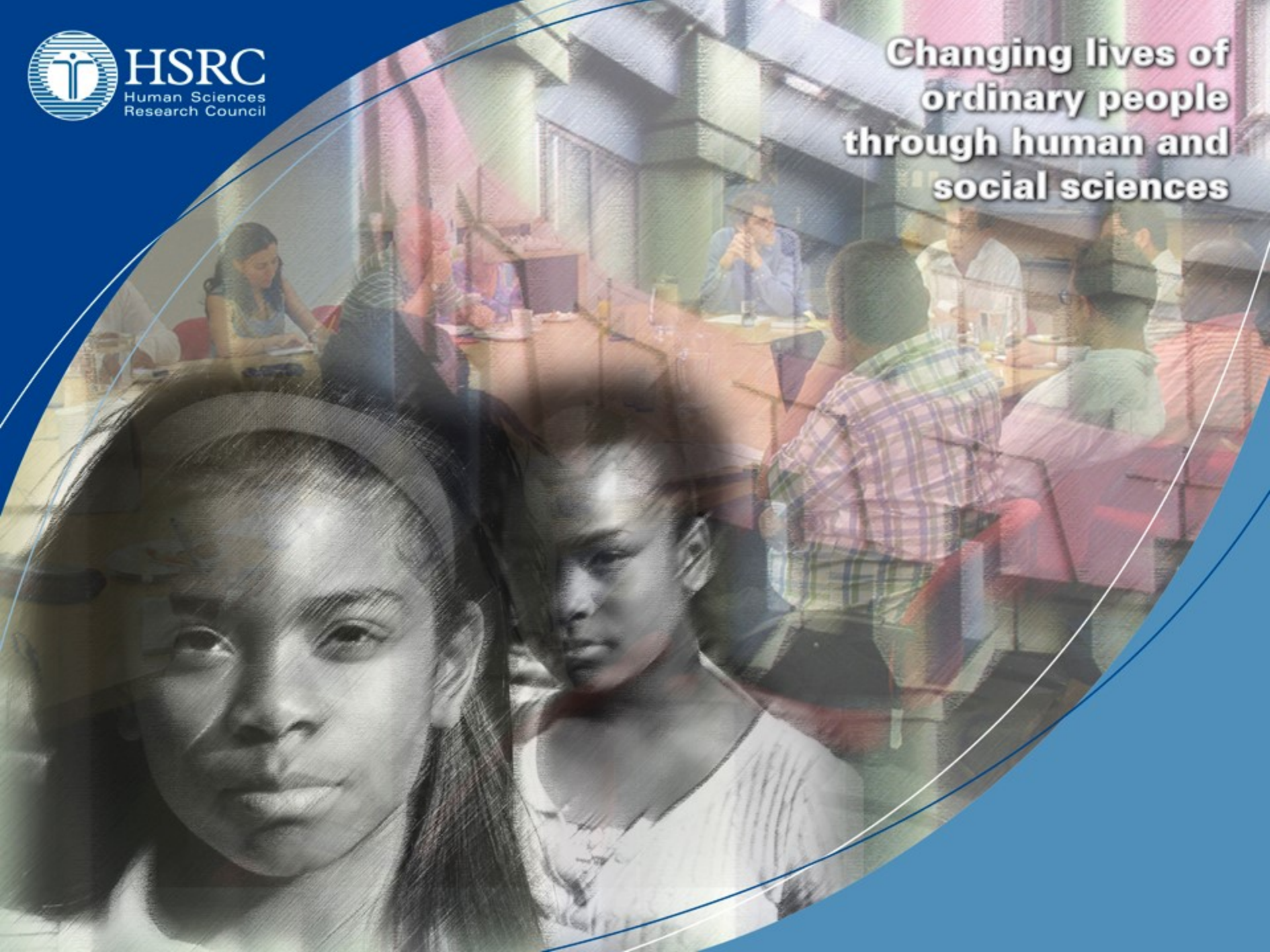
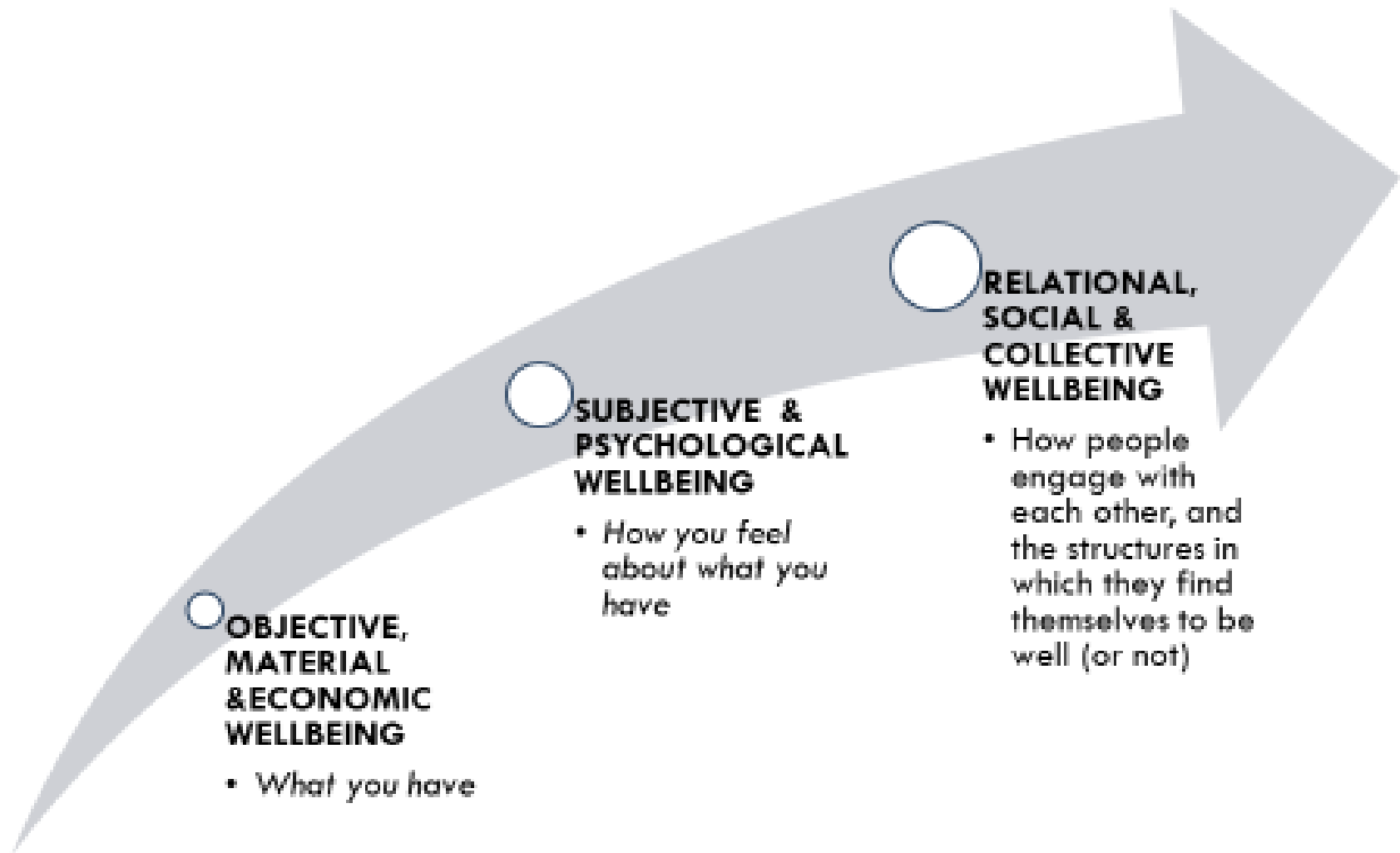


