

INDICATORS OF POVERTY AND SOCIAL  
EXCLUSION PROJECT

**Findings from the Indicators of  
Poverty and Social Exclusion Project:**

**A Profile of Poverty using the  
Socially Perceived Necessities Approach**

**Gemma Wright**

**Key Report 7**

May 2008

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**social development**

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**Indicators of Poverty and Social Exclusion Project**

**Project 4.3.1 of the Department of Social  
Development's Social Policy Analysis Programme**

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A Profile of Poverty using the  
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Approach**

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## Section 1 Introduction

This report presents the findings from the final stage of the Indicators of Poverty and Social Exclusion (IPSE) project. The approach taken in this project is based on a concept of relative poverty that focuses on the ability of people to achieve a socially determined acceptable standard of living (Pantazis *et al.*, 2006) to enable them to participate fully in society (Townsend, 1979). Such an approach includes but also goes beyond the meeting of basic needs and resonates well with principles contained in key South African policy documents, the Constitution (Magasela, 2005; Republic of South Africa, 1996), and influential historical documents such as *Africans' Claims in South Africa* (ANC, 1943; Asmal, 2005) and the *Freedom Charter* (ANC, 1955; Asmal, 2005).

The project uses the 'socially perceived necessities' approach which originated in Britain (Gordon and Pantazis, 1997; Mack and Lansley, 1985) but has since been applied in over 15 countries around the world including Bangladesh (Ahmed, 2007), Ireland (Nolan and Whelan, 1996), Japan (Abe, 2006), Vietnam (Davies and Smith, 1998), a small study in Mali (Nteziyaremye and MkNelly, 2001) and a Europe-wide study (Eurobarometer, 2007). The approach involves seeking the views of people about what they consider to be essential for an acceptable standard of living.

The project had three stages:

- Focus Groups - 48 focus groups were undertaken across South Africa to explore what possessions, services and activities people regarded as essential that everyone should have, have access to, or be able to do, in order to have an acceptable standard of living (Noble *et al.*, 2004; Ratcliffe *et al.*, 2005). Special reports were produced on people's views about housing (Magasela *et al.*, 2006), health and a safe environment (Cluver *et al.*, 2006), necessities for children (Barnes *et al.*, 2007) and education (Barnes and Wright, 2007).
- Pilot Module – a pilot module was included in the 2005 South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) to obtain a nationally representative definition of necessities (Noble *et al.*, 2007; Wright *et al.*, 2007).
- Full Module – a full module was included in the 2006 SASAS which asked the same set of definitional questions and also measured whether people lacked each of the items. This report presents the findings for this final stage of the project.

This is the first time that the socially perceived necessities approach has been explored in South Africa (for an overview of the range of other recent approaches to defining poverty in South Africa see for example May (1998) and SPII (2007)). It is also the first time that a nationally representative survey has been undertaken in a middle-income country to explore this approach. Importantly, the research findings demonstrate that even in the context of high levels of income poverty and inequality, South African people have a remarkably common view about what it means to have an acceptable standard of living.

## Section 2      Defining the socially perceived necessities

### The selection of items for the socially perceived necessities module in SASAS 2006

The socially perceived necessities module in SASAS 2006 sought the views of South Africans about which items, activities and services they thought were essential for all South Africans to have (or do, or have access to) in order to be able to enjoy an acceptable standard of living. This is the ‘definitional’ component of the module. The other half of the module asked the respondents whether they had each of the items (the ‘measurement’ component).

The SASAS 2006 definitional questions were almost identical to those in SASAS 2005 and comprised 50 questions: 33 about possessions, 4 about activities, 8 about the neighbourhood, and 5 about relationships with friends and family (see Appendix 1). The survey was designed to be nationally representative and contained 2904 cases. People were asked to say whether they think each item or activity *is essential for everyone to have in order to enjoy an acceptable standard of living in South Africa today*. They were given four options as responses: ‘essential’ if they regarded the item or activity as essential in this way; ‘desirable’ if they regarded the item or activity as desirable but not essential; ‘neither’ if they regarded the item or activity as neither essential nor desirable; and ‘don’t know’.

The competing criteria for selecting items for the definitional part of the module were as follows:

- The items should reflect the issues raised in the 48 focus groups.
- The items should represent the breadth of the dimensions of poverty including employment, health, housing, education, the living environment, social relations, material possessions.
- The items should also represent a range of standards of living, from achieving survival through to a lifestyle that many would regard as luxurious.
- Some items that might become more important over time should be included (e.g. computer).
- The focus should be on possession rather than affordability. Some studies of this type ask whether people ought to be able to *afford* the items whilst others, including this study, ask whether people ought to be able to *have* the items, treating supply as a second-order issue.

The items were restricted to 50 due to space constraints, and therefore the findings are indicative rather than exhaustive. We also did not ask about the quality and quantity of items in this study.

## Defining the socially perceived necessities

**Table 1** shows the percentage of the population that defined each of the 50 items as ‘essential for everyone to have in order to enjoy an acceptable standard of living in South Africa today’.<sup>i</sup>

**Table 1 Percentage of people defining an item as ‘essential’ (sorted in descending order)**

Item	% of All saying essential
Mains electricity in the house	92
Someone to look after you if you are very ill	91
A house that is strong enough to stand up to the weather e.g. rain, winds etc.	90
Clothing sufficient to keep you warm and dry	89
A place of worship (church/mosque/synagogue) in the local area?	87
A fridge	86
Street lighting	85
Ability to pay or contribute to funerals/funeral insurance/burial society	82
Separate bedrooms for adults and children	82
Having an adult from the household at home at all times when children under ten from the household are at home	81
Having police on the streets in the local area	80
Tarred roads close to the house	80
Paid employment for people of working age	79
For parents or other carers to be able to buy complete school uniform for children without hardship	79
A flush toilet in the house	78
People who are sick are able to afford all medicines prescribed by their doctor	77
Someone to talk to if you are feeling upset or depressed	76
A neighbourhood without rubbish/refuse/garbage in the streets	75
A large supermarket in the local area	75
A radio	74
Someone to transport you in a vehicle if you needed to travel in an emergency	74
A fence or wall around the property	74
Being able to visit friends and family in hospital or other institutions	73
Somewhere for children to play safely outside of the house	72
Regular savings for emergencies	71
A neighbourhood without smoke or smog in the air	69
Television/ TV	69
Someone to lend you money in an emergency	66
A cell phone	63
Meat or fish or vegetarian equivalent every day	62
A bath or shower in the house	62
Burglar bars in the house	62
Special meal at Christmas or equivalent festival	56
Some new (not second-hand or handed-down) clothes	55
A sofa/lounge suite	54
A garden	51
A car	49
A landline phone	48
Washing machine	44
A lock-up garage for vehicles	43
A small amount of money to spend on yourself not on your family each week	42
Having enough money to give presents on special occasions such as birthdays, weddings, funerals	41
For parents or other carers to be able to afford toys for children to play with	39



A burglar alarm system for the house	38
A holiday away from home for one week a year, not visiting relatives	37
A family take-away or bring-home meal once a month	34
An armed response service for the house	28
A DVD player	27
A computer in the home	26
Satellite Television/DSTV	19

Source: SASAS 2006

Notes: The 36 items that were defined as 'essential' by more than half of the respondents are highlighted in bold.

As well as informing the construction of the list, the focus group material provides a backdrop for these items because people explained in the focus groups why they considered certain items to be essential. The following quotations illustrate some of the necessities that emerged from SASAS 2006. Clearly, people will often regard the same items as essential for different reasons, but the examples given below were frequently made across the focus groups.

