



The Netherlands Institute
for Social Research

Social monitoring and reporting in the Netherlands since 1973

From the viewpoint of SCP

Jeroen Boelhouwer

Villa Vigoni, October 6, 2026



1973: SCP was established

The coordinating minister 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, 2008)





First mission SCP

Its official tasks were threefold:

1. to describe the social and cultural situation in the Netherlands and outline anticipated developments;
2. to provide the information needed for a well-considered choice of policy objectives and resources and for the development of alternatives;
3. to evaluate government policy, especially interdepartmental policy, for example concerning the elderly, young people, ethnic minorities, etc.



First building





1974

Social and Cultural Report

- Focus of SCP on it's task: "produce a coherent picture of the state of social and cultural welfare in the Netherlands and likely developments in this area"
- **SCP's own choice** (but felt as an obligation for a comprehensive report_
- Bi-annual
- Broad range of life-domains
- No fixed publication date
- Description of:
 - developments in policies
 - societal developments



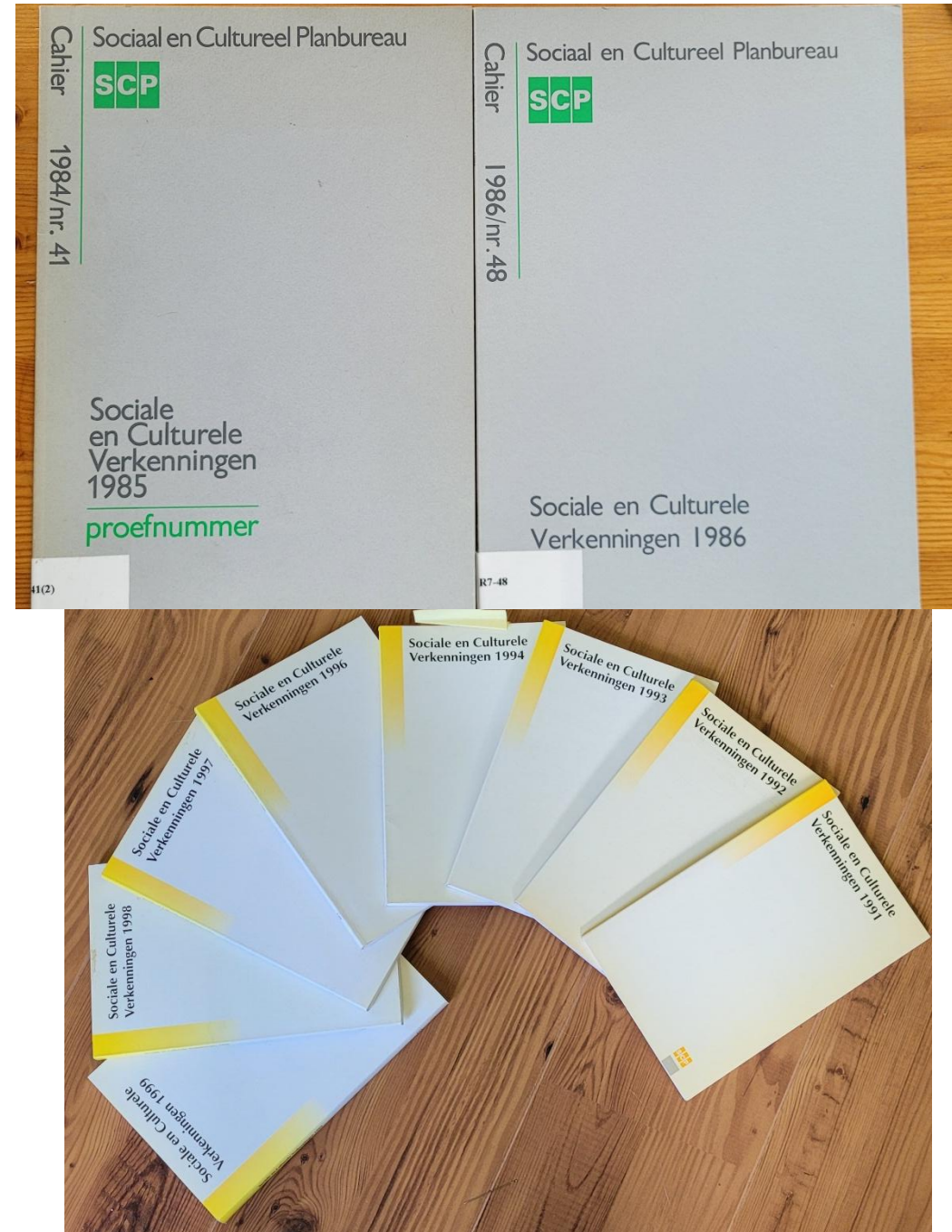
current building



1985

Social and Cultural Outlook

- 1985: Dutch **House of Representatives** **asks** for counterpart of Economic Outlooks, to be used during budget discussions.
