

# Political Trust; a Matter of Personality Factors or Satisfaction with Government Performance?

A study on the influence of personality traits, moods and satisfaction with government performance on political trust.

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## Preface

This thesis has been written in order to finish my master Public Administration at the University of Twente. This thesis seeks an explanation for variations in the level of political trust. Political trust is a topic that has been frequently discussed in the press, in particular the decline of trust in Dutch politics, especially after the first cabinet Balkenende made its entrance. Nowadays, the decline of political trust is often discussed in combination with the new political parties that have entered the national political arena. These new parties get backed by people who have been dissatisfied with the way politics has worked over the past decades. This development aroused my interest and triggered me to learn more about what factors explain the level of political trust. Conducting this master thesis gave me the opportunity to broaden my knowledge about this.

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## Abstract

Over the past years the reported decline in political trust among Dutch citizens has received much attention from politicians, scientists, media etc. The main assumption among researchers nowadays is that the variations in the level of political trust are caused by (dis)satisfaction with performance of political institutions.

Yet, this research hypothesizes that trust in politics is a result from personality traits or mood states that determine the level of trust someone will put in politics and its attitude towards performance of political institutions. The possible influence of satisfaction with government performance on political trust has, however, not been ignored in this study, as this variable is hypothesized to intermediate within the relationship between personality factors and political trust.

In this thesis personality factors have been divided into personality traits and mood dimensions. Personality traits have been measured by using the Big-Five scale that has been constructed by Goldberg (1990), and the Positive and Negative Affect Scale by Watson e.a. (1988b) has been used to measure mood dimensions. Political trust has been measured on different levels, such as: trust in the Dutch government, trust in the Dutch parliament, trust in political parties, and trust in the democracy.

Strikingly, no evidence has been found for a relation between the different personality factors and each level of political trust. Besides that, statistical testing delivered evidence that personality factors do *not* influence the level of satisfaction with government performance. The hypothesis that the level of satisfaction with government performance is influencing the level of political trust has, however, been affirmed by the results of the statistical tests. There has been found that satisfaction with government performance explains about roughly one-third of the variance in the level of political trust. This result suggests that current methods that are used to restore political trust, such as improving performance by benchmarking, are most likely to be effective.

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# 1 Research Design

## 1.1 Introduction

Trust in Dutch politics is declining. This message pops up often in the media nowadays. Recently, it has been reported that only 49% of the people has trust in the incumbent government Balkenende IV (SCP, 2007: 78). According to the report of the Social and Cultural Planning bureau (SCP) the parliament gained a trust percentage of 54%, and 36% of the people trusts political parties (SCP, 2007). This means that generally not even half of the citizens exhibit trust in politics. These figures are worrying, since The Netherlands, contrary to international tendencies, used to be a country where political trust was relatively high, especially in the 1980's and 1990's. From 2002 onwards political trust showed, however, a rapid decline (Bovens & Wille, 2008). As a result, a lot of debates are going on about the state of the Dutch democracy, in particular on how the fading away of trust in politics can be stopped. These debates often ascribe the fading away of political trust to a lack of satisfaction with government performance (Bovens & Wille, 2008).

Not surprisingly, politicians in particular stress that there is a loss of trust and they complain that trust has been replaced by cynicism (Breeman, 2006). It is in politicians' self-interest to be trusted, because only then they can work effectively. Therefore, the Dutch parliament has, for example, executed a parliamentary self-reflection, in order to find out how they can deserve trust from citizens and how members of parliament can gain trust from citizens. The parliament stated that trust is an important condition for a proper working democracy and that political trust needs to be restored (Vertrouwen en Zelfvertrouwen, 2009).

Furthermore, much research has been done about political trust and its overall decline through the years (*cf.* Dalton, 2004; Van der Burg & Van Praag, 2007; Newton, 2001). There is, however, not much clarity about the role that 'personality factors' play in this respect. It has often been hypothesized that trust is created by the level of satisfaction with government performance. When people are not satisfied with the performance of the government this satisfaction will lead to less trust in politics (Norris, 1999; Van de Walle & Bouckaert, 2003). However, this relationship can also be caused by a third variable, for example, a personality factor like pessimistic mood. Deters e.a. (2004) assume that personality factors are an intermediating variable that might play a role in the relationship between citizens and their trust in politics.

A pessimistic mood might, for instance, cause that people project their mood state on their environment (incl. Politics). It might be that this has more influence on the level of political trust than government performance. Hence, in this study 'personality factors' will be the independent variable and 'trust in politics' will be the dependent variable. Nevertheless, the influence of satisfaction with government performance will not be ignored, as it will be included as a third variable that is presumed to stand in between the variables personality factors and political trust.

## 1.2 Research Objective

The objective of this research is a combination of explorative research and theoretical testing. Much of social research is conducted to explore a topic that is relatively new (Babbie, 2007). The topic of this research is new in the sense that the influence of personality factors of the electorate on political trust has *not* been studied often (*cf.* Mondak & Halperin, 2008; Winter, 2003; Schoen & Schumann, 2007). The influence of high levels of satisfaction with government performance on the level of political trust has, however, been studied quite often (Newton & Norris, 1999; McAllister, 1999; Miller & Listhaug, 1999). It is frequently assumed that satisfaction with government performance elicits trust in politics, arguing that satisfied people will not demand more and consequently trust that government performance will meet their expectations in the future (Norris, 1999). Miller and Listhaug (1999) found evidence that the level of political trust is explained ( $R^2$  0.11) by the level of satisfaction with government performance. This means that within this study theory can be (re)tested. Hence, this study is not purely explorative. The aim of this study is, therefore, exploring and testing the relationships between the three variables and finding out how strong the correlation between those variables is.

Therefore, the research goal is:

***‘Exploring and testing the relationship between personality factors and the trust that people have in politics, plus finding out what the influence of the level of satisfaction with government performance is within that relationship.’***

## 1.3 Research Question

The *research question* will be:

***‘What is the relationship between personality factors and the trust that people have in politics, and does the level of satisfaction with government performance have a significant influence within that relationship?’***

Based upon the research question the following *sub-questions* are formulated:

- **What is political trust, what are personality factors and what is known about the influence of satisfaction with government performance on political trust?**

This first sub-question deals with the conceptualization and operationalization of the variables ‘political trust’, ‘personality factors’ and ‘satisfaction with government performance’. To answer this question theory about these variables will be explored and presented.

- **Which personality factors have a significant influence on political trust and the evaluation of government performance?**

In order to provide an answer to this question, as theoretical search will be executed first. There has been previous research conducted that shows which personality factors (in particular traits)

are relevant towards political trust (*cf.* Mondak & Halperin, 2008; Schoen & Schumann, 2007). Secondly, a selection of personality factors will be made by using the data which are available (see paragraph below) and corresponding theory about the measurement scales. After that, tests will be done to find out which personality factors have a significant influence on political trust. Furthermore, this research hypothesizes that the level of satisfaction with government performance stems from personality factors. As it is likely that people project, for instance, their mood state on the way they evaluate the performance of the government. Thus, the latter part of answering this question is empirical.

- **Is there a relationship between the level of satisfaction with government performance and the degree of political trust?**

There is empirical evidence present that states that the level of satisfaction with government performance has a significant influence on the degree of political trust (*cf.* Newton & Norris, 2000: 12; McAllister, 1999: 210). In this research this hypothesis will be retested. Finding out what the relationship between those two political factors is not only useful for proving that political trust is influenced by satisfaction with performance. When the hypothesis in the previous sub-question will be supported with statistical evidence, then the statistical evidence that follows from this question can show whether the variable 'satisfaction with government performance' acts as an intermediating variable between personality factors and political trust. Thus, it can be that personality factors have a direct influence on political trust, or that personality factors influence the level of satisfaction with government performance, and subsequently influence the degree of political trust.

## 1.4 Research Methods

This research started with a literature study. Existing literature about (political) trust, personality factors and satisfaction with government performance has been sought and studied. English and Dutch literature has been reviewed in order find information about the concepts and how they can be conceptualized and operationalized. Furthermore, literature about the relation between (political) trust and personality factors, and the influence of satisfaction with government performance on political trust has been sought after.

Data will be used from the LISS-data panel. These data have been collected by CentERdata by carrying out a survey on a (internet) panel (the so-called LISS panel) which contains approximately 5000 Dutch households<sup>1</sup>. All individual members of these households who are at least 16-years-old have been asked to participate. *"The sampling and survey units of the LISS panel are the independent, private households, thereby excluding institutions and other forms of collective households"* (Scherpenzeel e.a., 2008: 4). The unit of analysis is thus 'Dutch citizens' (Babbie, 2007).

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<sup>1</sup> URL: [http://www.centerdata.nl/nl/TopMenu/Databank/LISS\\_panel\\_data/](http://www.centerdata.nl/nl/TopMenu/Databank/LISS_panel_data/)



The internet panel is representative because recruitment is based on a probability sample drawn from registers. People that do not have access to internet were given a special equipment to participate in the survey. Furthermore, special groups e.g. immigrants or the oldest old have been sampled separately. From this we can conclude that this survey sample is relatively large and that it is representative for the population.

## 1.5 Scientific Relevance and Societal Relevance

The relevance of research consists of two parts; the scientific relevance and societal relevance. Scientific relevance deals with the theoretical, methodological or descriptive relevance of the research (Geurts, 1999). In other words, which new insights, explanations or clarifications does the research bring forth? Moreover, societal relevance deals with the usefulness of the outcome of the research for society (Geurts, 1999).

### 1.5.1 Scientific Relevance

This study sheds a different light on the concept of political trust by assuming that it is originating from an independent variable named personality traits. Not much research has been done on this relationship. There are studies about the personality factors of political leaders and the trust they received from the electorate, but there are not many studies about the personality factors of the electorate itself and the consequence of those traits for the trust they exhibit towards politics (Schoen & Schumann, 2007; Mondak & Halperin, 2008). This study will, therefore, contribute to the existing theory about political trust and its origins. Furthermore, relationships between three variables will be operationalized and tested; this should provide clarity about how these variables are influencing each other.

### 1.5.2 Societal Relevance

Bovens and Wille (2008) argue that trust is essential glue in political life; a democracy needs trust to thrive. Democratic consensus may block when citizens question every act of government or express doubts about every government policy (Bovens & Wille, 2008: 285). A lack of trust in politics thus threatens the legitimacy of the democratic system, because a democratic system needs support from its citizens in order to function and maintain legitimacy (*cf.* Beetham & Lord, 1998: 9). Expressing trust in politics is, therefore, essential for maintaining the democratic system.

Therefore it is important to find out where the lack of trust in politics rooted at. When the assumption that political trust is rooted at personality factors is corroborated it might be that current methods for enhancing and restoring the level of trust in politics are perhaps *not* suitable. As a consequence other methods to enhance political trust might be required. Thus, the results of this research can help developing methods to restore trust, when it is proven that political trust is originating from particular personality traits.

## 2 Theoretical Framework

This chapter contains the conceptualization of trust and makes a distinction between different types of trust. Furthermore, a distinction between political trust and political support will be made. This theoretical exploration ends with two different models that are expected to clarify the level of political trust; these two models are based upon the two different dependent variables in this research. The last part of this chapter contains the hypotheses that will be tested within this research.