The item defined as most essential was electricity in the house, with 92% of respondents defining it as essential in the focus groups. Many people said that electricity was essential because the alternative forms of lighting – paraffin stoves and candles – are very hazardous, and frequently cause fires. The importance of housing and adequate healthcare are discussed in Magasela *et al.* (2006) and Cluver *et al.* (2007) respectively. Housing, for example, is not simply about the availability of shelter:

*'When you have a house you have respect and dignity.'* (KwaZulu-Natal, black African, low income, rural, male, Zulu).

Eighty-six percent of people defined a fridge as essential. In one focus group, a woman from Gauteng explained why she considered a fridge to be a necessity:

*'to buy in bulk and refrigerate so as to save us money or even run a small business; to drink cold water when it's hot in summer; to help us not to buy food all the time.'* (Gauteng, black African, low income, urban, informal, female, Sepedi).

Eighty-five percent of people defined street lighting as essential, and it was regarded as such in the focus groups for a number of reasons. For example:

*'Lights are important to have, especially where we stay. If the children disappear you don't know where to run to or search for them because it's too dark, you can't look for them, there are no lights [..and..] to avoid accidents, especially on the roads. If there's no lights anything can happen like accidents and rape cases occur.'* (Western Cape, coloured, low income, urban, formal, female, Afrikaans).

Eighty percent of respondents said that it was essential to have police on the streets in the local area. Safety and the need for more police support was frequently raised in the focus groups and one participant described the main challenge in his area:

*'The biggest challenge is that of security and fighting crime. Stolen goods are sold back to us. Everyday there is a house-breaking incident because these stolen items can be sold back to us.'* (Eastern Cape, black African, low income, urban, formal, male, Xhosa).

Tarred roads were defined as essential by 80% of respondents. A focus group participant from an informal settlement in Gauteng argued that tarred roads are essential because they ‘prevent accidents caused by gravel roads’, ‘prevent us from dust which causes diseases’, ‘protects cars from being damaged by potholes’ and they ‘shorten the journey.’

Many of the survey respondents (79%) defined paid employment for people of working age as essential. As one focus group participant said:

*‘All the things we have mentioned need a person to have a job because that’s where you get the money to feed yourself, buy clothes and send children to school.’* (Gauteng, black African, urban, informal, female, Sesotho).

Almost 80% of respondents (78%) defined a flush toilet in the house as essential. Many people do not have flush toilets, and many of the focus group participants talked about the importance of having one’s own toilet in the house as the communal ones can be dangerous, particularly for children and at night. The importance of having a flush toilet rather than other types such as a ventilated pit latrine or the bucket system was also stressed in the focus groups.

Seventy-seven percent of respondents said that it was essential for people who are sick to be able to afford all medicines prescribed by their doctor. The challenges for people in relation to obtaining good quality affordable health care are reported in Cluver *et al.* (2007). One focus group participant commented that:

*‘There must be a decrease in the cost of the medicines, not only in medical centres but in pharmacies as well.’* (Eastern Cape, black African, middle income, urban, formal, mixed, Xhosa).

Three-quarters of respondents said that it was essential to have a neighbourhood without rubbish/refuse/garbage in the streets. Many of the focus group participants commented on the hazards, particularly for children, of having refuse lying around. For example:

*‘To have our dirt/rubbish removed [...] to protect our children from germs, because children play in the rubbish, they put it into their mouths and this causes illness.’* (Western Cape, low income, urban, formal, coloured, female, Afrikaans).

Finally, at the other end of the spectrum, the five items defined as ‘essential’ by the smallest proportion of respondents were – this time in ascending order – ‘satellite television/ DSTV’ (19%); ‘a computer in the home’ (26%); and ‘a DVD player’ (27%). These responses make intuitive sense in that they all represent more ‘luxury’ items that are most commonly associated with people with high levels of disposable incomes.

Having collated the list of items, it is important to ask at what stage an item can be called a socially perceived necessity. One approach is to select items that a simple majority (50%) of the population have defined as essential. Of the 50 items in the SASAS 2006 module, 36 (72%) were defined as ‘essential’ by half or more of the respondents. These 36 items are shown in bold in the table above and are a highly reliable set of items.<sup>ii</sup>

## How do the views of different groups compare?

The extent of agreement between different groups becomes an important issue when measuring the lack of socially perceived necessities. If there is a general agreement about the necessities in life across the population, then if someone does not possess the item it is reasonable to regard it as a deprivation or an indicator of poverty, particularly if the item is defined as essential by the whole population. However, if different subgroups in the population define different items as essential, then the lack of an item could sometimes relate to poverty and sometimes relate to choice (McKay, 2004).

There is no easy way to decide where to draw the line between agreement and disagreement (unless one defines the former as unanimity). However, to inform the decision there is merit in considering the correlations between responses of different subgroups and exploring the extent of commonality between different subgroups' responses.

The following table shows the correlation between different groups in South Africa, by looking at how people responded to the 50 definitional questions in terms of whether they defined the items as 'essential' or not.

**Table 2 How people's definitions of necessities compare – by sex, age, area, and whether there is a child in the household**

Subgroups compared	Correlation (% defining each of the 50 items as essential)
Women and Men	0.98
People aged 65 and over, and people aged less than 65	0.95
People aged 16-24, and people aged 25 and over	0.97
People in urban areas and rural areas	0.90
Children under 16 in household or not	0.97

Source: SASAS 2006

Note: All Spearman's rank correlations are significant ( $p < 0.01$ )

Table 3 shows how the responses compared by population group. The highest level of agreement is between black African and coloured respondents. The lowest level of agreement is between black African and white respondents.

**Table 3 How people's definitions of necessities compare – by population group**

	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White
Black African	1.00			
Coloured	0.86	1.00		
Indian/Asian	0.79	0.93	1.00	
White	0.71	0.91	0.90	1.00

Source: SASAS 2006

Note: All Spearman's rank correlations are significant ( $p < 0.01$ )

Table 4 shows the extent of agreement between a range of different subgroups of the population that are based on a variety of poverty definitions and proxies for class.

**Table 4 How people’s definitions of necessities compare – using other definitions of poverty and proxies for class**

Subgroups compared	Correlation (% defining each of the 50 items as essential)
Self-defined poverty status <sup>iii</sup>	0.91
Equivalised household income <sup>iv</sup>	0.92
Minimum Income Question <sup>v</sup>	0.97
Food insecurity <sup>vi</sup>	0.95
Educational status <sup>vii</sup>	0.96
Employment status <sup>viii</sup>	0.95
Occupational status <sup>ix</sup>	0.92
Self-defined social status <sup>x</sup>	0.90

Source: SASAS 2006

Note: All Spearman’s rank correlations are significant ( $p < 0.01$ )

The extent of agreement between different groups about which of the items everyone in South Africa should have (or have access to, or do) is very striking.

## Section 3      Measuring poverty using the socially perceived necessities approach

### Possession of the socially perceived necessities

As well as including the set of definitional questions, the SASAS 2006 module contained a ‘matching’ set of measurement questions, to find out whether people possessed the items or not. People were asked: ‘Please say whether you have each of the following. If you do not have the item please say whether you don’t have it and don’t want it, or don’t have it and can’t afford it. So the three possible answers are ‘have’, ‘don’t have and don’t want’ or ‘don’t have and can’t afford’.