- “In the parliamentary debate it should be clear that the social-cultural situation is equally important as the socio-economic”
- This annual report was less voluminous than the Social and Cultural Report
- It presented capita selecta of topics instead of a coherent picture





Social and Cultural Report: last edition in 2019

1974-1996:

Bi-annual comprehensive social report



1985 SCV



Social and Cultural Report: last edition in 2019

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Bi-annual comprehensive social report



1985 SCV



1998 – 2019: Bi-annual thematic report

- 25 Years of social change
- The Netherlands in Europe
- Quality of the quaternary sector
- Trends and expectations for the future
- Engagement and capabilities of citizens
- Social cohesion
- Generations in the Netherlands
- Division of responsibilities between government and citizens
- Disparities in the Netherlands (2014)
- Thinking of the Netherlands (2019)





Timeline of SCP's social reporting

1974-1996:

Bi-annual comprehensive Social and Cultural Report

SCP's **own choice**, no fixed publication date

1985-1999:

Annual Social and Cultural Outlook (SCV)

Asked for, september (budget discussions)
More or less capita selecta, without framework

1998-2019:

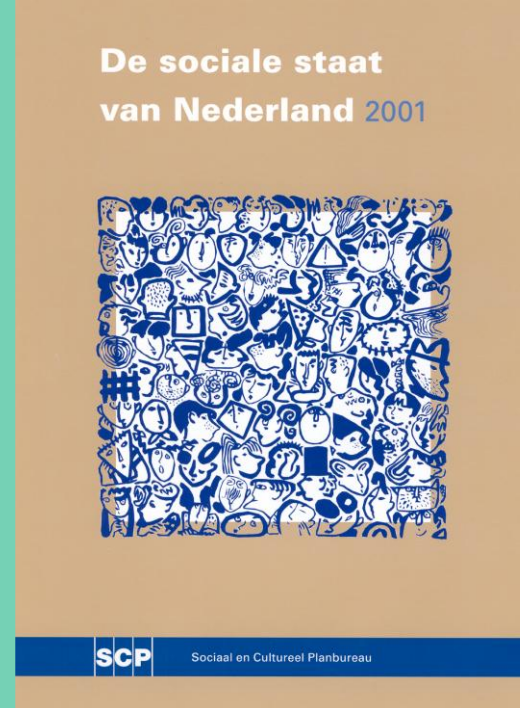
Bi-annual thematic Social and Cultural Report (SCR)

