the sample, the prominence of strategic reporting is clear. A lot of articles concerned the election campaigns, their invisibility and political strategies behind it. As described in section 4.2 and 4.3, the absence of a proper election campaign and the disinterest in European affairs were the main topics. This strategic reporting was supported by reflexive reporting as the media wondered whether they contributed to the unpopularity of European politics. During the 2014 election campaign both *De Volkskrant* and *NRC* wrote about the role of the media and interviewed the managers of news stations and talk-show hosts.^{102 103}

The media coverage was not centred around certain political issues, mostly because politicians were also not addressing certain issues and kept their message simple: more or less Europe. Journalists tried their best however to change this. Although they might not feel responsible for Euroscepticism or creating a European public debate, by publishing various articles about the functioning of the EU, the content of the elections and party programmes the media took an effort to make Europe more interesting and informing the voters.

¹⁰² “Europa in twee woorden Framing,” 17 May 2014, *De Volkskrant*, accessed 17 May 2016, <http://www.lexisnexis.nl>.

¹⁰³ “NOS Nieuws 'Debatten doen het steeds minder goed”, “RTL Nieuws 'Kijkers hebben niets aan campagneprietpraat”, “Nieuwsuur 'Het onderwerp is gewoon lastig”, “Pauw & Witteman 'Dat lagere kijkcijfer neem je op de koop toe’”, 20 May 2014, *NRC Handelsblad*, accessed 17 May 2016, <http://www.lexisnexis.nl>.

Conclusion

Within the academic and public debate, the convincing rejection of the European constitution by the Dutch population in 2005 is seen as a turning point in the relationship between the Netherlands and the EU. It is assumed that after the constitutional referendum, the dominant pro-European consensus in the Netherlands was definitely replaced by widespread criticism. The rejection of the constitution has been researched a lot, but studies analysing the relationship between the Netherlands and the EU after 2005 are limited. This study contributes to the current academic debate by questioning the critical turn, asking whether it indeed signalled the start of a new period and describing how Euroscepticism developed after the referendum. Has Euroscepticism in the Netherlands increased after 2005?

The literature study and media content analysis show that this question cannot be answered simply. Two seemingly contradicting developments were identified which create a dual image of the level of Euroscepticism. On the one hand, looking at political opinions expressed in the media and positions presented in party programmes, it can be concluded that the Netherlands have certainly become more Eurosceptic after 2005. Especially the large parties in the political centre, the VVD, CDA and PVDA, who often form the government, became more critical towards the EU. They gave up their unconditional ideological support for the EU and replaced it with a more pragmatic approach in which national interests took a prominent place, trying to win back voters. The traditional Eurosceptic parties, PVV and SP, also voiced more critical opinions and even the Europhile parties *GroenLinks* and D'66 referred more to national interests.

On the other hand, this study shows that behind the façade of negative evaluations and Eurosceptic opinions, a more pro-European practice takes place. The Dutch government and parliament have supported almost all European policies and decisions in the past decade. Also within the European parliament Dutch MEP's support policies that their colleagues in the election campaigns publicly objected to. The existence of European parties and the fact that Dutch parties send their most Europhile party members to Brussels stimulates this. Furthermore, Eurobarometer data show that levels of support for the European Union remain stable since 2005 and that the group that objects European integration never reaches more than 25%.

Thus, the reaction of the Dutch governments and parties to the ‘no’ in 2005 was to both become more critical of the EU and act pro-European at the same time. This reaction did not address the Eurosceptic concerns that citizens expressed by rejecting the constitution, but only confirmed the already existing Eurosceptic feelings. The hypocrisy of saying one thing and doing the other underlines the democratic deficit. It confirms the image that many citizens have of a European elite acting on its own, who cannot be trusted and do not represent them. Furthermore, the negative tone when debating Europe and the fact that Dutch politicians blame Brussels for problems they are actually responsible also amplify Euroscepticism.

Apart from these two main issues, other communication problems that contribute to Euroscepticism were also identified. The general disinterest in European politics and limited knowledge of the European Union is one of them. European politics are considered boring and too complex by citizens, the media and even politicians, as shown by the invisible election campaigns. The lack of involvement and engagement in European politics makes criticizing and blaming the EU expected as one does not feel part of the polity. Another related source of Euroscepticism is the limited media coverage which is cyclical, centred around key moments and using mostly national actors and national contexts, creating a feeling of distance and the EU as ‘the Other’.

How could politicians solve these issues and reduce Euroscepticism? First of all, an honest and open communication about European politics is needed. Politicians should take responsibility for their role in the European decision making and back their decisions by a clear vision of what the future of the EU should be. Second of all, the knowledge and coverage of European politics should be increased. Politicians can play their game of saying one thing and doing the other as they are not controlled by the media and citizens as European affairs are considered too complex and boring and a European public debate is non-existent. A system of voting for European parties with a European-wide debate would be a good first step to change this and get citizens more engaged. Furthermore, politicians should make an effort to create policies increasing the knowledge, such as school programmes.