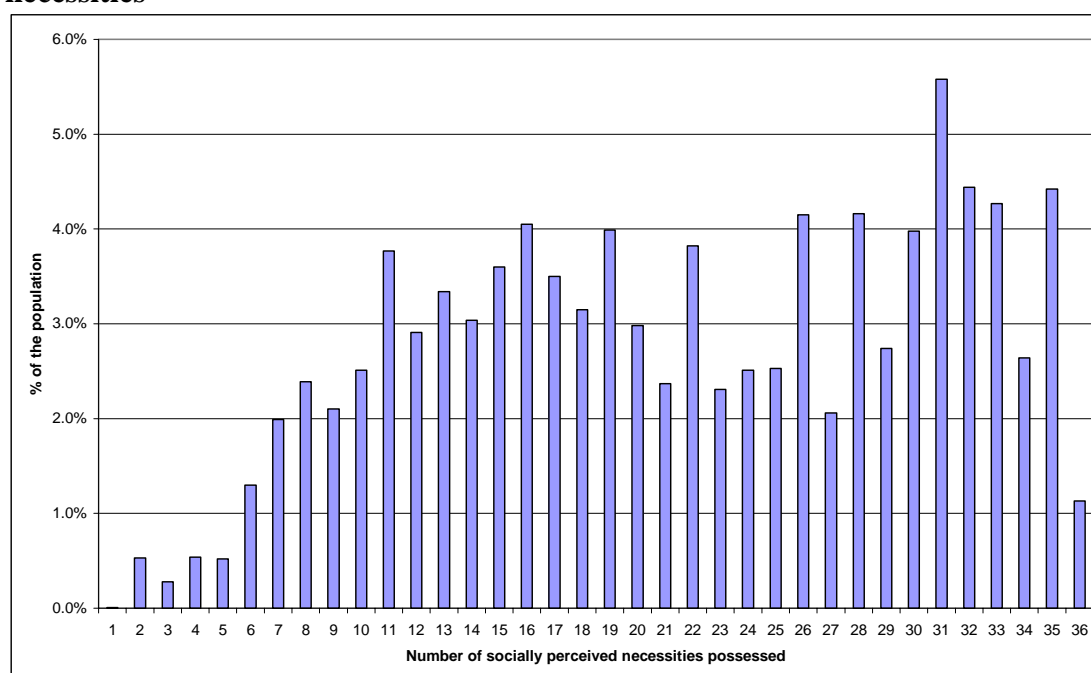
For activities, the possible answers were ‘do’, ‘don’t do and don’t want to do’ or ‘don’t do and can’t afford.’ For the items relating to the neighbourhood, and relationships with friends and family, the possible options were simply ‘have’ or ‘don’t have’ as these items do not necessarily relate to access to financial resources.

The average number of socially perceived necessities possessed by all respondents is 21.5. Overall, 40 of the 50 items in the module were possessed by a smaller percentage of people than defined them as ‘essential’, so for 80% of the items in the module, fewer people possessed them than regarded them as ‘essential’, on average. Looking just at the socially perceived necessities, 28 of the 36 items were possessed by a smaller percentage of people than defined each one as essential, so for 78% of the socially perceived necessities, fewer people possessed them than regarded them as ‘essential’ on average. There is a discrepancy between the standard of living which people regard as acceptable and the standard of living that is currently experienced by many people in South Africa.

The distribution of possession of the 36 socially perceived necessities is shown in **Figure 1** below. There appears to be a bimodal distribution, with peaks occurring around the possession of 16 and 31 items. This suggests that there is one group of people in South Africa which possesses roughly double the number of socially perceived necessities than people in the other group.

The breakdown of patterns of possession by population group is very striking. Apart from three items, where coloured people have the lowest possession rate, black African respondents have the lowest possession rate across the population groups for each of the 36 socially perceived necessities.<sup>xi</sup> For example, though almost all coloured, Indian/Asian and white respondents had mains electricity in the house and sufficient clothing to keep warm and dry, these were possessed by only three-quarters of black African respondents.

**Figure 1 Percentage of respondents in possession of the 36 socially perceived necessities**



Source: SASAS 2006

The following table shows the mean number of items defined as ‘essential’ by population group, and the mean number of ‘essential’ items possessed by population group.

**Table 5 Mean number of SPNs possessed, by population group**

	All	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White
Mean number of items defined as necessities (from a list of 50 items)	32 (30.9-32.3)	31 (31.5-32.3)	30 (28.5-31.3)	33 (31.8-34.1)	34 (32.3-35.8)
Mean number of socially perceived necessities possessed (from a list of 36 items)	22 (21.0-22.1)	19 (18.5-19.9)	26 (24.9-27.0)	31 (30.5-31.8)	32 (30.8-32.4)

Source: SASAS 2006

Note: 95% confidence intervals shown in brackets. SPN=Socially Perceived Necessity (50% threshold) totalling 36.

On average, 32 of the 50 items were defined as essential by respondents to the questionnaire. By population group, the average number of items defined as essential ranges from 30 (coloured respondents) to 34 (white respondents), with black African and Indian/Asian respondents defining 31 and 33 items as essential respectively. This suggests that the aspirations of South Africans do not differ greatly by population group, certainly in terms of number of items defined as essential from the list of 50. However, the mean number of socially perceived necessities that are actually possessed ranges from 19 for black African respondents to 32 for white respondents, with coloured and Indian/Asian respondents possessing 26 and 31 socially perceived necessities respectively.

Though not all of the socially perceived necessities are purchasable with money, there is also a striking difference between patterns of possession for people falling above and below Statistics South Africa’s proposed upper poverty line (Statistics South Africa, 2007).<sup>xiii</sup> For example, whilst 94% of those above this income threshold live in weather proof houses, this is only enjoyed by 68% of those below the threshold; and while 73% of those above the threshold can afford medicines prescribed by their doctor, this can only be afforded by 39% of people below the threshold.

The following table compares people who fall above and below this threshold (R847 income per capita per month). On average, 34 items are defined as essential by those falling above this income threshold, compared with 31 items for those below the threshold. However, an average of 8 more socially perceived necessities are possessed by people above this threshold (28) than for people below the threshold (19).

**Table 6 Mean number of SPNs possessed, by monthly per capita income**

	All	Above R847 per capita	Below R847 per capita
Mean number of items defined as necessities (from a list of 50 items)	32 (30.9-32.3)	34 (32.9-35.1)	31 (29.8-31.6)
Mean number of socially perceived necessities possessed	22 (21.0-22.1)	28 (26.7-28.5)	19 (18.7-20.0)

Source: SASAS 2006

Note: 95% confidence intervals shown in brackets. SPN=socially perceived necessity (50% threshold).

Tables 5 and 6 demonstrate that although there is considerable agreement in terms of people’s aspirations for the country as a whole – at least in terms of number of items selected from the list of 50 – there is nevertheless a marked discrepancy in terms of average number of essential items possessed, for the different population groups and for those above and below a selected income threshold.

### **Lack of the socially perceived necessities**

This section summarises findings relating to the lack of socially perceived necessities. As well as considering a general, unspecified, lack, it is possible to refine this by considering ‘enforced lack’ (or an approximation thereof).

For items or activities that can be purchased, people were given two possible responses to choose from if they did not possess the item. The possible responses were ‘don’t have, don’t want’ or ‘don’t have, can’t afford’ for the items, and ‘don’t do and don’t want to do’ or ‘don’t do and can’t afford’ for the activities. The reason for this distinction was to enable people to be identified who were experiencing an *enforced* lack of items or activities due to lack of resources. Lack of the neighbourhood-related items could also be seen as ‘enforced’ as though the lack may not be due to lack of personal resources per se, it could be enforced due to lack of provision by government (e.g. not employing sufficient police to achieve a presence on the street) or business (e.g. no large supermarket in the area). It could also be argued (and is here) that lack of the five relationship items could be enforced, depending on how one defines poverty. For the purposes of analysing lack of

necessities, employment and the child-related items were omitted because not all respondents were of working age and not all respondents had children in their households. This resulted in 31 (rather than 36) socially perceived necessities.

The following table shows the average number of socially perceived necessities that are lacked, by population group, for these 31 socially perceived necessities.