### 2.1 Conceptualization of Trust

Trust is a word that crops up often in our daily language. Yet, ordinary-language usages of the term trust are various and ill-articulated (Hardin, 2002). When a person for instance says, 'I *trust* you are well' it means normally a little more than 'I *hope* you are well'. The word 'trust' carries a connotation that is stronger than 'hope' (Giddens, 1990). The word trust, however, is also often used within relations, on an individual level or individual-institution level (Hardin, 2002). Since the word trust is so often used in various contexts many definitions of trust are available. Hardin (1996) states that trust fundamentally is a personal decision to grant discretion to another. In *general* trust is a three-part relation in which; "A *trusts B to do X*" (Luhmann, 1980: 27). So, trust is grounded in the truster's assessment of the intentions of the trusted regarding some action (Hardin, 1996).

The lack of full information is a premise for trust, because when activities were visible, thought processes were transparent and full information would be available there would be no need to trust (Giddens, 1990). As a consequence trust is about an expectation; you expect the one you trust to act according to your expectations, because you cannot fully assess the occurrence of a particular action. In other words; trust refers to "*expectations held by one actor (A) in a particular social relationship that another actor (B), who is involved in that relationship, will act in accordance with the normative (role) expectations that from A's perspective are linked to B's social position*" (Denters e.a., 2004). This means that trust is seen as a subjective concept, when trust is defined as an expectation it follows that individuals trust if they suspend risks or uncertainties and consequently expect favorable results (Breeman, 2006).

### 2.2 Social and Political Trust

The concept trust is often divided in social trust and political trust (Ruscio, 1999; Newton, 2001). Social trust is the trust that people have in each other. This type of trust can be defined as: "*the actor's belief that, at worst, others will not knowingly or willingly do him harm, and at best, that they will act in his interests*" (Newton, 2001: 202). According to this definition social trust is sometimes called *interpersonal* trust. Besides that, social trust is sometimes referred to as *generalized* trust, which is trust in the general other person who we might encounter (Hardin, 2002: 9). So, interpersonal or generalized trust is a two-part relation in that sense (Hardin, 2002). A person can put trust in one another, but others can also put trust in you.

Trust in politics is different from generalized or interpersonal trust, given the fact that a political system is quite an abstract system. Furthermore the working of the system is complex and therefore difficult to understand for layman. This abstractness of the political system makes it necessary for citizens to put trust in it, as they are not capable of fully fathoming the working of the system. Nevertheless, when citizens believe that it is too risky to put trust in the system, the legitimacy of the system will be threatened, because a system needs backing from citizens to be legitimate (Beetham & Lord, 1998). A lack of trust can, for instance, cause free-ridership or non-compliance to the law by citizens (Newton, 2001; Dalton, 2004). This threatens the democracy; as democratic polities are built on the presumption that citizens will voluntarily comply with the law (Dalton, 2004). Legitimacy of the political system and voluntary compliance with the law enables a democracy to function. In order to permit democratic governments to function trust in the political system is required. But what is exactly meant with political trust? Newton (2001) summarizes political trust as the trust people have in public institutions, governors, executives and politicians. Ruscio states that *“political trust is always conditional”* (1999: 65). This means that political trust is changing during the course of life, because e.g. politicians also change relatively often. This makes political trust different from the unconditional trust that we put in friends and family. People sometimes say in ordinary language that they trust the government, yet they do not mean anything closely analogous to utterance of trust to another person (Hardin, 1996). Political trust is therefore a one-part relation. We depend heavily on the favor of politics, but politics does not depend that heavily on ours. So, that we might not trust those who have power over us, in particular when they have not much reason to care about us, is not a surprise (Hardin, 2002).

Trusting people *expect* the political system to produce outcomes that they prefer, even when they do not take part in it (Gabriel, 1995). Arguing that trust in politics is about an expectation emphasizes that trust is a one-part relation; *“A trusts (or has a trusting attitude), although they may include a restriction, “with respect to X””* (Hardin, 1999: 68). In other words, ‘A’ can expect ‘B’ to act according with normative role expectations, but ‘B’ does not play an active role in the judgment of whether or not ‘B’ can live up to those expectations. Thus, political trust is determined by the degree that politics meets the expectations that rest in the mind of the individual.

### 2.2.1 Relation between Social and Political Trust

Kaase (1999) stressed that political and social trust originates from the same source inside an individual. When you regard trust as a personality trait, then it is likely that political and social trust are indeed stemming from attitudes/affects within the mind of the individual. Thus there might be a relation between social and political trust. Newton & Norris (2000), however, concluded that there is only a small association between social and political trust at the individual level. Kaase (cited in Newton & Norris, 2000) subscribes to this point of view by stating that the *“statistical relationship between interpersonal trust and political trust is small indeed”* (1997: 15). Yet, social and political trust do not necessarily have to be related, it is possible to have much trust in the general other, but not in politics

(McAllister, 1999; Orren, 1997). Besides that, Newton (1999, 2001) emphasized that political trust seems to be more a product of political factors (e.g. trust in political party) rather than social factors (e.g. interpersonal trust). According to Newton (2001) it follows that social and political trust do not have common origins in the same set of conditions, they are different things that have different causes. Hence, this research will only explore the influence of personality factors on political trust; and consequently social trust will be left out of consideration.

## 2.3 Distinction between Political Support and Political Trust

The concepts political support and political trust are often used together (McAllister, 1999). On first sight, these concepts might be referring to the same thing. Support, however, appears to be more concrete than trust. Easton defines support *“as an attitude by which a person orients himself to an object either favourably or unfavourably, positively or negatively”* (1975: 436). Easton argues that support deals with an evaluation of politics, whereas trust deals with an expectation (*cf.* § 2.1). Thus, when you support the government, it means that you for instance subscribe to the intentions, opinions, ideas and outcomes of the government. When you trust the government you expect the intentions, opinions and ideologies of the government to be compatible with yours.

Thus, trust is more holistic than support. Trust can exist without presence of support; this means that they are not directly connected to each other. When you disagree with a certain decision, thus you do not support that decision; it is still possible to put trust in the authority/person that is responsible for that decision (Norris, 1999). Moreover, trust implies that you subscribe to the basic values and principles of the democratic system. Trust is therefore more abstract but also more fundamental than support. A democracy cannot function without trust, without support it probably can. Both concepts, however, overlap each other a lot. For that reason, this research includes theories about political support and uses it to describe and explain political trust.

Nonetheless, most theories about political trust start with the renowned conceptualization of Easton of diffuse and specific support (Norris, 1999). This conceptualization is not only useful for describing the different types of political support; it can be applied to political trust as well. Hence, the distinction between diffuse and specific support by Easton will be expounded below.

### 2.3.1 Diffuse and Specific Support

Within the concept of political support Easton (*cf.* Easton, 1975; Norris, 1999) makes a distinction between diffuse and specific support. Diffuse support, is support that underlies the regime and the political community. Diffuse support can be interpreted as a measurement of the level of legitimacy of the political system or political institutions (Dalton, 2004). Easton states that this type of support refers to evaluations of what an object is or represents, thus to the general impression it has for a person, and not to what it does, its performance (1975: 444). So, it deals with the construction of the system instead of its outcomes. Hence, when the level of diffuse support is low the system might be at risk (Dalton, 2004).

In most countries support for the political community and democratic principles is overwhelming (Norris, 1999). The Netherlands is one of the countries where citizens express high levels of support towards the political community and democratic principles, so in The Netherlands diffuse support is present (Van der Burg & Van Praag, 2007). As a result, the overall decline in political trust in the Netherlands is less strong than in other democracies. Thus the decline in trust among Dutch citizens most likely has occurred at the level of specific support (Dalton, 2004).

Specific support focuses on the level of satisfaction that members of a system feel they obtain from perceived outputs and performance of political authorities (Easton, 1975). Specific support is a response to the authorities, or to be more precise, a response to the *perceived* decisions, policies, actions, utterances or general style of authorities (Easton, 1975). Authorities do, however, change relatively often; hence specific support is therefore less durable than diffuse support<sup>2</sup>.

### 2.3.2 Different Levels of Political Support

Norris (1999) draws a distinction between support for the *political community*, *regime principles*, *regime performance*, *regime institutions*, and *political actors*. This distinction is an important explanation for those who see a pattern of declining political trust and those who argue that these are trendless fluctuations; it appears that they are referring to different levels of support. It is rational and consistent that citizens, for instance, believe in democratic values but to remain critical about the way governments actually work in practice or that citizens disparage most politicians but continue to express trust towards a particular political party (Norris, 1999). So, political trust is not all at one piece, citizens can mistrust one level of the democracy and still have trust at another level of the democratic system.

For this research not all levels are relevant, as the first level *political community* deals with basic support towards the nation beyond present government institutions, and a general willingness to cooperate politically (Norris, 1999). In the Netherlands there are no signs of a lack of support for the political community; therefore this level will not be used to conceptualize different levels of political trust. The level *regime performance* deals with evaluations of performance of the regime (or government). This level links up with the intermediating variable, satisfaction with government performance, which is included in this research. Hence, the level *regime performance* will be not be used to conceptualize political trust. Besides that, the level *political actors* will be left out of consideration as it does not deal with trust in political institutions, but with a form of interpersonal trust, even though trust in politicians is a one-part relation just like trust in political institutions is (Newton, 2001). Nevertheless, trust in politicians deals with trust between persons which makes it far less abstract and different than trust in an institution. Furthermore, trust in politicians often demonstrates strong fluctuations over the years, politicians come and go with the swings of the electoral pendulum, and trust in them may consequently rise and fall, which is a natural aspect of politics (Newton & Norris, 1999: 2). The lack of support for this level of politics is for that reason hardly a threat for the overall

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<sup>2</sup> Political trust can, however, refer to both diffuse (trust in democracy) and specific support (trust in incumbent government), as political trust is based upon expectations towards politics that can be specific or more diffuse (cf. Easton, 1975; Newton, 2001). The concept trust is thus more holistic than support.

level of political trust. Hence, only the levels *regime principles* and *regime institutions* are relevant for this research. *Regime principles* deal with the core regime principles which represent the values of the political system. This level provides insights into the perceived moral legitimacy which is essential for long-term political stability (Norris, 1999: 10). It thus relates to diffuse support. The level *regime institutions* deal with attitudes towards: governments, parliaments, political parties etc. Thus it is, for example, about the trust in political parties rather than particular party leaders. This means that responses to the authorities will be measured, thus also questions about specific support will be included.<sup>3</sup>

## 2.4 Personality Factors model

According to Ryckman (2003) personality can be described as a dynamic and organized set of characteristics of a person that uniquely influences his or her cognitions, motivations, and behaviours in various situations. In studying political behaviour, the influence of personality factors has only received sporadic attention over the past decades (Winter, 2003; Schumann & Schoen, 2007; Mondak & Halperin, 2008). Yet, Winter states that “*political structures and actions are shaped and channelled by people’s personalities*” (2003: 110). Thus, personality factors influence the way people act in the political realm. Mondak and Halperin (2008), stress that in studies about political behaviour where personality has been included, those efforts typically have yielded significant effects. The research that was conducted by Mondak and Halperin (2008), for instance, confirmed that personality influences political behaviour. In this research it is, however, hypothesized that personality traits and mood dimensions shape citizens’ judgments of performance of the government and the exhibition of trust in politics. In other words, it is hypothesized that people are projecting their personality traits and mood states the way they evaluate government performance, on what they expect from politics, and if politics consequently can be trusted.

### 2.4.1 Personality Traits

People are different in many ways, some are interested in others and some are not, some people are liberal, others conservative, some are talkative or quiet. These differences are so-called personality traits and they are important for what people think and how they behave, not only in the course of everyday life, but also in the political realm (Mondak & Halperin, 2008).