In conclusion, after the constitutional referendum Euroscepticism in the Netherlands has become more dominant in political party discourse, but when actual European decisions and votes are studied, this increasing Euroscepticism has to be reconsidered. The main cause and amplifier of Euroscepticism is the failing political communication on multiple levels. Almost

all Dutch politicians take over the dominant Eurosceptic narrative instead of countering it by an inclusive, pro-European discourse promoting the value of European Integration. Moreover, no attempts are made to increase the knowledge of the EU. In this regard, Euroscepticism can be seen as a positive development as it challenges politicians to discuss the worth of the EU and increases its knowledge. The 2016 referendum about Ukraine proved however that this remains a difficult task. The Dutch government and parties supporting the treaty mostly remained silent and were unable to communicate the merit of the treaty. When asked about their opinion, they emphasised that it is 'just a trade agreement'. Thus, a new period of Euroscepticism has started, but the end is not in sight.

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Annex 1: Researched Articles 2009

Id	Date	Newspaper	Title	Topic
1	05/05/2009	NRC Handelsblad	Europese campagne hervat met politiek debat	European Elections Campaign
2	05/05/2009	Volkskrant	Europees Parlement voor beginners	European parliament wants more media coverage
3	05/05/2009	Volkskrant	'Er moeten fatsoenlijke privacyregels komen'	D66 election programme
4	06/05/2009	NRC Handelsblad	Achterin klinkt gemopper over stemvee	EU Election Debate in The Hague
5	06/05/2009	Telegraaf	Invoering Europese stresstest voor grote banken valt slecht	Financial crisis, new bank laws
6	06/05/2009	Telegraaf	Kredietbeoordelaars binnen EU snel aan banden gelegd	Extra requirements moneylenders
7	06/05/2009	Volkskrant	'PVV vertoont duikgedrag en is gewoon laf'	Absence PVV in EU Elections Debate
8	06/05/2009	Volkskrant	'Je hebt toch ook geen gemeentesceptici?'	Thijs Berman discusses PVDA position in Elections
9	06/05/2009	Volkskrant	Bos bepleit stresstest voor grote Europese banken	Wouter Bos talks about Summit Ministers of Finance
10	06/05/2009	Volkskrant	Zwak, die Barroso, hij mag blijven	Discussing Functioning Barroso
11	07/05/2009	Telegraaf	'Aanpak EU-fraude veel te slap'	Corruption with EU money should be addressed more
12	08/05/2009	Telegraaf	Knip	EU has to spend less money and be more efficient
13	08/05/2009	Volkskrant	'Burger heeft nu niets te vertellen in Europa'	EU election programme Newropeans
14	09/05/2009	Volkskrant	Met me vlaggetje, me hoedje en me toeter	Campaign gadgets disappoint so far
15	11/05/2009	NRC Handelsblad	Retour Den Haag-Brussel	Various Topic about National Politics, EU Campaign
16	11/05/2009	Telegraaf	Nederland soepel met asielzoekers	Netherlands allows more asylum seekers than other EU countries
17	11/05/2009	Telegraaf	Braafste jongetje van de klas; Stinkkaas in 'De Slag om Brussel'	TV show made about EU exposes lot of EU problems
18	12/05/2009	NRC Handelsblad	De bedilzucht komt juist niet uit Brussel	TV programme show NL respecting the rules the most, but blaming Brussels
19	13/05/2009	NRC Handelsblad	Europese begroting voor koele rekenmeesters	6 Dutch economist take a look at the EU budget
20	13/05/2009	Telegraaf	Stem	Future EU reforms
21	13/05/2009	Volkskrant	Tegen Wilders en tegen Europa? Kies ChristenUnie	Boycott of PVV
22	14/05/2009	NRC Handelsblad	'Wij leerden te kiezen voor Europa. Natuurlijk'	Jan Pronk and Frits Bolkenstein discuss value of European Integration

