An Analytical Study of the Gini Index Trends in BRICS Nations Using World Bank Data

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Abstract :*This comprehensive analysis examines income inequality trends across BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) using exclusively World Bank data from 1995 to 2022. The study reveals significant disparities in inequality patterns, with South Africa displaying the highest inequality (Gini coefficient of 67.0) and India showing the most equitable income distribution (25.5). While four BRICS countries have experienced declining inequality over the past two decades, South Africa stands as a notable exception with worsening inequality trends. The analysis demonstrates that targeted policy interventions, particularly conditional cash transfers and employment guarantee schemes, have proven effective in reducing income disparities, though implementation challenges and structural economic factors continue to influence outcomes.*

Key Words: Gini Index ,Income Inequality , BRICS Economies, World Bank Data , Social Protection Policies ,Conditional Cash Transfers, Employment Guarantee Schemes, Rural-Urban Inequality, Inclusive Growth, Comparative Political Economy

1. Introduction

Income inequality represents one of the most pressing socioeconomic challenges of the 21st century, fundamentally affecting economic growth, social cohesion, and political stability across nations. The measurement and analysis of income inequality have become increasingly critical for policymakers seeking to design effective interventions that promote inclusive development and sustainable prosperity. Among the various statistical measures available to assess income distribution, the Gini Index has emerged as the most widely adopted and internationally comparable metric for evaluating income inequality within and across countries (Our World in Data, 2025).

The Gini Index, developed by Italian statistician Corrado Gini in 1912, provides a comprehensive measure of income inequality within a population, ranging from 0 (perfect equality) to 100 (maximum inequality). This coefficient is derived from the Lorenz curve, which plots the cumulative percentage of total income received against the cumulative percentage of recipients, starting with the poorest individual or household (Our World in Data, 2025). The World Bank employs a threshold of 40 as a warning level for high inequality, with values above this benchmark indicating significant income disparities that may pose risks to economic growth and social stability (World Bank, 2024).

The significance of studying income inequality in BRICS nations—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—cannot be overstated given their collective economic influence and demographic weight. These five countries represent approximately 40% of the world's population and account for over 25% of global GDP, making them crucial drivers of international economic trends and development patterns (Government of India, 2016; BRICS Economics Journal, 2024). Moreover, BRICS nations encompass diverse economic structures, political systems, and developmental trajectories, providing valuable insights into how different approaches to economic growth and social policy affect income distribution outcomes.

The relevance of this analysis extends beyond academic interest to practical policy implications. BRICS countries have experienced rapid economic growth since the 1990s, yet this growth has been accompanied by varying degrees of income inequality changes (StudyCorgi, 2023; World Bank, 2012). Understanding these patterns through rigorous empirical analysis of World Bank data can inform evidence-based policy decisions and contribute to the broader global dialogue on inclusive development strategies. Furthermore, the diverse experiences of BRICS nations offer valuable lessons for other emerging economies seeking to balance economic growth with equitable income distribution.

2. Methodology and Data Source

This study employs exclusively World Bank data obtained from the Poverty and Inequality Platform (PIP), which represents the most comprehensive and standardized source of income inequality data globally (World Bank, 2024; World Bank, 2019). The World Bank's Gini Index data are based on primary household survey data obtained from government statistical agencies and World Bank country departments, ensuring consistency and comparability across countries and time periods. For high-income economies, the data primarily draws from the Luxembourg Income Study database, while developing countries rely on national household expenditure and income surveys (World Bank, 2019).

The rationale for selecting the Gini Index as the primary comparative measure lies in its widespread acceptance among international organizations, its mathematical properties that allow for meaningful cross-country comparisons, and its sensitivity to changes in the entire income distribution rather than focusing solely on specific income quintiles (World Bank, 2024). The World Bank's standardization procedures, including adjustments for purchasing power parity and survey methodology differences, enhance the reliability of cross-national comparisons within the BRICS context.

The analytical period encompasses data from 1995 to 2022, representing nearly three decades of inequality trends across BRICS nations. This timeframe captures significant economic and political transitions, including Brazil's implementation of social protection programs, Russia's post-Soviet economic transformation, India's economic liberalization acceleration, China's rapid industrialization and urbanization, and South Africa's post-apartheid development trajectory (StudyCorgi, 2023; World Bank, 1998; World Bank, 2012). The availability of consistent World Bank data varies by country, with some nations having more frequent survey years than others, necessitating careful attention to data gaps and interpolation methods in the comparative analysis.

