From QOL to QOS

Two new Dutch social reports.

Jeroen Boelhouwer

Sarah Hardus

Roelof Schellingerhout

@SCPonderzoek

The Netherlands Institute for Social Research

Already in the 60's and 70's: There is a 'problem' with GDP

Robert Kennedy: "GDP measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwile"

Link to his 1968 speech https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6U2irFSYHo

STIGLITZ, SEN, FITOUSSI 2009: policy attention QOL

In 1973 SCP was established, next to CPB

The coordinating minster for welfare stated: "a wish from the government is that all policy makers and civil servants, but also students and people who are just interested, at times can, in between their daily businesses, be reminded at the fate of the people for whom all policy efforts are meant"

› Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB, 1945)

› Netherlands Institute for social research (SCP, 1973)

› Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL, 2002/2008)

About The Netherlands Institute for social research | SCP

› Government organisation which carries out its work independently and on a scientific basis

› Monitors, explains and explores the social and cultural well-being of people living in the Netherlands

› Conducts research into the social aspects of all areas of government policy

A short history of 'The social state'

› 1985: Dutch House of Representatives asks for counterpart of Economic Outlooks. SCP came up with a yearly *Social and Cultural Outlook*

› 2001: more structural layout based on a theoretical framework, bi-annual instead of annually -> *The social state of the Netherlands*

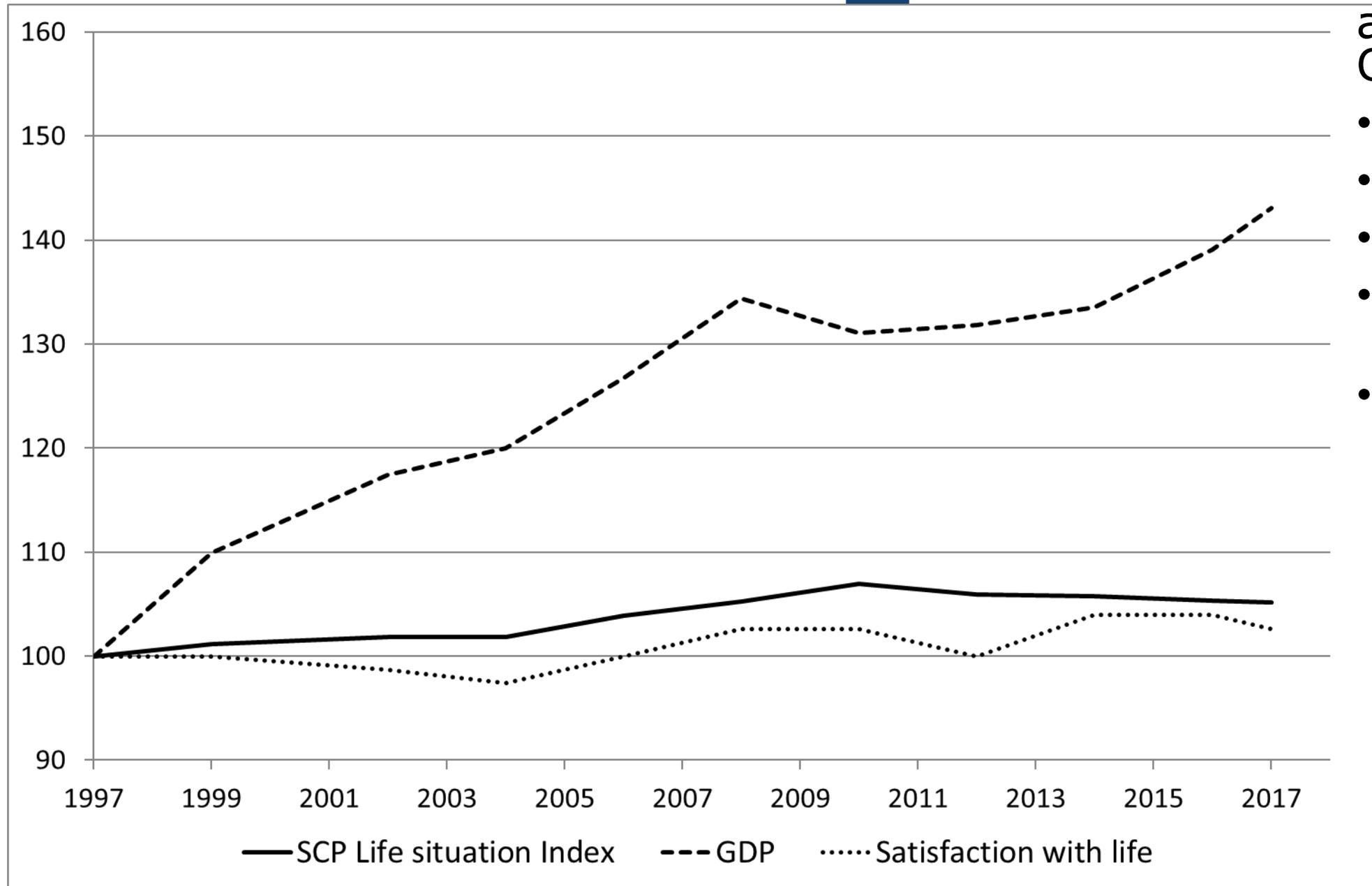› 2016: Dutch Senate asks for yearly update, prior to budget debates -> core indicators update on the internet