23	14/05/2009	Telegraaf	PVV slaat munt uit boycot	PVV boycott only beneficial for the party
24	14/05/2009	Volkskrant	40 procent twijfelaars	European elections: 40% voter has doubts
25	15/05/2009	Volkskrant	Europa moet meer zijn dan een interne markt	Dennis de Jong talks about his party programme for European Elections
26	16/05/2009	Telegraaf	Het is de SCHULD van BRUSSEL!	Dutch attitude towards Europe and EU Elections
27	16/05/2009	Volkskrant	Nationaal belang in soorten en maten	MEP's analyse Dutch attitude towards Europe
28	16/05/2009	Volkskrant	Nederlandse politiek te laf voor Europa	Laurens Jan Brinkhorst discusses the Dutch relationship with Europe
29	16/05/2009	Volkskrant	'Argwaan burgers schaadt Europa niet'	Euroscepticism does not harm EU but sparks debate that is needed
30	16/05/2009	Volkskrant	De EU snakt naar standbeelden	An EU Canon could create a stronger feeling of being European
31	17/05/2009	Telegraaf	Van Baalen haalt uit naar oud-partijgenoten	Start European Campaign VVD
32	18/05/2009	NRC Handelsblad	Loyaal aan Geert, maar eigenlijk meer van Pim	Barry Madlener (PVV) discusses European elections
33	18/05/2009	NRC Handelsblad	Retour Den Haag Brussel	Various topics European Elections
34	18/05/2009	Telegraaf	Turkije en de Europese wortel	Most important themes Elections discussed
35	18/05/2009	Volkskrant	Ik wil een Europese FBI, steviger dan Europol'	Interview Hans van Baalen about Elections
36	18/05/2009	Volkskrant	'Verkiezing Europa gaat over de zwakste schakel'	EU elections about 'weakest link'
37	19/05/2009	Telegraaf	CDA wil stijgen	CDA campaign coverage
38	19/05/2009	Volkskrant	'EU werd probleem, niet de oplossing'	Joost Lagendijk talks about Europe
39	19/05/2009	Volkskrant	'De EU kost zo weinig en geeft ons zo veel terug'	VVD MEP discusses EU, changed opinion positively
40	20/05/2009	Volkskrant	Voor wie zijn kinderen liefheeft	Jeltje van Nieuwenhoven argues to vote for Europe and PVDA
41	22/05/2009	NRC Handelsblad	'Je verstoppert achter rooie luiken helpt niet'	Debate between SP, PVDA, frontrunners about EU Elections
42	22/05/2009	Telegraaf	Europa heeft Turkije nodig	Possible membership Turkey
43	22/05/2009	Volkskrant	Geslaagde burgers, maar ontevreden	PVV party strategy
44	22/05/2009	Volkskrant	Omdat al het natuurlijke leven mij lief is	Arguments to vote for Partij voor de Dieren
45	23/05/2009	NRC Handelsblad	Zelf geen kandidaat, maar wel overall present	Frans Timmermans talks about EU Elections and politics
46	23/05/2009	Telegraaf	Brusselse vleespotten	Financial situation of Europe and Dutch contribution

47	23/05/2009	Volkskrant	Europese verkiezingen missen element dat verkiezingen interessant maakt	Unpopularity European politics
48	24/05/2009	Telegraaf	Europa naar de stembus	Europe is increasingly important
49	25/05/2009	Volkskrant	Ik ga naar Brussel als politiek actievoerder	Interview Natasja Oerlemans, Partij voor de Dieren
50	25/05/2009	NRC Handelsblad	'In Brussel zullen ze wel weten wat ze doen'	Letter Dutch entrepreneur
51	25/05/2009	NRC Handelsblad	Operatie Oomen is een lesje campagne	Ria Oomen running for 5th time as MEP
52	26/05/2009	NRC Handelsblad	Hogere drempel voor Europa	Kees van der Staaij wants larger majority for approving EU policies
53	26/05/2009	Telegraaf	EU SCOORT SLECHT	Results from Telegraaf survey about Europe
54	27/05/2009	NRC Handelsblad	Het project zonder passie	European Elections: party positions and lack of passion for Europe
55	27/05/2009	NRC Handelsblad	Afstemmen hoe je voor Nederland opkomt	Wim van der Camp (CDA), Hans van Baalen (VVD) discuss European Election
56	27/05/2009	NRC Handelsblad	Politici zijn zelf de schuld van de Europafobie	Politicians created Europhobia themselves
57	27/05/2009	Volkskrant	Ik geloof in Hans	Writer votes for Hans van Baalen
58	27/05/2009	Volkskrant	Nu komt echt iedereen bij Corus op de koffie	Lot of campaigning at Corus
59	28/05/2009	NRC Handelsblad	'Ik ga niet stemmen, er zitten allemaal zakkenvullers	Interview Eurosceptic voter
60	28/05/2009	NRC Handelsblad	De koe wordt duur betaald - maar niet overdrijven	Fact check European myths
61	28/05/2009	Telegraaf	Wie heeft de Macht?	European decisions are taken by national leaders
62	28/05/2009	Volkskrant	Turkije kan goede buur zijn, maar geen familie'	Interview Barry Madlener about PVV programme
63	29/05/2009	NRC Handelsblad	Vrij reizen - vroeger, nu en in de toekomst	Debate D66 and PVV frontrunners
64	29/05/2009	Volkskrant	Waarden van Calvijn zijn goed voor Europa'	Interview Peter van Dalen about CU/SGP election programme
65	29/05/2009	Telegraaf	Hét Nederlands Belang	Groenlinks speaks out against national interests
66	29/05/2009	Volkskrant	Afkeer van Brussel zet zich niet om in zetels	Analysis televised election debate
67	29/05/2009	Volkskrant	Migratie dicteert debat over Europa	TV Debate mostly concerned migration
68	29/05/2009	Telegraaf	Gereis naar Straatsburg bron van vele irritaties	Moving between Strasbourg and Brussels leads to irritation
69	29/05/2009	Volkskrant	Waarom gaan we eigenlijk stemmen?	Writer votes for SP
70	30/05/2009	NRC	Scharrelkippen met macht	Interview with various MEP's

