MEASURES OF CHILD POVERTY PROJECT

Child Poverty in South Africa: A Socially Perceived Necessities Approach

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1 Introduction

Large numbers of children worldwide live in poverty and it is universally recognised to be a major problem. In South Africa, the legacy of apartheid has left a large proportion of the population, particularly children, in severe poverty.

Many governments, including that of South Africa, have committed themselves to tackling child poverty. This contributes to a wider development strategy by improving the future life chances of today's children and thus the future of the country (White et al., 2002). However, childhood is also important in its own right and so child poverty is not only unacceptable because of its long-term implications but also because of the present experienced reality of poverty (UNICEF, 2004). Such a position can be seen in the then President Nelson Mandela's speech at the launch of the National Programme of Action for Children in 1996:

> *Our children are our nation's future. Prospects for development are seriously undermined by the kind of large-scale deprivation of children that South Africa has experienced. On the other hand investing in their health, nutrition and education not only improves our children's quality of life - the gains reverberate into future generations. […] Children can be our spearhead for attacking poverty, reinforcing human rights, and accelerating economic growth and development. Such a programme will also help alleviate the urgent plight of the children of today, the principal victims of yesterday's neglect of the majority of South Africa's people.* (Mandela, 1996)

Since 1994 the South African government has committed itself to protecting child rights and reducing child poverty through initiatives such as the National Programme of Action for Children and the Office on the Rights of the Child, national legislation such as the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (Act 108 of 1996) and the *Children's Act* (38 of 2005), international commitments such as the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (United Nations, 1990) and the *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child* (Organisation of African Unity, 1999), and the provision of social assistance in the form of three grants for children: the child support grant (CSG), the foster care grant and the care dependency grant. Since its introduction in 1998, the CSG has been a key element of the government's approach to tackling child poverty and over eight million children are currently in receipt of the grant (SASSA, 2008; Skweyiya, 2007b). The recent change to the means test threshold and extension of the grant to children under 15 years of age means that more children will benefit from the grant.

Nevertheless, as remarked by Dr Zola Skweyiya, Minister for Social Development, on the occasion of a child poverty symposium, poverty is still experienced by large numbers of children in the country:

> *…despite Government's commitment to the long-term objective of transforming the country into a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic nation, children remain on the periphery of social transformation. Children continue to be hard hit by poverty in various parts of the country.* (Skweyiya, 2007a)

The budget vote speech delivered by the Minister in May 2007 therefore asserted 'a renewal of our pledge to a national partnership to fight child poverty, social exclusion and to promote social cohesion and improve service delivery' (Skweyiya, 2007b).

This research project speaks directly to the government's renewed commitment to tackle child poverty. It aims to provide detailed analysis of the current levels of child poverty in South Africa, in order to provide an evidence-base for policies to tackle child poverty. The project involves exploration of different concepts, definitions, and subsequent measurements[1], of child poverty.

South African child poverty research has tended to use money metric definition and measurement (e.g. Barnes, 2009a; Dieden and Gustafsson, 2003; NIEP/UNICEF, 1996; Streak, 2002a; Streak, 2002b; Streak, 2004; Streak et al., 2008; Woolard, 2008; World Bank, 1995), what is often referred to as an 'indirect' approach[2]. This study adopts a 'direct' approach to the analysis of child poverty, exploring the actual living standards of children. While previous studies have used definitions based on researcher judgement or 'expert' definition (examples using the direct approach include Barnes et al., 2007b; Haarmann, 1999; Proudlock et al., 2008), this study takes into account the views of the general population in defining child poverty ('democratic' or 'consensual' definition). Noble et al. make a strong case for using a democratic definition of poverty:

> *[…] a consensual definition of poverty would have the stamp of democratic legitimacy in a way that 'expert' definitions, no matter how theoretically acute, do not. In a newly-democratic country a bottom-up poverty measure, reflecting the views of most South Africans could prove important in influencing the direction of policy.* (Noble et al., 2004b: 14)

For a truly democratic definition, consultation with both adults and children is important, especially when the subject being defined relates to children. Children are well informed about their lives and pertinent issues and they have 'their own set of opinions and judgements, which, while not always the same as those of adults, nevertheless have the same moral legitimacy' (Ridge, 2002: 7), and they arguably have the best perspective on what is

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[1] Concepts of poverty are 'the theoretical framework out of which definitions are developed' (Noble et al., 2007a: 54). Definitions of poverty distinguish the poor from the non poor, and measurements of poverty are the ways in which definitions of poverty are operationalised, enabling the poor to be identified and counted, and the depth of poverty gauged (Lister, 2004).

[2] According to Ringen (1988), poverty can be defined and measured indirectly, in terms of the resources of the individual or household, or directly, in terms of the living conditions of persons and households. The former approach does not examine the actual living conditions, rather only one of the determinants of these conditions: a lack of financial resources. Nevertheless, the latter approach does recognise the role of resources as a key determinant of living standards.

required for an acceptable standard of living for children. A child definition of child poverty will be explored in a future report. This report focuses only on the adult democratic definition, and the extent of child poverty in South Africa using this definition.

In order to do so, a socially perceived necessities approach is used. The originated with Mack and Lansley's (1985) Breadline Britain Survey, which has been repeated twice in the UK (Gordon et al., 2000; Gordon and Pantazis, 1997b) and adopted as a methodology, in whole or part, in other countries. With this approach, a representative sample of the general population is surveyed to find out what they think are the requirements for an acceptable standard of living (usually described as 'socially perceived necessities'). Two stages are involved in defining necessities by this method: first, constructing a list of possible necessities for an acceptable standard of living (either using expert opinion or establishing the views of the general population through focus groups), and second, incorporating the list of possible necessities into a survey to explore which items are defined as necessary by members of the society. Having defined the necessities for full participation in society, it is then possible to measure (either in the same survey or in a different survey at a later date) who does not have them due to a lack of financial resources.

Chapter 2 briefly examines previous research using a socially perceived necessities approach. Chapter 3 focuses on the adult definition of child poverty from focus group work and a module in a nationally representative survey, and Chapter 4 focuses on the measurement of child poverty using this definition. The methodology is detailed in the Technical Appendix.

2 The socially perceived necessities approach: a literature review

There have been a number of studies internationally where adults have been consulted on what children need for an acceptable standard of living. Some have followed a socially perceived necessities approach, asking adults through a survey which of a specific list of items are necessary for children, while others have consulted adults about what children need through discussion group work, generally in order to produce budget standards.

There are fewer examples of the socially perceived necessities approach relating to children than can be found for the whole population (a summary of the latter can be found in Wright, 2008b). Internationally, there have been five studies with a specific module asking adults (variously defined) about a set of child items. These studies, which were drawn on to some extent for this study, are described below. Various other studies in a number of countries (e.g. Australia, Belgium, Mali and Vietnam) have included some child items in a broader module.

In Britain, Middleton et al. (1997) compiled a list of 30 child-related items for the Small Fortunes survey, under the headings of food, clothes, participation, development and environment. The parents of 1,239 children were asked to categorise items in the list as either items necessary for a child, which all children should be able to have and which they should not have to do without, or items which it may be desirable for children to have, but not necessary. Over 50 per cent of parents felt that 21 of the 32 items were essential for children. Over 90 per cent considered three meals a day, a warm coat, new, properly fitting shoes and own bed/mattress to be essential. The items which less than 50 per cent regarded as essential were a 'best outfit' for special occasions, a holiday once a year, swimming once a month, leisure equipment, construction toys, a bicycle, 50 pence per week for sweets, a computer suitable for school work, computer games and a television. Possession of items was also measured in the survey.

As part of the Poverty and Social Exclusion (PSE) Survey of Britain (Gordon et al., 2000; Pantazis et al., 2006), 1,855 respondents (aged 16 or over) to the June 1999 Omnibus Survey were asked which of a list of items they feel are necessary for children, which all children should be able to afford (or their parents should be able to afford for them) and which they should not have to do without. Thirty items relating to children were included; 23 were assets and seven were activities. The items came primarily from the work of Middleton et al. (1997), but were scrutinised in a series of focus groups during the pilot phase. All but three of the items – sweets, computer games and a computer suitable for school - were considered necessities by 50 per cent or more of respondents (Bradshaw et al., 2000)[3]. The items which were regarded as

[3] This lower number of items not considered essential in the PSE compared to Small Fortunes may be because the threshold for an acceptable standard of living has changed over time as society has become more affluent.

necessary by the highest proportion of respondents were a warm waterproof coat, new properly fitted shoes, fresh fruit/vegetables once a day, a bed and bedding to her/himself, celebrations on special occasions and three meals a day (all over 90 per cent). In general, the professional classes, young people, those still in education and the top income quintile (the richest 20 per cent) were less likely to consider items necessities, while younger pensioners (65 to 74 year olds) and people in the lowest quintile (the poorest 20 per cent) were more likely to consider an item a necessity. However, this was not always the case for any particular necessity (Bradshaw et al., 2000). The set of socially perceived necessities (the items regarded as necessary by 50 per cent or more of respondents) was then measured in the General Household Survey later in the year.

A similar approach was taken in Northern Ireland (Hillyard et al., 2003) and Guernsey (Gordon et al., 2001), using almost identical sets of questions[4]. The results are quite similar to those found in Britain. In both Northern Ireland and Guernsey, many of the items at the top of the list (i.e. those which the highest percentage of people regard as essential) are the same as the British list. The items not considered essential were going to the cinema regularly, a pet if wanted, computer games and access to internet from home (Northern Ireland), and a computer suitable for school work, computer games and an annual weekly holiday away from home with family (Guernsey).

A special Eurobarometer survey conducted in 2007 examined public opinion about poverty and exclusion in the European Union (European Commission, 2007). It contained a module asking 26,466 EU citizens (aged 15 and over) living in the 27 European Union Member States and 1,000 residents of Croatia about 21 items that may be necessary for children to be able to live and develop in good conditions. All 21 items were considered to be necessary by at least 50 per cent of respondents. However, only nine of the items were regarded as *absolutely* necessary by over 50 per cent of respondents. The items which were considered to be absolutely necessary by the highest proportion of respondents were medical care when needed, getting medicines and vitamins when needed, going for regular medical check-ups and three meals a day. The poorest more often than average tended to regard the items as being absolutely necessary. The views of respondents living with children aged 15 or younger did not differ that much from the European average, although there was a slight tendency to regard items as absolutely necessary. There was a great deal of variation between the different countries, for example 82 per cent of respondents in Portugal considered a meal with meat, chicken or fish at least once a day to be absolutely necessary, compared to only 20 per cent in the Czech Republic (a 62 percentage point difference). For some new and properly fitted clothes, 82 per cent of respondents in the Republic of Cyprus answered ‘absolutely necessary’, while 24 per cent of respondents in Italy gave that answer, a 58 percentage point difference (European Commission, 2007).

[4] The items in the Guernsey survey were identical in meaning, even though the wording sometimes differed, while there were nine additional items and two dropped items for the Northern Ireland survey.

The Eurobarometer 2007 survey did not contain measurement questions, but drawing from this survey, a module is proposed for the Eurostat Community Statistics on Income and Living Conditions 2009 about material deprivation. This module will include a set of questions relating to children's standard of living with the aim of measuring the extent of deprivation only, rather than both definition and measurement.

The socially perceived necessities method has been used in South Africa as part of the Indicators of Poverty and Social Exclusion (IPSE) project carried out by the Centre for the Analysis of South African Social Policy (CASASP). Five child-specific items were included in the South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2006[5], which asked 2,904 adults (aged 16 and over) which of a list of 50 items are essential for the whole population (Wright, 2008a). The five items were for parents or other carers to be able to afford toys for children to play with, for parents or other carers to be able to buy complete school uniform for children without hardship, somewhere for children to play safely outside of the house, separate bedrooms for adults and children, and having an adult from the household at home at all times when children under ten from the household are at home. Possession of the items was also measured in the same survey. The IPSE project also involved focus group work with adults to find out their views on what children need (see Barnes et al., 2007a). This work is described in brief in the Technical Appendix and in more detail in Noble et al. (2004a).

Although the socially perceived necessities approach has been undertaken in South Africa, it has not previously been carried out in any detail for child items until a module in the SASAS 2007 which is analysed in this report.

[5] Similar questions were also included in SASAS 2005 as a pilot for the 2006 module.

3 Adult definition of child poverty

A module was included in the SASAS 2007 which is run by the Human Sciences Research Council. The module sought the views of 3,164 adults (aged 16 and over) about necessities for children. This built on findings from a series of focus groups with adults across South Africa that considered, inter alia, necessities for children (Barnes et al., 2007a; Noble et al., 2004a). The Barnes et al. (2007a) report is drawn on in Section 3.1 in order to contextualise the quantitative findings from the SASAS 2007.

The items that were included in the SASAS module do not cover everything that would, in an ideal world, be part of a measure of child deprivation. The number and variety of items that could be included was governed by available space in the survey. The aim was to include child-focused items that covered a range of different domains of a child's life and a range of standards of living. It is not a comprehensive list, and it is recognised that more general household items such as adequate sanitation and heating in the home are missing. When it comes to measuring child poverty, these types of items can be found in other household surveys. Their exclusion from the SASAS module does not in any way diminish their importance and it is acknowledged that while a child may not lack any of the items in the SASAS module, this does not necessarily mean he or she is not poor, as these household items may be lacked. The items chosen are simply indicators of an acceptable standard of living and not a definitive list, and as such could be seen as child specific items that are supplementary to the necessities identified by adults using a module in SASAS 2006 for the population at large (Wright, 2008a). For further details about the module and selection of items, please see the Technical Appendix of this report.

3.1 The essentials for children

Table 1 shows the results from the SASAS 2007 module asking adults which of a list of items for children they consider to be essential for a caregiver to be able to afford in order that the child they care for has an acceptable standard of living.

Table 1: Percentage of adults defining an item as essential

Item[6]	Percentage saying essential
Three meals a day	91
Toiletries to be able to wash every day	90
All fees, uniform and equipment required for school	88
A visit to the doctor when ill and all medicines required	88
Clothing sufficient to keep warm and dry	85
Shoes for different activities	79
Bus/taxi fare or other transport to get to school	75
Some new clothes	67
Own bed	62
Pocket money/allowance for school aged children	59
Story books	50
A desk and chair for homework for school aged children	49
Educational toys/games	46
A school trip once a term for school aged children	45
Presents at birthdays, Christmas	40
Own room for children over 10	40
Leisure/sports equipment	33
Toys or materials for a hobby	33
A computer in the home for school aged children	32
Some fashionable clothes for secondary school aged children	32
A birthday party each year	30
Own cell phone for secondary school aged children	22
A hi-fi/CD player and some tapes/CDs for school aged children	14
A PlayStation/Xbox for school aged children	13
An MP3 player/iPod for secondary school aged children	9

Source: Own analysis on SASAS 2007.