According to Newton and Norris (1999) feelings of inner goodness, trust in others and oneself, and optimism form a ‘basic trust’ personality trait that is formed in the early stages of psychological development as a result of a mother nurturing her child. These ‘basic trust’ personality traits are enduring and general, because they influence many aspects of behaviour in a later stadium (Newton & Norris, 1999). Newton and Norris argue that “*because of their psychological history and make-up, some individuals have an optimistic view of life and are willing to help others, cooperate, and trust*”

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<sup>3</sup> In order to prevent that confusion occurs, from now on the concept ‘trust’ instead of ‘support’ will be used.



(1999: 5). Thus, personality traits are primarily shaped by someone's psychological history; as a consequence some people possess particular personality traits that make them more inclined to exhibit trust.

Personality traits refer to psychological characteristics of an individual human being. Traits are seen as relatively stable and enduring dispositions (Ajzen, 2005). Besides that, traits are public observable elements of personality, or as Winter comments traits are "*the consistencies of style readily noticed by other people*" (2003: 115). According to Ajzen a personality trait can be defined as "*a characteristic of an individual that exerts pervasive influence on a broad range of trait-relevant responses*" (2005: 2). Thus, a personality trait has an omnipresent influence on the way people respond and behave in during their life. In this research it is hypothesized that personality traits influence the level of political trust one exhibits, besides that it is hypothesized that personality traits influence the level of satisfaction with government performance.

The traits that can be distinguished reflect the language of first impressions; we use everyday language (adjective and adverbs) to describe someone. There are, however, many different personality traits, and it is therefore necessary to select a couple of them. Hence, below a structure for describing and measuring personality traits will be expounded.

Mondak and Halperin (2008, as well as Schumann and Schoen (2007) have shown that personality traits (measured with the Big-Five factor scale) have a significant influence on some aspects of political behaviour, such as voting behaviour and party identification. In this research the Big-Five Factor structure will also be used, the content of the Big-Five will be expounded below.

### **Goldberg's Big-Five Factor Structure**

In everyday language there are thousands of words that refer to someone's personality and the ways that personalities differ. But often those words are synonyms, and therefore referring to the same trait. Goldberg (2008), states that all those words referring to the ways that personalities differ can be reduced to a magical number, like five or six. An example of a 'magical' five is the Big-Five factor structure which is a useful framework for describing and measuring personality traits.

The Big-Five factor structure represents the major dimensions or 'factors' of personality-descriptive terms in language. In a tremendous number of studies the same five dimensions of personality have been observed, the so-called big-five by Goldberg (Mondak & Halperin, 2008). The Big-Five factors have proven to be extremely useful for describing individual persons, because those factors are a rich framework for classifying personality traits (Goldberg, 2008: 9). The Big-Five theory contains five factors that describe individual personality traits. Those factors are: Extroversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness to Experience (Goldberg, 1990). According to Goldberg (2008) each factor represents certain traits. Goldberg (1990) has developed a 50-item scale, which links 10 traits to each factor of the Big-Five. The table below gives an overview of the traits that are related to each factor.

**Table 1: Overview of Big-Five factors and the traits they represent<sup>4</sup>**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Traits</b>
Extroversion	Active, Assertive, Energetic, Talkative, and Sociable versus their opposites
Agreeableness	Amiable, Helpful, Kind, Sympathetic, and Trusting versus their opposites
Conscientiousness	Dependable, Hard-working, Responsible, Systematic, and Well-organized versus their opposites
Neuroticism	Calm, Relaxed, and Stable. Along with opposite traits such as Afraid, Nervous, Moody, and Temperamental
Openness to Experience	Artistic, Creative, Gifted, Intellectual, and Scholarly versus their opposites.

## 2.4.2 Mood Dimensions

Besides personality traits, that are basic structural elements of personality, this research will explore the influence of mood dimensions on the variables that deal with political factors. Nye (1997) states that explanations of mistrust (e.g. in politics) may lie in generalized moods. An important question in this case is whether these beliefs or moods are temporary or consistent, and whether or not they can be attributed to someone's personality.

Mood is a different concept than personality traits, as mood refers to feelings whilst traits refer to public observable elements of personality. Mood is considered to have an evaluative component, concerning the degree to which feelings are perceived as pleasant or unpleasant (Lane & Terry, 2000). Besides that, mood has an arousal component, typified by varying degrees of activity (Ibidem, 2000). Moreover, mood is presumed to be omnipresent, though the conscious recognition of feelings fluctuates in level of intensity and duration. Hence, mood can be defined as *"a set of feelings, ephemeral in nature, varying in intensity and duration, and usually involving more than one emotion"* (Lane & Terry, 2000: 17). Thus moods often consist of more than one emotion. This makes mood different from emotions. According to Lane and Terry (2000) emotions are relatively brief but intense experience activated by cognitive assessment of situational factors. Moods, however, *"are proposed to be less intense but more prolonged experiences which relate to the individual rather than the situation"* (Lane & Terry, 2000: 17). Yet, both moods and emotions are an essential part of enduring positive and negative feelings about persons, objects or issues (Ibidem, 2000).

Next to moods and emotions, there is a third term that is often used to describe feeling states, affect. Affect, refers to feeling states that vary on a positive and negative continuum (Lane & Terry, 2000).

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<sup>4</sup> Based on Goldberg (2008: 9)



According to Lane and Terry (2000), mood and emotions can be seen as an affective state, a state that is, however, unfocused and quite diffuse. Affect is the behavior that expresses the mood or emotion (Corsini, 2002). Consequently, affects can be observed and measured more easily. Therefore, the scale for measuring mood dimensions developed by Watson e.a. (1988b) is called Positive and Negative *Affect* Scale (PANAS). See for more about the PANAS below.

### **PANAS**

Mood dimensions can be measured with the Positive Affect and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS) that has been developed by Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988b). It is a 20-item self-report measure of positive and negative affects. The terms positive and negative affect seems to suggest that these mood factors are each others opposites (strongly negative correlated). In fact, the NA and PA scales are weakly correlated; this means that the PANAS-scales are largely independent of one another (Watson, 1988; Watson & Clark, 1997; Meyer & Shack, 1989). A high NA does, for instance, not exclude a high PA, so they can co-exist.

In short, Positive Affect (PA) reflects to the extent to which a person feels enthusiastic, active, and alert (Watson e.a., 1988b), so it reflects someone's level over pleasurable engagement with his/her environment. On the contrary, Negative Affect (NA) is a general element of subjective distress and unpleasant engagement that subsumes a variety of aversive mood states, like anger, contempt, disgust, guilt, fear, and nervousness (Watson e.a., 1988b; Watson & Clark, 1997). A person who scores low on Negative Affect is considered being in a state of calmness and serenity.

Watson e.a. (1988b) have constructed a 10-item version of the PA and NA scale, so the PANAS-scale consists of 20-items<sup>5</sup>. For the NA scale the mood descriptors (affects) were: *afraid, ashamed, distressed, guilty, hostile, irritable, jittery, nervous, scared* and *upset*. The mood descriptors for the PA scaled were: *active, alert, attentive, determined, enthusiastic, excited, inspired, interested, proud* and *strong* (cf. Watson, 1988:131). Watson e.a. (1988b) label these items as descriptors of mood (feelings in general), yet it is possible that these items also reflect emotions (feelings aroused by recent events) (Lane & Terry, 2000). Thus, people can interpret questions about these items in different ways, by referring to different time frames. Despite this ambiguity, this 20-item scale has proven to be reliable, internally consistent and have excellent convergent and discriminant correlations with lengthier measures of the underlying mood factors (Watson e.a., 1988b; Watson, 1988; Watson & Clark, 1997; Thompson, 2007).

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<sup>5</sup> In the LISS-survey the 20-item PANAS developed by Watson e.a.(1988b) has been used. In which the items have been translated into Dutch.

## 2.5 Government Performance Model

Much research has been done to the relationship between satisfaction with government performance and political trust (cf. Newton & Norris, 1999; Van de Walle & Bouckaert, 2003; Van de Walle, 2006). In many cases, it is assumed that within the political discourse well-functioning public services contribute to creating political trust (Van de Walle & Bouckaert, 2003; Dalton, 2004; Mishler & Rose, 2001). Studies about this assumption often show a positive correlation between these two variables (cf. Mishler & Rose, 2001). These studies, however, suppose that all citizens are exposed to action of the government thus its performance; consequently they assume that political trust is randomly distributed among, for instance, different personality types (Newton & Norris, 1999). Well, all citizens are indeed to a certain level exposed to government actions, some more than others for particular reasons. However, the assumption that political trust is as a consequence randomly distributed can be challenged, for the reason that people perceive government performance in a different way and will as a result express different levels of political trust. Accordingly, the level of satisfaction with government performance that influences political trust may be descending from personality traits or a particular mood state. If citizens are, for instance, optimistic (or pessimistic) about the future or their personal situation then it is likely that these mood states will be projected on how they expect the government to perform.

Satisfaction with government performance is according to Putnam “*a compound of expectations and actual performance*” (Putnam cited in Orren, 1997: 85). A drop in the level of satisfaction with government performance might reflect a diminishing performance of the government or rising expectations, or some combination of the two (Orren, 1997; Dalton, 2004). Moreover, it is important to know what the expectations are, because someone with high expectations regarding government performance will probably be less satisfied with the outcome of the government. Satisfaction with government performance is, however, not solely based on expectations but also on perceptions (Orren, 1997).

Overviews of figures about the performance of the government are often hard to understand for layman. As a result, it seems that, there is a gap between figures about actual performance and the way people perceive this performance (Van de Walle, 2006). Van de Walle and Brouckaert (2003) argue that an independent perception has an influence on the actual performance; therefore evaluations of performance are largely subjective. Both expectations and perceptions hold that the judgment of proper or poor performance is a personal assessment. Hence, it is likely that expectations of performance and the way of perceiving performance are shaped by personality traits and mood dimensions.

Despite the fact that people perceive actual performance differently and have different expectations, it is assumed that government institutions that perform well are likely to elicit trust of citizens; those that deliver poor or ineffective performance generate feelings of distrust (Newton & Norris, 1999).

Furthermore, the general public does recognize *which* government or political institutions are performing well or poorly, this will be reflected in the degree of trust citizens put in them. Thus, satisfaction with performance is a proper predictor of the level of political trust.

Dalton (2004) argues that when government performance falls below expectations it may have serious consequences for the level of trust in political institutions, but the consequences are still calculable as the next election presents the opportunity to change the incumbents. As a result only the incumbent government suffers the consequence, and a loss of specific support occurs. However, *“if performance dissatisfaction continues for an extended period of time, the decline of support may become more generalized and affect evaluations of the regime and the political community”* (Dalton, 2004: 111). On that level public dissatisfaction with government performance harms the democracy. Hence, it is necessary to make a distinction between different levels of trust (see § 2.3.) in order to see whether or not the dissatisfaction with government performance is threatening the political system as a whole or that it concentrates on a particular level.

## 2.6 Hypotheses

This paragraph presents the hypotheses that will be tested in order to find out if there is a significant correlation among the three variables. The hypotheses are based upon the models that were described in the previous paragraph.

### 2.6.1 Personality Factors and Political Trust

This first set of hypotheses is derived from an argumentation by Mondak and Halperin, they argue that *“variance in personality may correspond directly to variance in political behaviour”* (2008: 339). In this study instead of political behaviour the emphasize lies at political trust. Presumably, the mechanism will work the same way, variance in personality will correspond directly to different levels of political trust.