		Handelsblad		about functioning EP
71	30/05/2009	NRC Handelsblad	Het CDA moet nog missiewerk doen	European policies CDA and campaign
72	30/05/2009	Telegraaf	"De gekke Henkie van Europa"	PVV frontrunner Barry Madlener and his opinions
73	30/05/2009	Volkskrant	Verhagen snapt de euroscepsis	Maxime Verhagen understands Euroscepticism
74	30/05/2009	NRC Handelsblad	Thuisblijvers bij Europese verkiezingen doen zichzelf te kort	Expected low turnout elections
75	30/05/2009	Volkskrant	'De kiezer heeft over Europa een grens getrokken'	Maxime Verhagen talks about positions CDA
76	30/05/2009	NRC Handelsblad	Europese verkiezingen crucialer dan ze lijken	Importance European Elections
77	30/05/2009	Telegraaf	'Landbouwgeld voor wegen'	Hans van Baalen discusses his EU programme
78	30/05/2009	Telegraaf	"Groot, log, bemoeizuchtig en duur"	Wim van de Camp discusses CDA programme
79	30/05/2009	Telegraaf	"We willen minder Brussel"	Dennis de jong discusses SP programme
80	30/05/2009	NRC Handelsblad	De Europese borreltafel	Heijne discusses European Issues
81	30/05/2009	Telegraaf	Opstoken van Apathie	European Election campaign
82	30/05/2009	Telegraaf	Europa? Zappen!	Voters change channels when topic about European elections appears
83	30/05/2009	NRC Handelsblad	Niet-stemmen voor Europa is een roekeloze non-optie	European citizens should vote
84	02/06/2009	NRC Handelsblad	'PVV en SP geven stem aan afkeer van globalisering'	Polarisation cosmopolitan and national thinking groups becomes clearer
85	02/06/2009	Telegraaf	Verkiezing met maar twee smaken	Dissatisfied European electorate
86	02/06/2009	Volkskrant	'Ingewikkeld en nooit sexy'	Europe and Media
87	02/06/2009	Volkskrant	'Het kan best zijn dat wij ons bij stemmingen vaak onthouden'	Interview Eline van den Broek (Libertas)
88	03/06/2009	NRC Handelsblad	Van Baalen en zijn lastige lauwerkrans	Televised European elections debate
89	03/06/2009	NRC Handelsblad	Veertig procent geen mening over Europa	Televised European elections debate
90	03/06/2009	NRC Handelsblad	Opnieuw wil 'Europa' niet swingen Kopstukken ontbraken	European elections campaign
91	03/06/2009	Volkskrant	Angst voor de superstaat	European elections overview
92	03/06/2009	Volkskrant	Hoe groter, hoe beter	Europhile party positions
93	03/06/2009	Volkskrant	Brussel is niet meer heilig	Different attitude CDA, PVDA, VVD
94	03/06/2009	Volkskrant	Meer democratie gewenst	Positions Libertas/ Partij voor de Dieren
95	04/06/2009	NRC Handelsblad	In veel landen bestaat positieve grondhouding jegens Europa	Comparison European Elections in the Netherlands and other countries

96	04/06/2009	NRC Handelsblad	Rijk en arm naar de stembus 'Men is hier gezagsgetrouw'	EU elections in Rozendaal
97	04/06/2009	NRC Handelsblad	'Europa? Dat zegt me niets'	EU elections in Rucphen
98	04/06/2009	NRC Handelsblad	De strijd die niet was	Invisible election campaign
99	04/06/2009	Telegraaf	De kosten van Europa	European costs and benefits for Netherlands
100	04/06/2009	Telegraaf	Kiezers- oordeel kabinet	EU elections have more significance for domestic politics than European
101	04/06/2009	Volkskrant	Winkelcentrum trekt meer kiezers dan Europa	Local referendum more popular than elections

