

# Attitudinal Approaches to Measuring Poverty in South Africa

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in South Africa

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# A Statistical Awakening

- In the run up to the 1994 elections, South Africans had been promised **“a better future”** and the government set about **collecting data on social conditions** in the country.
- In 1996, the **national census** was launched and an appeal went out to South Africans to “play your part in the miracle” of the **“great counting of the people”** just as they had participated in the earlier events which gave birth to democracy.
- South Africa’s transition to democracy in the 1990s, therefore, evoked a statistical awakening, a **“social indicators movement”**.

# Subjective Poverty in South Africa

- During the post-apartheid period, there has been a tendency among the **media** and **officials** to focus on poverty in “**money metric**” terms.
- Household surveys in South Africa have tended to collect objective data on **household income, expenditure and assets** in an effort to measure poverty, **ignoring subjective indicators**.
- Increasingly researchers in South Africa became aware that poverty **cannot be reduced to money-metrics alone** but should also take account of **subjective realities**.
- Recent survey research has begin to provide **new insight into subjective poverty and deprivation** in South Africa.



# **What is the HSRC's DGSD Research Programme doing in relation to attitudinal approaches to the study of poverty?**



## South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS)

- Survey conducted by **HSRC** on annual basis since **2003**, with **Round 12** recently completed
- Nationally representative of the population 16 years and older living in private residence in the 9 provinces
  - **Primary sampling units:** 500 Census EAs, stratified by province, geography type and majority population group
  - **Secondary sampling units:** 7 household visiting points randomly selected per EA
  - One respondent 16+ years randomly selected per household
- In **2013**, for example, the **realised** sample size was **2,885**
- Responses to the **survey voluntary and confidential**, collected by **face-to-face interview**
- Normal data collection: **November-December**

# Contributing to the Study of Poverty

- Subjective poverty indicators were **introduced as SASAS core items** since the inception of the series in **2003**
- Currently there are **twelve years** of quantitative data on **subjective poverty deprivation available**.
- Worked primarily on identifying a subjective **deprivation cut-off** for different **domains of poverty** and then these **cut-off points** can be used to determine **subjective poverty**.
- SASAS has pushed the **frontier on poverty analysis** in the country, **partnering** with a **diverse array** of collaborators (e.g. South African Social Policy Research Institute).
  - SASAS measures have influenced other studies, e.g. National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS), StatsSA's Living Conditions Survey (LCS), Hlabisa Demographic Surveillance Site (DSS).

# Poverty Measures in SASAS, 2003-2014

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Minimum income question (MIQ)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Income evaluation question (IEQ)	..	..	..	..	..	X	..	..	..	..	..	..
<b>Consumption adequacy questions (CAQs)</b>												
Expenditure questions	..	..	..	..	X	X	..	..	..	..	..	..
Adequacy questions	..	..	..	..	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Economic welfare question (EWQ)</b>												
Self-rated poverty question	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Economic ladder question	..	..	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Consensual poverty approach</b>												
Adults	..	..	X (d)	X (d/m)	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Children	..	..	..	..	X (d/m)	..	..	..	..	X (d)	..	..
<b>Subjective Wellbeing Poverty Line</b>												
General life satisfaction	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Happiness question	X	..	..	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Note: under the Consensual Approach, (d) means socially perceived necessities definitional component and (m) signifies measurement component.

# Notable Partnerships

- In 2005, partnered with StatsSA and the Centre for Analysis of South African Social Policy (CASASP, Oxford) to produce the **South African Index of Multiple Deprivation**
- 2006-2008: CASASP collaboration on Consensual Approach
- 2007/8: Engagements with South African Labour and Development Research Unit (Saldru) on the **National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS)** subjective poverty measures and StatsSA on Living Conditions Survey subjective poverty measures.
  - Allowed harmonisation of certain subjective measures across different surveys and institutions
  - Agreement: SASAS to administer definitional component of Consensual Measures for adults & children; Living Conditions Survey would focus on measurement component

