

**ABSTRACT**  
**PARALLEL WORKING SESSION**

**THE REDUCTION OF POVERTY**

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**Inequality and poverty in post-apartheid South Africa:  
gains and challenges**

This paper describes the legacies of deep poverty and high levels of inequality that were bequeathed to the new democratic South African government in 1994 by its predecessors, and the impact of government programmes on these over the past 16 years.

The paper outlines a range of current debates and controversies on why poverty and inequality have proved so persistent, and contrasts residual vs relational approaches to the explanation of poverty. The latter includes the view that poverty and inequality in post-apartheid South Africa are 'structural' in character, requiring major state interventions in the market economy. Finally, government thinking on these questions is described, and contrasted with those of a number of engaged scholars.