Annex II: Researched Articles 2014

Id	Date	Newspaper	Title	Topic
1	23/04/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Over Den Haag	European Elections Campaign
2	24/04/2014	NRC Handelsblad	'Politici dragen zelf bij aan wantrouwen Europa'	Trust European politics
3	24/04/2014	Volkskrant	Europa's nieuwe missie	Europa should focus more on the environment
4	24/04/2014	Volkskrant	EU-kandidaat PVV haakt af wegens 'foute figuren'	PVV frontrunner quits
5	26/04/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Mickey Mouse-parlement wordt een machtig monster	European elections/parliament
6	26/04/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Deze politici voeren u straks aan in Brussel	Overview frontrunners party elections and positions
7	26/04/2014	Volkskrant	Iedereen naar huis met een mooi verhaal	Sources Euroscepticism
8	27/04/2014	Telegraaf	EU en euro onomkeerbaar	European elections mostly concern national issues.
9	29/04/2014	Telegraaf	Geen woord over geldverspilling EU	AIV research did not address corruption, inefficient EU.
10	30/04/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Rutte dreigde met euro-exit, zegt EU-chef Van Rompuy	Rutte threatened to leave euro zone in 2014
11	30/04/2014	Telegraaf	Van Baalen in debat zonder 'Den Haag'	Start election campaigns
12	30/04/2014	Volkskrant	Rutte dreigde euro te verlaten	Rutte threatened to leave euro zone in 2014
13	01/05/2014	Telegraaf	Dreigement Rutte blijft rondzingen	Rutte threatened to leave euro zone in 2014
14	01/05/2014	Volkskrant	Een boze premier	Rutte threatened to leave euro zone in 2014
15	01/05/2014	Volkskrant	Oppositie eist uitleg over 'euro-exit' Rutte	Opposition wants Rutte to explain leaving threat
16	02/05/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Europa EU-verkiezingsdebat bij Nieuwsuur slecht bekeken	EU election debate not a lot of viewers
17	02/05/2014	Telegraaf	Bekvechten over Brussel	Coverage of EU election debate
18	02/05/2014	Volkskrant	'In Brussel is een tegenmacht nodig'	Interview with Peter van Dalen CU/SGP about
19	02/05/2014	Volkskrant	Nummer 3 op Europese PVV-lijst demonstreerde tegen Wilders	Number 3 on PVV list protested against Wilders
20	03/05/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Hoe machtig zijn de Nederlanders in Brussel?	Influence of NL in EP
21	03/05/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Waarom ruziën de Nederlanders zo?	Functioning of Dutch MEP's in EP
22	03/05/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Hoe werken politici uit 28 landen samen?	Dutch MEP's on functioning EP
23	03/05/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Meer meer meer of minder minder EU	Worth of European integration discussed
24	03/05/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Ruttes paniekaanval is oud-Hollandse traditie	Rutte's opt out remarks

25	03/05/2014	Volkskrant	Wilt u minder of meer Europa? Dat is precies de verkeerde vraag	Analysis of European debate, more or less Europe? Democratic deficit
26	03/05/2014	Volkskrant	D66 wil klaarheid van PVV over Front National	D66 wants answer from PVV about working together with Front National
27	03/05/2014	Telegraaf	De bananenverkiezing van het EU-parlement	What is the source of Euroscepticism
28	03/05/2014	Telegraaf	'Rode kaart voor bemoeizucht'	Hans van Baalen wants more influence national parliaments
29	04/05/2014	Telegraaf	Met de moed der wanhoop	Campaign in Eindhoven, PVDA has troubles
30	05/05/2014	Volkskrant	'In Europa neemt Groen het voortouw'	Interview frontrunner Groenlinks Bas Eickhout
31	05/05/2014	Volkskrant	Lijsttrekkers willen macht uit Brussel terug	Parties want more power Dutch parliament to veto EU decisions
32	05/05/2014	Volkskrant	Werkgevers en bloc in de bres voor Europa	Employers/companies lobby for Europe
33	08/05/2014	Telegraaf	Afkeer Europa groeit	Rise of populist parties: how do European and Dutch politicians deal with it
34	08/05/2014	Volkskrant	Europa en de economie	Marcel van Dam discusses plea of employers for positive European image
35	09/05/2014	Telegraaf	Pro-eurokamp oneens over inrichting muntunie	Pro-euro camp divided
36	09/05/2014	Volkskrant	Boeman Brussel	Results of research by Dutch TV programme in Brussels discussed
37	09/05/2014	Volkskrant	Applaus. Dank u, volgende vraag	Mark Rutte talks about the campaign
38	10/05/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Dat je denkt: weinig Europese democratie is zo gek nog niet	Level of democracy EU
39	10/05/2014	Telegraaf	Europa gaat om de economie, sufferd!	Employers promote Europe: more focus on economy and prosperity
40	10/05/2014	Volkskrant	Nederland moet uit de Europese Unie	Arguments for staying in EU and opt out
41	10/05/2014	Volkskrant	Ik wil een Europa dat Nederland dient	Mark Rutte's view on Europe
42	10/05/2014	Volkskrant	Ruttes Europa laat armen voor de crisis betalen	Bram van Ojik's opinion on Europe, criticizes Rutte
43	10/05/2014	Volkskrant	De strijd tegen de desinteresse is bijna niet te winnen	How can the Dutch citizens love Europe again?
44	11/05/2014	Telegraaf	VVD valt coalitiepartner aan	VVD campaign started, attacks PVDA
45	12/05/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Nederland PvdA waarschuwt voor Wilders' Europese vrienden	PVDA warns for 'wrong' friends PVV

