

Should referendums
be used more widely
essay sample



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Some people believe that referendums should be used more widely in UK's decision and policy making. They justify this belief, because there are many questions being asked of UK's democracy and the severe lack of voters in the last general election. There are many reasons to back this argument up, one would be to make the voters feel more involved in decisions (an example of this is the so called greening of the conservative party where because of public pressure they paid increasing attention to environmental issues) and so therefore would spark a more active interest amongst voters and possibly minors (potential voters)

If there is a wider use of referendums, there would be less for MP's to represent, which would be easier, because many feel out of touch with their MP's some never speaking to him/her, so how can a MP represent his constituency if he/she does not hear the voters point of view. It also offers a factor of 'direct democracy' in a 'representative democracy' (direct meaning citizens have maximum influence on decisions by vote), which would also add interest from voters.

Another advantage of having more referendums, it would lessen the need for focus groups as government would be more in touch with general public's mood, preferences and will on policies and government decisions. This would bolster the communication and relationship between government and public.

Other people believe that referendums should not be used more widely and they too have a many good arguments to back this claim. The main one would be that if we have too many referendums they would lose their significance amongst the general public so the more referendums could

mean less voting, because they may become tedious and so therefore would not represent whole nations views.

A danger with having more referendums is if the public is subjected to one-sided campaigns e. g. 1975 European and 1998 Scottish referenda. Not only one-sided campaigns are threats to referendums but also misuse of information or a lack of it.

Another reason not to use referenda more widely and possibly the main one is that the government do not have to take the results into consideration, but they can simply use them as opinion poles, rather than policy changers or decision makers. If this was the case then less people each time, the government pay no attention and go against the referenda's result would bother to vote.

Clearly the overuse of referenda would not be a good idea, because as well as the arguments stated above also it may simplify a complex issue to a yes or no vote, or even merge to important issues into one. But my main reason for not thinking that the overuse of referendums is they may let governments get away by shifting blame to public for unpopular decisions.