**Changing lives of
ordinary people
through human and
social sciences**



Multidimensional Wellbeing: what it is, and how it relates to reducing poverty and inequality - a historical, methodological and practical approach



Pilot qualitative study

- How do people understand wellbeing in households and what are their strategies for improving/achieving wellbeing – in whatever oppressive and resource-poor environment they find themselves?
- Thornton
- Vulindlela - Sweetwaters

Insights from pilot studies

- Criteria:
 - Gendered household composition
 - Socio-economic class
 - Race
 - Security of tenure
- Methods:
 - Recruitment
 - Family/household/event mapping
 - Individual interviews – over 18

Our sample

3 households in Thornton

- Informal settlement
- White suburban family
- Coloured suburban family

4 households in Vulindlela

- All African
- 3–owned, 1 rented – all mud houses

Commonalities

- All female headed
- Multigenerational – larger, smaller in Thornton

Methodological insights

- Recruitment strategies: social media, flyers, referrals, solicitation outside supermarket
- Discomfort with involving entire household
- Difficulties in including men
- Intimate-partner violence, sexual abuse
- Difficulties in recruiting lower middle class participants (qv. working class and precariat)
- Need better relational entry to communities
- Class and domestic space – questions about where to conduct interviews (space and comfort)
- Psychological support during fieldwork (for researchers and participants)

- **Researcher:** The interview process was an emotional one, both the community mapping exercise and the individual interview. **There were tears throughout the interview and this was triggered by some things that the family had gone through in the past.** Although it was evident that the family was at a point in life where they seemed to be strong and moving on with their lives, having to re-tell their experience brought up a lot of emotions. **This made me feel like we were opening old wounds for the family,** and while I understand that this is an issue that they have been living with for many years now, I thought the one thing that made it difficult was having to share the story with strangers.

Thornton

- **Issues raised**
- Housing
- Employment
- Safety from crime
- Schools and education
- Family
- Religious community
- Transportation
- Racism and sexism
- The presence of men
- Innovation & collective resources
- Pivotal events
- Networks of relations

Vulindlela

Issues raised

- Plagued by illness
- Grants
- Sanitation
- Church and prayer,
- Neighbours, stokvels
- Safety and policing
- Teen pregnancy
- Unskilled work
- Employment
- Education, colleges
- Recreation, libraries
- Ubuntu eroded
- Families a source of emotional and financial struggle and support
- No experience of talking about pain, survival, trauma, therapeutic alternatives, emotional resources

Where to from here?

A deep contextual study of wellbeing

- Langa and Thornton
- Soweto and Mondeor
- Vulindlela and Edendale
- Rustenburg and Marikana

An index of wellbeing – repeated biennially

- Material, Subjective, Relational
- Strategies – individual and collective
- Agency, co-agency, helplessness

Publications

Mahali, A., Lynch, I., Fadiji, A., Tolla, T., Khumalo, S. and Naicker, S. (2018). Networks of wellbeing in the global south: a critical review of current scholarship. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 34, 3: 1–28. [IBSS]

Mahali, A. & van Rooyen, H. (forthcoming 2020). *Multidimensional wellbeing in Unequal Spaces: A research agenda*. Cape Town, South Africa: HSRC Press.

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