46	12/05/2014	Telegraaf	Partners PVV aan online schandpaal	PVDA warns for 'wrong' friends PVV
47	12/05/2014	Telegraaf	Rutte zoekt Nederbelgen op	Rutte campaigns in Belgium
48	12/05/2014	Volkskrant	Campagne	Invisible campaign
49	13/05/2014	Telegraaf	'Zelfs hoofd Rutte mag op gulden'	PVV presents collected signatures to reintroduce the <i>Gulden</i>
50	13/05/2014	Telegraaf	D66 loochent zijn Europese standpunten'	CDA blames D66 for betraying European ideology
51	13/05/2014	Volkskrant	'Werk moet boven aan de agenda'	Interview Paul Tang, PVDA
52	13/05/2014	Volkskrant	Rutte verkondigt onzin over de Europese verkiezingen	Statements Rutte about elections
53	14/05/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Regels komen niet van EU maar van lidstaten	Politics blame Brussels, but should look at themselves
54	14/05/2014	Telegraaf	Migratie blijft heet hangijzer	EU migration discussed by CDA/ GL
55	14/05/2014	Telegraaf	Standpunten migratie en asiel	Migration positions parties
56	15/05/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Over de haag	Election Campaign
57	15/05/2014	Telegraaf	Date	D66 candidate used tinder to campaign
58	15/05/2014	Telegraaf	Baantje	Rutte promotes Europe as employer
59	15/05/2014	Volkskrant	Klein bier	Debate about more power national parliament
60	15/05/2014	Volkskrant	'Ik wil ook geen Europese superstaat'	Interview Sophie in 't Veld (D66) about European elections
61	15/05/2014	Volkskrant	Peiling: D66 en PVV even groot in EU	Elections poll
62	16/05/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Heeft Europa te veel regels?	European Rules
63	16/05/2014	Telegraaf	Bittere strijd om zetel in Brussel	PVDA will have troubles getting seats in European Parliament
64	16/05/2014	Volkskrant	Het groen van D66 is in Europa nogal flets	Positions regarding environment and elections in campaign
65	16/05/2014	Volkskrant	Greep	Role national parliament in European decision making
66	17/05/2014	NRC Handelsblad	De keuze is donderdag wel degelijk voor of tegen Europa	Dishonesty Dutch Politicians about European Politics
67	17/05/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Kandidaten Nederland voor EU zijn veel te licht	Dutch MEP's should be more experienced and known
68	17/05/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Oh Europa, ik zou zo graag van je houden	Polarised European debate
69	17/05/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Een selfie met Marcel? Die kennen we niet	Election campaign
70	17/05/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Weinig Europeanen stemmen, doe er iets aan	MEP's should have a place in national parliament

71	17/05/2014	Telegraaf	Europa	What went wrong with Europe?
72	17/05/2014	Telegraaf	'Spijt is politiek zinloos'	Interview Geert Wilders (PVV)
73	17/05/2014	Volkskrant	Europa in twee woorden Framing	Role media in framing Europe
74	17/05/2014	Volkskrant	Ik stem op de ChristenUnie	Analysis party positions/elections
75	17/05/2014	Volkskrant	Besef nut en schoonheid van Europa	Frans Timmermans argues for more positivism
76	17/05/2014	Volkskrant	Het is niet zo slim om een B-team naar Brussel te sturen	The Hague sending political lightweights to Brussels
77	17/05/2014	Volkskrant	'Ik zit tussen dom en onverstandig in'	Interview Hans van Baalen (VVD)
78	18/05/2014	Telegraaf	Eurotoppers onbekend bij kiezers	Many voters do not know the frontrunners
79	18/05/2014	Telegraaf	'Europa interesseert me helemaal niets'	Results election poll
80	19/05/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Oma is gezoend door Mark Rutte	Election campaign: VVD at Libelle zomerweek
81	19/05/2014	Telegraaf	Pechtold haalt uit naar Buma	Pechtold attacking Buma on supporting federalism
82	19/05/2014	Volkskrant	Het zuiver nationale 'wij' is een absurde fictie	Elections framed as better for 'us', national interests
83	19/05/2014	Volkskrant	'Onze cultuur staat hoger dan de islam	Interview Marcel de Graaf (PVV)
84	20/05/2014	NRC Handelsblad	NOS Nieuws 'Debatten doen het steeds minder goed'	Limited coverage Europe in Dutch media
85	20/05/2014	NRC Handelsblad	RTL Nieuws 'Kijkers hebben niets aan campagneprietpraat'	Limited coverage Europe in Dutch media
86	20/05/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Nieuwsuur 'Het onderwerp is gewoon lastig'	Limited coverage Europe in Dutch media
87	20/05/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Pauw & Witteman 'Dat lagere kijkcijfer neem je op de koop toe'	Limited coverage Europe in Dutch media
88	20/05/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Ook VVD, PvdA, SP en CDA hebben foute EU-vrienden	Not only PVV, but other parties also have wrong friends in EP
89	20/05/2014	Volkskrant	'De euro kunnen we niet handhaven'	Interview Dennis de Jong (SP)
90	21/05/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Rutte wil snel afspraken over minder taken EU	Rutte wants to have a meeting to discuss less competences EC
91	21/05/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Waar is de Piketty van de Euro-democratie?	Democratic reforms needed
92	21/05/2014	NRC Handelsblad	Stemmen is simpel, kiezen niet	What to choose in elections?
93	21/05/2014	Telegraaf	Europese kiesstrijd is nationaal	EU Vote is national vote
94	21/05/2014	Volkskrant	Wat 'tegen' is in Den Haag is soms 'voor' in Brussel	Vote in Brussels can be different than in The Hague
95	22/05/2014	NRC	De campagne moest voor een prikkie	Not much money spent on