SCP's **own choice**, no fixed publication date

2001-2020

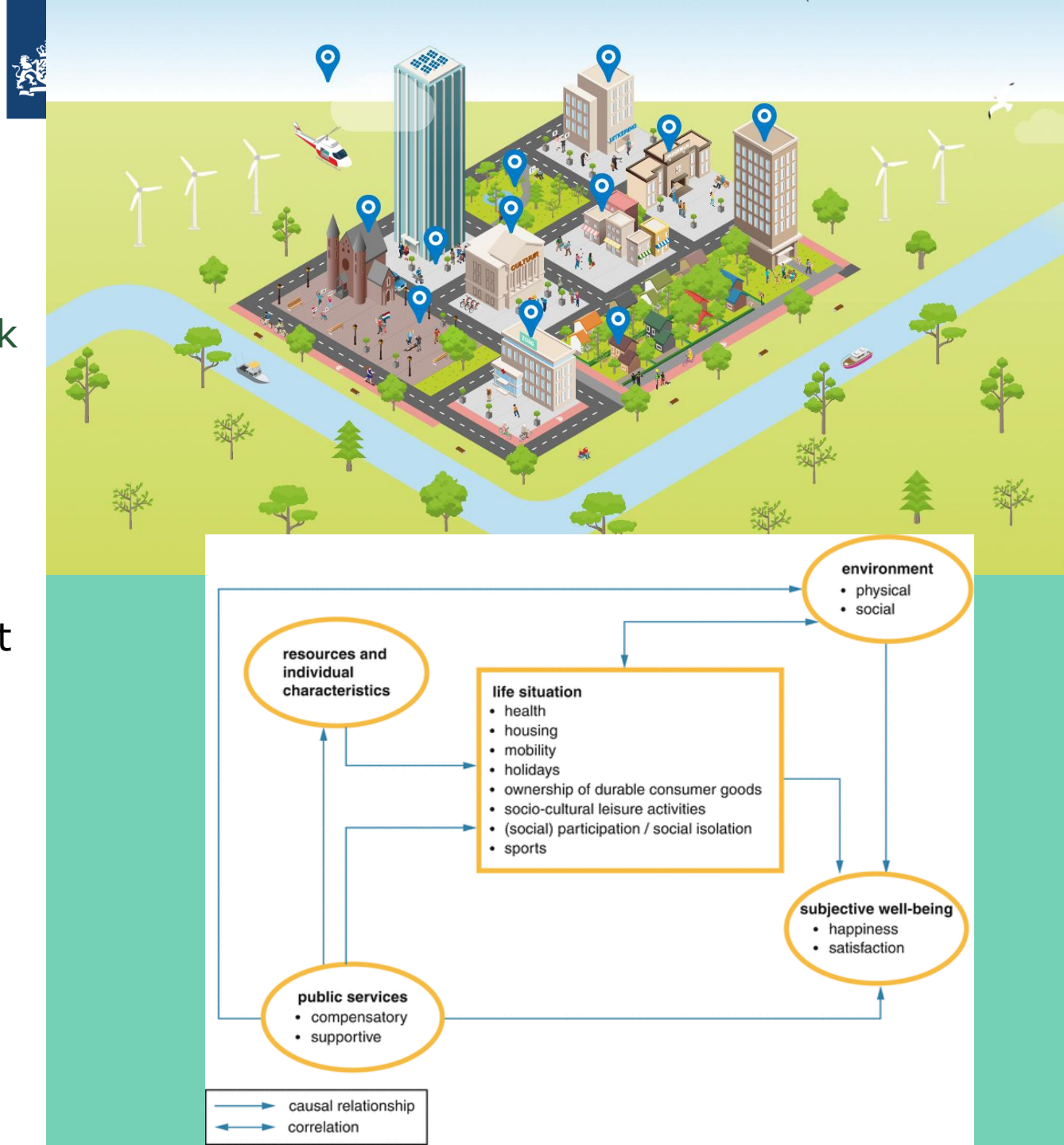
Social state of the Netherlands

- 2001: follow-up of (asked for report) SCV, but **own choice** to put clearer focus on SCV
- more structural layout based on a theoretical framework
- bi-annual instead of annually
- Published a week before budget debate
- 2016: Dutch **Senate asks** for yearly update (prior to budget debates)
-> core indicators update on the internet



Social state of the Netherlands

- Describing and analysing developments in quality of life, based on theoretical framework
- Structured chapters:
 - Outline of policy
 - Objective qol: how is the actual situation people live in?
 - Subjective 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 breakdowns by different social categories
- > Ended in 2020; less focus on monitoring





