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One Kind of Freedom: Poverty Dynamics in Post-apartheid South Africa

Michael R. Carter ... Julian May

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Abstract

A 1993 South African living standards survey documented the legacy of apartheid in the form high levels of inequality and human insecurity. Drawing on a 1998 re-survey of households in the 1993 study, this paper explores whether this legacy has been superseded, or whether apartheid's end has been only one kind of freedom that has left households in a poverty trap from which they cannot escape. After proposing a theoretically grounded dynamic poverty typology that distinguishes stochastic from structural poverty transitions, the paper goes on to estimate that significant numbers of the South African poor are potentially trapped in a structural poverty trap and lack the means to escape poverty over time.



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Keywords

income dynamics; poverty measures; South Africa

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