		Handelsblad		campaign
96	22/05/2014	Telegraaf	Verkiezingen draaien om 'meer of minder'	Overview elections and positions
97	22/05/2014	Telegraaf	Stemmen	European elections and EU politics
98	22/05/2014	Telegraaf	Nieuwe vrienden brengen Wilders in verlegenheid	Wilders and populist European 'friends'
99	22/05/2014	Volkskrant	Beslis mee	Plea to vote in elections if you want change
100	22/05/2014	Volkskrant	Alsof het plan was de kiezers het bos in te sturen	Analysis elections and campaign
101	22/05/2014	Volkskrant	Oppositie vist naar EU-debat met premier	Opposition wants debate with Rutte about European policies
102	22/05/2014	Volkskrant	Korset	Rutte presents 5 plans for Europe

Annex III: Researched Articles 2016

Id	Date	Newspaper	Title	Topic
1	07/03/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Ze delen weinig, behalve de diepe afkeer van Europa	Diverse 'no' campaign
2	07/03/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Doe toch niet zo zuur over dat referendum	Referendum is a good opportunity
3	07/03/2016	Volkscrant	Rutte staat voor cruciale EU-top	Difficult task for Rutte as chairman EU
4	07/03/2016	Volkscrant	Nederland begaat blunder met Oekraïne	Rutte should take referendum more seriously
5	09/03/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Oekraïnereferendum Oldenzaal mag met vijf stembureaus volstaan	Less places to vote than in national elections, low turnout expected
6	09/03/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Stopt dit akkoord de bootjes?	Migrant deal Turkey
7	09/03/2016	NRC Handelsblad	De premier ziet de nul naderen	Chairmanship EU/Refugee deal, Rutte wants to decrease amount of refugees
8	09/03/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Dijsselbloem schrijft pleidooi voor Oekraïne	Dijsselbloem argues to vote for association
9	09/03/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Laten we het over dat verdrag hebben	Dijsselbloem argues to vote for association
10	09/03/2016	Telegraaf	Deal is volstrekt duister	Turkey deal explained by politicians
11	11/03/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Boerenbloed wordt wild van Oekraïne	Ukraine deal good for Dutch economy and farmers
12	11/03/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Kabinet-Rutte heeft tijdelijk geen mening	Dutch government wants to be neutral as chairman EU
13	12/03/2016	Volkscrant	Nee-kamp referendum op comfortabele voorsprong	No camp comfortably taking the lead
14	15/03/2016	Volkscrant	Corrigeer grote fout in referendumwet	Minimum turnout needed
15	16/03/2016	NRC Handelsblad	De voorstander is een beetje lui	'Yes' campaign bit 'lazy'
16	18/03/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Met de vrijhandel komt ook de Oekraïense plofkip	Treaty not good for animal rights
17	18/03/2016	Volkscrant	Ja-kamp sombert over uitblijven echte campagne	'Yes' campaign pessimistic and unhappy
18	19/03/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Kabinet moet voluit campagne voeren voor het referendum	Rutte administration should campaign more for referendum
19	19/03/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Voor? Tegen? Of niet stemmen?	Overview referendum issues and questions
20	19/03/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Als de boel uit de hand loopt, ga ik niet zitten wachten op Europa	Halbe Zijlstra's views on referendum
21	19/03/2016	Volkscrant	Europa als utopie en als monster	Analysis future European integration
22	19/03/2016	Volkscrant	Referendumvrees	Referendum should not be taken too seriously

23	19/03/2016	Volkskrant	Referendum	Referendum is a waste of time and money
24	22/03/2016	NRC Handelsblad	In Kiev vreest men een 'nee'	Dutch delegation in Kiev
25	22/03/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Afzijdigheid is grotere afgang dan een 'nee'	Politicians have to be more visible and defend Europe
26	25/03/2016	Volkskrant	Referendum-moeheid	Author is tired of the referendum, does not want to get involved
27	26/03/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Zijn we bang voor Poetin of niet?	Debate between Roemer and Pechtold about referendum
28	29/03/2016	Volkskrant	Moeten we Oekraïne uitleveren aan Poetin?	Analysis what the referendum is really about
29	30/03/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Animo referenda neemt af bij hoogopgeleiden	SCP Report: Statistics voters and population concerning referendum
30	30/03/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Bij het CDA is het wel erg stil	Silent campaign of both CDA and VVD
31	30/03/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Wat zijn de belangrijkste argumenten van de tegenstanders?	Arguments against treaty
32	30/03/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Wat zijn de belangrijkste argumenten van de voorstanders?	Arguments in favour of treaty
33	30/03/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Oekraïne-referendum: de belangrijkste vragen en antwoorden	Most important questions and answers referendum
34	30/03/2016	Telegraaf	Verdrag provoceert Poetin en Kremlin	Treaty with Ukraine provokes Putin
35	30/03/2016	Telegraaf	'We hebben veel te bieden'	Interview minister Ukraine
36	30/03/2016	Volkskrant	Referenda geliefd bij SP'ers en PVV'ers	SCP Report referendum
37	31/03/2016	NRC Handelsblad	'Oekraïne kan ons niets schelen'	Interview Burgercomité-EU
38	31/03/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Voorbij, die tijd van lekker besturen zonder debat	Analysis future EU
39	31/03/2016	Volkskrant	TourNEE	SP campaign to vote NO
40	31/03/2016	Volkskrant	GeenPeil redeneert als Kremlin	Geenpeil campaign argues like Kremlin
41	31/03/2016	Volkskrant	Een stem voor een stroopwafel	Campaign coverage
42	01/04/2016	NRC Handelsblad	EU-verdrag? Sinds Geert Wilders is de beer los	Since start of PVV more Euroscepticism
43	01/04/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Ik koester mijn vrijheid en stem 'ja'	Jeanin Hennis Plasschaert argues to vote yes
44	01/04/2016	Volkskrant	Blok EU tegen lidmaatschap Kiev	Several EU countries against Ukraine as member
45	02/04/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Rutte wil niet vooruitlopen op 'nee'	Rutte Ministry does not want to anticipate on 'no'
46	02/04/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Ja	Referendum not democratic
47	02/04/2016	NRC Handelsblad	'Referendum onder valse voorwendselen georganiseerd'	Interview Pechtold about referendum