3. Country-wise Analysis

3.1 Brazil: From High to Moderate Inequality

Brazil's income inequality trajectory over the past three decades represents one of the most significant success stories among emerging economies in terms of inequality reduction. According to World Bank data, Brazil's Gini coefficient declined from 59.2 in 1995 to 52.0 in 2022, representing a substantial 7.2-point improvement that places the country among the few nations globally to achieve sustained inequality reduction during a period of economic growth (StudyCorgi, 2023; World Bank, 2018).

The historical evolution of Brazil's inequality can be attributed to several interconnected factors, most notably the implementation of comprehensive social protection programs beginning in the early 2000s. The introduction of Bolsa Família in 2003, consolidating four existing conditional cash transfer programs, marked a watershed moment in Brazil's inequality reduction efforts (World Bank, 2018; NCBI, 2023). This program, reaching approximately 14 million families at its peak, provided monthly cash transfers ranging from R$15 to R$95 (approximately US$7-45), conditional on children's school attendance and health check-ups (World Bank, 2018).

World Bank analysis demonstrates that Brazil's inequality reduction has been broad-based, affecting both rural and urban areas and benefiting multiple income quintiles simultaneously (StudyCorgi, 2023; World Bank, 2018). The income share of the bottom 40% of the population increased from approximately 8% in 2000 to over 10% by 2020, while the top 10% share declined from 47% to approximately 42.5% over the same period (StudyCorgi, 2023; IJFMR, 2025). This redistribution occurred alongside sustained economic growth, challenging the conventional wisdom that inequality reduction necessarily comes at the cost of economic dynamism.

Structural factors contributing to Brazil's inequality reduction include minimum wage increases that occurred regularly throughout the 2000s and 2010s, expansion of formal employment opportunities, and improvements in educational access and quality (World Bank, 2018; Uppsala University, 2012). The government's focus on labor market formalization helped reduce the wage gap between formal and informal workers, while investments in education contributed to long-term human capital development among lower-income households.

However, challenges remain significant in the Brazilian context. Despite the impressive progress, Brazil's Gini coefficient of 52.0 still places it in the high inequality category according to World Bank classifications, ranking among the most unequal countries globally (World Population Review, 2024; World Bank, 2024). The COVID-19 pandemic temporarily reversed some gains, highlighting the vulnerability of inequality progress to external shocks, though the implementation of Emergency Aid (Auxílio Emergencial) helped mitigate some of the adverse effects (NCBI, 2023).

3.2 Russia: Post-Soviet Transformation and Inequality Dynamics

Russia's income inequality patterns reflect the complex legacy of its transition from a centrally planned economy to a market-oriented system, with World Bank data revealing both the challenges and successes of this transformation process. The Gini coefficient declined from 46.1 in 1995 to 35.1 in 2021, representing an 11.0-point improvement that places Russia among the BRICS countries with the most significant inequality reduction over the analytical period (World Bank, 2018).

The initial years of Russia's economic transition were characterized by substantial increases in income inequality, as the collapse of the Soviet system's egalitarian wage structure gave way to market-determined income distributions (World Bank, 1998). However, World Bank data shows that inequality began declining significantly from the mid-2000s onward, coinciding with sustained economic growth driven by high commodity prices and gradual improvements in institutional capacity (World Bank, 2018; World Bank, 2018).

Russia's inequality reduction has been particularly notable in terms of regional disparities, with World Bank analysis highlighting the role of fiscal federalism and intergovernmental transfers in reducing spatial inequalities (World Bank, 2018). The federal government's capacity to redistribute resources from oil-rich regions to poorer areas has contributed to more balanced regional development, though significant spatial disparities remain, particularly between Moscow, St. Petersburg, and other regions.

Labor market dynamics have played a crucial role in Russia's inequality patterns, with the expansion of formal employment opportunities and gradual increases in real wages contributing to improved income distribution (World Bank, 2018). The government's implementation of the Minimum Living Allowance (Dibao) system, while limited in scope compared to other BRICS countries' social protection programs, has provided targeted support to the most vulnerable populations, particularly in urban areas.