The three items that were regarded as essential by the highest percentage of respondents[7] were three meals a day (91 per cent[8]), toiletries to be able to wash every day (90 per cent) and all fees, uniform and equipment required for school (88 per cent)[9]. Such views were evident in the focus groups with adults, especially in relation to food and resources for school.

[6] The list of items has been abbreviated. The full set of questions can be found in the Technical Appendix.

[7] For clarity, 'respondents' refers to the people who answered the SASAS questions, while 'participants' refers to the people who took part in the focus groups.

[8] This takes into account the survey weights (i.e. it represents the total population aged 16 and over in 2007). Unless otherwise stated, throughout this report the results presented from SASAS are weighted in this way.

[9] As mentioned in Chapter 2, five child-specific items were included in SASAS 2006 which asked about items that are essential for the whole population. Where appropriate, these can be compared with the results here to give an indication of the robustness of the findings. In SASAS 2006 almost 79 per cent of respondents thought that it was essential for parents and other carers to be able to buy complete school uniform for children without hardship (Wright, 2008a). The percentage is higher in SASAS 2007, but this is perhaps to be expected as the questions are not identical and the SASAS 2007 question asks about school fees and school equipment in addition to school uniform.

In the focus groups, proper nutrition was seen as essential for health and for enabling children to function effectively at school and in play.

> *P1: Children must eat because food enables them to be attentive at school. Food gives them energy.*
> *P2: A child can not concentrate at school when he/she is hungry.*
> *P3: Food gives them power.*
> *P4: Food strengthens the children.*
> *P5: Children will not have a good rest in the evening on an empty stomach.*
> *P6: Food will keep your children at home. They will not roam around the street seeking something to eat.*
> *P1: Children who are not well fed end up being thugs. They turn to stealing to get food.*
> *P5: Children who are not well fed end up being street kids.*
> (North West, African, low income, rural, former homeland, Tswana, female)

The kinds of food and amount required were also discussed in the focus groups. The general opinion was that three meals a day were necessary and that the food had to be healthy and nutritious.

In terms of school requirements, a wide range of items that are needed for school were identified as essential for children in the focus groups. These included uniform, books, bags, stationery and school fees. The major financial burden of putting a child through school was a concern for many focus group participants. The cost of school fees, uniforms, school books and other equipment was felt to be very high by many parents in the focus groups. School uniform was seen as important - and critically having all the school uniform required - but at the same time, it was considered a huge expense that some people are unable to afford.

> *In terms of school clothing, it is expensive and parents cannot always afford it.* (Western Cape, coloured, high income, urban, formal, Afrikaans, male)

There was also some recognition that different items and costs are necessary for children of different ages.

> *Facilitator: How much would you expect to spend on books for a primary school child?*
> *P1: Maybe five or six hundred rand per year on top of school fees. And that will increase as the child gets older.*
> (KwaZulu-Natal, Indian, low income, urban, formal, English, male)

Free education was put forward as a necessity by some focus group participants. For others, it was important that the fees were affordable and that some help was given for parents who could not afford the school fees. When asked for their aspirations for the future, free education, especially for poor people, was frequently proposed by focus group participants.

Education must be free for poor people. (Gauteng, African, domestic workers, urban, informal, Sesotho, female)

Approximately 88 per cent of SASAS respondents considered a visit to the doctor and all the medicines required to be essential. The need for good health was mentioned in many focus groups. As with other issues, it was considered the parent's responsibility to ensure their children were healthy. Access to hospitals, clinics, doctors and medicines for children was regarded as very important, and the need for nurses at schools was sometimes mentioned.

Access to free medication, if child is sick, you sometimes don't have finance to buy appropriate medicine for the child. (Western Cape, coloured, low income, urban, formal, Afrikaans, female)

Three items relating to clothing were considered essential by fairly high percentages of respondents: clothing sufficient to keep warm and dry (85 per cent), shoes for different activities (80 per cent) and some new clothes (67 per cent). In the focus groups, adequate clothing was seen as very important for children for two main reasons: protection from the elements and for social acceptability.

Facilitator: Why are clothes important?
P1: To be warm and to look presentable and decent.
(Gauteng, white, middle income, urban, formal, Afrikaans, male)

Participants considered that it was essential to have clothing suitable for different weather conditions.

When it's hot a child must wear cool clothes and when it is cold warm clothes. (KwaZulu-Natal, African, low income, rural, Zulu, female)

It was also recognised that various sets of clothes are needed for different activities, which is a similar idea to the SASAS question on different shoes for different activities.

[Following a discussion on school uniforms]
P1: Children need a tracksuit too. I will call this play clothing. Children can't play with their Sunday clothes.
Facilitator: Do you then say that children need all sorts of clothing for play, for school and for Sunday?
P1: Yes. Children also need takkies[10]*. It is not nice to see them walk bare feet. They need a lot of that.*
(Western Cape, coloured, high income, urban, formal, Afrikaans, male)

Clothes were seen as necessary in order to appear decent, respectable and presentable within one's community, and particularly for children, they are important for status among peers and a sense of belonging.

[10] The South African word for trainers.

Facilitator: Can you explain decent clothing to me? What do you mean by that?
P1: It must be clean and warm and not torn. The parents must see to it that the child does not wear old clothes.
P2: The parent must be there to see that there are no holes for example in the child's socks and the child gets embarrassed due to that.
(Western Cape, coloured, middle income, urban, formal, Afrikaans, female)

Related to the social status requirement for clothing were discussions on new and second hand clothing. There was some disagreement in and between focus groups over whether second hand or handed down clothes are acceptable, which reflects the lower percentage in the SASAS than for other items relating to clothing.

P1: In my family we hand down clothes as well as toys.
P2: Not everyone can have new clothes.
P3: Children might get new clothes on special occasions, like for Christmas.
Facilitator: Say the children need to go to a wedding for example, can they wear smart second hand clothes or do the clothes need to be new?
P1: It depends. If the clothes are in good condition then I say it is fine to use them.
Facilitator: So it's more about what the clothes look like than whether they are new?
P1: Yes.
(KwaZulu-Natal, Indian, low income, urban, formal, English, female)

Three quarters of respondents felt that a bus or taxi[11] fare or other transport (e.g. bicycle) to get to school was essential. This view was evident in the focus groups, particularly in the more rural provinces. It was mentioned on numerous occasions that some children have to walk very long distances to get to school, especially in rural areas. Buses and bicycles were seen as essential, and were cited most often as the modes of transport that should be provided for school children.

*Our children must have bicycles because they walk long distances to school. For example, here in *L* there are no high schools. Our children have to walk long distances to *M* to attend school.* (North West, African, low income, rural, former homeland, Tswana, female)

Other reasons for needing transport, besides the distance children have to walk, were to ensure children get to school on time, to keep them safe, and to protect them from the elements.

P1: I think it would be good if the schools can assist parents in getting a bus to transport children, especially during winter. Most of the children are

[11] In South Africa minibus taxis are regularly used as an inexpensive form of transport.

at home because they cannot go to school. If they go, they are soak wet because of the rainy weather.
P2: It is dark that time of the morning.
(Western Cape, coloured, low income, urban, formal, Afrikaans, female)

Children who use organised transport get to school on time and they are protected. (Limpopo, African, middle income, urban, former homeland, Venda, female)

For some, particularly those in rural areas, it was not only the need for transport to far away schools that was important, but building more schools so that children do not have to travel as far. This was particularly evident in the discussions on aspirations.

*There are not enough schools and children have to travel to come to *D* schools. Even the very young who are doing their first year at school.*
(KwaZulu-Natal, African, low income, rural, Zulu, female)

Approximately 59 per cent of respondents considered pocket money to be essential. Pocket money was also mentioned as a necessity in a number of focus groups. Even low income groups who would perhaps not have the disposable income needed to provide pocket money saw it as an important item for children to have. The reasons given were mainly to do with learning how to use money, budgeting and saving. However, there was also some concern that children would spend pocket money on the wrong things, for example drugs.

P1: Children must have the right to pocket money and you must organize for them to learn about money management.
Facilitator: How much pocket money must children have?
P1: Depending on what suits your pocket.
P2: Children will then get more independent.
P1: A child must learn to budget.
(Western Cape, coloured, middle income, urban, formal, Afrikaans, female)

At the other end of the scale, the three items that the smallest proportion of respondents considered essential were a hi-fi/CD player (14 per cent), a PlayStation/Xbox (13 per cent) and an MP3 player/iPod (9 per cent). This is unsurprising as they all represent more luxury items, which would require fairly high levels or disposable income to purchase[12]. There was not really any discussion of these items in the focus groups.

Approximately one third of respondents (32 per cent) considered a computer in the home for school aged children to be essential. In the focus groups there was a great deal of discussion - and some disagreement - about whether or not having a computer in the home is essential, as the following quotes illustrate:

[12] A similar result was found in the questions asked about the whole population in SASAS 2006: satellite television/DSTV, a computer in the home and a DVD player were the items considered essential by the smallest proportion of respondents (Wright, 2008a).

P1: Children must also have a computer at home so that they can grow up using it. It is a very important thing in today's world.
P2: Very good point. Our children must not be like us. We missed out on these things and we must make sure that they get them so that they are not disadvantaged when they come to look for a job.
P1: You can check and find almost any information on the computer, news, sports, people, if you want to know everything about Mandela you can find it there.
(Gauteng, African, middle income, urban, formal, Sesotho, male)

P1: For me it's more essential for children because everywhere you go there is a computer and knowing how to use it is an important skill these days.
P2: If you can use a computer it shows that you are educated, you did not run away from school very early.
(Gauteng, African, domestic workers, urban, informal, Sesotho, female)

Another item with a similarly low percentage is toys or materials for a hobby (33 per cent)[13]. Toys were the major child-specific possession mentioned in the focus groups, and in contrast to the survey results, most participants considered it essential that every child has toys to play with.

I think toys is important. Even if it is only wooden blocks. But it is something to stimulate them with. (Gauteng, white, high income, urban, formal, Afrikaans, male)

P1: All children need toys to play. When children have enough toys, they are kept busy during the day hence they do not roam around the streets.
P2: Toys relaxes children especially after studying.
P3: Toys keep children busy especially when parents are not there.
(North West, African, low income, rural, former homeland, Tswana, female)

In one focus group there was some disagreement: while play was felt to be important for children, toys were not seen as an essential mechanism for this to take place.

P1: Toys are not essential, because what is a toy? If I buy them a toy I promise you they'll be bored within an hour.
P2: Maybe educational toys.
P1: Toys mean nothing.
Facilitator: But do you think it's a necessity for children to be able to play?
All: Yes.
P1: Children don't need toys to play, if you're a child you'll find something or invent something.

[13] In SASAS 2006 39 per cent of survey respondents felt that it was essential for parents or other carers to be able to afford toys for children to play with (Wright, 2008a). Although a higher percentage than in SASAS 2007, it is still low, and much lower than in Britain where 83 per cent defined toys as essential (Bradshaw et al., 2000). Toys were the only child specific item in SASAS 2006 not considered to be essential by a majority (50 per cent) of the survey respondents.

P3: I think play is a necessity as a prerequisite to learning. (KwaZulu-Natal, Indian, middle income, urban, formal, English, male)

Educational toys were given particular prominence in the focus groups, but were only considered essential by 46 per cent of survey respondents. Perhaps the anonymity of the survey allowed people to express their true views on toys, which may be that toys per se are not essential, but play for children is important (as suggested in the quote above). In the focus groups, the participants may have given what they thought would be the socially acceptable response.

Approximately 40 per cent of respondents to SASAS said that it was essential for children over ten years old to have their own room[14]. This is a fairly low percentage, yet in the focus groups most considered it essential for children to have their own bedrooms (meaning a designated room for sleeping in the house, rather than sleeping in the kitchen or outside).

There must be enough bedrooms in the house for children to have their own bedrooms and not sleep on the floor. (Gauteng, African, low income, urban, formal, Sesotho, female)

Furthermore, in most focus groups it was concluded, sometimes after lengthy discussion, that it is essential for adults and children to have separate rooms.

A great deal more was said by adults on an acceptable standard of living for children, some of which is not related to items in the survey module. Further analysis of the focus groups with adults in relation to children can be found in Barnes et al. (2007a) and Barnes and Wright (2007).

3.2 Socially perceived necessities

The aim of the definition stage of the socially perceived necessities approach is to obtain a set of items which the adult population generally agrees to be essential for children to have an acceptable standard of living. This requires first a decision on what percentage of the population must regard the item as essential for it to be classified as a socially perceived necessity (SPN), thereby compiling a set of SPNs, and second performing a reliability test on the set of SPNs. It is then necessary to explore the extent to which there is agreement between different groups in the population. The validity of the socially perceived necessities approach rests on the assumption that there are not large differences in the definition of necessities amongst different

[14] This result is very different to SASAS 2006 where 82 per cent responded that separate bedrooms for adults and children were essential (Wright, 2008a). Part of the difference may be accounted for by the question wording, as for example, respondents may have disagreed with the age given (10 years) in SASAS 2007, whereas in SASAS 2006, the question was more vague and open to any interpretation. The 2006 question may also have hinted that adults and children sharing was inappropriate and/or allowed the possibility of all children sharing a room, which is less 'luxurious' than a child having his or her own room, as in SASAS 2007. Nevertheless, this is a fairly dramatic difference (about 40 percentage points) which warrants further investigation.

groups in society (Gordon and Pantazis, 1997a). It is therefore important to explore whether there is a common perception about what is necessary for an acceptable standard of living for children, even though there are large disparities between social, economic and racial groups in South Africa.

3.2.1 When does an item become a socially perceived necessity?

Determining the threshold by which an item is regarded a SPN is a contentious issue. As Mack and Lansley (1985) remark, any threshold selected is arbitrary. If the aim is to produce a *consensual* definition of child poverty then it could be argued that there is only a true consensus when everyone has the same opinion. Certainly a dictionary definition of consensus is: 'Agreement in opinion; the collective unanimous opinion of a number of persons'[15]. There are no items which all respondents defined as essential: the closest is three meals a day, but even for that, approximately 9 per cent considered it to be not essential. On this basis, there are no SPNs and therefore no adult definition of child poverty.

However, if the aim is to produce a *democratic* definition of child poverty, in the sense that it is defined by the people rather than by experts (Noble et al., 2004b), then the options for a threshold are numerous. Mack and Lansley (1985) argue that a straight majority (that is, any item which is defined as essential by 50 per cent or more of respondents) is as good a threshold as any other. While a 50 per cent majority is sometimes referred to as 'consensual', as Veit-Wilson points out, this is actually a majoritarian approach, 'since a consensus implies there are no objectors' (Veit-Wilson, 1987: 200). In democratic governance a simple majority is usual, and therefore, in common with many of the studies using a socially perceived necessities approach to measuring poverty, a 50 per cent majority will be used as the threshold in the following analysis.