48	02/04/2016	Telegraaf	Nee-stem wint	Polls show that 'no' will win
49	02/04/2016	Telegraaf	Een stok om de EU mee te slaan	Overview referendum
50	02/04/2016	Telegraaf	'De gewone man heeft niets aan dit verdrag'	Interview Roemer (SP) referendum
51	02/04/2016	Telegraaf	'EU groot genoeg met 28 landen'	Interview vice prime minster Asscher
52	02/04/2016	Volkskrant	Beter voor ons, beter voor hen	Overview referendum, vote yes
53	02/04/2016	Volkskrant	Laat Maidangeneratie niet in de steek, stem ja	Vote yes, don't let Maidan generation down
54	02/04/2016	Volkskrant	Regering speelt vals om ja-stem af te dwingen	Interview Burgercomité-EU
55	02/04/2016	Volkskrant	Waarom u voor/tegen moet stemmen	Arguments pro/anti treaty
56	02/04/2016	Volkskrant	Ja-kamp moet hopen op veel thuisblijvers	Turnout important: 'yes' voters should stay at home
57	03/04/2016	Telegraaf	Campagne-weekeinde referendum Oekraïne	All politicians are out campaigning in weekend
58	04/04/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Ga niet stemmen, boycot alle referenda	Boycott all referenda
59	04/04/2016	NRC Handelsblad	'Verdrag gaat niet over meer geld voor Oekraïne'	Fact-checking arguments to support or oppose treaty
60	04/04/2016	NRC Handelsblad	GeenPeil Flyeren voor hoge opkomst tegenstanders willen het referendum laten slagen	GeenPeil campaign intensified for higher turnout
61	04/04/2016	Volkskrant	Zo ken ik Nederland niet	Referendum new sign of polarisation
62	04/04/2016	Volkskrant	Respecteer de Oekraïners, stem voor	Frans Timmermans argues to vote 'yes'
63	04/04/2016	Volkskrant	Aan Victoria Koblenko lag het niet, die lome sfeer	Campaign coverage: Event Amsterdam Dam square
64	05/04/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Geen tv-debat fractieleiders dinsdagavond	TV debate tomorrow night, analysis media coverage
65	05/04/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Wet is getekend door politiek gehakketak	Problems with referendum law, turnout and signatures
66	05/04/2016	Telegraaf	Wel of geen nauwere band met Oekraïne?	Overview referendum, arguments and what to vote
67	05/04/2016	Telegraaf	'Een 'nee' niet te negeren'	Interview Nigel Farage about referendum
68	05/04/2016	Volkskrant	Waarom ik waarschijnlijk 'nee' zeg tegen het Associatieakkoord	Rutte and Juncker have failed in communicating why to vote 'yes'
69	05/04/2016	Volkskrant	Thuisblijven mag	Strategic voting and turnout
70	05/04/2016	Volkskrant	Alle kwesties op een rij	Overview referendum, arguments, what to vote
71	05/04/2016	Volkskrant	Referendum	Referendum is not really democratic
72	06/04/2016	NRC Handelsblad	Kiezer heeft dubbel dilemma	Strategic voting and turnout
73	06/04/2016	Telegraaf	'Jan, maak je nou niet zo boos'	Jan Roos and Hennis Plasschaert discuss referendum

74	06/04/2016	Telegraaf	'Ga vooral stemmen!'	Opinions political leaders
75	06/04/2016	Volkskrant	Referendum gaat niet over Nederland	Referendum concerns much more than Ukraine
76	06/04/2016	Volkskrant	Referendum is gegijzeld door desinformatie	Lot of propaganda and disinformation about treaty
77	06/04/2016	Volkskrant	Een klus voor troubleshooter Rutte	Scenarios for result referendum