**Table 7 Average number of socially perceived necessities lacked by population group (using 50% threshold)**

Population group	Mean number of SPNs lacked - enforced	Median number of SPNs lacked - enforced	% of total population
Black African	13 (12.1 – 13.3)	16	77
Coloured	7 (6.1 – 8.0)	6	9
Indian/Asian	2 (1.9 – 2.7)	2	3
White	2 (1.4 – 2.5)	2	11
<b>All</b>	<b>10.7 (10.2 – 11.2)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: SASAS 2006

Notes: SPN= socially perceived necessity based on 50% threshold. Child-related items and employment are excluded, resulting in a total of 31 SPNs. 95% confidence intervals are shown for the means in brackets.

The enforced lack of socially perceived necessities is closely related to people’s self-defined poverty status and to their income status. The table below shows the mean and median number of socially perceived necessities lacked (enforced) for each of the five self-defined poverty status categories. It also shows the average per capita monthly income of these groups.

**Table 8 Mean and median number of socially perceived necessities lacked and average per capita monthly income by self-defined poverty status (using 50% threshold)**

Self-defined poverty status	Mean number of SPNs lacked - enforced	Median number of SPNs lacked – enforced	Average per capita monthly income (Rand)	% of the total population
Wealthy	6 (3.4 – 8.2)	5	3024	1
Very comfortable	3 (1.8 – 3.8)	1	3550	7
Reasonably comfortable	6 (5.6 – 7.2)	3	1523	25
Just getting along	10 (9.3 – 10.6)	9	763	39
Poor	17 (15.7 - 18.0)	18	429	23
Very Poor	20 (19.2 - 21.1)	21	222	6
<b>All</b>	<b>11 (10.2 - 11.2)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1051</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: SASAS 2006

Notes: SPN= socially perceived necessity based on 50% threshold. Child-related items and employment are excluded, resulting in a total of 31 SPNs. 95% confidence intervals are shown for the means in brackets.

With the exception of the people who defined themselves as wealthy (and these can be disregarded because only 27 cases defined themselves as such), there is clearly a relationship between the mean and median numbers of socially perceived necessities lacked and the self-defined poverty status. The mean number of socially perceived necessities lacked ranges from 3 items for those who defined themselves as ‘very



comfortable’ to 20 items for those who defined themselves as ‘very poor’. Those who defined themselves as ‘very poor’ lacked almost twice as many socially perceived necessities as the respondents overall and twice as many as those who defined themselves as ‘just getting along’.

There is also a relationship (again excluding the small number of people who defined themselves as wealthy) between the average per capita monthly income and the average number of socially perceived necessities lacked, by self-defined poverty status. For example, those who defined themselves as ‘very comfortable’ and lacked just three socially perceived necessities on average had a monthly per capita income of R3550. This compares with those who defined themselves as very poor, who lacked 20 socially perceived necessities on average and had a monthly per capita income of just R222.

Further analysis of the lack of socially perceived necessities revealed several observations which are listed in brief here:

- Almost all respondents who lacked a socially perceived necessity said that they didn’t have it and couldn’t afford it. That is, there is very little evidence of people reporting that they had *chosen* not to possess any of the socially perceived necessities.
- People who defined an item as essential were more likely to possess it. For example, 60% of those who defined a bath or shower as essential possessed a bath or shower in the house, whereas only 13% of those who defined it as desirable but not essential had a bath or shower in the house. There therefore does seem to be an association between patterns of definition and patterns of possession. Indeed, for *all 50 items* a higher percentage of those who defined the item as essential possessed the item than those who defined the item as desirable but not essential.
- People who possessed an item were more likely to define it as essential. Returning to the example of the bath or shower in the house, of those who possessed a bath or shower in the house, 89% defined it as essential, whereas 46% of those who said they don’t have it and can’t afford it defined it as essential.
- Nevertheless, many people who lacked the items still defined them as essential. If people were only influenced by their own circumstances then there would not be so much agreement about what the necessities in life are between the different subgroups in the population (as seen in tables 2-4). And if people only made decisions about necessities in relation to their current circumstances we would not see the discrepancies between definitions of necessities and patterns of possession that are shown in tables 5 and 6.

## Summarising the lack of necessities

There are three different ways in which the lack of necessities can be summarised, and each encompasses several variants which have been developed internationally. The three main options are shown in Table 9; each approach has its own set of challenges, strengths and weaknesses.

**Table 9 Different ways to summarise the lack of necessities**

	<b>Examples</b>
<b>Option 1: Summarise the lack of necessities without reference to income status</b>	(1) lacking one or more socially perceived necessities (e.g. Mack and Lansley, 1985); (2) weight the lacks by the extent to which they were defined as essential (e.g. Halleröd, 1994)
<b>Option 2: Summarise the lack of necessities in terms of income</b>	(1) Cost out the socially perceived necessities; (2) identify a point at which lack of resources results in a sudden withdrawal from participation in society (e.g. Townsend, 1979).
<b>Option 3: Combine lack of necessities with lack of income</b>	Identify people who lack necessities (Option 1) and who are also income poor based on a specified threshold (e.g. Pantazis <i>et al.</i> , 2006).

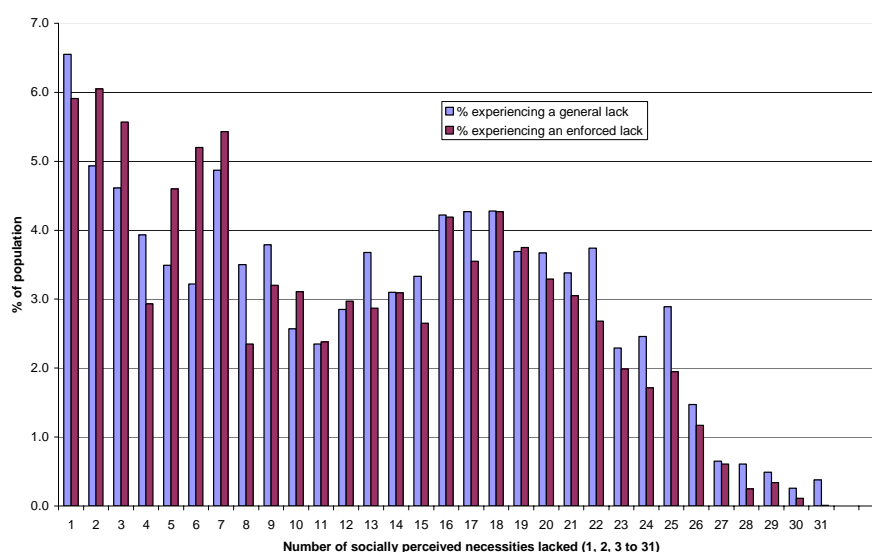
In this report we present findings relating to the two examples shown in Option 1. Option 2 is not pursued here for two reasons: our set of socially perceived necessities cannot be costed out because the list is not exhaustive (so Example 1 won't work), and some of the necessities identified are not purchasable (so Example 2 won't work). Option 3 can be undertaken but isn't undertaken here; the results depend very much on the selection of the income threshold. Again, for the purposes of this analysis items relating to children are excluded (as some of the respondents live in households without children), and so too is the employment question (as some of the respondents are not of working age).

### *Majority Necessities Index (Option 1 Example 1 in Table 9)*

Figure 2 below shows the distribution of the proportion of the population lacking one, two, three, and so on up to all 31 socially perceived necessities. A distinction is made between people reporting any type of lack, and those who reported an enforced lack. The figure demonstrates that there is very little difference in the distribution between a general (unspecified) lack and an enforced lack.

Clearly, the situation in South Africa is very different from that in non-developing countries where this methodological approach has been undertaken.<sup>xiii</sup> A large proportion of the population lacks several socially perceived necessities.

**Figure 2 Percentage of people lacking socially perceived necessities (1, 2, 3 up to 31)**



Source: SASAS 2006

Notes: SPN= socially perceived necessity based on 50% threshold. Child-related items and employment are excluded, resulting in a total of 31 SPNs.