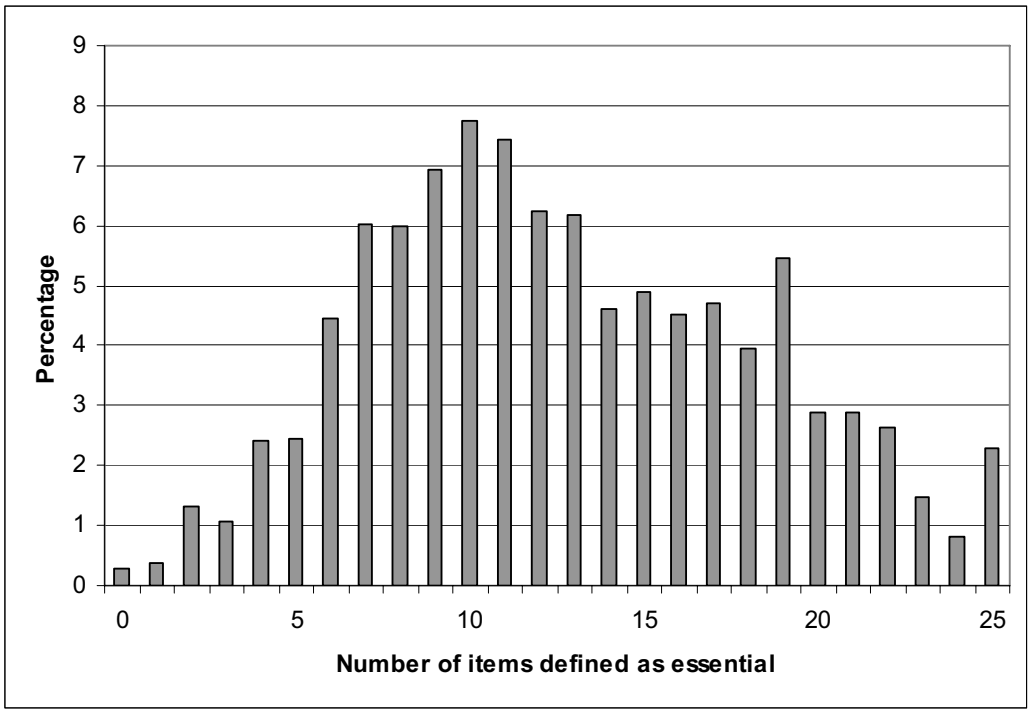
Of the 25 items included in the questionnaire, only 11 (less than half) were regarded as essential by 50 per cent or more of the respondents. Over 90 per cent of respondents felt that three meals a day and toiletries to be able to wash every day are essential. The item in this set of 11 that was considered essential by the smallest proportion of people was story books (50 per cent), followed by pocket money for school aged children (59 per cent). Many of these items relate to basic needs, for example food, hygiene, health care education and clothing, and these are defined as essential by the highest proportion. Those items which a lower percentage of respondents defined as essential are less basic, for example some new clothes, pocket money and story books.

On average, respondents defined 13 of the 25 items as essential. The modal number of items is 10. Approximately 0.3 per cent of the respondents did not consider any items to be essential, while 2.2 per cent considered all items to be essential. Figure 1 is a histogram of the number of items that were defined

[15] Oxford English Dictionary, 1989, second edition.

as essential by each respondent. The y axis is the percentage of respondents and the x axis shows the number of items defined as essential (from 0 to 25). Using just the 11 items defined as essential by 50 per cent or more of respondents, an average of eight were defined as essential.

Figure 1: Number of items defined as essential by SASAS respondents



Source: Own analysis on SASAS 2007.

3.2.2 Reliability of the set of items defined as essential

Cronbach's coefficient alpha (Cronbach, 1951) is a technique that can be used to test the reliability of the set of items identified as essential. It was used in the analysis of SASAS 2006 (Wright, 2008a) and also in similar studies internationally, for example the PSE (Gordon et al., 2000). The scale reliability coefficient (alpha) measures the set of items defined as essential with all other hypothetical sets of items. The square root of the coefficient (alpha) is the estimated correlation of the set of items with a set of errorless true scores (Cronbach, 1951).

For the set of 11 items defined as essential in SASAS 2007 (based on a 50 per cent threshold), the scale reliability coefficient (alpha) is 0.7703 and the square root of the coefficient (alpha) is 0.8777. In SASAS 2006, the scores were 0.9201 and 0.9592 respectively (Wright, 2008a). In the PSE, for the child items, the scores were 0.8339 and 0.9132 (Gordon et al., 2000). These are both higher than for the set of items in the current survey. Nunnally (1981)

argues that reliability coefficients of 0.7 or higher are sufficient, and therefore at 0.7703, the set of items can be considered reliable.[16]

If higher SPN thresholds of two thirds[17] and three quarters[18] of respondents are used, the coefficient alphas are still above 0.7 at 0.7297 (square root 0.8542) and 0.7186 (square root 0.8477) respectively.

Although the set of items appears robust, it is necessary to explore the extent to which different groups in the population have different views on which items are essential. If an item is only defined as essential by certain groups in the population, can it really be regarded as a SPN? Although unanimity in response is not required, if particular sub-groups respond in very different ways, then a single definition of an acceptable standard of living for children cannot be achieved. This is the subject of the next section.

3.3 Adults' views by sub-group

In this section, various characteristics that could be expected to impact on whether or not someone defines an item as essential are explored. It is difficult to predict how different sub-groups of the population might respond to particular items, and whether there will be significant differences in responses. Previous research has not produced consistent findings, although the overall picture has generally been of a high level of consensus among sub-groups.

Male and female responses to children and their needs may differ, perhaps because women have more involvement in bringing up children and so may have a different perspective to men. Age may work in various ways, possibly depending how recently a person was a child him or herself. This may also be linked to parental status and having children in the household, both of which can be associated with particular points in the life cycle. Having children in the household can also reflect a variety of other situations, for example younger respondents may have younger siblings who are children and older respondents may be grandparents living in the same household as their grandchildren, a common occurrence in South Africa. Being a parent may give people a particular idea of things that are important which differs from that of the rest of the population. They may be more generous or they may be more restrictive in what they consider to be essential. Having children in the household, regardless of whether a parent, may also give a particular insight into necessities for children.

An important issue when examining the responses of sub groups is the notion of 'bounded realities'. This refers to a situation where what one conceives of as necessary is influenced by one's knowledge of how others live (Noble et

[16] Analysis of the average inter-item correlations (the average correlations between all items, except the one item in question) show there is little change in the correlation when a particular item is excluded. Furthermore, the coefficient alpha for the additive scale, which consists of all items except the one item in question (i.e. the alpha if the item is removed), would not increase if one of the items were removed from the list of SPNs. This analysis further suggests that the set of indicators is reliable.
[17] Eight items were defined as essential by 66.6 per cent or more of respondents.
[18] Seven items were defined as essential by 75 per cent or more of respondents.

al., 2004b; Noble et al., 2007b), which can result in a very limited view of what is essential. So, for example, someone living in a remote rural area may have very minimalist ideas about necessities because they have only had exposure to a very basic lifestyle. Likewise, people from different population groups have very different experiences and lifestyles, which may impact on what they consider to be essential. However, the greater access to TV, films and media showing different standards of living; migration from rural to urban areas with details of city life relayed back to rural areas; and the impact of tourism may mean that people are more aware of how others live (Wright, 2008b).

A further issue is that of 'adaptive preferences'. This has been described as a situation where the experience of poverty artificially dampens expectations (Burchardt, 2004). People may therefore be unwilling to define items as necessities if they expect that they will never be able to afford them (Noble et al., 2007b).

Table 2 summarises the responses of different sub-groups. The table and the following discussion looks at the number of items defined as essential (based on the 50 per cent threshold) by a particular sub-group, how many of these items are SPNs (as defined by the whole population using the 50 per cent threshold), and which of the SPNs are not defined as essential by the sub-group in question. Some sub-groups additionally defined other items (non SPNs) as essential, and these are discussed, as well as the correlations between responses of the sub-groups[19]. Significant differences in the responses of sub-groups for particular SPNs are also noted.

[19] All correlations reported in this section are Spearman's rank and are significant at the 0.001 level.

Table 2: Summary of responses of sub-groups

Sub-group	Number of items considered essential by majority (50% threshold)	Number of SPNs (out of total of 11)	SPNs not considered essential by majority (50% threshold)	Number of items in addition to SPNs	Additional items considered essential by majority (50% threshold)
Male	12	11	/	1	desk and chair
Female	10	10	story books	0	/
Black African	10	10	story books	0	/
Coloured	12	9	story books; pocket money	3	educational toys; presents at birthdays/Christmas; school trip
Indian/Asian	12	10	pocket money	2	educational toys; desk and chair
White	17	11	/	6	educational toys; presents at birthday/Christmas; toys; birthday party; desk and chair; own room for children over 10
Young (16-24 year olds)	12	11	/	1	desk and chair
Old (65 years old and over)	11	11	/	0	/
Urban	12	11	/	1	desk and chair
Rural	10	10	story books	0	/
Not parent	12	11	/	1	desk and chair
Parent	10	10	story books	0	/
No children in household	11	10	story books	1	desk and chair
Children in household	11	11	/	0	/
Not poor	14	11	/	3	educational toys; presents at birthdays/Christmas, desk and chair
Just getting along	10	10	story books	0	/
Poor	10	10	story books	0	/

Source: Own analysis on SASAS 2007.

Sex

Male respondents defined 12 items as essential: the 11 SPNs plus a desk and chair for homework. Female respondents defined 10 items as essential: all were SPNs, and the only SPN not defined as essential was story books. The male and female responses correlate very highly at 0.9908 for all items and 0.9636 for SPNs only. Of the SPNs, the biggest differences in the responses were for own bed (9 percentage points, $p<0.003$) and story books (7 percentage points, $p<0.05$) where a higher percentage of men than women defined the item as essential.

Age[20]

Younger respondents defined one more item as essential than older respondents. The young considered all the SPNS to be essential, and additionally, a desk and chair. The old defined only the 11 SPNs as essential. The correlation is high at 0.9792 for all items and 0.9818 for SPNs only. In general, a higher percentage of the young considered an item to be essential[21], although the differences are not significant for all items. The biggest difference that is significant - 9 percentage points ($p<0.05$) - is for clothing to keep warm and dry.

Parental status[22] *and children in the household*[23]

The non-parents defined all 11 SPNs as essential and additionally a desk and chair. The parents defined only 10 items as essential (all SPNs). The one SPN not defined as essential was story books. The correlations are high at 0.9892 for all items and 0.9455 for SPNs only. For most items in the list, a greater percentage of non-parents defined them as essential, although the differences are not significant for all items. Own bed in particular was regarded as essential by a much higher percentage of non-parents than parents ($p<0.001$).

Those with children in the household considered only the 11 SPNs to be essential. Those without children in the household also defined 11 items as essential, but only 10 of these were SPNs: story books was the SPN not considered essential, while a desk and chair was defined as essential. The correlations are again very high: 0.9931 for all items and 0.9636 for SPNs only.

[20] Two age categories were created: the 'young' (respondents aged 16-24) and the 'old' (those aged 65 and over).
[21] This is the opposite finding to Britain, where less generous judgements were made by the youngest age group (Bradshaw et al., 2000).
[22] There is a question in the survey which asks whether the respondent is the parent or caregiver of any children under the age of 18.
[23] A count of number of children in the household is provided in the data.

It is interesting that those who are not caregivers and those who do not have children in the household consider a desk and chair to be important. Caregivers or those who have children in the household perhaps know that children can, and do, undertake their homework in a variety of places (e.g. at a table, sitting on their bed, on the floor etc) and that a desk and chair are not therefore essential.

Area[24]

There are some differences between urban and rural respondents. Urban dwellers defined 12 items as essential: the 11 SPNs and additionally a desk and chair. Rural dwellers on the other hand defined 10 items as essential: all are SPNs and again story books are the one SPN not considered essential. The responses correlate highly at 0.9792 for all items and 0.9364 for SPNs only.

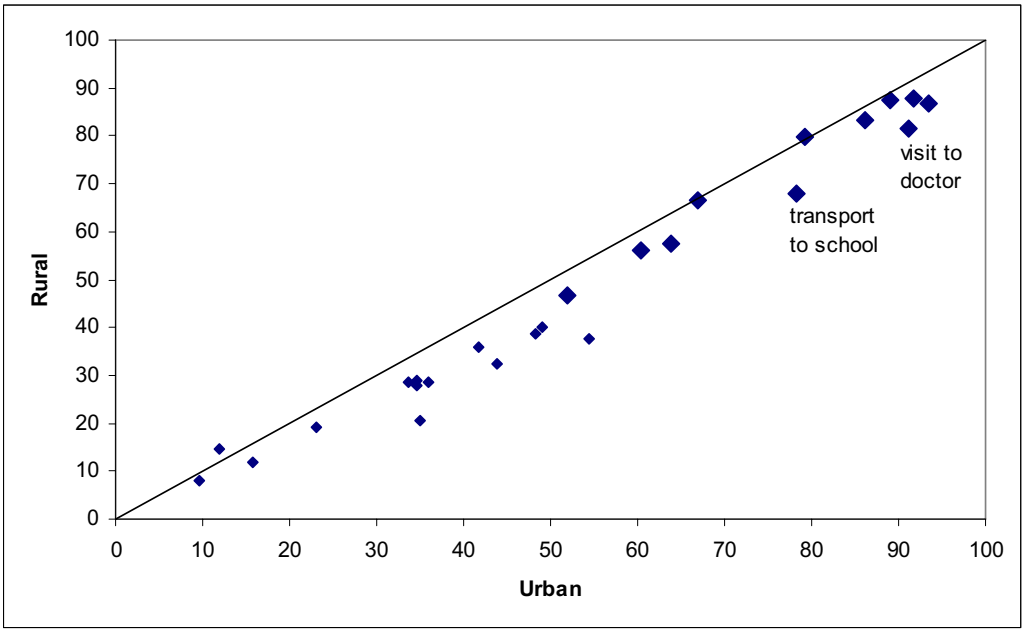
Interestingly, the SPN that has the greatest difference is transport to school, where a greater percentage of urban dwellers regarded it as essential (78 per cent compared to 68 per cent of rural dwellers, a difference of 10 percentage points, $p<0.001$). The fact that children often live far away from schools in the rural areas would a priori suggest that rural dwellers would consider this to be essential, more so than urban dwellers. However, it may be that there simply are not any buses/taxis in the rural areas, so having money to pay for them is an irrelevance. Alternatively, it may be that in the urban areas, the roads are more dangerous with a higher incidence of car accidents (as discussed in some of the focus groups), and so a safe means of transporting children to and from school is regarded as important.

There was also a large difference for a visit to doctor when ill where a higher percentage of urban dwellers regarded it as essential (91 per cent compared to 82 per cent, a difference of 9 percentage points, $p<0.001$). This may similarly relate to a lack of services in rural areas meaning that some rural respondents have adjusted their views in line with the realities of everyday life.

In general a lower percentage of rural dwellers defined an item as essential, as Figure 2 shows (all 25 items are displayed, but the larger points indicate the 11 SPNs). The exceptions are Play Station and shoes for different activities, where a higher percentage of rural dwellers regarded the item as essential (the differences are not significant though).