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SCP's own choice, no fixed publication date

2001-2020:

Bi-annual Social state of the Netherlands (SSN)

Asked for, september (budget discussions)
Focus on QOL was SCP's own choice

Since 2023:

Annual Social and Cultural Developments (SCO)
Wellbeing reflection on budget (with CPB and PBL)

SCP's own choice, march (budget discussions)
Asked for, september (budget discussions)

Social and Cultural Developments spring - since 2023



- > But, in 2023, SCP aims to be even closer connected to the budget cycle (whole year around)
- > New publication earlier in the year (**SCP's own choice**)
- > Focus on Quality of Society
 - ◇ Quality of life
 - ◇ Social cohesion
 - ◇ Relationship between citizens and government
- > Distribution issues (education and income)
- > International comparisons

Sociale en Culturele Ontwikkelingen

Stand van Nederland 2023



Koersen op kwaliteit van de samenleving

Sociale en Culturele Ontwikkelingen 2024



Sociale en Culturele Ontwikkelingen 2025

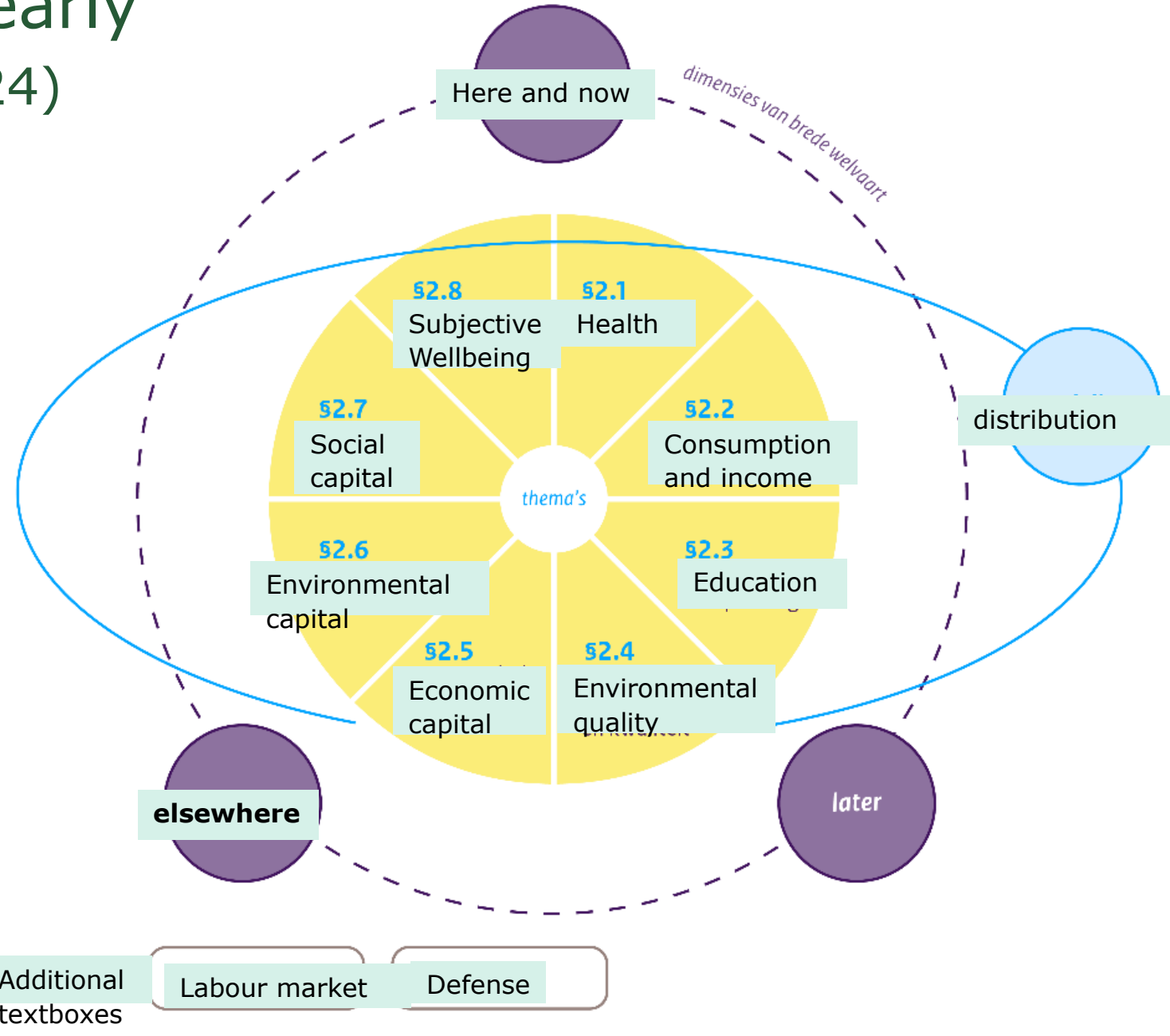


Sociale en Culturele Ontwikkelingen 2026



Wellbeing reflection on yearly budget (september, since 2024)

- > People (SCP)
- > Planet (PBL)
- > Profit (CPB)
- > Effect of proposed policies on all aspects of 'beyond gdp'
- > Here and now, Later, Elsewhere
- > Distribution
- > **Asked for by House of Representatives**
- > Since 2024





COB

Citizens Outlooks Barometer since 2008

- › It explores current trends in public opinion in the Netherlands and looks in more depth at a number of important topics from the cob bulletins
- › The cob also gives respondents an opportunity with some questions to explain their answer in their own words - fi why they think things in the Netherlands are moving in the right or wrong direction
- › With the same intention focus groups are organized





Current mission

SCP contributes to a society in which people thrive and get along well with each other



We want our knowledge regarding the quality of society to contribute to sound policy. That is why we ensure that the necessary knowledge reaches the right parties at the right time. We conduct research, interpret findings, and place issues on the agenda. We do this both upon request and on our own initiative, always keeping the citizens' perspective at the heart of our work.



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Thank you for your attention