The original method of quantifying this lack in the international literature is in the form of the percentage of the population lacking one *or more* socially perceived necessities, two *or more*, and so on (i.e. Option 1 Example 1). The table below provides these figures for the 31 socially perceived necessities, again reporting on general lack and ‘enforced’ lack. Over ninety percent of the population experienced an enforced lack of one or more socially perceived necessities; half of the population had an enforced lack of 10 or more; and over a third of the population reported an enforced lack of 15 or more socially perceived necessities. A slightly higher proportion of people had an unspecified lack than those with an enforced lack, for each of the thresholds shown below.

**Table 10 Percentage of respondents lacking socially perceived necessities (using 50% threshold)**

Number of SPNs lacked	% of respondents reporting a lack of SPNs	% of respondents reporting an enforced lack of SPNs
1 or more	96	91
2 or more	89	85
3 or more	84	79
5 or more	76	71
10 or more	57	50
15 or more	42	36
20 or more	22	17
25 or more	7	4
30 or more	1	0

Source: SASAS 2006

Notes: SPN= socially perceived necessity based on 50% threshold. Child-related items and employment are excluded, resulting in a total of 31 SPNs.

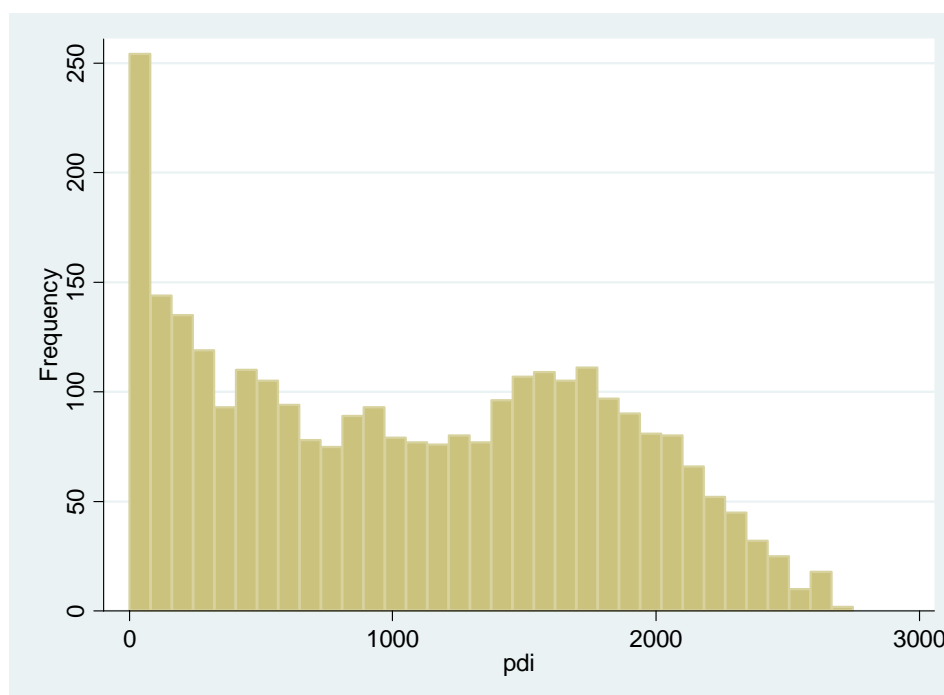
### *Proportional Deprivation Index (Option 1 Example 2 in Table 9)*

A refinement to this approach is to abandon the 50% ‘cliff’ whereby an item is defined as a socially perceived necessity only if more than 50% of the population has defined it as essential. This refinement was first introduced by Halleröd and is called the Proportional Deprivation Index (Halleröd, 1994).

Lack of an item is weighted according to the extent to which the item has been defined as essential. This means that all of the items are taken into account (i.e. 44 items, having deleted the child-related and employment items for the reasons given above). The PDI score is then the sum of the weighted ‘lacks’. In a hypothetical situation where all 44 items were defined as essential by all people, the highest possible score one could obtain – if one lacked all 44 items – would be 4,400. Importantly, by using this approach the weight assigned to each of the items is still determined by the population at large.<sup>xiv</sup>

Having made these calculations, the distribution of the PDI for South Africa looks as follows (see Figure 3). Again, we see evidence of (at least) two parallel standards of living in the country: one group with a relatively high standard of living, and one with a relatively low standard of living. The PDI mean is 1065.7 and unweighted PDI median is 1035.9.

**Figure 3 Distribution of the Proportional Deprivation Index for South Africa**



Source: SASAS 2006

Notes: 44 items were included (employment and child-related items were excluded). Each item was weighted by the extent to which it had been defined as essential by the population as a whole.

A threshold for the PDI was calculated by using ANOVA and logistic regression models to identify an optimum cut-point. This approach was taken using equalised household income, and (separately) using self-defined poverty status, both of which yielded the same optimum threshold of a PDI score of 500 or more.<sup>xv</sup>

This means that, using the socially perceived necessities approach and the PDI method for summarising the enforced lacks, people can be defined as ‘poor’ if they have a PDI score of 500 or more, resulting in a poverty rate of 72% (for people aged 16 and over). Ninety percent of the people defined as ‘poor’ using this threshold are black African and 8% are coloured. Half of the people defined as ‘poor’ using this threshold live in urban areas, and half in rural areas. The average per capita income of those with a PDI score of 500 or more (those defined as ‘poor’ using this approach) is less than a fifth of the average income of those with a PDI score of less than 500.

**Table 11 Poverty rates in South Africa using the Proportional Deprivation Index approach**

	<b>PDI (%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	72 (68.4 – 74.8)
<b>Population Group</b>	
Black African	84 (79.8 – 87.1)
Coloured	60 (51.7 – 67.2)
Indian/Asian	20 (14.0 – 26.8)
White	13 (7.1 – 20.9)
<b>Area Type</b>	
Urban formal	52 (46.5 – 56.5)
Urban informal	98 (95.5 – 98.9)
Former homeland	97 (95.3 – 98.5)
Rural formal	92 (89.1 – 94.4)
<b>Sex</b>	
Women	73 (68.7 – 76.9)
Men	70 (65.2 – 75.0)

Source: SASAS 2006

Notes: 95% confidence intervals shown in brackets. The poverty rates relate to people aged 16 and over.

The PDI poverty rates vary dramatically by population group: 84% of black African people are poor using the PDI, compared with 60% of coloured people, 20% of Indian/Asian people and just 13% of white people. Even taking into account the relatively wide 95% confidence intervals, there is clear water between each group apart from between Indian/Asian and white people.

Just over half of people in urban formal areas are defined as poor using the PDI, compared to over 90% of people in all other area types. The poverty rates vary slightly by sex, with slightly higher poverty rates for women than for men. However, the 95% confidence intervals for men and women overlap and so these differences should not be accorded much importance.

Using the SASAS 2006 data it is also possible to calculate poverty rates by province. The table below provides poverty rates for each of the nine provinces in South Africa. This table should be treated with more caution because even though the survey was weighted to be representative at province level some of the provinces have

particularly large 95% confidence intervals. Using the PDI, the Western Cape and Gauteng are the two least deprived provinces, and Limpopo is the most deprived province.

**Table 12 Poverty rates by Province using four different summary measures**

<b>Province (and % of respondents from this province)</b>	<b>PDI</b>
Western Cape (11%)	49 (40.3 – 57.3)
Eastern Cape (14%)	87 (81.9 – 91.3)
Northern Cape (2%)	68 (60.5 – 74.6)
Free State (6%)	71 (64.2 – 77.1)
KwaZulu-Natal (20%)	69 (61.2 – 75.9)
North West (8%)	87 (77.7 – 92.6)
Gauteng (21%)	54 (43.3 – 63.5)
Mpumalanga (7%)	84 (76.9 – 88.7)
Limpopo (11%)	97 (92.9 – 98.4)

Source: SASAS 2006

Notes: 95% confidence intervals shown in brackets. The poverty rates relate to people aged 16 and over.