[24] The area analysis is based on the geographical type variable which categorises respondents as living in urban formal, urban informal, rural formal or tribal areas. The variable was recoded as urban (the first two categories) and rural (the last two categories).

Figure 2: Scatter of urban and rural responses



Source: Own analysis on SASAS 2007.

Population group

In terms of population group, the correlations for all items are high (above 0.91) across all sub-groups (see Table 3). The correlations between the responses for the SPNs are not as high as for all items (see Table 4).

Table 3: Population group correlation coefficients (all items)

	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White
Black African	1.0000			
Coloured	0.9192	1.0000		
Indian/Asian	0.9415	0.9585	1.0000	
White	0.9246	0.9554	0.9600	1.0000

Source: Own analysis on SASAS 2007.

Table 4: Population group correlation coefficients (SPNs)

	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White
Black African	1.0000			
Coloured	0.7636	1.0000		
Indian/Asian	0.7909	0.7909	1.0000	
White	0.7818	0.9636	0.7818	1.0000

Source: Own analysis on SASAS 2007.

Indian respondents defined 12 items as essential: 10 were SPNs (pocket money was the SPN not defined as essential), and in addition, educational toys and a desk and chair were defined as essential. The fact that two

educational items were additionally considered essential is interesting in the light of a comment made in one of the Indian focus groups when discussing whether a computer is essential: 'Anything towards the education of the child would be essential'. For all items, the Indian responses correlate best with the white responses (0.9600), but for the SPNs the Indian responses correlate identically with both the black African and coloured responses (0.7909).

White respondents defined 17 items in total as essential. All 11 SPNs were considered essential, and in addition, educational toys, presents at birthdays and Christmas, toys, a birthday party, a desk and chair and own room for children over 10. For the SPNs, the highest correlation is with the coloured responses (0.9636).

Black African respondents defined 10 items as essential: the only SPN not defined as essential was story books. Coloured respondents likewise did not consider story books to be essential. This may simply be because there are few story books written in Afrikaans and the different African languages spoken in South Africa, and therefore story books are not an item that is available or meaningful to these population groups[25]. Pocket money was the other SPN not defined as essential by coloured respondents. However, they also thought three additional items were essential: educational toys, presents at birthdays and Christmas and a school trip once a term.

The black African and coloured responses correlate 0.9169 for all items and 0.7636 for the SPNs, which are actually the lowest correlations across the population sub-groups[26]. The second lowest correlations are between black Africans and whites. This is illustrated in Figure 3 and Figure 4, where the differences in responses for particular items are apparent.

Figure 3 shows the differences in responses between black African and coloured respondents for all items (the SPNs are again indicated by the large points). The greatest differences are for pocket money and own bed ($p<0.001$). A greater percentage of black African than coloured respondents considered pocket money to be essential (63 per cent compared to 32 per cent respectively, a difference of 31 percentage points), while for own bed a greater percentage of coloured than black African respondents considered it to be essential (81 per cent compared to 56 per cent, a difference of 25 percentage points).

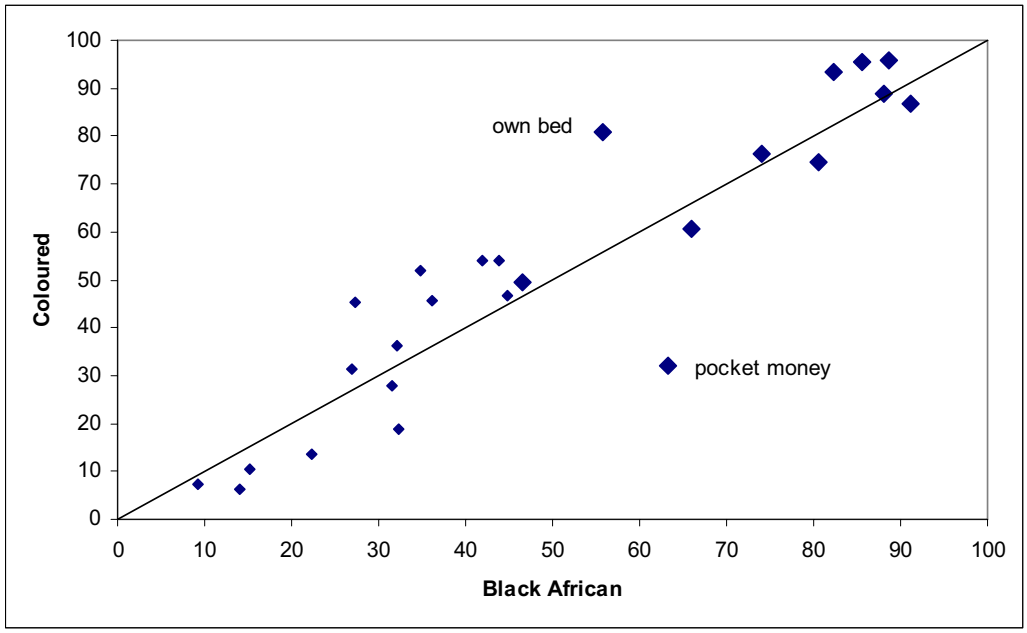
Figure 4 shows the differences in responses between black African and white respondents for all items. The greatest differences are for own bed and story books ($p<0.001$). For these, and indeed for the majority of items, the

[25] A recent speech by Dr Z Pallo Jordan, the Minister of Arts and Culture, outlined a recent government initiative to revive publishing in the African languages as 'literature in these languages is in large measure unavailable in this country'. Dr Jordan envisaged 'that our school system will very soon become aware of these republished classics and that many, otherwise lost to memory, will once again be prescribed as part of the school syllabus. The library system, otherwise starved for literature in the indigenous languages, will now have this resource to draw on. I know it will take time, but I long for the day when I can walk into Exclusive Books, or any other bookstore in South Africa, and find shelf upon shelf of books in the African languages' (Jordan, 2009).

[26] A similar result was found in SASAS 2006, where the black African and coloured responses correlated 0.86, one of the lowest correlations (Wright, 2008a).

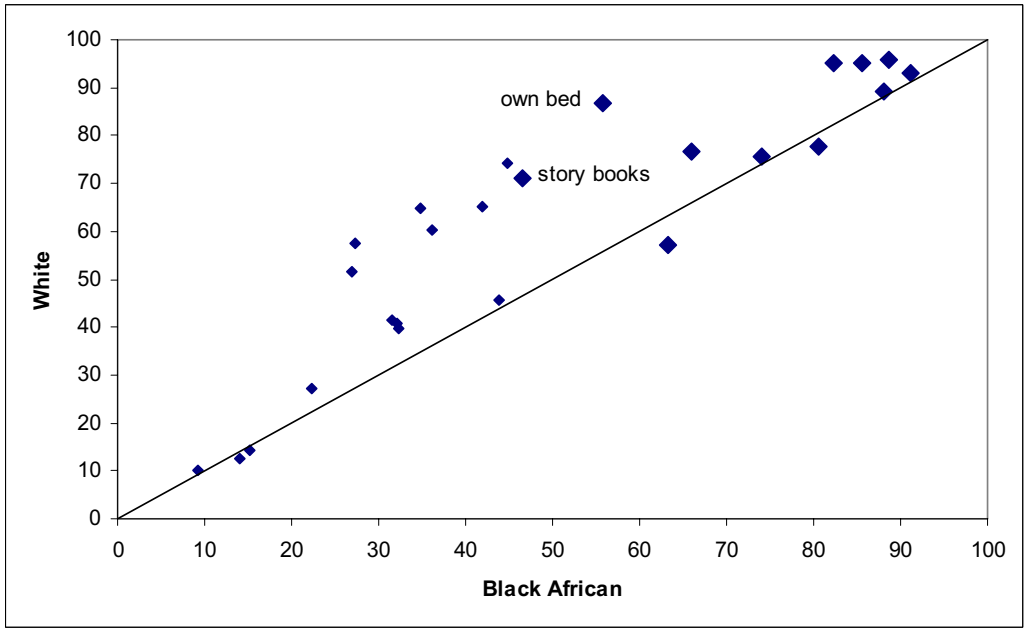
percentage of black Africans responding essential is lower than the percentage of whites. For example, for own bed 56 per cent of black African respondents compared to 87 per cent of white respondents considered it to be essential, which is a difference of 31 percentage points. The SPN items where the reverse is true are shoes for different activities ($p<0.002$) and pocket money (not significant).

Figure 3: Scatter of black African and coloured responses



Source: Own analysis on SASAS 2007.

Figure 4: Scatter of black African and white responses

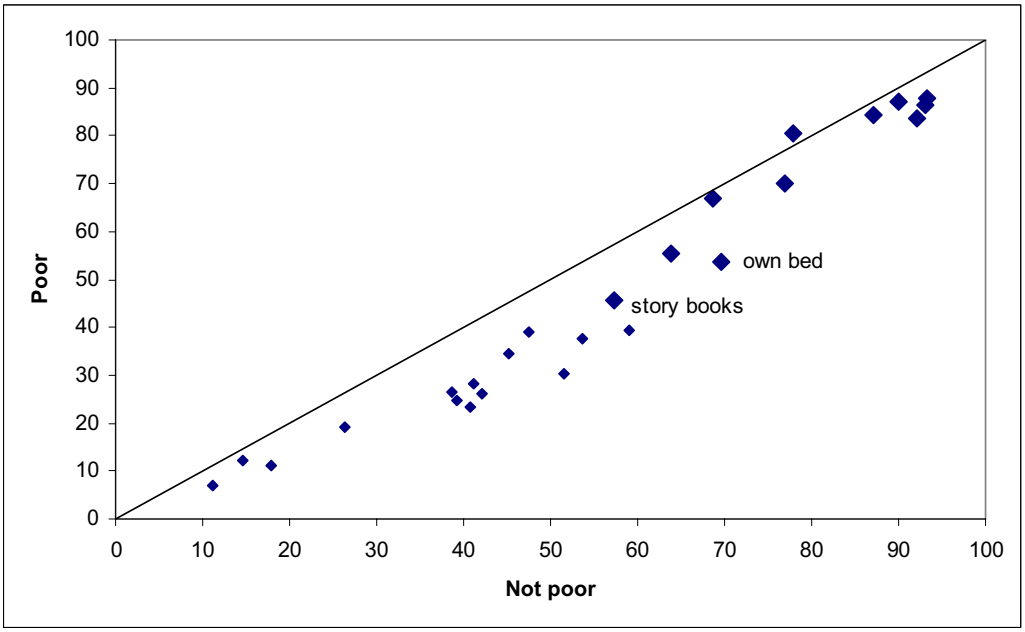


Source: Own analysis on SASAS 2007.

Poverty status[27]

The not poor defined 14 items as essential: the 11 SPNs plus educational toys, presents at birthdays and Christmas, and a desk and chair. The poor defined only 10 items as essential, all of which were SPNs. The SPN not defined as essential is story books. This was also the case for the just getting along group. The responses correlate highly at 0.9815 for all items and 0.9273 for the SPNs only. Particular items where there was a big difference in response were own bed and story books (a percentage point difference of 16 and 12 respectively, $p<0.001$), where a higher percentage of the not poor defined the item as essential. Indeed, for all but one item a higher percentage of the not poor defined the item as essential. The one item where this was not the case was shoes for different activities.

Figure 5: Scatter of not poor and poor responses



Source: Own analysis on SASAS 2007.

[27] The analysis for poverty status is based on answers to the question 'Would you say that you and your family are… wealthy, very comfortable, reasonably comfortable, just getting along, poor or very poor?'. It is therefore a self-defined poverty status for which three categories were created: not poor (the first three responses), just getting along (the fourth response) and poor (the fifth and sixth responses). An 'objective' poverty status was not calculated because both the income and expenditure variables have a high proportion of missing values. While the data can, and was, imputed using a multiple imputation technique (see Technical Appendix), this would have required calculations on each of the imputed datasets, which would have been a long and unnecessary process for the purposes of this analysis.

Reliability of the sets of items defined as essential by each sub-group

Cronbach's coefficient alpha was calculated for each sub-group's set of necessities (Table 5). For all except the Indian/Asian sub-group, the alpha is 0.7 or above, suggesting a reliable set of items for each sub-group. For the white, old and poor sub-groups, the alpha is over 0.8. The alpha for the black African sub-group is 0.7703, which is exactly the same as the alpha overall. This is unsurprising as black Africans are the dominant population group in South Africa (79 per cent of the population according to the recent Community Survey 2007 - see Stats SA, 2007).

Table 5: Cronbach's coefficient alpha for sub-groups

Sub-group	Alpha	Square root of alpha
Male	0.7917	0.8898
Female	0.7549	0.8688
Black African	0.7703	0.8777
Coloured	0.7959	0.8921
Indian/Asian	0.6534	0.8083
White	0.8675	0.9314
Young	0.7737	0.8796
Old	0.8182	0.9045
Urban	0.7813	0.8840
Rural	0.7583	0.8708
Not parent	0.7999	0.8944
Parent	0.7304	0.8546
No children in household	0.7853	0.8862
Children in household	0.7601	0.8718
Not poor	0.8123	0.9013
Just getting along	0.7522	0.8673
Poor	0.7762	0.8810

Source: Own analysis on SASAS 2007.

3.4 Democratic definition of child poverty

It appears that there is a common view amongst the adults surveyed in SASAS 2007 of what is required for an acceptable standard of living for children in South Africa. There is a set of 11 items that are regarded by adults as essential for children to have an acceptable standard of living:

- Three meals a day
- Toiletries to be able to wash every day
- All fees, uniform and equipment required for school
- A visit to the doctor when ill and all medicines required
- Clothing sufficient to keep warm and dry
- Shoes for different activities
- Bus/taxi fare or other transport (e.g. bicycle) to get to school

- Some new clothes
- Own bed
- Pocket money/allowance for school aged children
- Story books

This can be considered an adult definition of child poverty, and a child can be considered poor if he/she does not have these items.

However, this raises a number of questions. How many of the items must a child lack before being considered poor or deprived? Is a lack of one item a deprivation, or is it necessary to lack more than one, or even all, of the items? Is it worse to lack some items than others, for example, are the items that the greatest percentage of people regard as essential the most important? This process of determining a poverty line is really a second phase of the definition stage, but it actually aligns more closely with the measurement stage, as will become clear in the next chapter where these issues are discussed and the adult democratic definition of child poverty is operationalised using the matching set of possession questions in SASAS 2007.