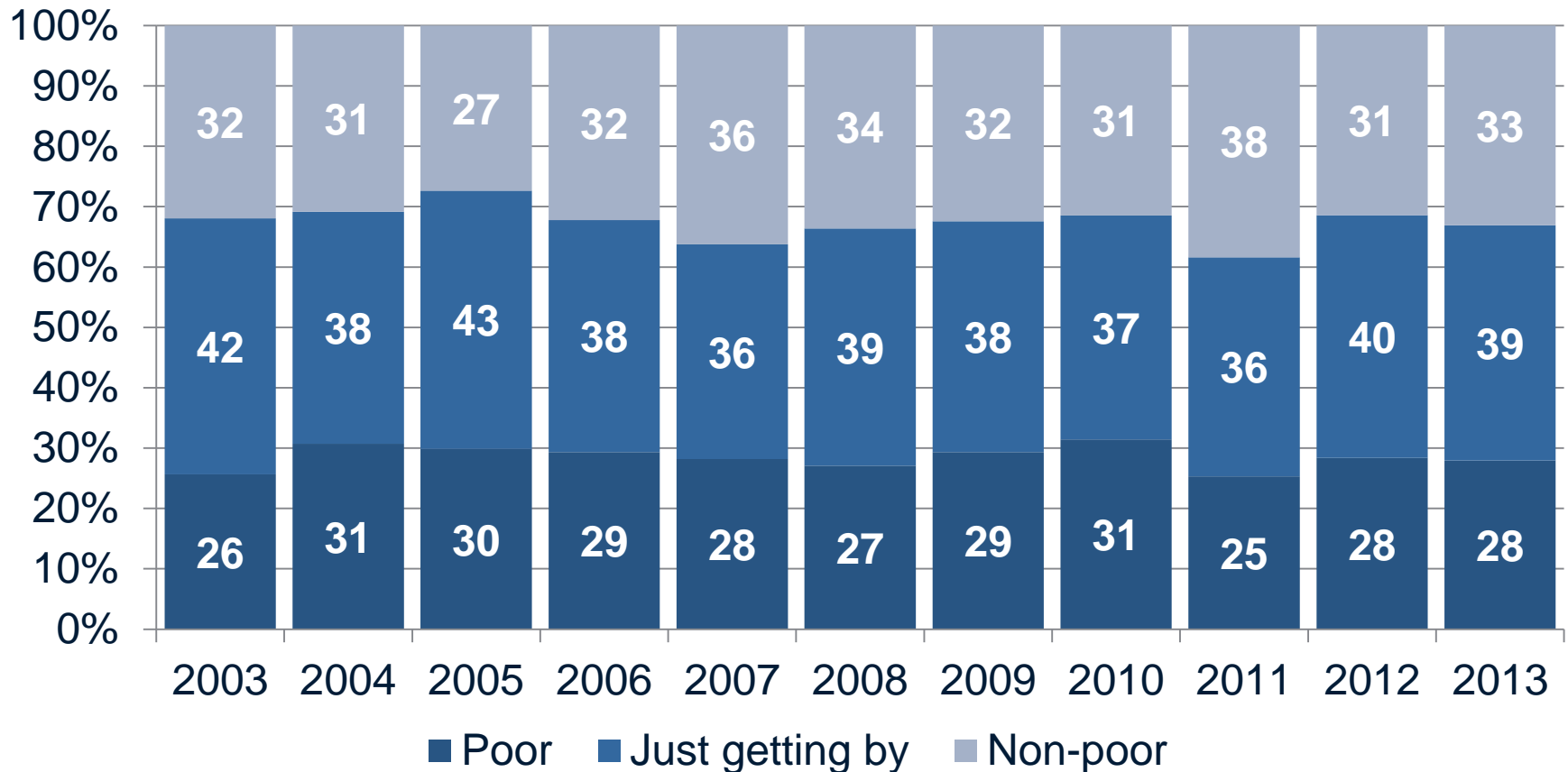


# Notable Partnerships (2)

- Experimental work completed 2015 on merging South African Index of Multiple Deprivation (SAIMD) derived variables into SASAS [**Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Pathfinder support**]
- EU Presidency **Programme to Support Pro-Poor Development** (PSPPD):
  - Low-value grant (2015) on examining livelihoods, vulnerability and shocks using SASAS together with published NIDS findings;
  - Family project (2015/16) include analysis of SASAS 2012 socially perceived necessities for children data (definitional).
- Ongoing discussion about refielding **Socially Perceived Necessities (SPNs)** for adults (definitional) in SASAS in next year or two.

# Subjective Poverty (Single Item)

Would you say that you and your family are...



Source: HSRC SASAS 2003-2013 self-rated poverty question.

Note: Use is made of collapsed version of original 6-point scale, ranging from "wealthy" to "very poor".