## Section 4      Concluding remarks

‘(W)e must, constrained by and yet regardless of the accumulated effect of our historical burdens, seize the time to define for ourselves what we want to make of our shared destiny’ (Mbeki, 2006).<sup>xvi</sup>

The aim of this project has been to develop a definition of poverty that takes into account the views of ordinary people. In the qualitative stage of the project people’s views were taken into account during the 48 focus groups that took place across South Africa. The selection of items to include in the survey questionnaire was based on the spectrum of views that were expressed during these focus groups. In terms of defining which of the items were necessities, this was achieved by taking into account the views of a nationally representative sample of the population using data from SASAS 2006. When considering the extent to which people lacked necessities, for which a variant of the Proportional Deprivation Index was used, the lack of an item was weighted according to the extent to which the population had defined the item as essential. And finally, though the method for determining a threshold to distinguish between people who are ‘poor’ or not on the PDI spectrum is quite technically complex, the technique nevertheless draws from information relating to people’s own self-defined poverty status.

Notwithstanding these points, there are several ways in which the approach also involves researcher judgment. First, the research team designed the focus group schedule and determined what questions to ask the participants. Second, the research team determined which items arising from the focus groups should be included in the survey definitional module. Third, the research team designed the questions and determined what the possible responses could be for the pilot of the definitional module in SASAS 2005, and the full definitional and measurement module for SASAS 2006. Fourth, it was decided to take into account enforced lack, and the modified version of the PDI approach was selected in order to create a summary measure. Most importantly of all, though resonating well with key policy documents and the Constitution, the conceptualisation of poverty (in terms of being unable to enjoy what society considers to be an acceptable standard of living) was predetermined at the outset (though what that might constitute was not predetermined). The socially perceived necessities approach to conceptualising, defining and measuring poverty is only one approach among many and each of the approaches has its own set of strengths and weaknesses.

The project has revealed a list of socially perceived necessities that reflect a standard of living which is not restricted to issues merely relating to survival, but nor is it oriented around consumerism and excess.

The extent of agreement between different groups about the necessities in life was very striking. In some respects the most stark (though possibly unsurprising) finding is the high rates of non-possession of the socially perceived necessities. Of the 36 socially perceived necessities, more than three-quarters are possessed by a smaller percentage of the population than define them as essential. There are notable differences by population group: as Table 5 shows, black African people only possess

19 socially perceived necessities on average, compared to 26 for coloured people, 31 for Indian/Asian people and 32 for white people.

Though an acceptable standard of living – as defined by the population at large – is not enjoyed by many people in the population, it is remarkable the extent to which there is agreement between groups about what that standard of living comprises. In a country that is still recovering from the legacies of colonialism and apartheid, this is an important and rather unexpected finding. The project demonstrates that the socially perceived necessities approach is feasible in a highly divided society which has high levels of inequality. In spite of these divisions, there is evidence of a shared view about what constitutes an acceptable standard of living. This works in two directions: on the one hand those who lack the socially perceived necessities are very aware of their lacks, and on the other hand those who possess the socially perceived necessities have expressed the view that they should be possessed by the population as a whole.

There are many areas for further research. People's patterns of possession change over time, and so too do views about necessities. These changes have been monitored in a number of different countries internationally and it would be important to do so in South Africa which is experiencing such rapid change. It would also be instructive to undertake comparative research, to see how the South African picture compares with countries elsewhere in the SADC region and with countries further afield that are also experiencing rapid transitions.

In a small way the analysis in this thesis helps to start to flesh out the socio-economic rights of citizens in South Africa, by providing a picture of what people regard as an acceptable standard of living in the present day. This can help inform the overarching goal of the Constitution, to 'Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person' (Republic of South Africa, 1996).

The socially perceived necessities approach also helps to inform our understanding of inequality because it highlights the areas where people's notion of an acceptable standard of living is so much higher than the realities of their current standards of living. People's benchmarks are not being set at the level of the standard of living of the most privileged groups in the country, but nor are they being set at the level of the average standard of living. Instead, the standard of living that people seem to have in mind is one that is only currently enjoyed by just over a quarter of the population. Such a discrepancy between the collective view about an acceptable standard of living and the experienced reality is bound to continue to cause tensions until more active steps have been taken to redress these inequalities.



# Appendix 1 The socially perceived necessities module in SASAS 2006

## DEFINITIONS OF POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Please say whether you think each of the following is essential for everyone to have in order to enjoy an acceptable standard of living in South Africa today. If you think it is essential please say 'ESSENTIAL'. If you think it is desirable but not essential please say 'DESIRABLE'. If you think it is not essential and not desirable please say 'NEITHER'. So the three possible answers are 'ESSENTIAL', 'DESIRABLE' or 'NEITHER'.

	Item	Essential	Desirable	Neither	(Do not know)
1.	A fridge	1	2	3	8
2.	Having enough money to give presents on special occasions such as birthdays, weddings, funerals	1	2	3	8
3.	Meat or fish or vegetarian equivalent every day	1	2	3	8
4.	A landline phone	1	2	3	8
5.	Special meal at Christmas or equivalent festival	1	2	3	8
6.	Washing machine	1	2	3	8
7.	Clothing sufficient to keep you warm and dry	1	2	3	8
8.	For parents or other carers to be able to afford toys for children to play with	1	2	3	8
9.	Satellite Television/DSTV	1	2	3	8
10.	Some new (not second-hand or handed-down) clothes	1	2	3	8
11.	Regular savings for emergencies	1	2	3	8
12.	A small amount of money to spend on yourself not on your family each week	1	2	3	8
13.	Ability to pay or contribute to funerals/funeral insurance/burial society	1	2	3	8
14.	A cell phone	1	2	3	8
15.	Television/ TV	1	2	3	8
16.	A car	1	2	3	8
17.	People who are sick are able to afford all medicines prescribed by their doctor	1	2	3	8
18.	A sofa/lounge suite	1	2	3	8
19.	A computer in the home	1	2	3	8
20.	An armed response service for the house	1	2	3	8
21.	A DVD player	1	2	3	8
22.	For parents or other carers to be able to buy complete school uniform for children without hardship	1	2	3	8
23.	A radio	1	2	3	8
24.	Burglar bars in the house	1	2	3	8
25.	Mains electricity in the house	1	2	3	8
26.	A flush toilet in the house	1	2	3	8
27.	Separate bedrooms for adults and children	1	2	3	8
28.	A fence or wall around the property	1	2	3	8
29.	A garden	1	2	3	8
30.	A house that is strong enough to stand up to the weather e.g. rain, winds etc.	1	2	3	8
31.	A bath or shower in the house	1	2	3	8
32.	A burglar alarm system for the house	1	2	3	8
33.	A lock-up garage for vehicles	1	2	3	8

Please say whether you think each of the following activities are essential for everyone to be able to do in South Africa today. If you think they are essential please say 'ESSENTIAL'. If you think they are desirable but not essential please say 'DESIRABLE'. If you think they are not essential and not desirable please say 'NEITHER'.

	Activity	Essential	Desirable	Neither	(Do not know)
34.	A holiday away from home for one week a year, not visiting relatives	1	2	3	8

35.	Paid employment for people of working age	1	2	3	8
36.	Being able to visit friends and family in hospital or other institutions	1	2	3	8
37.	A family take-away or bring-home meal once a month	1	2	3	8

I am now going to read you a list of features relating to neighbourhoods. Please say whether you think each of the following are essential for everyone to have in South Africa today. If you think it is essential please say 'ESSENTIAL'. If you think it is desirable but not essential please say 'DESIRABLE'. If you think it is not essential and not desirable please say 'NEITHER'.