4 The extent of child poverty in South Africa

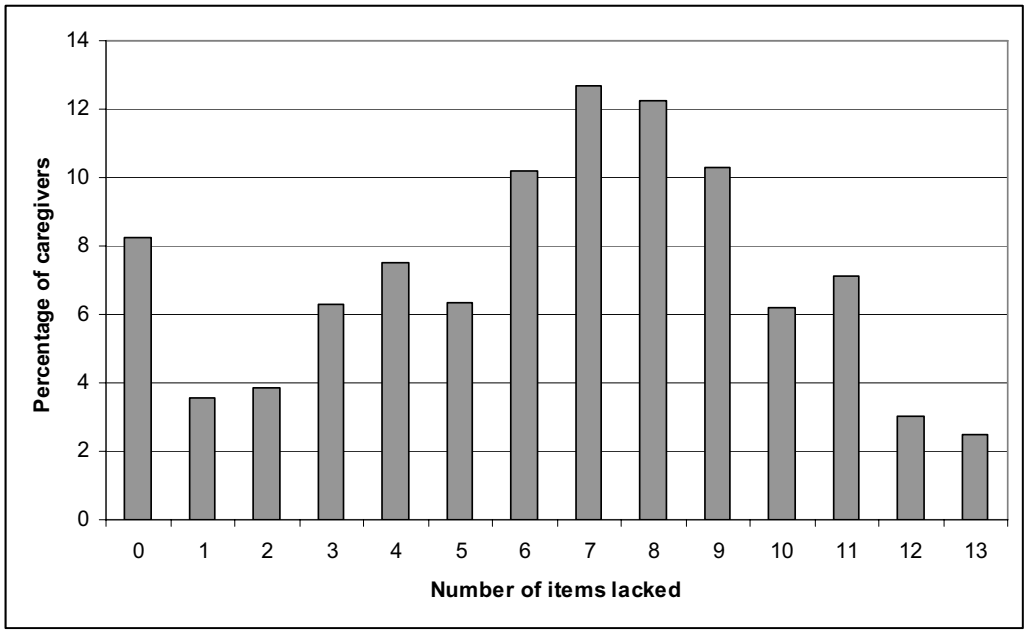
The SASAS 2007 module contains 13 items which are applicable to children of all ages, eight of which are SPNs. The remaining three SPNs are applicable only to children of school age. Cronbach's coefficient alpha for the eight SPNs that are applicable to children of all ages is 0.6954 (square root 0.8339), which is lower than for the full set of 11 SPNs and just a fraction below the 0.70 threshold for reliability stated by Nunnally (1981). Given how close the alpha is to the 0.70 threshold, this set of items is considered sufficiently reliable. The items relevant to all children are examined first.

4.1 General unspecified lack

The 13 items relevant to children of all ages

Figure 6 shows the percentage of caregivers lacking none, one, two, three and so on of the 13 items that are relevant to children of all ages. A reasonably high percentage (8 per cent) does not lack any items and then there is a peak at six to nine items which are lacked by a total of 45 per cent of caregivers. Approximately 2.5 per cent of caregivers lack all of the items.

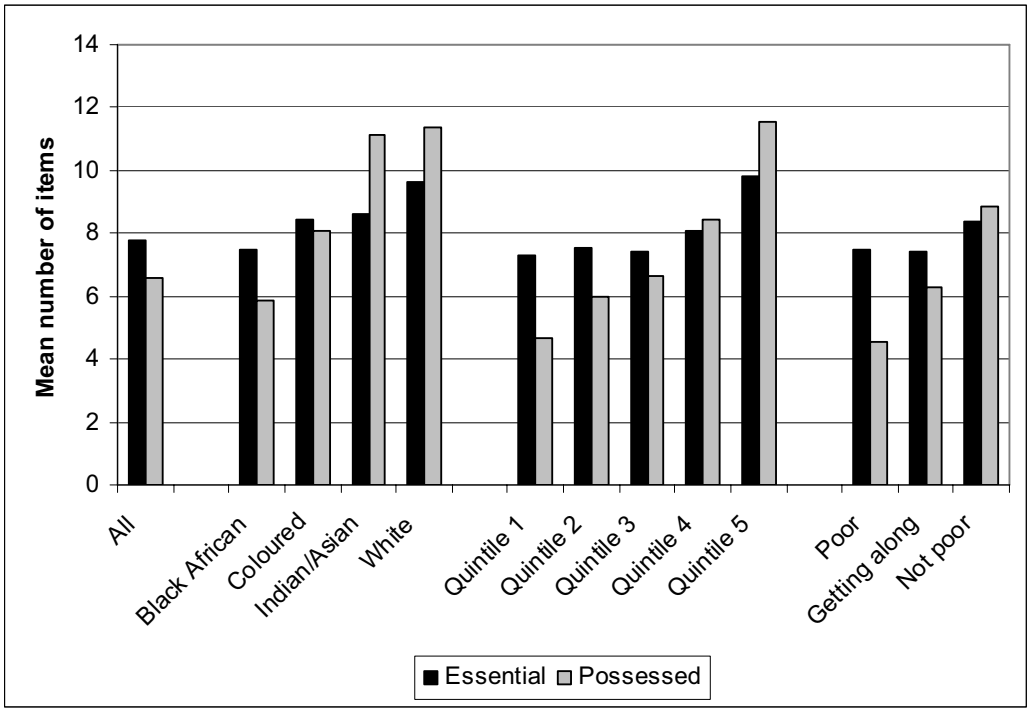
Figure 6: Percentage of caregivers lacking items relevant to children of all ages



Source: Own analysis on SASAS 2007.

Overall the mean number of items (out of 13) regarded as essential by caregivers is greater than the mean number possessed (see Figure 7). The same is true for particular sub-groups including black Africans, those in the three lowest income quintiles[28] (the bottom 60 per cent) and those who perceive themselves to be poor or just getting along. For other sub-groups, the situation is reversed: on average caregivers possess a greater number of items than they regard as essential. Approximately 16 per cent of caregivers define fewer items as essential than they actually possess, whereas 71 per cent define a greater number of items as essential than they possess. The remaining 13 per cent have the same score for number of items considered essential and number of items possessed (these are not necessarily the same items - for 56 per cent of caregivers they are however). This suggests that many caregivers aspire to a higher standard of living for their children than they are currently able to provide.

Figure 7: Mean number of items defined as essential and possessed by caregivers



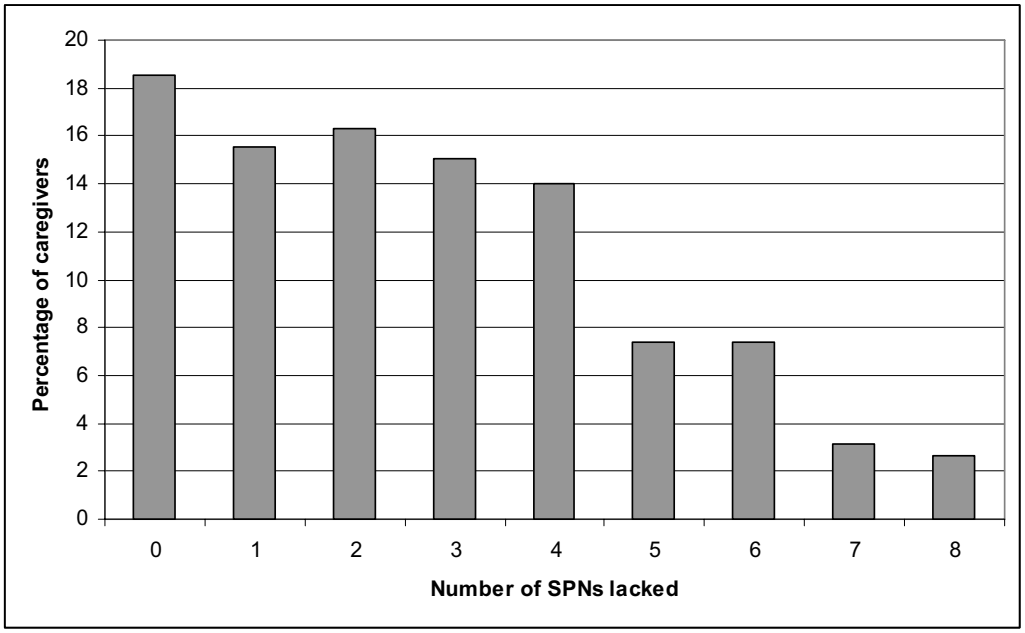
Source: Own analysis on SASAS 2007.
Notes: Values rounded to nearest whole number, income variable from imputation 1 only.

[28] The Technical Appendix gives details of the imputation process carried out on the total household income variable (which produced ten plausible complete income variables). Midpoints were then assigned to the banded income variable to produce a 'continuous' distribution. The income variable was divided by the total number of people in the household to give a per capita income. This was done on each of the ten income variables, although only imputation 1 is used in this analysis. The per capita income was then ordered from lowest to highest and divided into five equal groups (quintiles), with quintile 1 being the lowest income and quintile 5 the highest income.

The eight SPNs relevant to children of all ages

Figure 8 shows the same information as Figure 6 but for the eight SPNs that are relevant to children of all ages. Almost three per cent of caregivers lack all of the eight SPNs, while at the other extreme 19 per cent of caregivers do not lack any of the SPNs, which is the modal number. The median number of SPNs lacked is two. It is clear therefore that a large proportion of caregivers lack several SPNs.

Figure 8: Percentage of caregivers lacking the eight SPNs relevant to children of all ages



Source: Own analysis on SASAS 2007.

As we have seen, the fact that an item is defined as essential does not necessarily mean it is possessed. In terms of the SPNs, for all items, the percentage of adults (or caregivers) defining the item as essential is higher than the percentage of caregivers who possess the item (see Table 6). Nevertheless, the items which the highest percentage defines as essential are those which the fewest children go without.

Table 6: Percentage of caregivers defining an SPN as essential and percentage possessing an item

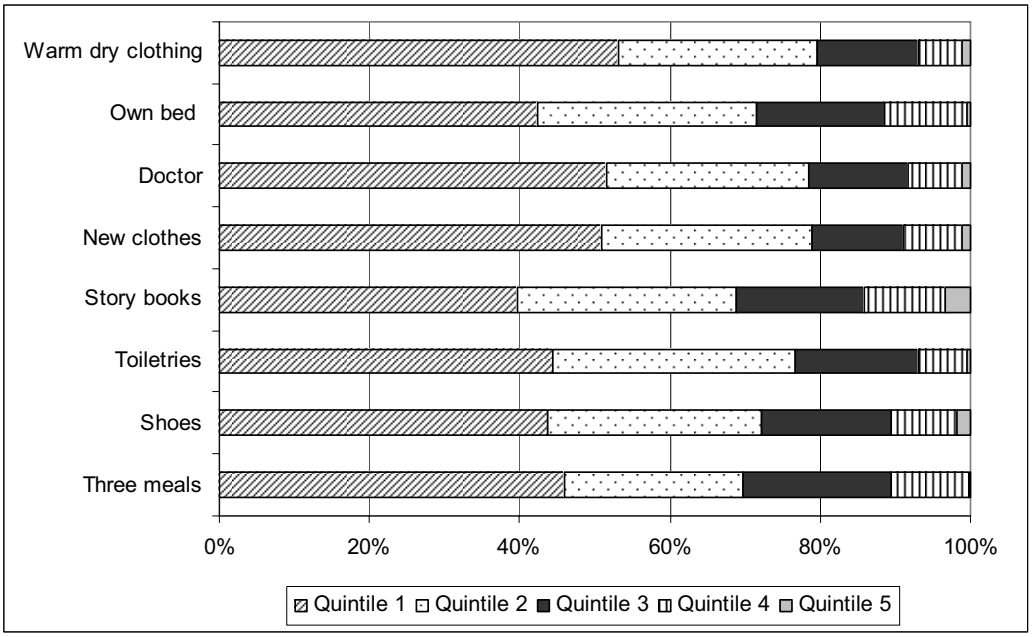
Item	Percentage of adults regarding item as essential	Percentage of caregivers regarding item as essential	Percentage of caregivers whose child	
			Has item	Doesn't have item
Three meals a day	91	93	80	19
Toiletries to wash every day	90	89	83	17
A visit to the doctor and medicines	88	88	78	22
Clothing to keep warm and dry	85	84	79	21
Shoes for different activities	79	79	69	31
Some new clothes	67	66	61	38
Own bed	62	56	40	60
Story books	50	48	34	66

Source: Own analysis on SASAS 2007.

For each item over 85 per cent of those caregivers who do not have an item are black African. Approximately 81 per cent of caregivers are black African, and therefore black Africans are disproportionately represented amongst the poor. This is particularly so for some items, such as toiletries to be able to wash every day, where almost all of the poor are black African.

There is a mixed picture for income status (see Figure 7.6). The majority of caregivers who lack an item are in the lowest two income quintiles, but there are still surprising numbers in the middle and top (highest) income quintiles. Similarly, when using the self-defined poverty status variable described in Chapter 3, there are still large numbers of the not poor group of caregivers who do not have the item.

Figure 9: Lack of SPNs by income status



Source: Own analysis on SASAS 2007.
Note: Income variable from imputation 1 only.

4.2 Enforced lack

In the above analysis a general unspecified lack of an item was considered. However, the usual way of measuring lack of SPNs is to look at an 'enforced lack', that is non-possession because of an inability to afford an item, rather than through choice not to possess it. The latter cannot truly be regarded as poverty, although it has been acknowledged by the principal studies in this field that people may have adapted their preferences based on their financial situation: an item that someone cannot afford, and will be unlikely to ever be able to afford, sometimes becomes regarded as something that they do not want, imbued with a sense of choice.

The two possible responses to the possession questions enable enforced lack to be determined. Because the emphasis was on determining enforced lack of items, the 'don't have, can't afford' category was prioritised, and other reasons for non-possession, including personal choice, were subsumed into one category 'don't have, other reason'.

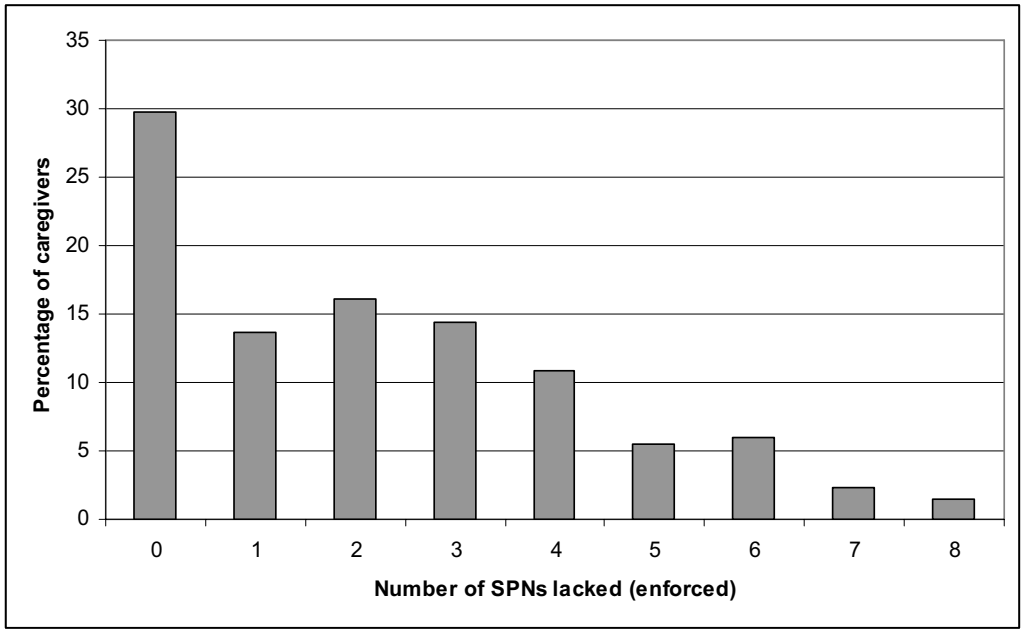
As the reasons for lacking an item, besides ability to afford, cannot be uncovered from the survey responses, and as a high percentage (at least 70 per cent) of caregivers state that they are unable to provide an item for their child for financial reasons rather than choice (see Table 7), it seems reasonable to only classify as poor those children experiencing an enforced lack of items. Figure 10 shows the percentage of caregivers experiencing an enforced lack of one, two, three and so on of the eight SPNs relevant to children of all ages.