*H1a: People with high scores on **agreeableness** exhibit high levels of political trust*

Scoring high on agreeableness factor means that a person is pliable and eager to please people. Furthermore they are interested in other people's lives. Therefore they will probably show greater political/social involvement, than people who score low on agreeableness. Furthermore, people who score high on agreeableness have the tendency to be co-operative; this should incline them to group participation, such as a petition drive (Mondak & Halperin, 2008). A greater political/social involvement is hypothesized to be leading to exhibiting a higher level of political trust. There is, however, a chance that the confrontational aspect of politics is putting agreeable people off, and as a result they will be withering away from politics which presumably will lead to lower levels of trust (Mondak & Halperin, 2008). Thus the effect of high levels of agreeableness on political trust is quite uncertain. Mondak & Halperin (2008: 354) did, however, find a small significant correlation (0.34,  $p < \alpha$  0.05) between agreeableness and political trust.

*H1b: People with high scores on **conscientiousness** exhibit high levels of political trust.*

People, who score high on conscientiousness, are people who have a great sense of duty. They are seen as reliable and organized people (Mondak & Halperin, 2008). Furthermore, they pay attention to the details. Hence, they are expected to have studied the game of politics well and that they have weighted pro and cons cautiously. Accordingly they are expected to take well-considered decisions. Besides that, people who score high on this factor like order, and are confirmative to it. So they probably have respect for politics, democratic institutions and authorities who protect order in society. Moreover, people who are conscientiousness endeavour to stay informed about politics, they are expected to follow the news and participate in political discussion. Consequently, people who are conscientiousness will be more likely to exhibit political trust (Mondak & Halperin, 2008: 343-344).

*H1c: People with high scores on **openness to experience** exhibit high levels of political trust.*

The openness to experience factor applies to learning behaviours, strategies and cognitive orientations (Mondak & Halperin, 2008). People, who score high on this factor, are for example curious and have a vivid imagination. Mondak & Halperin (2008) expect that people who score high on openness of experience will be relatively interested and attentive to politics. The curiosity and perceptiveness of people that score high on openness to experience, is expected to relate to possessing political knowledge and opinionation, and also prompt a willingness to participate in political discussions. This political involvement is expected to lead to exhibiting high levels of political trust.

*H1d: People with high scores on **extroversion** exhibit high levels of political trust.*

Extrovert people are talkative, feel comfortable around people and do not mind being the center of attention. Whereas introvert people tend to have a tendency towards withdrawal, passivity and shyness, extrovert people are more sociable, lively and active (Mondak & Halperin, 2008). This also means that they are easily interacting with relatively many people, and they do not mind expressing their opinion. As a result, extrovert people are expected to attend political meetings and rallies, to speak out at such meetings and participating in political discussions (Mondak & Halperin, 2008)<sup>6</sup>. Consequently, extrovert people are expected to exhibit high levels of political trust, since they are through participation well-informed about the political process.

*H1e: People with high scores on **neuroticism** exhibit low levels of political trust.*

Neuroticism is sometimes labelled as emotional stability. Neuroticism is, for instance, related to anxiety, instability and negativity. Moreover, this factor correlates with levels of psychological distress and positive and negative moods (Mondak & Halperin, 2008). Mondak & Halperin (2008) state that individuals with low levels of emotional stability view many developments as unfair and often unsatisfactory. This can also influence the level of political trust, because people who score high on neuroticism, suffer for instance often from mood swings or get easily upset, these people likely tend to

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<sup>6</sup> Mondak & Halperin (2008) found statistical evidence for the relation between extrovert people and attendance to political meetings,  $R\ 0.59 \alpha\ 0.01$ ).

view political decisions more often as unfair than people who score low on neuroticism. Thus people, who score high on neuroticism, are expected to evaluate political decisions more rapidly as unfair and will as a consequence express lower levels of trust towards politics.

## 2.6.2 Mood Dimensions and Political Trust

*H1f: People with high scores on the **Negative Affect Scale** exhibit low levels of political trust.*

People who score high on the Negative Affect Scale can be described as; people who are likely to be distressed, and/or possess some aversive mood states (Watson e.a., 1988b). Just like in the hypothesis stated above, where is expected that high levels of neuroticism will cause low levels of political trust, in this hypothesis is hypothesized that the negative mood descriptors cause a low level of political trust. In other words, people who score high on negative mood descriptors are likely to project this negativity on the context of their life; this affects their judgements and thoughts about politics, and their evaluation of government performance.

*H1g: People with high scores on the **Positive Affect Scale** exhibit high levels of political trust.*

This hypothesis presupposes that high scorers on the Positive Affect Scale will exhibit high levels of political trust. As they will probably look on the bright side of things, it is hypothesized that they will have lower expectations about performance or that they will be pleased more easily. Furthermore, they are hypothesized to put more trust in politics as they are likely to believe that its representatives will serve society with good intentions. In other words, they are probably not that cynical as people who score high on the Negative Affect Scale.

## 2.6.3 Personality Factors and Satisfaction with Government Performance

***H2: Personality traits and mood dimensions have a direct influence on the level of satisfaction with government performance.***

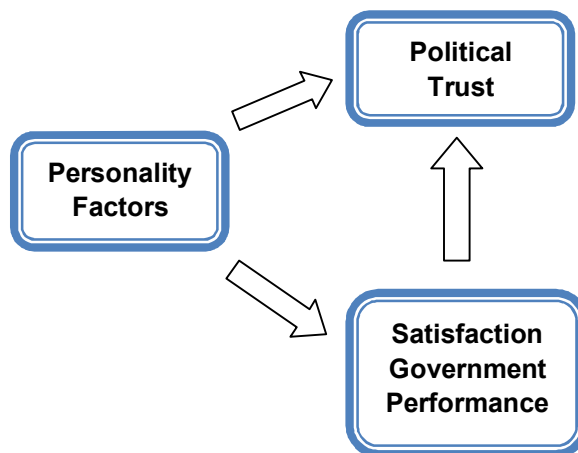
According to Van de Walle (2006) citizens tend to evaluate the performance of local institutions as positive, but when the institution is located on a general level, than they tend to be negative about its performance. Furthermore, citizens/layman base their evaluations not merely on factual information but on images of performance located in their mind. In that respect, the evaluation of performance might have more to do with personality factors than with actual performance. Thus the hypothesis is that these images in the mind are shaped by personality traits, consequently these traits have a significant impact on the level of satisfaction with government performance. The personality factors are expected to have the same impact as hypothesized under heading A. Thus *neuroticism* and *Negative Affect Scale* will have a *negative* influence on the satisfaction with government performance, the other dimensions of the Big-Five and PANAS are expected to have a *positive* influence on satisfaction with performance.

## 2.6.4 Satisfaction with Government Performance and Political Trust

***H3: The level of satisfaction with government performance has a direct positive influence on the level of political trust.***

This hypothesis expects that the level of political trust is influenced by the level of satisfaction of citizens with the performance of the government. This hypothesis has been the dominant explanation for the decline of political trust among executives and politicians in The Netherlands (Bovens & Wille, 2008). This hypothesis particularly focuses on the government in general, because it has been shown that citizens do evaluate the performance of local public institutions quite positively (Bovens & Wille, 2008; Van de Walle, 2006). This hypothesis has been tested before by Newton & Norris (2000) and McAllister (1999). These tests yielded a significant correlation of satisfaction with performance and political trust. So, in this study there will also be expected that these variables will be correlating; this study, however, contains another variable personality factors which is hypothesized to influence the level of satisfaction, see the previous hypotheses.

**Figure 1: Overview of variables and their hypothesized relationships with each other**



### 3 Operationalization of Variables

This chapter explains the measurement instruments that will be used in order to measure the relationships between the three variables that have been presented earlier. First, the indicators and scales for measuring political trust, personality factors (traits and mood dimensions), and satisfaction with government performance will be expounded. Furthermore, the internal validity of the scales will be tested by conducting a reliability analysis.

#### 3.1 Political Trust

Political trust has been measured with the question “*Can you on a scale of 0 to 10 indicate how much trust you personally have in each of the following institutions?*”. CentErData mentioned a range of institutions, but not all of those institutions are relevant for this particular research. Hence, only results of this question towards; *Dutch government*, *Dutch parliament*, *political parties* and the *democracy* will be included<sup>7</sup>. Trust in the government, parliament and political parties are three institutions that are at the heart of representative democracy, as they directly or indirectly depend on the public mandate given during elections (Van der Burg & Van Praag, 2008). These institutions relate to the level of *regime institutions* of Norris (1999), questions at this level measure the level of specific support for the system (see § 2.3). A decline of trust on the level of *regime institutions* can be a precursor of an erosion of trust in the democracy. Hence, it is necessary to include a question that measures the degree of trust in the democracy; moreover it would be interesting to see if this level of trust is also affected by evaluations of performance and personality factors. The level of trust in democracy says something about the approval of *regime principles*. The level of *regime principles* links up with Easton’s conceptualization of diffuse support. Thus, the measurement results of questions that deal with political trust will provide insight in the level of specific and diffuse support that is present in Dutch society.

#### 3.2 Personality Traits and Mood Dimensions

Personality traits and mood dimensions are measured with Goldberg’s Big-Five Factor scale and the Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS) of Watson e.a. (1988b). Before using the scales a factor analysis has been conducted, in order to find out if the items of the Big-Five and PANAS do indeed split into the number of factors, like their theories presume. Subsequently, a reliability analysis has been done on each separate factor analysis to find out if the scales are all internally consistent.

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<sup>7</sup> Trust in politicians has been left out of consideration, since that question deals with *interpersonal* trust rather than *political* trust, see for argumentation paragraph 2.3.

### 3.2.1 Factor and Reliability Analysis Big-Five Scale

First, a factor analysis on the 50-items of Goldberg's Big-Five has been executed. In advantage all items that were formulated negatively have been recoded<sup>8</sup> so that every item will have a positive total score. The scree plot of the factor analysis shows that the total eigenvalues of the items are higher than 1<sup>9</sup> at 8 of the 50 components. The components 6 up to and including 8 lie, however, very close to each other. The difference of the total of eigenvalues between components 5 and 6 is relatively large; circa 0.7 (see Appendix B). Therefore, before executing the factor analysis, the maximum number of factors that could be extracted has been set on five. All scales of the Big-Five correlate significantly with each other (see Appendix D). Therefore, the Oblimin rotation technique has been used while conducting the factor analysis, as this technique allows factors to correlate with each other.

**Table 1: Factor Analysis Big-Five**

Components	1	2	3	4	5
Big-Five Scales:					
<b>1 Agreeableness</b>					
<i>Feel little concern for others</i>	<b>.57</b>	-.07	-.09	.02	.06
<i>Insult people</i>	<b>.45</b>	-.22	.16	-.11	-.19
<i>Not interested in other people's problems</i>	<b>.64</b>	-.02	-.10	.08	.01
<i>Not really interested in others</i>	<b>.68</b>	-.08	-.08	.01	.14
<i>Interested in people</i>	<b>.67</b>	.01	-.06	.10	.14
<i>Sympathize with others' feelings</i>	<b>.75</b>	.12	.00	.01	-.02
<i>Have a soft heart</i>	<b>.31</b>	<b>.46</b>	-.04	.01	.04
<i>Take time out for others</i>	<b>.65</b>	.01	.08	-.00	.03
<i>Feel others' emotions</i>	<b>.60</b>	.19	.04	.15	.05
<i>Make people feel at ease</i>	<b>.50</b>	.03	.14	.06	.25
<b>2 Neuroticism</b>					
<i>Get stressed out easily</i>	-.04	<b>-.73</b>	-.02	.05	.02
<i>Worry about things</i>	-.24	<b>-.60</b>	-.13	-.02	.09
<i>Easily disturbed</i>	-.14	<b>-.70</b>	.09	-.02	-.01
<i>Get upset easily</i>	-.10	<b>-.80</b>	.04	.14	.04
<i>Change my mood a lot</i>	.14	<b>-.70</b>	.09	-.03	-.01
<i>Have frequent mood swings</i>	.13	<b>-.72</b>	.10	-.01	-.00
<i>Get irritated easily</i>	.23	<b>-.64</b>	-.04	-.04	-.03
<i>Often feel blue</i>	.10	<b>-.72</b>	.11	-.01	.12

<sup>8</sup> The scores of negative formulated items (f.e. *Feel little concern for others*) have been recoded like this: 5=1, 4=2, 3=3, 2=4, and 1=5.