# Consumption Adequacy Approach

(After Ravallion & Lokshin)

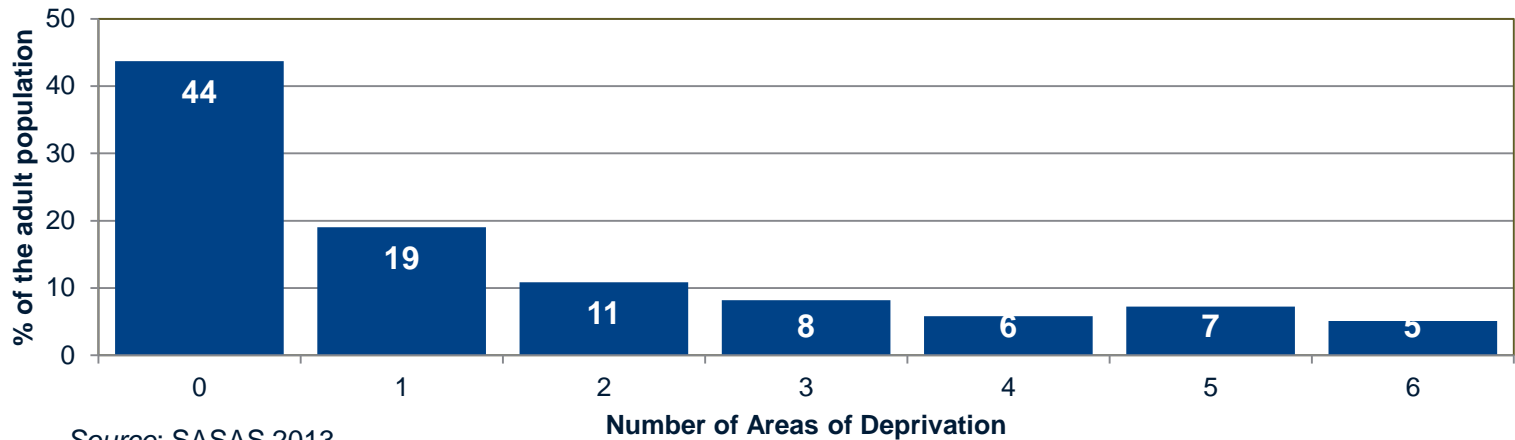
Now I would like to ask your opinion of your household's standard of living. Are the following inadequate, just adequate or more than adequate for your household's needs?

	It is not adequate	It is just adequate	It is more than adequate	(Do not know)	(N/A)
Your household's <u>housing</u>	1	2	3	8	
Your household's access to <u>transport</u>	1	2	3	8	
Your household's <u>health care</u>	1	2	3	8	
Your <u>children's schooling</u>	1	2	3	8	9
Your household's <u>clothing</u>	1	2	3	8	

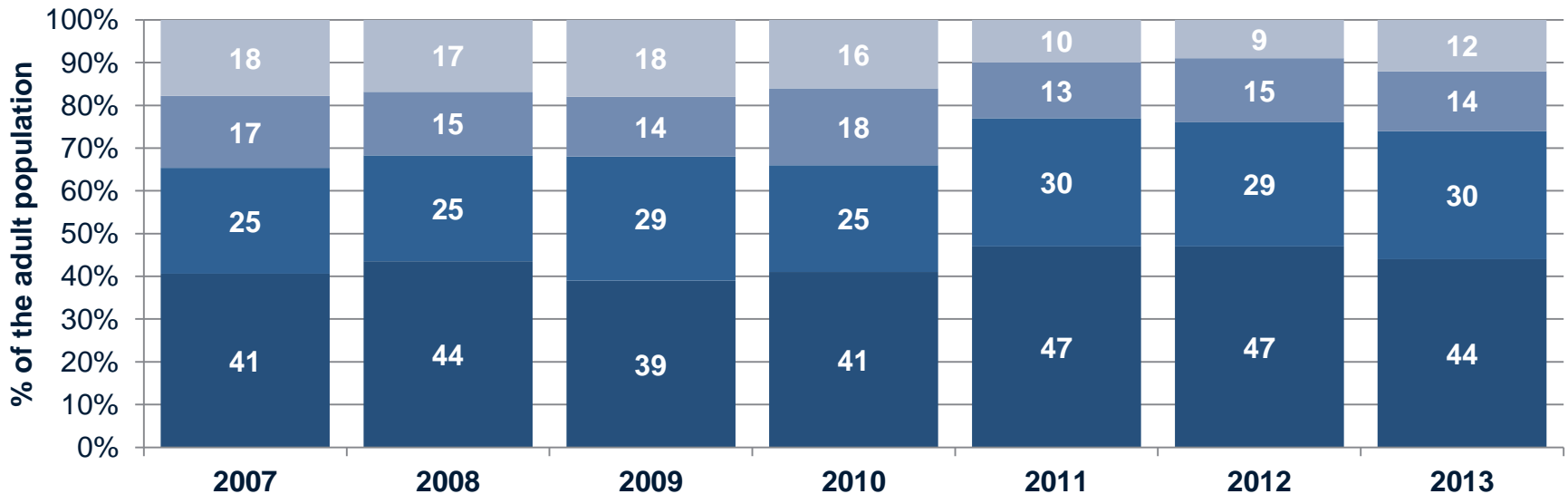
To what extent was the amount of food your household had over the past month less than adequate, just adequate or more than adequate for your household's needs?