Table 7: Reason for non-possession of SPNs as percentage of 'don't have' responses

Item	Don't have, can't afford	Don't have, other reason
Three meals a day	91	10
Shoes for different activities	81	24
Toiletries to wash every day	86	17
Story books	73	37
Some new clothes	90	12
A visit to the doctor and medicines	88	13
Own bed	77	30
Clothing to keep warm and dry	91	9

Source: Own analysis on SASAS 2007.

Figure 10: Percentage of caregivers lacking (enforced) the eight SPNs relevant to children of all ages



Source: Own analysis on SASAS 2007.

The measurement of child poverty using the socially perceived necessities approach requires a threshold below which children are considered poor. A list of SPNs has been determined through consultation with adults, but how should the list be used to measure child poverty? Does a child have to lack all items to be considered poor? If not, how many of the items must a child lack? Are some items more important that others and is a lack of these therefore worse than a lack of other items? This final question will be dealt with later, where the importance of items, in terms of the percentage regarding the item as essential, is explored, with reference to Halleröd's Proportional Deprivation Index (PDI) approach (Halleröd, 1994). First, however, the original Mack and Lansley approach (and its derivatives), which has since been termed the

Majority Necessities Index (MNI) (Halleröd, 1994) is employed to measure child poverty.

Majority Necessities Index

Mack and Lansley (1985) used two criteria to determine at what point to draw the poverty line:

a) where the overwhelming majority of those who lack necessities (because they cannot afford them) have low incomes in the bottom half of the income range; and
b) overall spending patterns should reflect financial difficulty rather than high spending on other goods.

By visual examination of the data they decided that a lack of three or more necessities was overwhelmingly enforced as it was quite common for people, irrespective of income status, to lack just one or two items.

In the subsequent Breadline Britain and PSE surveys, Gordon and colleagues (Gordon et al., 2000; Gordon and Pantazis, 1997b), as well as others who have used this approach, including Wright (2008a; 2008b), applied a more refined method. The aim in drawing up a poverty line is to divide the survey respondents (whether individuals or households) into two groups - the 'poor' and the 'not poor' - by finding the point on the scale of number of items lacked at which there is maximum variation between the two groups and minimum variation within the group in terms of income. There are various ways of doing this: analysis of variance (ANOVA), logistic regression and discriminant function analysis. In this analysis, ANOVA will be used. ANOVA and logistic regression seem to be more widely used and previous studies have found that the two methods give the same results.[29] Computationally, discriminant function analysis is very similar to a one-way ANOVA.

In general, the purpose of ANOVA is to test for significant differences between means, in this case, between the mean incomes of two groups. The ANOVA technique was applied to a succession of groups defined by the number of items lacked (e.g. one or more items, two or more items and so on up to eight or more items). The first analysis compared caregivers whose child does not lack an item with caregivers whose child lacks one or more items. The second analysis compared caregivers whose child lacks zero or one items with caregivers whose child lacks two or more items. This continued to the eighth analysis which compared caregivers whose child lacks eight items with caregivers whose child lacks seven or fewer items. The income variable took the form of per capita household income, although tests produced the same result using income equivalised using the modified OECD scale.[30]

[29] Logistic regression was also tested here and did indeed give the same result.

[30] Gordon and Pantazis and Gordon et al. suggest that net household income should be used and a count of the number of adults and number of children included alongside the deprivation group, rather than using equivalised income. This, they argue is because 'Both the household composition of the 'poor' and the position of the poverty line can be influenced by equivalisation. Therefore, in order accurately to determine the numbers of different sized households living in poverty, the likely position of the poverty line should be estimated before any equivalisation scales are applied' (Gordon and

The ANOVA analysis showed that the poverty line should be set at a deprivation score of one or more items. This is exactly the same result as in Britain, and seems sensible as the majority of the items relate to basic needs, and therefore a lack of only one, such as three meals a day or a visit to the doctor, is a real deprivation. Using the one or more threshold, 70 per cent of caregivers are in poverty.[31]

Table 8: ANOVA result for MNI and associated 'caregiver poverty rates'

Number of SPNs lacked	F statistic for ANOVA model*	Percentage of caregivers
1 or more	*236*	*70*
2 or more	160	57
3 or more	103	41
4 or more	56	26
5 or more	31	15
6 or more	17	10
7 or more	7	4
8 or more	3	2

Source: Own analysis on SASAS 2007.
Notes: * Average of 10 imputations, ANOVA calculations performed without survey weights.

At a provincial level (see Table 9), the lowest 'caregiver poverty rates' using the one or more threshold are in Gauteng (58 per cent) and the Western Cape (61 per cent). Surprisingly, in the light of other poverty results, KwaZulu-Natal ranks as the third least poor. However, a similar result was found by Wright (2008a; 2008b) for the adult population. There does not seem to be an obvious explanation for this finding, but given the very wide 95 per cent confidence intervals for all provinces (see Figure 11), the result should perhaps be treated with caution. At the other end of the scale, Limpopo is the poorest (86 per cent) followed by the Free State (81 per cent) and the Eastern Cape (80 per cent). The position of the Free State is also surprising given previous studies of poverty and child poverty, but again the wide confidence intervals should be noted. Items which are lacked by the greatest percentage of caregivers in the Free State include story books (85 per cent), new clothes (72 per cent), clothes to keep warm and dry (65 per cent) and own bed (63 per cent).

The Northern Cape has the smallest share of poverty which is not surprising given its small population size. KwaZulu-Natal has the largest share of poverty, despite its relatively low poverty rate. Again therefore we see that there are large numbers of poor caregivers (and therefore children) in the

Pantazis: 28-9). While I do not wholly agree with this approach, tests showed that the threshold is the same when either approach is used.

[31] It is not possible, using the SASAS, to measure the percentage of children in poverty as the survey is weighted to the adult population only. The questions on possession were only asked of caregivers, rather than all adults with children in the household, so the only possible poverty measure is caregiver poverty. See the Technical Appendix for further information.

province. Gauteng similarly is the least poor province, yet has the third highest share of poverty (behind KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape).

In terms of population group (see Table 9), black Africans have the highest 'caregiver poverty rate' - almost 80 per cent of black African caregivers are in poverty - and the greatest share of poverty (over 90 per cent), a figure that is similar to that found by a recent money metric approach (Barnes, 2009a), albeit in this instance for caregivers rather than children. Over half of the coloured caregivers are poor.

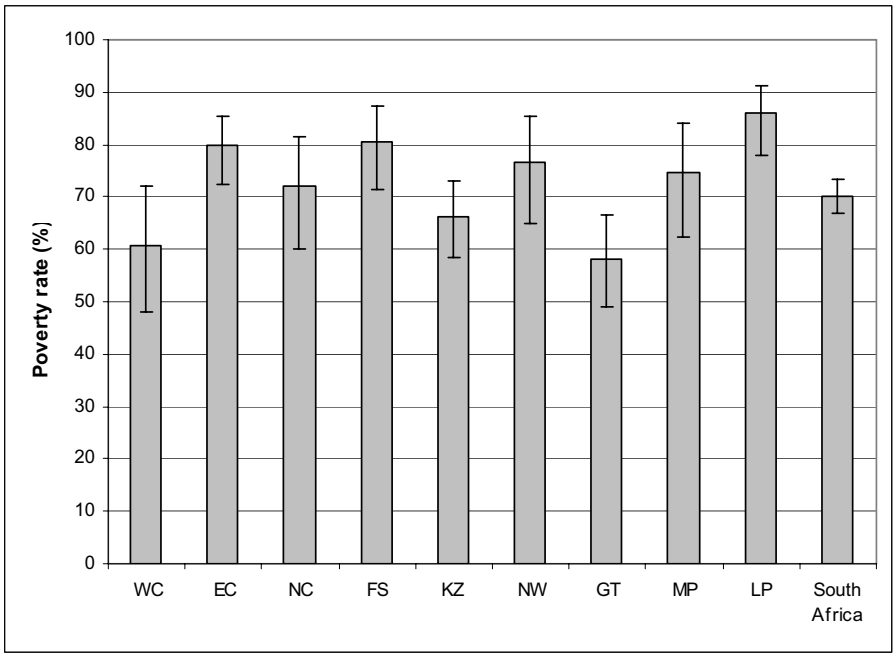
The analysis by area type reveals interesting findings (see Table 9). The 'caregiver poverty rates' are higher in rural than urban areas (approaching 90 per cent of rural caregivers are poor), but the share of poverty is higher in urban than rural areas which is the opposite of other (money metric) studies of child poverty. This finding suggests that the density of population in urban areas means that the sheer number in poverty is higher than in rural areas.

Table 9: 'Caregiver poverty rates' using the MNI approach

	Poverty rate	95% CI lower	95% CI upper	Poverty share
Province				
Western Cape	61	48	72	9
Eastern Cape	80	72	86	17
Northern Cape	72	60	81	2
Free State	81	71	87	6
KwaZulu-Natal	66	59	73	20
North West	77	65	85	10
Gauteng	58	49	66	17
Mpumalanga	75	63	84	6
Limpopo	86	78	91	12
Population group				
Black African	80	76	83	91
Coloured	52	41	63	7
Indian/Asian	10	6	17	0
White	11	5	21	1
Area type				
Urban	62	57	66	58
Rural	87	83	91	42

Source: Own analysis on SASAS 2007.
Note: Poverty line of one or more on the deprivation scale.

Figure 11: Provincial 'caregiver poverty rates' and 95 per cent confidence intervals using the MNI approach



Source: Own analysis on SASAS 2007.
Note: Poverty line of one or more on the deprivation scale.

Proportional Deprivation Index

One of Halleröd's main criticisms of Mack and Lansley's approach was the use of an arbitrary 50 per cent threshold that does not have any theoretical basis. He argues that:

> *There is […] no good reason to assume that a person who lacks just a few of those items from Mack and Lansley's list which were regarded as necessary by more than 50 per cent of the population suffers from more hardship than a person who lacks several items not regarded as necessities by a majority or not included in the list in the first place. To divide consumption dichotomously into necessary and non-necessary items also means that a person who does not consume items that 51 per cent of the population regard as necessary is seen as being just as poor as a person who does not consume items that 95 per cent of the population regards as necessary.* (Halleröd, 1994: 4)

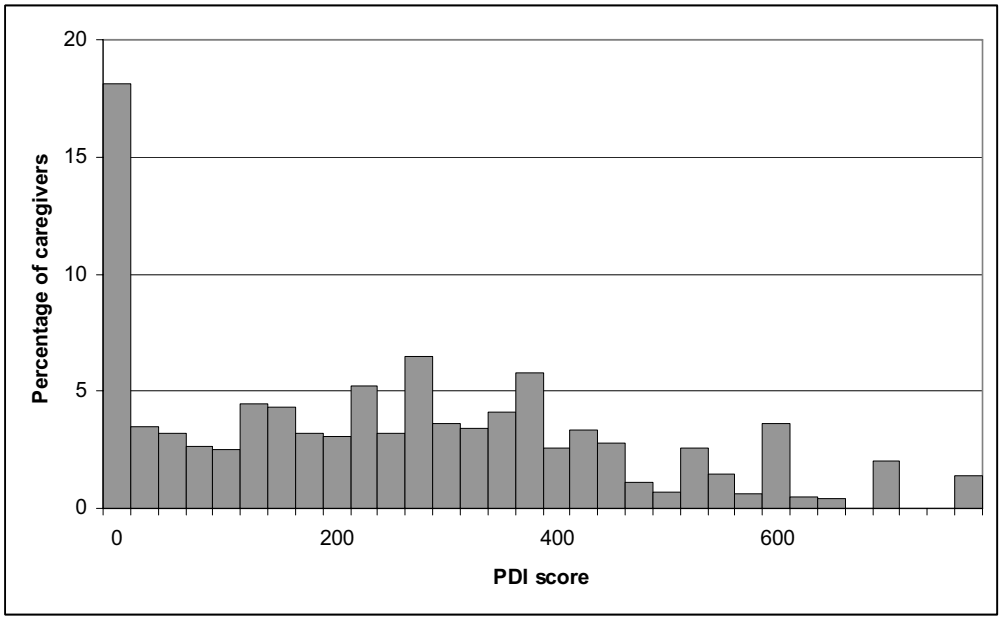
While it was argued in Chapter 3 that for the purposes of a democratic, rather than consensual, definition a 50 per cent threshold is appropriate, and therefore the MNI approach is valid, there is merit in taking into account the importance of items (as regarded by the general population). For example, just over 50 per cent of the survey respondents regarded story books as essential, whereas over 90 per cent considered three meals a day to be essential. Probably few would contest that a lack of story books is a less severe deprivation than a lack of one or more of the necessary three meals a

day. However, with the MNI approach, both deprivations are given equal value. Halleröd's PDI approach provides a solution to this difficult issue. He refined the MNI method by retaining all items, thus abandoning the 50 per cent 'cliff', and weighting each item according to the proportion of the population which regarded it as a necessity.

In a hypothetical situation where all 13 items in SASAS 2007 relevant to children of all ages were defined as essential by 100 per cent of respondents, the highest possible score that could be obtained, if an individual lacked all 13 items, would be 1,300. Figure 12 shows the distribution of the PDI. There is a group of caregivers with very low scores, indicating that relatively few items, or only items regarded as less important, are lacked. There is then a range of scores up to and including the highest possible score in this data given the percentage defining items as essential (795.04). Almost 1.5 per cent of caregivers have a score of 775 or more and therefore lack almost all 13 items. The mean score is 261.

Although Halleröd argued for a continuous poverty measure and therefore had no desire to draw a poverty line, it is possible to use ANOVA to find the optimum poverty line on this deprivation scale. To do so, deprivation groups have to be constructed. These take the form of a score of zero or more, 100 or more, 200 or more, and so on, up to 700 or more (the maximum score possible is 795.04) (as undertaken in Wright, 2008a). The first analysis compared caregivers with a deprivation score of less than 100 with those with a score of 100 or more, and the second analysis compared caregivers with a deprivation score of less than 200 with those with a score of 200 or more, and so on. Per capita income was again used to discriminate between the 'poor' and the 'not poor'.