<sup>9</sup> When factors have eigenvalues that lie below 1, it means that they add more variance than they explain.



<i>Relaxed most of the time</i>	.03	<b>-.60</b>	-.02	.08	.10
<i>Seldom feel blue</i>	.02	<b>-.50</b>	.02	-.00	.10
<b>3 Conscientiousness</b>					
<i>Always prepared</i>	-.08	.02	<b>.50</b>	.20	.04
<i>Pay attention to details</i>	.20	.11	<b>.40</b>	<b>.34</b>	-.10
<i>Get chores done right away</i>	.03	.02	<b>.60</b>	-.13	.09
<i>Like order</i>	-.02	.13	<b>.74</b>	-.08	.02
<i>Follow a schedule</i>	-.06	.10	<b>.57</b>	.20	.04
<i>Exacting in my work</i>	-.02	.10	<b>.34</b>	.23	.07
<i>Leave my personal belongings around</i>	-.09	-.10	<b>.71</b>	-.17	-.05
<i>Make a mess of things</i>	.09	-.40	<b>.54</b>	-.04	-.04
<i>Often forget to put things back in their proper place</i>	-.01	-.20	<b>.70</b>	-.04	-.05
<i>Shirk my duties</i>	.03	-.24	<b>.40</b>	-.01	-.02
<b>4 Openness to Experience</b>					
<i>Have a rich vocabulary</i>	.07	-.05	.03	<b>.60</b>	.08
<i>Have a vivid imagination</i>	.07	.14	-.16	<b>.51</b>	.13
<i>Have excellent ideas</i>	-.02	.01	.14	<b>.60</b>	.13
<i>Am quick to understand things</i>	.10	-.15	.14	<b>.55</b>	.01
<i>Use difficult words</i>	-.15	.12	-.13	<b>.60</b>	.03
<i>Spend time reflecting on things</i>	-.20	.05	.24	<b>.40</b>	-.19
<i>Full of ideas</i>	.02	.03	.10	<b>.60</b>	.20
<i>Have difficulty understanding abstract ideas</i>	-.02	-.24	-.02	<b>.62</b>	-.07
<i>Not interested in abstract ideas</i>	.03	-.20	-.09	<b>.60</b>	-.08
<i>Do not have a good imagination</i>	.16	-.20	-.04	<b>.40</b>	.00
<b>5 Extroversion</b>					
<i>The life of the party</i>	.06	-.01	.01	.03	<b>.61</b>
<i>Feel comfortable around people</i>	.24	.06	.04	-.06	<b>.57</b>
<i>Start conversations</i>	.18	.03	.09	.04	<b>.68</b>
<i>Talk to a lot of different people at parties</i>	.16	-.02	.07	-.09	<b>.71</b>
<i>Don't mind being the center of attention</i>	-.16	-.05	-.02	.14	<b>.60</b>
<i>Don't talk a lot</i>	.14	.06	.01	-.51	<b>.66</b>
<i>Keep in the background</i>	-.09	-.07	-.02	.01	<b>.74</b>
<i>Have little to say</i>	.20	-.14	.07	.14	<b>.48</b>
<i>Don't like to draw attention to myself</i>	-.23	.01	-.11	.08	<b>.60</b>
<i>Am quiet around strangers</i>	.01	-.12	.05	-.06	<b>.73</b>

Note: Principal component analysis with Oblimin rotation with Kaiser Normalization. Item loadings above .30 are in bold. In advantage the maximum number of components that could be extracted has been set on 5.

The factor analysis shows that the items of each scale of the Big-Five mainly fall into the correct factor. The item *'have a soft heart'* loads, however, higher on the 'Neuroticism' scale than it does on the 'Agreeableness' scale in which it according to theory belongs. Apparently having a soft heart can also be interpreted as being sensitive to neurotic feelings. For that reason, a reliability analysis will be done to find out if high loaders on multiple factors threat the internal consistency of the Big-Five scales.

**Table 2: Reliability Analysis of the Big-Five**

<i>Big-Five Factors</i>	Scale Mean <sup>#</sup> (s.d.)	Cronbach's Alpha	N
<i>Extroversion</i>	3.30 (0.63)	0.86	6781
<i>Agreeableness</i>	3.90 (0.49)	0.80	6781
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	3.72 (0.52)	0.77	6781
<i>Neuroticism</i>	3.41 (0.68)	0.88	6781
<i>Openness to Experience</i>	3.51 (0.50)	0.77	6781

Note: Big-Five answering scale runs from (1 = completely wrong, to 5 = entirely accurate).

<sup>#</sup> scale means have been accounted by adding up the total values of every item that belongs to the particular scale and dividing it by 10, which is the number of items of each scale.

The reliability analysis of the Big-Five scales shows that the Cronbach's Alpha of each scale is very high. This implies that each scale is internally consistent even the 'Agreeableness' scale. If the item *'have a soft heart'* would be deleted from the 'Agreeableness' scale, the Cronbach Alpha of that scale would become 0.82. Deleting the item *'have a soft heart'* barely causes a rise of 0.02 in the alpha level. This is rise is negligible, hence no item will be deleted from the scales, this makes the scales in accord with theory (cf. Goldberg, 1990). Subsequently, all items of each scale have been added up and divided by 10, so whilst conducting the statistical analyses the relationships between the Big-Five scales and dependent variables could be analyzed.

### 3.2.2 Factor and Reliability Analysis PANAS

For the PANAS a factor analysis has been executed as well. The scree plot of this factor analysis shows that it is justified to do so, as the total of eigenvalues of the third component is 1.039 which is only slightly higher than 1, besides that the difference in the total of eigenvalues between the second and third component is 3.7, which is quite large (see Appendix C). Hence, the maximum numbers of factors that could be extracted has been set on two before executing the analysis. The correlation matrix (Appendix D) shows that the Positive Affect and Negative Affect Scales hardly correlate ( $r$  0.02) with each other.

This means that both scales are largely independent of each other, so the result is in accord with the theory about the PANAS presented by Watson e.a. (1988b) which argued that both scales are independent of each other. Therefore, while executing the factor analysis the Varimax rotation technique has been used.

**Table 3: Factor Analysis PANAS**

<i>Components</i>	1	2
PANAS items:		
<b>1 Negative Affects</b>		
Afraid	<b>.64</b>	-.08
Nervous	<b>.80</b>	-.04
Scared	<b>.75</b>	-.09
Upset	<b>.85</b>	.06
Guilty	<b>.74</b>	-.07
Hostile	<b>.73</b>	-.03
Ashamed	<b>.74</b>	-.02
Jittery	<b>.83</b>	-.05
Irritable	<b>.82</b>	-.06
Distressed	<b>.80</b>	-.05
<b>2 Positive Affects</b>		
Active	-.04	<b>.73</b>
Enthusiastic	-.01	<b>.80</b>
Determined	-.01	<b>.77</b>
Attentive	-.01	<b>.74</b>
Inspired	-.08	<b>.73</b>
Strong	-.14	<b>.70</b>
Interested	-.09	<b>.60</b>
Alert	-.05	<b>.70</b>
Exited	<b>.55</b>	<b>.30</b>
Proud	-.00	<b>.71</b>

*Note: Principal component analysis with Varimax rotation. Item loadings above .30 are in bold. In advantage the maximum number of components that could be extracted has been set on 2.*

The factor analysis shows that the 20 items of the PANAS do indeed split, in accord with theory, into two components. The item 'exited' is however incorrectly placed in the Negative Affect Scale, while it belongs to the Positive Affect Scale. Thompson (2007) also found that the item 'exited' had a low loading on the Positive Affect Scale. According to Thompson (2007) the item 'exited' was thought to incorporate both positive and negative connotations. Negative connotations arise when the concept 'exited' is being interpreted as close to agitated, and close to importunate for others (Thompson, 2007).

Moreover, a reliability analysis has been conducted to see whether or not items that deviate from the ideal factors threaten the internal consistency of the scales. If so, items will only be deleted, but only if Cronbach's Alpha because of that will significantly increase. In addition, the means, standard deviations from the mean and the Cronbach's Alpha's of each scale have been accounted and are presented in the table below.

**Table 4: Reliability Analysis of the PANAS**

PANAS	Scale Mean <sup>#</sup> (s.d.)	Cronbach's Alpha	N
<i>Positive Affect Scale</i>	4.57 (1.00)	0.87	6762
<i>Negative Affect Scale</i>	2.06 (1.06)	0.92	6762

*Note: PANAS answering scale runs from (1 = not at all, to 7 = totally yes).*

*# scale means have been accounted by adding up the total values of every item that belongs to the particular scale and dividing it by 10, which is the number of items of each scale.*

The alpha levels in the PANAS are all very high (see Table 4). This means that the scales are internally consistent and that the items measure the same concept. Moreover, the number of respondents is very high. Deleting items that deviate from the factors in the factor analysis, therefore hardly causes a rise in the alpha level. When the item 'exited' would be deleted from the Positive Affect Scale the alpha level would become 0.88 instead of 0.87, this effect is negligible. Hence, no items will be deleted; thus both scales are in this research used like they are ideally represented in theory (cf. Watson e.a., 1988b). Consequently, the items of each scale has been added up and divided by 10, which enables the scales to be used for statistical testing.

### 3.3 Satisfaction with Government Performance

Satisfaction with government performance has been measured with the question "*How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with what the government has done recently?*" (1= very dissatisfied, to 5= very satisfied). With the government the incumbent government is meant. The use of the word recently is a bit of a hurdle, because when is 'recently'? Is recently until a couple of months ago or until a couple of years ago? Well, respondents interpret the question in their own way; it is however likely that they refer to their short-term memory of political events or that they refer to a summation of their experiences with government performance throughout the years (Norris, 1999). Thus, it is questionable whether every respondent is using the same reference point for the evaluation of performance. During the interpretation of the answer on this question the different reference points of respondents should be borne in mind.

## 4 Results

In this chapter the results of the statistical tests will be presented and interpreted. In order to find out if the hypotheses (see § 2.6) can be accepted or rejected, bivariate correlations have been accounted and a regression analysis has been done. In order to do a proper regression analysis, two different models have been constructed to prevent the occurrence of multicollinearity. Multicollinearity occurs when two independent variables highly correlate with each other when put into one model at a regression analysis. Multicollinearity is problematic because it undermines the statistical significance of an independent variable (Allen, 1997). Multicollinearity is risky when the independent variables have a correlation higher than 0.4., as the 'Neuroticism' scale of the Big-Five and the Negative Affect Scale of the PANAS have a significant negative correlation of  $-0.490^{10}$  at  $\alpha 0.01$  (see Appendix D). As a consequence the Big-Five scale and the PANAS were put into different models. The first model contains the Big-Five scales, and the second model contains the Positive and Negative Affect Scale. These scales are the independent variables. The independent variables have been regressed on the dependent variables. First, the Big-Five scales have been regressed on each dependent variable. After that, the Positive and Negative Affect Scales have been regressed on each dependent variable. Subsequently, the correlations between the dependent variables have been accounted. Finally, the influence of the mediating variable; satisfaction with government performance has been accounted by using the regression method. Accordingly, the hypotheses will be accepted or rejected.