The social state of the Netherlands

› Describing and analysing developments in quality of life, based on theoretical framework

› Structured chapters:

- Outline of policy

- <u>Objective</u> qol: how is the actual sitution people live in?

- <u>Subjective</u> qol: how do people think about their situation; how satisfied are they?

- European comparison

- Looking back 10 years in each edition

› Not just the average situation but also providing breakdowns by different social categories

Happiness in the world (score 0-10)

	2018-2020
1 Finland	7,8
2 Denmark	7,6
3 Switserland	7,6
4 Iceland	7,6
5 Netherlands	**7,5**
6 Norway	7,4
7 Sweden	7,4
46 Romania	6,1
58 Portugal	5,9
68 Greece	5,7
95 Bhutan (2019)	5,1
149 Afghanistan	2,5

Life situation is about objective QOL:

- Health
- Housing
- Participation
- Material standard
- Leisure time

SCP Life situation Index   - - - GDP   ······ Satisfaction with life

An extended history of social reporting

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› 2021: change from Quality of Life to Quality of Society

-> closer connected to the budget cycle

-> two publications

Quality of Society: 5 aspects

1. Population in optimal prosperity and wellbeing (quality of life)

2. Fair distribution

3. Sufficient societal coherence (social cohesion)

4. Sustainable development

5. Effective and legitimate policies.

Quality of Society: 1. Population in optimal prosperity and wellbeing (quality of life)

> Is not about GDP, but about the material position of people: their income and assets.

> Also about other resources, like labour market position; educational level; cultural resources; digital skills; social networks; physical and mental health ; attractiveness

> Do people participate in collectively appreciated activities, like: relaxation, political and sociaetal participation, sports.

> Also included is subjective quality of life

Quality of Society: 2. Fair distribution

> Is about the distribution of prosperity and wellbeing between various groups of people

> It goes beyond the realisation of a certain minimum standard – it is also about the position of middle groups and even upper groups.

> It also is about the distribution of burdens, like paying taxes

A fair distribution can imply a certain level of inequality (due to for example dfferences in predisposition, talent or efforts)

Quality of Society: 3. Sufficient societal coherence (social cohesion)

> This is about the extent to which people in a certain geographical unity (national, local) are connected.

> Is is also about feelings of discomfort, pessimism and dissatisfaction with society

> And it is also about (the lack of) trust in other people, government, social authorities

> And positive involvement of people with their own environment and surroundings and with society at large

Quality of Society: 4. Sustainable development

> This is about all mentioned three aspects

> It is a generation issue: can future generations count on the same level of prosperity and wellbeing , with the same distribution and social cohesion?

> But it is also about 'elsewhere': do we negatively impact the situation in other countries by sustain the quality of our own society?

Quality of Society : 5. Effective and legitimate policies

> This too is related to the other elements

> Effectiveness is about the extent to which the outcomes of policies is in line with what was intended and whether there are no negative side effects

> The legitimicy aspect is about the extent to which people are willing to accept poilices and government agencies.

Two new social reports

Both have a focus on QoS and five major challenging (policy) issues as SCP sees them: meaningfully participation; resilience and vulnerability within the ' social domain'; living together with variety; sustainability; democracy and trust

1. Social and Cultural Developments

› Part 1: reflection on the state of the country (based on key indicators and in-depth information provided in part 2)

› Part 2 separate chapters for each of the five challenges, with a description of: the current state of affairs (based on key indicators); our knowledge on underlying policy mechanisms; current policy (proposals); our recommendations.

Two new social reports

2. Social and Cultural Outlook

Key elements: long time horizon (2030-2050); multiple normative policy scenarios, based on different normative points of view; focus on ' citizen point of view'; backcasting (what policies are needed to achieve the desired future); actual policy proposals (new budgets) are analysed in light of these desired futures.

Purpose: next to the economic information of the CPB, provide social and cultural input input for:

- parliamentary discussion around current budgeting choices

- preparation of new policy demands by ministries in light of the next budgeting cycle

Goal: allow policy makers and politicians to take QoS/QoL into account in their policy decisions/the evaluation of policy decisions.

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Thank you

Jeroen Boelhouwer, Sarah Hardus and Roelof Schellingerhout (and Debbie Verbeek-Oudijk)

j.boelhouwer@scp.nl

www.scp.nl

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