Figure 12: Distribution of the PDI



Source: Own analysis on SASAS 2007.

This analysis revealed that the poverty line should be set at a score of 100 or more on the deprivation index. This gives a slightly higher poverty rate than the MNI: 73 per cent. When disaggregated by province, population group and area, the results are very similar to those derived using the MNI approach. There is some variation in the order of provinces by poverty rate, but Gauteng and the Western Cape remain the least poor provinces, and Limpopo the poorest (see Table 11). KwaZulu-Natal ranks as fourth least poor (compared to third on the MNI) and is six percentage points poorer on this measure, the largest difference of all the provinces.

Table 10: ANOVA result for PDI and associated 'caregiver poverty rates'

PDI score	F statistic for ANOVA model*	Percentage of caregivers
100 or more	*234*	*73*
200 or more	169	58
300 or more	100	40
400 or more	54	23
500 or more	26	13
600 or more	14	8
700 or more	6	3

Source: Own analysis on SASAS 2007.
Notes: * Average of 10 imputations, ANOVA calculations performed without survey weights.

Table 11: 'Caregiver poverty rates' using the PDI approach

Province	Caregivers with a score of 100 or more			
	Poverty rate	95% CI lower	95% CI upper	Poverty share
Province				
Western Cape	60	47	71	9
Eastern Cape	81	74	87	17
Northern Cape	70	58	79	2
Free State	80	71	87	6
KwaZulu-Natal	72	65	78	21
North West	80	69	88	11
Gauteng	59	50	68	17
Mpumalanga	79	66	87	6
Limpopo	87	78	92	12
Population group				
Black African	82	78	85	91
Coloured	53	42	64	7
Indian/Asian	16	11	25	1
White	15	8	26	1
Area type				
Urban	63	59	68	58
Rural	91	87	94	42

Source: Own analysis on SASAS 2007.
Note: Poverty line of 100 or more on the deprivation scale.

7.2.3 Older children

The above analysis was based on items which are applicable to children of all ages. The analysis in this section takes into account the 21 items which apply to children of school age only (aged 7 to 17 inclusive)[32], 11 of which are SPNs.

The ANOVA analysis produces exactly the same threshold for both the MNI and the PDI - a deprivation score of one or more or 100 or more respectively. The poverty rate is higher for caregivers of school age children than all children - 76 per cent (compared to 70 per cent) on the MNI, and 83 per cent (compared to 73 per cent) on the PDI. The PDI poverty rate for caregivers of school age children is therefore over 10 per cent higher than the respective poverty rate for caregivers of children of all ages. One possible explanation for this is that there is a greater range of items required for children of school age, both for school and leisure, and the items are often more expensive (e.g. Middleton et al., 1997). Caregivers cannot afford all these extra items, and therefore a greater percentage of caregivers do not possess items for their children.

There is some variation in terms of the provincial poverty rates. For example, on the MNI, the Free State has the highest poverty rate (89 per cent) ahead of Limpopo (86 per cent), and on the PDI, North West has the highest poverty rate (95 per cent) and Limpopo has only the fourth highest poverty rate. However, the 95 per cent confidence intervals are again very wide and so these results should be treated with caution.

Almost all (97 per cent) of the rural caregivers are poor on the PDI, but still comprise a lower share of the poor than urban caregivers.

[32] There are actually 22 items in the survey which are classified as school-age items. However, one of these, own room for children over 10, does not apply to 7, 8 and 9 year olds and so it is therefore excluded from the analysis in this section.

5 Conclusion

This report has provided an analysis of the views of adults about an acceptable standard of living for children in South Africa from a qualitative and quantitative perspective. A preliminary analysis was undertaken to examine which items are defined as essential for children by the highest percentage of respondents to the South African Social Attitudes Survey 2007, and which by the lowest percentage. Unsurprisingly, the items with the fewest 'essential' responses are what might be considered luxury items. Adults' views from focus group work were reported to provide a backdrop to the survey results. In most cases the focus group discussions are reflected by the survey. One notable exception where the survey and focus group responses are quite different is in relation to toys which were much more prominently raised as essential items in the focus groups than in the survey.

In line with previous socially perceived necessities studies, a 50 per cent threshold was then used to determine a set of SPNs. Of the 25 items, 11 were classified as SPNs using this threshold. The test for reliability suggested that this set of items is reasonably robust.

In order to find out whether there is a common perception about an acceptable standard of living for children across South Africa, the responses of sub-groups of the population were examined. It was found that overall there is a fairly high degree of consensus for the set SPNs. The majority of the sub-groups had high correlations for responses to the SPNs and shared at least nine SPNs in common. Story books and pocket money were the items which were not consistently defined as essential by each sub-group.

The greatest level of disagreement was between particular population groups (notably white and black African responses), the poor and non poor and, to a lesser extent, urban and rural respondents. It was reasoned that this might be the case because individuals in particular population groups, individuals living in poverty (albeit subjectively defined) and individuals in rural areas may have different reference groups when determining an acceptable standard of living, and/or they may have adjusted their desires and expectations to what is possible. Although it was not possible to further explore the issues of bounded realities and adaptive preferences, previous research has shown that although differences exist for particular items, these can generally be explained by whether or not the items are possessed by the respondent, rather than a more fundamental difference of opinion (e.g. Wright, 2008b).

The extent of deprivation was then explored and it was revealed that the children of over 80 per cent of caregivers lack one or more SPNs. For all SPNs, the percentage of caregivers defining an item as essential is higher than the percentage which possesses the item, suggesting that caregivers aspire to a higher standard of living for their children than they are currently able to provide - their definition of an acceptable standard of living is not simply a reflection of the standard of living that their children currently enjoy.

The usual way of measuring poverty using the socially perceived necessities approach is to look at an enforced lack of items (inability to afford rather than choice not to possess). Two methods were used to calculate caregiver poverty rates based on an enforced lack of child items: the Majority Necessities Index and the Proportional Deprivation Index. On the MNI, using ANOVA, the poverty threshold was found to be a lack of one or more items, meaning that approximately 70 per cent of caregivers are poor. On the PDI, the poverty threshold was calculated as a score of 100 or more, which results in a slightly higher 73 per cent of caregivers in poverty. Higher caregiver poverty rates were revealed for caregivers of school-aged children when using the set of items relevant to children of this age.

Disaggregation by population group produced expected results - black Africans have the highest poverty rates and the highest share of poverty. However, the poverty rates by province are less predictable, particularly for KwaZulu-Natal which, in contrast to many other poverty studies does not feature amongst the poorest provinces. However, the wide confidence intervals were noted. The highest share of poverty was found in urban areas which is the opposite of previous studies.

This report has outlined an alternative way of defining and measuring child poverty that involves the general public in the definition process and moves away from indirect (money metric) definitions to look at actual living standards. While it would have been preferable to have calculated the poverty estimates for children rather than caregivers, unfortunately the SASAS 2007 does not allow this and there are not currently any other datasets that contain a similar set of deprivation items. The Living Conditions Survey currently being undertaken by Stats SA contains a set of items relevant to the population in general, which are derived from the work of Wright (2008a; 2008b). Two of these are particularly relevant for children - school uniforms for children and separate bedrooms for adults and children. While it will be possible to measure the number of children lacking these and other items, a child specific set of items should be included in future surveys to enable child poverty to be measured in a more meaningful way. Consideration should also be given to the inclusion of more general household items for children, a lack of which can be a serious deprivation.

Although estimates of the number and percentage of children in poverty could not be calculated from the SASAS 2007, caregiver poverty (i.e. caregivers lacking items for their children) is a reasonable approximation. The results show that over 70 per cent of caregivers are unable to provide one or more of the items that are considered essential for children by the general adult population, and therefore a high proportion of children in South Africa must be deprived of items, including some very basic items such as food and adequate clothing, that are necessary for an acceptable standard of living.

Technical appendix

Adult definition of an acceptable standard of living for children was derived in two stages, first from focus groups with adults carried out as part of the Indicators of Poverty and Social Exclusion (IPSE) project, and second from a module that was included in the SASAS 2007 run by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), which also included a set of measurement questions.

Focus groups with adults[33]

The focus groups with adults aimed to find out what people across the country consider to be essential for an acceptable standard of living in South Africa today. Adults and children were asked about separately.

Focus group locations were selected on the basis of area characteristics and then appropriate individuals were selected from the area. The key variables considered likely to influence a person's views were province, race, income, language, rural/urban, formal/informal, township/former homeland, proximity to major industrial centre and racial homogeneity. Some special groups, such as farm workers and domestic workers were also identified. Individual level characteristics considered important were age and sex, both in terms of their influence on a person's views as well as on how well a focus group works.

Census sub-places were used as the area geography[34], and each sub-place was categorised in terms of the area characteristics identified. The aim was to conduct approximately 50 focus groups and therefore it was essential to prioritise the categories that would be most important for the research questions. The views of South African academics, civil society, government officials and the research team were taken into account, and practical and resource constraints were considered. The final set of focus groups covered adults in six of the nine provinces; nine of South Africa's eleven official languages; a range of incomes; each of the black African, coloured, Indian and white population groups; both male and female participants and rural/urban and formal/informal locations. An explanation of the decisions taken with regard to the selection of areas and groups is given in Ratcliffe et al. (2005), along with a table showing the profile of the final set of focus groups undertaken. The focus groups were not selected to generate statistically representative conclusions, but despite a great deal of compromise in area categorisation and selection, they do cover a broad range of groups in South African society.

The focus group schedule[35] was designed through consultation with informants from different population groups, stakeholders and academics, and

[33] A full account of the methodology for the focus groups can be found in (Ratcliffe et al., 2005).
[34] There are 21,243 Census sub-places in South Africa.
[35] The final focus group schedule is presented in Ratcliffe et al. (2005).

was then piloted in three stages. Having designed the questionnaire in English it was necessary to translate it into eight other languages for use in the focus groups. This led to some problems in the translation of the term 'essential' (it often became 'important' or 'very important') but a properly trained facilitator was able to explain and clarify the term sufficiently. Facilitators were chosen to be of the same race, language group and gender as focus group participants, and were generally from the same province. Potential facilitators were sent written information about the project and the focus group schedule, and were invited to a training and assessment day, from which the final facilitators were selected. In most cases community entry and focus group organisation was carried out by facilitators. The 52[36] focus groups were conducted in 2004. The groups had between 7 and 10 participants, informed consent was required from participants and they were paid R75 for their involvement.

After a warm up question, participants were asked to list what they thought were the essential things that everyone in South Africa should have, be able to do or have access to. They were then asked if there were any additional things that were essential for children. A more structured activity followed where the groups were asked whether items on a list constructed by the research team were essential or not[37]. The list used for children, which draws heavily on the PSE survey (Bradshaw et al., 2000; Gordon et al., 2000), is presented in Table A1.

The participants were then asked to talk about six areas of life that might be important (health, education, the economy, personal security, family and friends, and housing and the neighbourhood) and who might be included and excluded from these different spheres. Participants were then asked explicitly whether there are people in South Africa who are poor, and what they understand this to mean. The final activity involved participants discussing aspirations for the future for South Africans.

Each focus group was recorded on audio tape and then transcribed verbatim and translated into English by the focus group facilitator. A member of the research team was also present to make notes to supplement the audio tapes.

[36] Four focus groups were eventually discarded during the quality control process, leaving a total of 48.
[37] The analysis in Chapter 3 does not distinguish between the unstructured and structured activity.

Table A1: List of possible children's essentials discussed in the adult focus groups

Goods/possessions
Three meals a day
Toys (e.g. dolls, play figures, teddies, etc.)
Sports equipment
Leisure equipment (e.g. sports equipment or a bicycle)
Enough bedrooms for every child over 10 of different sex to have his/her own
Computer games
A warm coat for when its cold
Enough bedrooms so that girls and boys over 10 do not have to share a room
School books of her/his own (not shared)
Non-school books of his/her own
A bike, new or second hand
Construction toys such as Duplo or Lego
Educational games
Smart shoes that fit properly e.g. for when you go into town
At least seven pairs of underpants
At least four cardigans/sweatshirts/sweaters or jerseys
All the school uniform required by the school
At least four pairs of trousers, leggings, jeans or jogging bottoms
At least 5 Rand per week to spend on sweets
Meat, fish or vegetarian equivalent at least twice a day
A computer in the home suitable for school work
Fresh fruit or vegetables at least once a day
A safe garden or yard to play in
Some new, not second-hand or handed-on clothes
A carpet in their bedroom
A bed and bedding to her/himself
A pair of trainers/running shoes sneakers
Activities
A hobby
A sport or leisure activity
Celebrations on special occasions such as birthdays, Christmas other religious
Swimming at least once a month
Play group at least once a week for pre-school aged children
A holiday away from home at least once a year with his/her family (not visiting
Going on a school trip at least once a term for school aged children
Friends round to play once a fortnight

SASAS 2007

SASAS began in 2003 as a response to calls to improve the quality of the HSRC's Evaluation of Public Opinion Programme surveys. The main objective of SASAS is to 'design, develop and implement a conceptually and methodologically robust study of changing social attitudes and values in South Africa' (Pillay, 2006: 5). Conducted on an annual basis, SASAS has a core module and standard set of demographic and background variables. A number of themes are accommodated on a rotational basis. The survey was designed to yield a representative sample of adults aged 16 and older in households geographically spread across the nine provinces. The survey fieldwork for SASAS 2007 was conducted in October and November 2007. The sample was drawn from HSRC's master sample which is based on the 2001 Census and consists of 1000 Census enumeration areas (EAs) with 11 visiting points in each area. The EAs were stratified by province, geographical sub-type and population group. In total 3,464 households (visiting points) and one individual were randomly selected from the master sample[38]. For further information about the SASAS surveys, see Pillay et al. (2006). The realised sample is 3,164 (a response rate of 91 per cent). The HSRC is responsible for data collection, capture and processing.

The definition stage

The SASAS module provides further information on adults' perceptions of an acceptable standard of living for children, which are used to explore a democratic (adult) definition of child poverty in Chapter 3. The module comprises a list of items and activities relating to a range of different standards of living for children (see Table A2). The items included are indicative rather than exhaustive as there were various constraints on the size of the module (i.e. available space in the survey, financial costs and concerns about respondent fatigue). In terms of the items included, the aim was to be child-focused and so more general household items were not included. However, such items have been looked at in relation to the whole population of South Africa (adults and children) in the 2006 version of SASAS (Wright, 2008a). The items were based on the IPSE focus groups[39], the PSE survey and focus groups with children. It may seem inappropriate to use children's views as the basis for an adult definition, but I would argue that there is little sense in drawing up an acceptable standard of living if it bears no relation to the experiences of children, so it was necessary to pay some attention to what they said. In any case, any list is limited by the number of questions that can be included and also by researcher judgement of what to include, and therefore the definition derived is always restricted to items on the list. Halleröd (1994) was critical of the arbitrary nature of researchers identifying

[38] The HSRC has recently refreshed its master sample, which had not been done since 2002. Therefore SASAS 2007 drew on a new set of clusters.