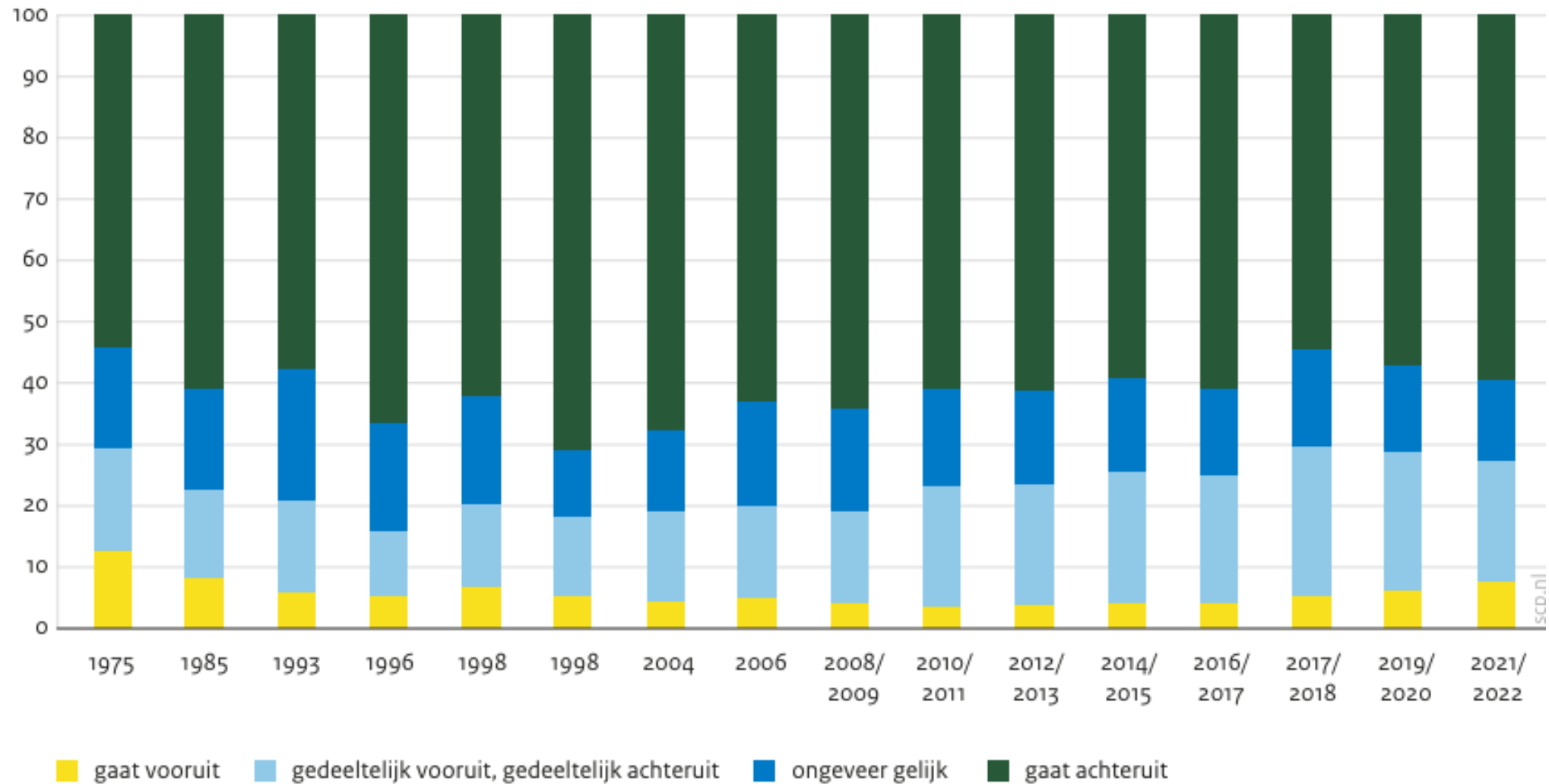


Jeroen Boelhouwer
j.boelhouwer@scp.nl

 english.scp.nl
 [@SCPonderzoek](https://twitter.com/SCPonderzoek)
 [Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau](https://www.linkedin.com/company/sociaal-en-cultureel-planbureau)