### 4.1 Personality Factors Regressed on the Dependent Variables

First, a regression analysis has been done to test hypothesis 1, and its sub-hypotheses H1a up to and including H1g. The hypotheses state that personality factors directly influence the level of political trust. After that, a regression analysis has been done to test hypothesis 3, this hypothesis states that personality factors have a significant influence on the level of satisfaction with government performance.

To find out if there is evidence for influence of each separate scale of the personality factors on levels of political trust and satisfaction with government performance, the table below also includes standardized Bèta-coefficients which provide information about the relation between the several scales within the independent variable and the dependent variables. Besides that, the correlation coefficient (R) and the  $R^2$  will be given to show what the influence of the model is on the dependent variables.

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<sup>10</sup> The negative correlation is a result of not recoding the Negative Affect Scale, when these items would be recoded the negative correlation will turn into a positive one.

**Table 5: Personality factors regressed on dependent variables**

<i>Dependent Variables</i>	<b>Trust in Dutch Government</b>	<b>Trust in Dutch Parliament</b>	<b>Trust in Political Parties</b>	<b>Trust in Democracy</b>	<b>Satisfaction with Government Performance</b>
<b><u>Model 1:</u></b>	<i>Bêta</i>	<i>Bêta</i>	<i>Bêta</i>	<i>Bêta</i>	<i>Bêta</i>
<i>Extroversion</i>	0.011	0.003	-0.011	-0.012	-0.008
<i>Agreeableness</i>	-0.005	0.000	0.005	0.012	-0.011
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	0.001	-0.007	-0.003	-0.005	0.016
<i>Neuroticism</i>	0.004	0.014	0.010	0.001	-0.011
<i>Openness to Experience</i>	-0.004	0.001	0.005	0.019	-0.014
<hr/>					
<u>Model Summary:</u>					
Constant	5.358	5.319	4.745	6.196	2.833
Standard Error	0.234	0.228	0.233	0.230	0.099
<i>Correlation Coefficient (R)</i>	0.011	0.016	0.013	0.023	0.029
R <sup>2</sup>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.001
<hr/>					
<i>Dependent Variables</i>	<b>Trust in Dutch Government</b>	<b>Trust in Dutch Parliament</b>	<b>Trust in Political Parties</b>	<b>Trust in Democracy</b>	<b>Satisfaction with Government Performance</b>
<b><u>Model 2:</u></b>	<i>Bêta</i>	<i>Bêta</i>	<i>Bêta</i>	<i>Bêta</i>	<i>Bêta</i>
<i>Positive Affect Scale</i>	0.008	0.000	0.002	0.004	-0.006
<i>Negative Affect Scale</i>	0.027	0.023	0.015	0.005	0.015
<hr/>					
<u>Model Summary:</u>					
Constant	5.223	5.304	4.744	6.385	2.701
Standard Error	0.111	0.108	0.111	0.110	0.047
<i>Correlation Coefficient (R)</i>	0.028	0.023	0.015	0.007	0.016
R <sup>2</sup>	0.001	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000

Significance level: \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001.

Note: the model did not appear to be significant (p-values ranged from 0.354 to 0.974) these values are bigger than α 0.05; this means that there is no significant correlation between personality factors and the dependent variables.

Strikingly, in all the regression analyses in which personality factors have been regressed on the items that deal with political trust and satisfaction with government performance resulted in a  $R^2$  of 0.001 (PANAS) or 0.000 (Big-Five)<sup>11</sup>. This means that none of the variance in the dependent variables is explained by the independent variable. In other words, personality factors do not have influence on the level of political trust. Nor, do personality factors explain the variance in the level of satisfaction with government performance ( $R^2$  0.001). Thus, there is no evidence of a direct influence of personality factors on either political trust or satisfaction with government performance. Hence, hypotheses 1 (incl. 1a till 1g) and 3 will be rejected (see § 2.6 for an overview of the hypotheses). In the next chapter, the consequences of rejecting these hypotheses will be elaborated. Below, correlations between the dependent variables will be accounted.

## 4.2 Correlations between Satisfaction and Political Trust

In addition, bivariate correlations<sup>12</sup> between the variable 'satisfaction with government performance' and the several levels of political trust have been computed by using SPSS. A bivariate correlation instead of a regression analysis has been computed because in the model both variables are dependent of personality traits. Thus there is no independent variable present that is required for a regression analysis. In the bivariate correlation method no distinction can be made between independent and dependent variables, hence the bivariate correlation method will be used to analyze if there is a relation between the two dependent variables. The Pearson correlations are presented below.

**Table 6: Correlations between political trust and satisfaction with government performance**

	1	2	3	4	5	N
1 <i>Satisfaction with Government Performance</i>	1.000	-	-	-	-	6811
2 <i>Trust in Dutch Government</i>	0.602**	1.000	-	-	-	6692
3 <i>Trust in Dutch Parliament</i>	0.529**	0.885**	1.000	-	-	6535
4 <i>Trust in Political Parties</i>	0.480**	0.741**	0.760**	1.000	-	6495
5 <i>Trust in Democracy</i>	0.311**	0.536**	0.568**	0.538**	1.000	6598

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)<sup>13</sup>.

From the results from table 6 there can be concluded that there is a strong correlation between 'satisfaction with government performance' and all levels of political trust. Not surprisingly, trust in Dutch government has the highest correlation. Trust in democracy has the lowest correlation. This

<sup>11</sup> To make sure these low values are not errors, a bivariate correlation analysis has been done between the Big-Five plus PANAS and a question that deals with interpersonal trust. This analysis did result in a significant correlation (see Appendix D). This means that the scales that measure personality traits are well constructed.

<sup>12</sup> The Pearson's Correlation that results from conducting a bivariate correlation is, however, similar to the R at a simple linear regression analysis.

<sup>13</sup> The correlations are significant at  $\alpha$  0.01 this implies that there is a chance of 1 in a 100 that the correlation is a coincidence.

underpins the assumption that trust in democracy is a type of diffuse support that is not easily influenced by performance of institutions of the government.

Furthermore, this table provides some additional information. In chapter 2 a distinction between the levels of political trust has been made in which *regime performance* has been left out of consideration, since *regime performance* was considered to be strongly related to the intermediating variable 'satisfaction with government performance'. The correlation coefficients in this table underpins the argumentation that trust in government and government performance are two different concepts, as the correlation coefficients between trust in Dutch parliament and trust in Dutch government are for instance higher than the correlation coefficient of trust in Dutch government and satisfaction with government performance. From this it can be concluded that trust in the government and government performance are indeed different from each other.

Up next there will be tested if the variable 'satisfaction with government performance' does indeed act as an intermediating variable, between personality factors and political trust.

### 4.3 Mediation Model; Relationship between the Three Variables

The variable 'satisfaction with government performance' is in this research expected to mediate between the independent variable personality factors and the dependent variable political trust. In order to conduct a regression analysis on a mediating variable it is according to Ellis (2006) necessary to do a regression analysis with 'personality factors' as independent variable and 'satisfaction with government performance' is the dependent variable. After that, a regression analysis needs to be done in which 'personality traits' and 'satisfaction with government performance' are independent variables, and where 'political trust' is the dependent variable (*cf.* Ellis, 2006: 97).

Sub-paragraph 4.1 showed that 'personality factors' do not influence the variable 'satisfaction with government performance' ( $R^2$  0.001). Hence, only a regression analysis needs to be done where 'satisfaction with government performance' will be treated as an independent variable besides 'personality traits'. The results of this test are shown below in Table 7.

**Table 7: Personality factors and satisfaction with government performance regressed on political trust**

<i>Dependent Variables</i>	<b>Trust in Dutch Government</b>	<b>Trust in Dutch Parliament</b>	<b>Trust in Political Parties</b>	<b>Trust in Democracy</b>
<b><u>Model 1:</u></b>	<i>Bêta</i>	<i>Bêta</i>	<i>Bêta</i>	<i>Bêta</i>
<i>Extroversion</i>	0.016	0.008	-0.008	-0.010
<i>Agreeableness</i>	0.001	0.005	0.009	0.015
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	-0.011	-0.018	-0.011	-0.010
<i>Neuroticism</i>	0.012	0.019	0.015	0.004
<i>Openness to Experience</i>	0.006	0.009	0.012	0.024



<i>Satisfaction with Government Performance</i>	0.602	0.529	0.480	0.311
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Model Summary:

Constant	1.416	2.002	1.622	4.197
Standard Error	0.197	0.205	0.216	0.231
<i>Correlation Coefficient (R)</i>	0.602***	0.529***	0.480***	0.311***
R <sup>2</sup>	0.362 (36.2%)	0.280 (28.0%)	0.230 (23.0%)	0.097 (9.7%)

<i>Dependent Variables</i>	<b>Trust in Dutch Government</b>	<b>Trust in Dutch Parliament</b>	<b>Trust in Political Parties</b>	<b>Trust in Democracy</b>
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<b><u>Model 2:</u></b>	<i>Bèta</i>	<i>Bèta</i>	<i>Bèta</i>	<i>Bèta</i>
<i>Positive Affect Scale</i>	0.012	0.016	0.005	0.006
<i>Negative Affect Scale</i>	0.018	0.003	0.008	0.002
<i>Satisfaction with Government Performance</i>	0.601	0.528	0.480	0.310

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Model Summary:

Constant	1.449	2.116	1.747	4.473
Standard Error	0.108	0.112	0.118	0.127
<i>Correlation Coefficient (R)</i>	0.602***	0.528***	0.480***	0.311***
R <sup>2</sup>	0.362 (36.2%)	0.279 (27.9%)	0.231 (23.1%)	0.096 (9.6%)

Note: the correlation coefficients (R) are similar to Pearson's Correlation (r) found in the bivariate correlation analysis (See Appendix D).

Significance level: \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001.

From the results presented in Table 7 it can be concluded that the variable 'satisfaction with government performance' is not mediating within the relationship of personality factors with political trust. The Bèta coefficients show that effect of the personality scales Big-Five and PANAS on the levels of political trust is very low<sup>14</sup>. This implies that personality factors do not influence the level of political trust. The Bèta coefficient of the variable 'satisfaction with government performance' is,

<sup>14</sup> The Big-Five scales as well as the PANAS do hardly differ from each other (only 0.001 point) in their influence on political trust. The Correlation Matrix (Appendix D) shows that this is not an error, as both scales do elicit different effects on the controlling variable that deals with interpersonal trust.

however, very high. In Table 7 it is shown that the Bèta of that variable is almost equal to the Correlation Coefficient (R). Thus, the level of satisfaction with government performance is not a mediating variable, but is a variable that directly causes variances in the level of political trust. From the results of the regression of 'satisfaction with government performance' on the items that measure political trust it can be concluded from the  $R^2$  levels that there is a strong ( $R^2 < 0.20$ , cf. Ellis, 2006: 116) causal relationship between these two variables. Thus a variance in the level of 'satisfaction with government performance' leads to a variance in the level of political trust. This means that hypothesis 2 can be *accepted*, and that there is no evidence found for hypothesis 1 (incl. its sub-hypotheses) and hypothesis 3.