[39] Only five child-specific items were included in the SASAS 2006 module, which was based on the focus groups with adults. This new module goes further by fully taking into account the comments made by adults in relation to children in the IPSE focus groups.

the items from which the survey respondents could select a set of necessities. In the case of the module in SASAS 2007 used here (and indeed the module in SASAS 2006 used by Wright, 2008a), the list of items was informed by focus groups with adults and children, and so the degree of arbitrariness is reduced to some extent, although inevitably researcher judgement did play a role in the selection of items.

Table A2: List of possible essentials included in SASAS 2007

Three meals a day including at least one portion of fruit/vegetables and at least one portion of protein (e.g. meat, fish, eggs, pulses, nuts, seeds)
Shoes for different activities (e.g. school shoes, takkies for sport/play, smart shoes for special occasions)
Toiletries (e.g. toothbrush and paste, soap, shampoo, hairbrush/comb) to be able to wash every day
Story books
Some new clothes (not second hand or handed on/down)
Educational toys/games
Presents at birthdays, Christmas or other religious festivals
Toys or materials for a hobby
A visit to the doctor when ill and all the medication prescribed to treat the illness
Own bed
Leisure/sports equipment
Clothing sufficient to keep warm and dry
A birthday party each year
All fees, uniform and equipment (e.g. books, school bag, lunch/lunch money, stationery) required for school
A computer in the home for school aged children
A school trip once a term for school aged children
A desk and chair for homework for school aged children
Pocket money/allowance for school aged children
Bus/taxi fare or other transport (e.g. bicycle) to get to school
A PlayStation or Xbox (computer games) for school aged children
A hi-fi/CD player and some tapes/CDs for school aged children
Own room for children over 10
Some fashionable clothes for secondary school aged children
Own cell phone for secondary school aged children
An MP3 player/iPod (portable music player) for secondary school aged children

Adults were asked to say whether it is essential for every parent or caregiver to be able to afford each item or activity for children they care for in order for them to enjoy an acceptable standard of living in South Africa today[40]. There are four options as responses: 'essential' if they regard the item or activity as

[40] The wording of the SASAS module is similar to the question used in the PSE, which asks respondents to classify items as necessary or desirable, with necessary meaning items 'which all adults [or children] should be able to afford and which they should not have to do without'. The choice of items in the SASAS module may be restricted to those which can clearly be purchased with money, rather than other aspects contributing to an acceptable standard of living, but these are no less appropriate than a different, perhaps broader, set of items. In fact, only having items that can be afforded makes answering the possession questions - where one response is because the caregivers cannot afford the item - more straightforward.

essential in this way; 'desirable' if they regard the item or activity as desirable but not essential; and 'neither' if they regard the item or activity as neither essential nor desirable. The fourth category is 'don't know'. The first two of the four possible responses enable the respondents to distinguish between items that they think every child should have, and those which they think it would be merely nice (but not essential) for every child to have. The aim of the module was to obtain a nationally representative list of items the majority of people define as essential in order for children to enjoy an acceptable standard of living: an adult democratic definition of child poverty.

On reflection, and after carrying out focus groups with children[41] where the list of items was discussed in more detail and it was possible to unpick the questions, some criticisms of the items chosen can be made.

First, in trying to maximise the number of items asked about, some questions were a combination of related items, which may have caused the respondents some difficulty as they might have agreed with one part but not another. Such items include:

- Three meals a day including at least one portion of fruit/vegetables and at least one portion of protein.
- A visit to the doctor when ill and all the medication prescribed to treat the illness.
- All fees, uniform and equipment required for school.

Second, judgements were made on the age at which some items become relevant for children. This was where it was felt that items might be seen as definitely not a necessity for a younger child, but perhaps a necessity for an older child. However, the ages selected may have been inappropriate, in that the age threshold was set too low.

Third, when talking to children, it became obvious that a CD player and an MP3 player/iPod were seen as the same thing, and so it was not really necessary to ask about both. Both items were included because an MP3 player/iPod was regarded as a portable item and almost a status good whereas a hi-fi or CD player was seen as a more basic item found in the home. The children, and this may be particular to South Africa where either item is often beyond the means of many households, generally regarded both as the same kind of luxury item. A similar difficulty arose with the questions about leisure/sports equipment and toys or materials for a hobby, where sport was often regarded as a hobby and therefore it became difficult to differentiate between the two items.

Notwithstanding these criticisms, the SASAS module contains a range of items reflecting a variety of standards of living and a number of different aspects of children's lives (or domains in the child poverty model) from which adults can define an acceptable standard of living for children.

[41] See Barnes (2009b, forthcoming).

The measurement stage

The data

In order to measure the adult democratic definition, it is necessary to find out how many children lack the items that are considered necessary by a majority of the population because they cannot be afforded by the caregiver. In the SASAS 2007, a set of questions was also included to find out whether the children of respondents who are caregivers possess the list of items, and if not, whether this is because the caregivers cannot afford them or for some other reason. The possible responses are 'have', 'don't have, can't afford' and 'don't have, other reason'.

It was only possible to ask about one child because it would have been too complicated for the respondent to answer the questions for every child cared for. The eldest child was selected as the subject when designing the module, although it would also have been possible to ask about all children together. The assumption was made that where the eldest child had or did not have an item, all children in that household also had or did not have the item. In other words, it was assumed that all children in a household had the same standard of living, although this may not necessarily be the case in practice.

The preferred way of measuring child deprivation using the socially perceived necessities approach is to count the number of *children* lacking a certain number of items. This requires a household survey with information on possession of items for each child in the household (usually asked for all children together rather than each child separately). Unfortunately, the SASAS is representative of the adult population only. Although there is limited information on each individual in the household, estimates for the whole population (and subsets such as children) cannot be produced as there are no sample weights to allow this. As in other surveys (e.g. the PSE), the question was asked only of respondents who were caregivers (rather than respondents with children in the household) and therefore the measure of child deprivation using SASAS necessarily has to be *caregivers* whose children lack certain items.

It is difficult to accurately compare the overall SASAS population as the survey is weighted to the overall adult population (defined as 16 years and over). From Stats SA's mid-year population estimates it is possible to calculate a rough estimate of the adult (16+) population by taking the 20 years and over population and adding four fifths of the 15-19 age group. The Stats SA estimates give a figure of 31,527,405, which is quite similar to the SASAS population (0.2 per cent difference). A comparison of the survey population with Stats SA's population estimates by province and population group is given in Table A3 below. Of particular note is the large difference for North West (the SASAS population is 15 per cent higher than the Stats SA MYE).

Table A3: Child population estimate comparison by province and population group

	SASAS population	Stats SA's MYE	Difference (SASAS-Stats SA)	Percentage difference
Western Cape	3395865	3584265	-188400	-5.26
Eastern Cape	4378297	4120066	258231	6.27
Northern Cape	694968	735575	-40607	-5.52
Free State	2002771	1914178	88593	4.63
KwaZulu-Natal	6362113	6373772	-11659	-0.18
North West	2587175	2241536	345639	15.42
Gauteng	6684326	7246878	-562552	-7.76
Mpumalanga	2141764	2201824	-60060	-2.73
Limpopo	3342163	3109309	232854	7.49
Black African	24222783	24006309	216474	0.90
Coloured	2959931	2989320	-29389	-0.98
Indian/Asian	875028	911196	-36168	-3.97
White	3531700	3620578	-88878	-2.45
South Africa	31589441	31527405	62036	0.20

Source: Own analysis on SASAS 2007 and Statistics South Africa mid-year estimates 2007.

Data preparation: missing and implausible values

The key variables required for the analysis of child deprivation are the possession questions, household income[42] and various geographical and individual characteristics such as province, area type and population group.

Imputation of missing values was not carried out on the SASAS 2007 data prior to its release to CASASP, but few variables have a large proportion of missing data. There were no missing values for the province, area type and population group variables. There were very few missing responses for the possession questions (generally less than 1 per cent), and even when put together with don't know responses, which can be considered a category of missing responses, the percentage is still under 1 per cent. The exceptions are materials for a hobby, leisure equipment and bus fare or other transport to school where the missing response rate is still less than 2 per cent. Only one of these - transport to school - is a SPN. It was not considered necessary to carry out imputation for these variables because the percentage of missing data was so small. Six individuals who claimed to be caregivers did not respond to any of the 13 items asked of children of all ages and so these cases were excluded from the analysis completely.

[42] This is used in ANOVA models, rather than for the estimation of child monetary resource poverty.

A large percentage of individuals do not have any income information however, and so it was felt necessary to impute the data. Any individuals who refused to answer or who were uncertain of their income were treated as missing, while those cases of an employed individual reporting no household income were treated as implausible and set to missing. Overall, income was imputed for 25 per cent of the cases using a sequential regression multiple imputation (SRMI) method[43]. The percentage of missing and implausible data is broken down by category of non response/implausibility in Table A4 and the variables used in the imputation process and the percentage of missing values on the variables (ordered from most to least missing data) are given in Table A5.

The imputation process produced ten complete income distributions which are all similar (see Figures A1 and A2). The eighth imputation is less consistent with the rest, particularly in bands 10, 11 and 12. However, because calculations from the ten possible income variables are averaged, the overall impact of this inconsistent income variable will be minimised.

In order to make use of the income variable, for example for calculating per capita income, values (midpoints) were assigned to the banded income.

Table A4: Missing and implausible values in the SASAS 2007

Case	Percentage
Refused (code 97)	14.29
Uncertain/don't know (code 98)	10.65
Missing	0.47
Employed individual with zero income	0.06
Total missing cases	25.47

Source: SASAS 2007.
Note: Unweighted values.

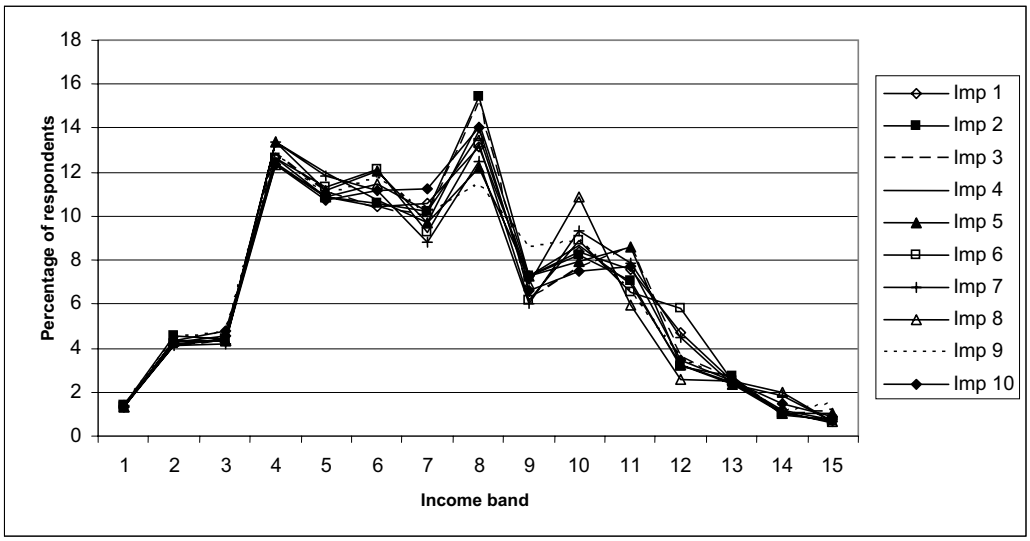
[43] SRMI imputes values through a sequence of multivariate regressions, varying the model by the type of variable being imputed. Covariates include all other variables observed and imputed from previous rounds for a particular individual. The sequence of imputing missing values takes place in a cyclical manner, each time overwriting previous values. Multiple imputations are generated by taking the *n*th imputed set of values in the cycle (i.e. after every *n*th cycle an imputed data set will be created). See see Barnes et al. (2006) and Barnes (2009a) for further details.

Table A5: Variables used in imputation of SASAS 2007

Variable	Question number	Recoding steps	Missing (N)	Missing (%)
Household income	q289	Refuse to answer (code 97), uncertain/ don't know (code 98) and employed part-time or full-time with no income (code 1) recoded to missing	806	25.47
Domestic worker	q283	/	25	0.79
Dishwasher	q279	/	13	0.41
Fridge/freezer	q264	/	12	0.38
Home security service	q276	/	12	0.38
M-Net/DStv subscription	q278	/	10	0.32
Source of water	q201	/	5	0.16
Type of dwelling	q262	/	4	0.13
Toilet facility	q203	Don't know recoded to missing	4	0.13
Mains electricity	q205	Uncertain/ don't know recoded to missing	2	0.06
Race	q241	/	0	0.00
Self-perceived wealth	q127	/	0	0.00
Number in household	pershh	/	0	0.00
Environmental milieu	geotyp	/	0	0.00
Province	prov	/	0	0.00

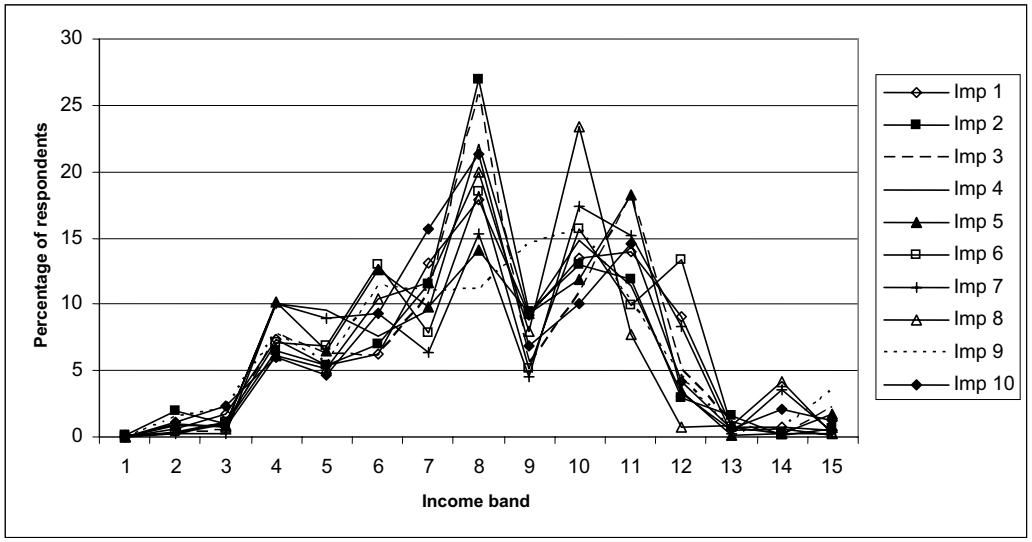
Source: SASAS 2007.
Note: Unweighted values.

Figure A1: The complete income distribution post SRMI



Source: Own analysis on SASAS post imputation
Notes: Unweighted values, institution cases deleted.

Figure A2: The income distribution of the imputed cases



Source: Own analysis on SASAS post imputation
Notes: Unweighted values, institution cases deleted.

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