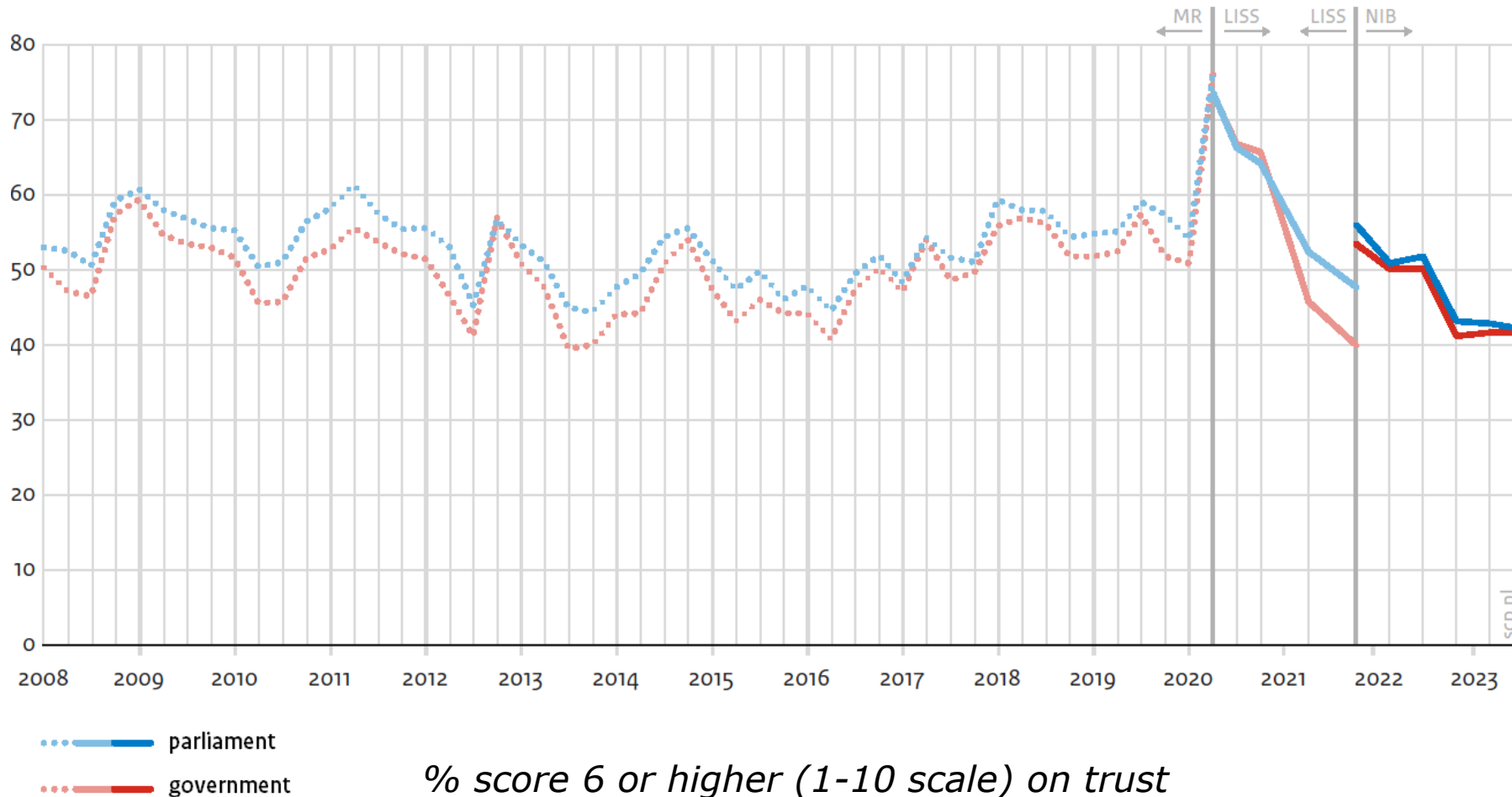


Opinion on the decline or progress of norms and values





Political trust is low



- Political trust has not fallen structurally, but has become structurally volatile.
- Geared towards political actors and institutional performances
- No indications (yet) that legitimacy of the democratic rule of law is structurally undermined



Social Indicators movement since the 60's: There is a 'problem' with GDP

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

Stiglitz, Sen, Fitoussi2009:
policy attention QOL





Timeline of SCP's social reporting

1974-1996: 1973-1977 kabinet Den uyl, pvda, d66, ppr, kvp, arp

Bi-annual comprehensive Social and Cultural Report

SCP's own choice, no fixed publication date

1985-1999: 1982-1986: Lubbers I, cda, vvd

Annual Social and Cultural Outlook (SCV)

Asked for, september (budget discussions)
More or less capita selecta, without framework

1998-2019: 1998-2002 Kok II, pvda, vvd, d66

Bi-annual thematic Social and Cultural Report (SCR)

(paars2 ervoor was paars 1

SCP's own choice, no fixed publication date

2001-2020: Kok II (zie boven)

Bi-annual Social state of the Netherlands (SSN)

Asked for, september (budget discussions)
Focus on QOL was SCP's own choice

Since 2023: Rutte IV, VVD, D66, CDA, CU

Annual Social and Cultural Developments (SCO)
Wellbeing reflection on budget (with CPB and PBL)

SCP's own choice, march (budget discussions)
Asked for, september (budget discussions)