	Item	Essential	Desirable	Neither	(Do not know)
38.	Tarred roads close to the house	1	2	3	8
39.	Street lighting	1	2	3	8
40.	A place of worship (church/mosque/synagogue) in the local area?	1	2	3	8
41.	A neighbourhood without smoke or smog in the air	1	2	3	8
42.	A neighbourhood without rubbish/refuse/garbage in the streets	1	2	3	8
43.	Having police on the streets in the local area	1	2	3	8
44.	A large supermarket in the local area	1	2	3	8
45.	Somewhere for children to play safely outside of the house	1	2	3	8

I am now going to ask you some questions about people's relationships with their friends and family. Please say whether you think each of the following are essential for everyone to have in South Africa today. If you think it is essential please say 'ESSENTIAL'. If you think it is desirable but not essential please say 'DESIRABLE'. If you think it is not essential and not desirable please say 'NEITHER'.

	Item	Essential	Desirable	Neither	(Do not know)
46.	Someone to look after you if you are very ill	1	2	3	8
47.	Having an adult from the household at home at all times when children under ten from the household are at home	1	2	3	8
48.	Someone to lend you money in an emergency	1	2	3	8
49.	Someone to transport you in a vehicle if you needed to travel in an emergency	1	2	3	8
50.	Someone to talk to if you are feeling upset or depressed	1	2	3	8

#### MEASUREMENT OF POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Please say whether you have each of the following. If you do not have the item please say whether you don't have it and don't want it, or don't have it and can't afford it. So the three possible answers are 'HAVE', 'DON'T HAVE AND DON'T WANT' or 'DON'T HAVE AND CAN'T AFFORD'.

	Item	Have	Don't have and don't want	Don't have and can't afford	(Do not know)
51.	A fridge in the household	1	2	3	8
52.	Having enough money to give presents on special occasions such as birthdays, weddings, funerals	1	2	3	8
53.	Meat or fish or vegetarian equivalent every day	1	2	3	8
54.	A landline phone in the household	1	2	3	8
55.	Special meal at Christmas or equivalent festival	1	2	3	8
56.	Washing machine in the household	1	2	3	8
57.	Clothing sufficient to keep you warm and dry	1	2	3	8
58.	Toys for children to play with (if you have children)	1	2	3	8
59.	Satellite Television/DSTV in the household	1	2	3	8
60.	Some new (not second-hand or handed-down) clothes	1	2	3	8
61.	Regular savings for emergencies	1	2	3	8
62.	A small amount of money to spend on yourself not on your family each week	1	2	3	8
63.	Ability to pay or contribute to funerals/funeral insurance/burial society	1	2	3	8
64.	A cell phone	1	2	3	8
65.	Television/ TV in the household	1	2	3	8
66.	A car in the household that you can use	1	2	3	8

67.	Medicines prescribed by your doctor when you are ill	1	2	3	8
68.	A sofa/lounge suite in the household	1	2	3	8
69.	A computer in the household	1	2	3	8
70.	An armed response service for the house	1	2	3	8
71.	A DVD player in the household	1	2	3	8
72.	School uniforms for children (if you have children)	1	2	3	8
73.	A radio in the household	1	2	3	8
74.	Burglar bars in the household	1	2	3	8
75.	Mains electricity in the house	1	2	3	8
76.	A flush toilet in the house	1	2	3	8
77.	Separate bedrooms for adults and children	1	2	3	8
78.	A fence or wall around the property	1	2	3	8
79.	A garden	1	2	3	8
80.	A house that is strong enough to stand up to the weather e.g. rain, winds etc.	1	2	3	8
81.	A bath or shower in the house	1	2	3	8
82.	A burglar alarm system for the household	1	2	3	8
83.	A lock-up garage for vehicles	1	2	3	8

Please say whether you are able to do the following activities. If you don't do them please say whether you don't do them because you don't want to do them, or you don't do them because you can't afford to. So the three possible answers are 'DO', 'DON'T DO AND DON'T WANT TO DO' or 'DON'T DO AND CAN'T AFFORD'.

	Activity	Do	Don't do and don't want to do	Don't do and can't afford	(Do not know)
84.	A holiday away from home for one week a year, not visiting relatives	1	2	3	8
85.	Being able to visit friends and family in hospital or other institutions	1	2	3	8
86.	A family take-away or bring-home meal once a month	1	2	3	8

I am now going to read you a list of features relating to neighbourhoods. Please say whether you have them or not. So the two possible answers are 'HAVE' and 'DON'T HAVE'.

	Item	Have	Don't Have	(Do not know)
87.	Tarred roads close to the house	1	2	8
88.	Street lighting	1	2	8
89.	A place of worship (church/mosque/synagogue) in the local area?	1	2	8
90.	A neighbourhood without smoke or smog in the air	1	2	8
91.	A neighbourhood without rubbish/refuse/garbage in the streets	1	2	8
92.	Having police on the streets in the local area	1	2	8
93.	A large supermarket in the local area	1	2	8
94.	Somewhere for children to play safely outside of the house	1	2	8

I am now going to ask you some questions about your relationships with friends and family. Please say whether you have or don't have access to these. So the two possible answers are 'HAVE' and 'DON'T HAVE'.

	Item	Have	Don't Have	(Do not know)
95.	Someone to look after you if you are very ill	1	2	8
96.	Having an adult from the household at home at all times when children under ten from the household are at home	1	2	8
97.	Someone to lend you money in an emergency	1	2	8
98.	Someone to transport you in a vehicle if you needed to travel in an emergency	1	2	8
99.	Someone to talk to if you are feeling upset or depressed	1	2	8

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## Notes

<sup>i</sup> All responses are population weighted (to represent the total population in South Africa aged 16 and over in 2006) unless otherwise specified, and all percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

<sup>ii</sup> In order to test the reliability of this set of 36 items identified as ‘essentials’, the appropriate method to use is Cronbach’s Coefficient Alpha test (Cronbach, 1951). For the 36 items that were defined as essential by 50% or more of the population, the scale reliability coefficient (alpha) was calculated to be 0.9201. This score measures the correlation of the set of 36 items with all other hypothetical 36-item sets of ‘essentials’. The square root of the coefficient (alpha) is the estimated correlation of the set of 36 questions with a set of errorless true scores: this was calculated to be 0.9592. This means that although the 36 ‘essentials’ that have been identified are not comprehensive they are capturing the underlying issue of poverty well (conceptualised in this way) and are a highly reliable set of items (Nunnally, 1981). Another way to test the robustness of the 2006 findings is to compare them with the results from the 2005 SASAS module. There are 49 common items between 2005 and 2006 in the definition module. The percentage of the population defining each of the 49 common items as essential in 2005 and 2006 correlates 0.96 (Spearman’s rho), which again suggests that the 2006 results are highly reliable.

<sup>iii</sup> Respondents to SASAS 2006 Questionnaire 1 were asked ‘Would you say that you and your family are wealthy, very comfortable, reasonably comfortable, just getting along, poor, or very poor?’ (Q150). This can be seen as a self-defined poverty status question, and responses were provided by 99% of all respondents. If one conflates ‘wealthy/very comfortable/reasonably comfortable’ into a single variable (i.e. ‘not poor’), and ‘poor/very poor’ into a single variable (i.e. ‘poor’), a comparison can be made between people who were ‘not poor’, ‘just getting along’ and ‘poor’ using this definition. Of those who responded to this question, 33% were ‘not poor’, 38% were ‘just getting along’ and 29% were ‘poor’. The correlation shown in Table 4 is between those in the ‘poor’ and the ‘not poor’ groups.