It was less than adequate for your household's needs	1
It was just adequate for your household's needs	2
It was more than adequate for your household's needs	3
(Do not know)	8

# Consumption Adequacy Results, 2007-2013



Source: SASAS 2013



Source: SASAS 2007-2013

■ None ■ Low(1-2) ■ Medium(2-4) ■ High (5-6)

# Consumption Adequacy by Subgroup, 2013

Share of Adults who Reported: “Not Adequate”						
	Housing	Access to transport	Health care	Children’s schooling	Clothing	Amount of food over the past month
<b>National</b>	29%	32%	29%	17%	23%	31%
<b>Race Group</b>						
<b>Black African</b>	35%	37%	33%	19%	27%	36%
<b>Coloured</b>	18%	19%	17%	13%	17%	17%
<b>Indian/Asian</b>	13%	15%	11%	6%	7%	17%
<b>White</b>	5%	7%	8%	3%	3%	4%
<b>Geographic Type</b>						
<b>Urban formal</b>	23%	24%	21%	14%	18%	26%
<b>Urban informal</b>	50%	48%	43%	21%	30%	35%
<b>Trad. Auth. Area</b>	37%	45%	43%	21%	33%	38%
<b>Rural formal</b>	37%	50%	41%	23%	32%	44%

Source: HSRC SASAS 2013

# Consensual Approach: Socially Perceived Necessities

- Asking ordinary people what they regard as an **acceptable standard of living** that all South Africans should enjoy in the **present day – a more democratic definition of poverty**.
- Resonates with the collection of people's **political social** and **economic demands** which were reported to the **Congress of the People** and which fed into the preparation of the **1955 Freedom Charter**.
- In SASAS 2006 respondents are asked which of a **list of items (possessions, services or activities)** are necessary for all South Africans to have or have **access to enjoy an 'acceptable' standard of living**.

# Results on Socially Perceived Necessities for Adults

- **36 of the 50 items** were defined as essential by more than half the adult population; 27 items by two thirds or more.
- **Main Categories**
  - **service provision/infrastructure-oriented** (mains electricity, a weather-proof house, street lighting, tarred roads close to the house, and separate bedrooms for adults and children )
  - **material possessions** (TV, cell phone, radio, sofa/lounge suite, a special meal at Christmas or equivalent festival and some new clothes)
  - **social networks** (someone to talk to if you are feeling upset or depressed, someone to lend you money in an emergency, someone to look after you if you are very ill, having an adult from the household at home at all times when children under ten from the household are at home)

# Growing Debate...

- Growing debates in the **media** and among **policy-makers** on a **decent living wage** and what this might constitute.
- Strikes by **organised labour** and protest action in **poor communities**.
- Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa indicated that he is **determined** to see a **national minimum wage** in place – one of President Jacob Zuma’s pre-election promises.
- HSRC’s DGSD Research Programme is **committed** to working with existing partners (e.g. Stats SA, SASPRI) to continue **collecting data on poverty and improving** the understanding of poverty and its dynamics in South Africa



# Research Support

- More survey-based research to **better understand poverty** and its **extent** in the country.
- SASAS provides an **excellent tool to monitor** and study **perceived necessities** and **public definitions** of poverty.
  - Need funding to analyse **existing data** on poverty and basic needs –need **new partners** for collaborations.
  - Repeat the Socially Perceived Necessities definitional module to **better understand** changing **definitions of poverty** and **deprivation** in the country.

**Thank You**



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