Trust in Dutch government has the highest  $R^2$  of 0.362 this means that 36.2% of the variance in trust in Dutch government is explained by the level of satisfaction with government performance. Trust in democracy has the lowest  $R^2$  of 0.096 this implies that only 9.6% of the variance in trust in democracy is explained by the level of satisfaction with government performance. This level is not very high, this might have to do with the fact that trust in democracy is a form of diffuse support and consequently is hardly affected by performance of the government. This result is in accord with Easton's (1975) argumentation that trust in democracy refers to evaluations of the general impression it has for a person, not to its performance. Trust in parliament and political parties have an  $R^2$  that lies close to each other. About a quarter of the variance in these levels of political trust is explained by the level of satisfaction with government performance. Probably, aspects like party affiliation, voting behavior, ideology etc. may play a role at these levels of trust. Assuming that, people that support a party which is not governing will be less satisfied with government performance and accordingly will express lower levels of trust. These aspects may also play a role at the other levels of trust but to a lesser extent.

## 5 Conclusion & Discussion

In this chapter a conclusion will be drawn based upon the information from previous chapters. After that, the conclusions will be discussed in which limitations of this research will be addressed and implications for further research will be given.

### 5.1 Conclusion

This research sparked with the assumption that personality factors have a significant influence on the level of political trust. Furthermore, this research hypothesized that the level of satisfaction with government performance might act as an intermediating variable within the relationship of personality factors and political trust.

Strikingly, none of the factors of the Big-Five and the PANAS produced significant effects. This resulted in rejection of the hypotheses that dealt with personality factors. Up next, conclusions will be drawn from the rejection of the hypotheses that dealt with the Big-Five factors; subsequently conclusions will be drawn from rejection of the hypotheses that dealt with the PANAS.

The results show that people who score high on agreeableness, are not necessary agreeable on politics. Apparently, some of them are put off by the confrontational aspect of politics. Conscientiousness people were expected due to their dutiful behavior to exhibit high levels of trust; well the results from the statistical tests show that this is not the case. Conscientiousness people are probably well informed and therefore more critical towards the functioning of politics, consequently they exhibit low levels of political trust and satisfaction with performance of the government. Mondak & Halperin (2008) showed that conscientiousness people do score high on aspects of political behavior like dogmatism and attending meetings regarding local political issues. A similar way of reasoning applies to openness to experience. People that are open to experiences were expected to elicit high levels of political trust due to their knowledge about politics. Well, again this expectation has been proven inadequate as the openness to experience scale also did not show any significant relation with one of the levels of political trust and satisfaction with government performance. For this reason, people who score high on openness to experience have apparently due to their knowledge about politics also higher expectations about politics, just like people who score high on conscientiousness do. Extrovert people were also expected to exhibit high levels of trust, as they were expected to frequently attend political meetings and would participate in political discussions. From the results it seems that, participation in politics does not evidently lead to high levels of political trust, probably the attendance of meeting can cause that someone gets higher expectations. Finally, people who are neurotic were expected to exhibit low levels of political trust. This result is most striking, as neurotic people were expected due to their traits to judge performance of the government negatively, and accordingly would express low levels of political trust. Apparently, people who score high on this scale are able to make a distinction between occasions in their personal life and occasions in the political realm.

Evidently, the people that score high on the Negative Affect Scale are just like the ones that score high on the neuroticism scale able to make such a distinction. High scorers on the Positive Affect Scale were expected to have low expectations about the performance of the government and were expected to exhibit high levels of political trust as they were assumed to believe that political system serves its citizens with the best intentions.

Nonetheless, it seems that trust in politics and satisfaction with government performance is randomly distributed among different personality types. Apparently, people are able to make a distinction between occasions in their personal life and events in the political realm, which enables them to put trust in politics or be satisfied with performance even if they, for instance, feel blue or distressed. This tampers the argumentation that personality factors explain variances in the levels of trust and satisfaction with politics its performance. Besides that, the results do not support the argumentation (see § 2.5) that perceptions and expectations derive from personality factors and consequently influence the level of satisfaction with performance of the government.

Not every hypothesis has, however, been rejected. As there has been evidence found that the level of satisfaction with government performance explains roughly one-third of the variance in the level of political trust. A level that is relatively high. From this there can be concluded that the level of trust in politics is substantially determined by the performance of the government. So, political trust appears to be following from evaluations of the political world (Newton, 2001). In which low levels of trust suggest that government is performing poorly, that citizens have expectations that are too high, or that people perceive the performance differently.

Nowadays government and its institutions give much attention to raising the level of satisfaction with performance in order to restore political trust, by for instance, interactive policy-making, evaluating the satisfaction of citizens with specific outputs, and the use of benchmarking as an instrument. The outcome of this research stress that these current approaches are, at this point, most likely to restore and nurture political trust.

## 5.2 Discussion

This research has some limitations. The first limitation is the scope of the data derived from the LISS-survey. The LISS-survey is a longitudinal research project, but unfortunately at this time only one wave of surveys was present. If this research was based upon longitudinal data better tests could have been done. Furthermore, this LISS-data survey has been executed in the Netherlands only, it was therefore impossible to test the hypotheses on data from other countries. The external validity of the results is therefore low. Perchance, it would have been possible to exclude the idea that the results that have been found are typical for the Netherlands. Moreover, the LISS-data survey did not include items that explicitly questioned about the performance of several government institutions. Consequently, only a question that measured the level of satisfaction with performance of the incumbent government could be included.

If more levels would be included, just like has been done at the questions that measure political trust, perhaps a more refined picture could be presented about the correlations between variables. Based upon the conclusions and limitations of this research some implications for further research will be addressed now.

The results have shown that there is no evidence for the assumption that personality factors play a role in the relationship with political trust. Political trust is probably a variable which is too abstract to be *directly* influenced by the personality factors that were included in this study. It is, however, too quick to write off the influence of personality on political trust, because Schoen and Schumann (2007) stress that personality influence aspects of political behavior indirectly rather than directly. This implies that political trust probably requires more intermediating variables in its relationship with personality factors, such as partisan attitudes, or political predispositions. The same way of reasoning applies to the variable satisfaction with government performance; expecting a *direct* relation between personality factors and this variable was probably a bit too ambitious.

There is, for instance, not much clarity about the way citizens *perceive* the performance and the *expectations* of citizens while evaluating the performance. Orren (1997) argued that judgment of proper or poor performance is a personal assessment; hence *perceptions* and *expectations* of people are considered to be more important than factual information about the performance. For that reason, it would be interesting to know how the perceptions and expectations of people are shaped; are these originating from experience with the government or are they originating from personality factors which are shaped by personal experiences? It could be that some personality types have higher expectations or are more critical towards politics and government performance than others. Or it could be that some personality types perceive performance in a different way. Analyzing this could track down if people with particular perceptions or with high expectations are more easily disappointed than others, are consequently less satisfied with performance of government institutions and do accordingly express lower levels of trust in politics.

So, by adding more intermediating variables to the relationship of personality factors and the variable satisfaction with government performance it is likely that a better model for explaining variances in political trust can be created.

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## Appendixes

### Appendix A: Overview of the operationalization of concepts

#### Political Trust

*Can you on a scale of 0 to 10 indicate how much trust you personally have in each of the following institutions?*

[0 means that you do not have any trust in an institution and a 10 means that you have full trust in an institution. When you do not know the answer, click on '?' = 99]

**Cv08a013** Dutch government

**Cv08a014** Dutch parliament

**Cv08a018** Political parties

**Cv08a027** Democracy

#### Personality Traits<sup>15</sup>

##### **Goldberg's Big-Five Factor**

Use the answering scale below in order to how precisely every expression describes you as a person.

- 1= completely wrong
- 2= quite wrong
- 3=correct nor incorrect
- 4= fairly accurate
- 5=entirely accurate

##### **1. Extroversion**

- + **Cp08a020** *Am the life of the party*
- Cp08a030** *Feel comfortable around people*
- Cp08a040** *Start conversations*
- Cp08a050** *Talk to a lot of different people at parties*
- Cp08a060** *Don't mind being the center of attention*
  
- **Cp08a025** *Don't talk a lot*
- Cp08a035** *Keep in the background*
- Cp08a045** *Have little to say*

---

<sup>15</sup> The items with a (-) before them have been recoded (5=1, 4=2, 3=3, 2=4, 1=5).

**Cp08a055** *Don't like to draw attention to myself*

**Cp08a065** *Am quiet around strangers*

## 2. Agreeableness

- **Cp08a021** *Feel little concern for others*

**Cp08a031** *Insult people*

**Cp08a041** *Am not interested in other people's problems*

**Cp08a051** *Am not really interested in others*

+ **Cp08a026** *Am interested in people*

**Cp08a036** *Sympathize with others' feelings*

**Cp08a046** *Have a soft heart*

**Cp08a056** *Take time out for others*

**Cp08a061** *Feel others' emotions*

**Cp08a066** *Make people feel at ease*

## 3. Conscientiousness

+ **Cp08a022** *Am always prepared*

**Cp08a032** *Pay attention to details*

**Cp08a042** *Get chores done right away*

**Cp08a052** *Like order*

**Cp08a062** *Follow a schedule*

**Cp08a067** *Am exacting in my work*

- **Cp08a027** *Leave my personal belongings around*

**Cp08a037** *Make a mess of things*

**Cp08a047** *Often forget to put things back in their proper place*

**Cp08a057** *Shirk my duties*

## 4. Neuroticism

- **Cp08a023** *Get stressed out easily*

**Cp08a033** *Worry about things*

**Cp08a043** *Am easily disturbed*

**Cp08a048** *Get upset easily*

**Cp08a053** *Change my mood a lot*

**Cp08a058** *Have frequent mood swings*

**Cp08a063** *Get irritated easily*

**Cp08a068** *Often feel blue*

+ **Cp08a028** *Am relaxed most of the time*

**Cp08a038** *Seldom feel blue*

#### 5. *Openness to Experience*

+ **Cp08a024** *Have a rich vocabulary*

**Cp08a034** *Have a vivid imagination*

**Cp08a044** *Have excellent ideas*

**Cp08a054** *Am quick to understand things*

**Cp08a059** *Use difficult words*

**Cp08a064** *Spend time reflecting on things*

**Cp08a069** *Am full of ideas*

- **Cp08a029** *Have difficulty understanding abstract ideas*

**Cp08a039** *Am not interested in abstract ideas*

**Cp08a049** *Do not have a good imagination*

Note: The factors have been accounted by adding up all the items (after they have been recoded) that belong to a particular scale and dividing them by 10.

**PANAS – mood dimensions**

**Cp08146 – cp018165**

To what extent do you feel now, that is to say at this time...

1 = not at all

7 = totally yes

<b>Cp08a146</b>	Interested?
<b>Cp08a147</b>	Upset?
<b>Cp08a148</b>	Exited?
<b>Cp08a149</b>	Distressed?
<b>Cp08a150</b>	Strong?
<b>Cp08a151</b>	Guilty?
<b>Cp08a152</b>	Scared?
<b>Cp08a153</b>	Hostile?
<b>Cp08a154</b>	Enthusiastic?
<b>Cp08a155</b>	Proud?
<b>Cp08a156</b>	Irritable?
<b>Cp08a157</b>	Alert?
<b>Cp08a158</b>	Ashamed?
<b>Cp08a159</b>	Inspired?
<b>Cp08a160</b>	Nervous?
<b>Cp08a161</b>	Determined?
<b>Cp08a162</b>	Attentive?
<b>Cp08a163</b>	Jittery?
<b>Cp08a164</b>	Active?
<b>Cp08a165</b>	Afraid?