<sup>iv</sup> Respondents to SASAS 2006 Questionnaire 1 were asked ‘Please give me the letter that best describes the total monthly household income of all the people in your household before tax and other deductions. Please include all sources of income i.e. salaries, pensions, income from investment etc.’ (Q330). Missing incomes and implausible zero incomes were imputed using sequential regression multiple imputation (Raghunathan *et al.*, 2001). The incomes were assigned to midpoints of the bands apart from the upper band which was calculated using the median income of people in the relevant group in the IES 2000, inflated to 2006 figures. A per capita amount was calculated and the income threshold used was Stats SA’s proposed upper poverty line, also inflated to 2006 figures i.e. R847 per capita per month (Statistics South Africa, 2007; Statistics South Africa and the National Treasury, 2007).

<sup>v</sup> Respondents to SASAS 2006 Questionnaire 1 were asked ‘What monthly income level do you consider to be minimal for your household, i.e. your household could not make ends meet with less?’ (Q332), which can be seen as a minimum income question (MIQ). It is therefore possible to compare responses to the definitional questions by whether people reported that their household had an income that was more (or less) than the amount required by their household to make ends meet, for those who responded to this question. This is an unconventional usage of the MIQ, but is useful for the purpose of this analysis as it captures groups who are reporting that they have more or less income than their household requires to make ends meet. In order to compare people’s response to the MIQ with the household’s actual income, it was necessary to set the MIQ responses alongside the question relating to actual household income. Though the MIQ is unbanded, the question relating to the household’s actual income (Q330) is banded, and so in order to link the two questions, responses to the MIQ were assigned to the same set of bands as for the household’s reported actual income. On this basis it was possible to determine that on average 26% of respondents lived in households that had an income larger than the amount they felt they required to make ends meet (‘above MIQ’), 15% lived in households that were bringing in roughly the amount required to make ends meet (‘on MIQ’), and 47% of respondents lived in households that had an income that was less than the amount required to make ends meet (‘below MIQ’). The remainder of people did not provide an answer to the MIQ question. The correlation shown in Table 4 is between those ‘above MIQ’ and ‘below MIQ’.

<sup>vi</sup> Overall in the survey, 12.5% of respondents said that over the past year children in their household had gone hungry for this reason, and separately 17.5% of respondents said that other members of the household had gone hungry for this reason (presumably this question was intended to include the respondents themselves but this is left ambiguous in the wording of the questionnaire). If one combines these two indicators, a total of 17.8% of respondents reported that over the past year someone (either a child or other members of the household) had gone hungry due to lack of money for

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food. Therefore the second question was used, i.e. ‘In the past year did other members of the household go hungry because there was not enough money to buy food?’ (Q329). A simple comparison is made here between those who answered ‘yes’ (17%) and those who answered ‘no’ (78%). This can be seen as a proxy for food insecurity, which refers to long-term and short-term nutrition deprivation, and as such suggests the presence of extreme levels of income poverty.

<sup>vii</sup> Respondents to SASAS 2006 Questionnaire 1 were asked ‘What is the highest level of education that you have ever completed?’ Twenty-two different potential responses were offered which can be grouped into three categories: ‘less than matric’ (61%), ‘matric or higher’ (39%), and ‘other’ (less than half a percent of all responses, which is a combination of missing, ‘other’ and ‘don’t know’ responses). ‘Less than matric’ includes those who had had no schooling (6% of all respondents) through to those who had attended school but had not completed the matric year. ‘Matric or higher’ includes people who had completed the matric year at school (Grade 12/Standard 10/Form 5) right through to those who had a postgraduate degree or diploma. The correlation in Table 4 relates to those with ‘less than matric’ and those with ‘matric or higher’.

<sup>viii</sup> Respondents to SASAS 2006 Questionnaire 1 were asked ‘what is your current employment status?’ (Q283). Ninety-nine percent of respondents answered this question. 37.5% of respondents were unemployed (the majority of whom were looking for work) or operating as a housewife whilst looking for work. A further 34.5% of respondents were employed or self-employed, either part- or full-time. If one excludes the other groups (housewives not looking for work, pensioners, people who are temporarily sick or long-term disabled, students and ‘other’), it is possible to compare the two groups described above, which can be loosely called ‘unemployed’ and ‘employed’. These three aggregated groups therefore comprise people who can be categorised as ‘unemployed’ (37%), ‘employed’ (34%) and ‘other’ (29%). The correlation in Table 4 relates to those who were ‘unemployed’ and ‘employed’.

<sup>ix</sup> Respondents to SASAS 2006 Questionnaire 1 were asked ‘What is your current occupation?’ (Q284). This question was answered by just over 99% of all respondents. A crude set of four categories was constructed for people of working age (15 to 65 inclusive): ‘never had a job’ (28%); ‘employed: non-elementary’ (30%); ‘employed: elementary’ (18%); and ‘other’ (25%). The correlation in Table 4 relates to those who had never had a job with those categorised as ‘employed: non-elementary’. The responses of those who had never had a job and those categorised as ‘employed: elementary’ correlated 0.95, as did the responses of those categorised as ‘employed: elementary’ and ‘employed: non-elementary’.

<sup>x</sup> Respondents to SASAS 2006 Questionnaire 1 were asked ‘In our society there are groups which tend to be towards the top and groups which tend to be towards the bottom. Where would you put yourself on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is the top and 1 the bottom?’. In total, 71% placed themselves in the lower five groups, 29% placed themselves in the top five groups and less than half a percent declined to respond. The correlation in Table 4 relates to those who located themselves in the bottom half and top half.

<sup>xi</sup> The three exceptions where coloured respondents have a lower possession rate than black African respondents are: for parents or other carers to be able to buy complete school uniform for children without hardship, regular savings for emergencies, and a cell phone.

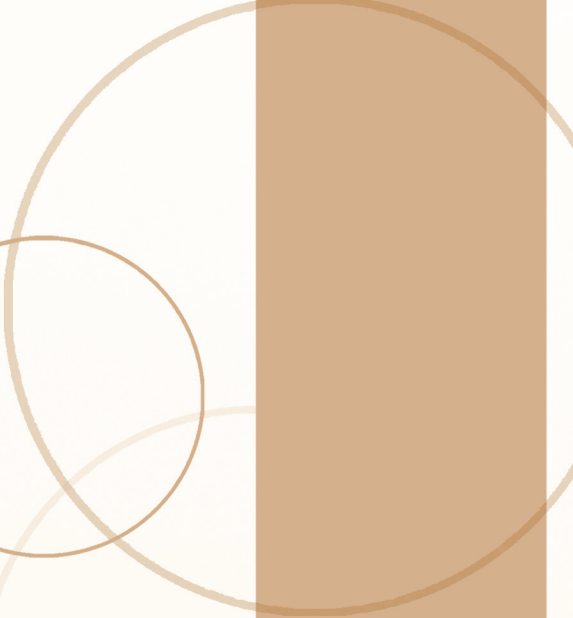
<sup>xii</sup> Statistics South Africa’s proposed upper-bound poverty line is R593 in 2000 prices (Statistics South Africa, 2007). This amount was adjusted to 2006 prices – the date of the SASAS survey – which resulted in a threshold of R847 per capita per month.

<sup>xiii</sup> For example, the British *Breadline Britain in the 1990s* study found that almost half of the population did not lack any of the 32 socially perceived necessities (Halleröd *et al.*, 1997: 221).

<sup>xiv</sup> Halleröd additionally varied the weight according to different preferences of subgroups but this is not undertaken here.

<sup>xv</sup> As the PDI score is continuous, bands of 100 were calculated, for example a PDI score of 100 or more, 200 or more, 300 or more, and so on. Logistic regression and ANOVA models were undertaken using the self-defined poverty status question. Both sets of models yielded an optimum threshold of a PDI score of 500 or more (ANOVA’s F statistic 949.45; logistic regression’s chi-squared 701.98). This same threshold was reached using equalised household income rather than the self-defined poverty status question.

<sup>xvi</sup> President Mbeki is quoting the former President Mandela.



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