Note: The factors have been accounted by adding up all the items that belong to a particular scale and dividing them by 10. None of the factors of the PANAS have been recoded.

**Government Performance**

**Cv08a001** How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with what the government has done recently?

1 = very dissatisfied

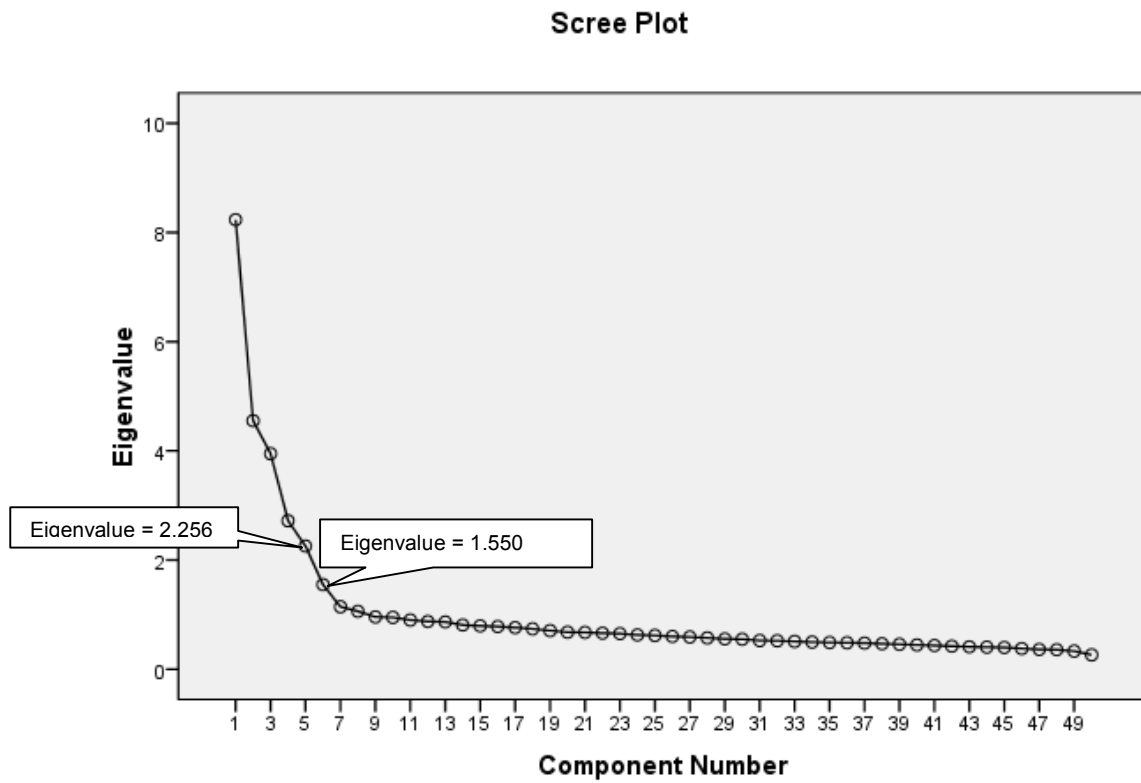
2=dissatisfied

3=not satisfied but also not dissatisfied

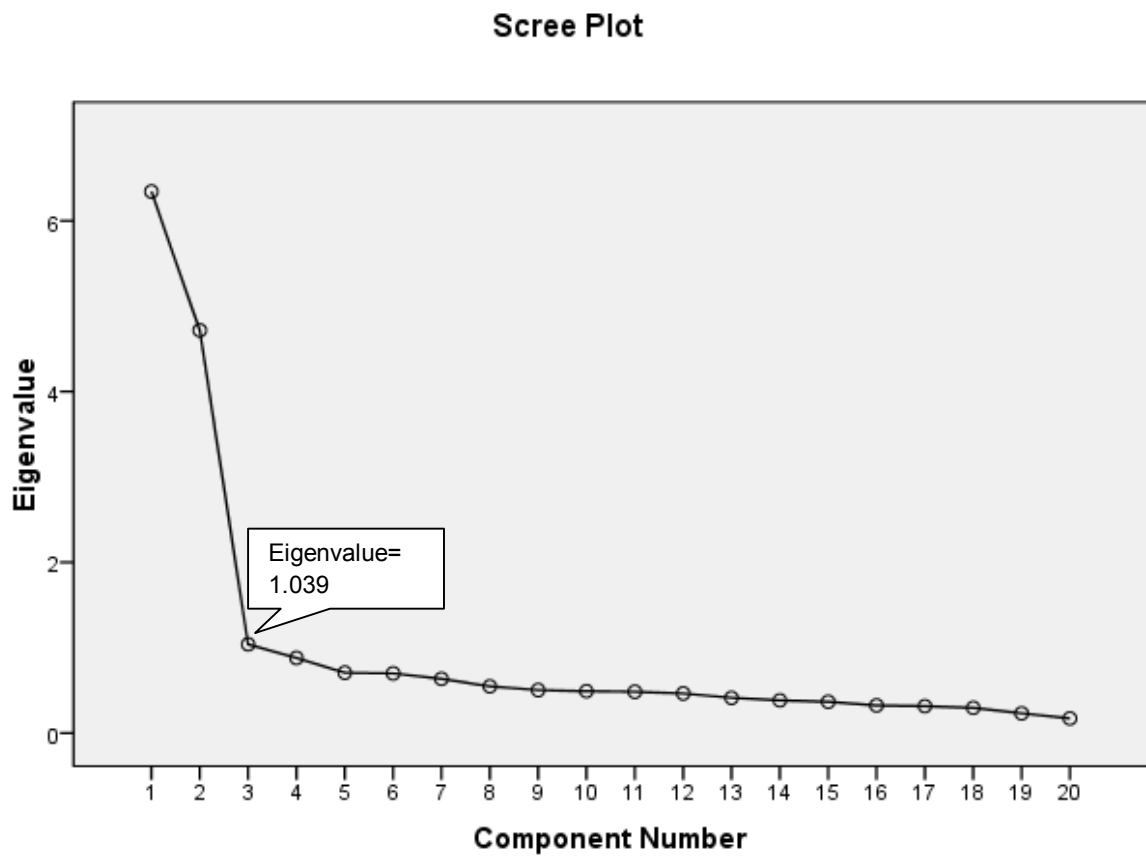
4=satisfied

5= very satisfied

## Appendix B: Scree Plot Factor Analysis Big-Five factors



## Appendix C: Scree Plot Factor Analysis Positive and Negative Affect Scale



## Appendix D: Correlation Matrix

Correlations

		How satisfied or dissatisfied are you, generally speaking, about what the government has done lately?	Trust: Dutch government	Trust: Dutch parliament	Trust: political parties	Trust: democracy	Extroversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	Openness to Experience	Negative Affect Scale	Positive Affect Scale	Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you, generally speaking, about what the government has done lately?	Pearson Correlation	1,000	,602**	,529**	,480**	,311**	-,018	-,013	,006	-,014	-,019	,015	-,005	,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000	,000	,000	,000	,146	,274	,600	,244	,119	,216	,659	,944
	N	6811,000	6692	6535	6652	6598	6791	6791	6791	6791	6791	6762	6762	6726
Trust: Dutch government	Pearson Correlation	,602**	1,000	,885**	,741**	,536**	,009	-,002	,000	,005	,000	,027*	,008	,012
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000		,000	,000	,000	,470	,853	,996	,654	,976	,028	,506	,332
	N	6692	6692,000	6534	6636	6560	6673	6673	6673	6673	6673	6645	6645	6609
Trust: Dutch parliament	Pearson Correlation	,529**	,885**	1,000	,760**	,568**	,007	,000	-,004	,014	,003	,023	,001	,021
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000		,000	,000	,596	,969	,747	,268	,800	,064	,955	,086
	N	6535	6534	6535,000	6495	6429	6517	6517	6517	6517	6517	6489	6489	6457



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Trust: political parties	Pearson Correlation	,480**	,741**	,760**	1,000	,538**	-,006	,002	,000	,007	,003	,015	,002	,021
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000		,000	,637	,859	,990	,554	,777	,222	,853	,088
	N	6652	6636	6495	6652,000	6539	6633	6633	6633	6633	6633	6604	6604	6569
Trust: democracy	Pearson Correlation	,311**	,536**	,568**	,538**	1,000	-,002	,013	,002	,001	,018	,006	,004	,008
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000		,893	,310	,859	,911	,151	,651	,720	,501
	N	6598	6560	6429	6539	6598	6580	6580	6580	6580	6580	6551	6551	6517
Extroversion	Pearson Correlation	-,018	,009	,007	-,006	-,002	1,000	,324**	,113**	,280**	,356**	-,118**	,309**	,145**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,146	,470	,596	,637	,893		,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	6791	6673	6517	6633	6580	6791,000	6791	6791	6791	6791	6762	6762	6721
Agreeableness	Pearson Correlation	-,013	-,002	,000	,002	,013	,324**	1,000	,312**	,081**	,291**	-,144**	,220**	,156**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,274	,853	,969	,859	,310	,000		,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	6791	6673	6517	6633	6580	6791	6791,000	6791	6791	6791	6762	6762	6721
Conscientiousness	Pearson Correlation	,006	,000	-,004	,000	,002	,113**	,312**	1,000	,208**	,232**	-,239**	,241**	,027*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,600	,996	,747	,990	,859	,000	,000		,000	,000	,000	,000	,028
	N	6791	6673	6517	6633	6580	6791	6791	6791,000	6791	6791	6762	6762	6721

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Neuroticism	Pearson Correlation	-,014	,005	,014	,007	,001	,280**	,081**	,208**	1,000	,216**	-,490**	,233**	,254**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,244	,654	,268	,554	,911	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	6791	6673	6517	6633	6580	6791	6791	6791	6791	6791	6762	6762	6721
Openness to Experience	Pearson Correlation	-,019	,000	,003	,003	,018	,356**	,291**	,232**	,216**	1,000	-,149**	,244**	,144**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,119	,976	,800	,777	,151	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	6791	6673	6517	6633	6580	6791	6791	6791	6791	6791	6762	6762	6721
Negative Affect Scale	Pearson Correlation	,015	,027*	,023	,015	,006	-,118**	-,144**	-,239**	-,490**	-,149**	1,000	,021	-,164**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,216	,028	,064	,222	,651	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,081	,000
	N	6762	6645	6489	6604	6551	6762	6762	6762	6762	6762	6762	6762	6692
Positive Affect Scale	Pearson Correlation	-,005	,008	,001	,002	,004	,309**	,220**	,241**	,233**	,244**	,021	1,000	,075**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,659	,506	,955	,853	,720	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,081	,000	,000
	N	6762	6645	6489	6604	6551	6762	6762	6762	6762	6762	6762	6762	6692

Master Thesis Henrieke Voortman

Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?	Pearson Correlation	,000	,012	,021	,021	,008	,145**	,156**	,027*	,254**	,144**	-,164**	,075**	1,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,944	,332	,086	,088	,501	,000	,000	,028	,000	,000	,000	,000	
	N	6726	6609	6457	6569	6517	6721	6721	6721	6721	6721	6692	6692	6726

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).