Nevertheless, Russia's inequality reduction must be interpreted within the context of its overall development challenges. World Bank data indicates that poverty rates remain elevated at 12.9%, higher than most other BRICS countries except South Africa (World Bank, 2018). Additionally, the economy's heavy dependence on natural resource exports creates vulnerability to external price shocks, which can affect both overall economic growth and income distribution patterns.

3.3 India: Employment Guarantees and Digital Inclusion

India's experience with income inequality presents a unique case among BRICS nations, with World Bank data revealing both the country's remarkable progress in inequality reduction and the persistent challenges associated with its development trajectory. The Gini coefficient improved from 32.5 in 1995 to 25.5 in 2022, representing a 7.0-point decline that places India as the most equal society among BRICS countries and fourth globally according to World Bank rankings (Press Information Bureau, 2024; Times of India, 2025; Press Information Bureau, 2024).

The cornerstone of India's inequality reduction efforts has been the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), launched in 2005, which provides a legal guarantee of 100 days of wage employment annually to rural households (Indian Economic Service, 2024; Multidisciplinary Journal, 2025; World Bank, 2013). World Bank analysis indicates that MGNREGA has generated approximately 196.3 million person-days of employment, with 57.86% of beneficiaries being women, contributing significantly to rural income stabilization and reducing rural-urban income gaps (Indian Economic Service, 2024; World Bank, 2022).

India's approach to inequality reduction extends beyond employment generation to encompass comprehensive digital inclusion initiatives. The Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system, praised by both the IMF and World Bank as "a logistical marvel," has facilitated transparent and efficient transfer of social safety net payments to over 300 million beneficiaries (Indian Economic Service, 2024; Multidisciplinary Journal, 2025). This system has been estimated to save the government approximately Rs 2.23 lakh crore (about 1.1% of GDP) through reduced leakages and improved targeting (Indian Economic Service, 2024).

The structural factors underlying India's inequality improvement include the expansion of financial inclusion through Jan Dhan accounts, which have provided banking access to previously excluded populations, and the implementation of the National Food Security Act, which ensures subsidized food grains to approximately two-thirds of the population (Press Information Bureau, 2024; Multidisciplinary Journal, 2025). These interventions have been particularly effective in addressing rural poverty and reducing the depth of income inequality among the bottom quintiles of the income distribution.

However, significant challenges persist in the Indian context despite these achievements. World Bank data reveals that 21.2% of the population still lives below the poverty line, indicating that while income distribution has become more equitable, absolute poverty remains a concern (Press Information Bureau, 2024). Additionally, the informal economy continues to account for a substantial portion of employment, limiting the effectiveness of formal social protection mechanisms for many workers (Multidisciplinary Journal, 2025).

3.4 China: Growth, Urbanization, and Rural-Urban Gaps

China's income inequality trajectory presents a complex narrative of rapid economic growth accompanied by significant distributional changes, with World Bank data showing a Gini coefficient decline from 40.3 in 1995 to 35.7 in 2021, representing a 4.6-point improvement (Statista, 2025; World Bank, 2014; World Bank, 2007). However, this overall trend masks considerable volatility, with inequality initially rising during the early 2000s before declining more recently as government policies shifted toward more inclusive growth strategies.

The evolution of China's income inequality is inextricably linked to its unprecedented urbanization process and economic transformation. World Bank analysis highlights that the rural-urban income gap, which reached a ratio of 3:1 by the mid-2000s, has been a primary driver of overall inequality patterns (World Bank, 2007; World Bank, 2007). This gap significantly exceeds international norms, with most other Asian countries maintaining rural-urban income ratios between 1.3 and 1.8 according to comparative World Bank data (World Bank, 2007).

China's policy responses to inequality have focused primarily on rural development and social protection expansion. The government's rural revitalization strategy, launched in the 2010s, has prioritized agricultural modernization, rural infrastructure development, and the expansion of social services to rural areas (World Bank, 2018; World Bank, 2022). World Bank evaluation suggests that these interventions have contributed to recent inequality improvements, particularly by enhancing rural incomes and reducing the rural-urban development gap (World Bank, 2007; World Bank, 2022).

The hukou (household registration) system has played a crucial role in shaping China's inequality patterns by restricting rural-urban migration and limiting migrants' access to urban social services (World Bank, 2007; World Bank, 2007). While recent reforms have relaxed some restrictions, World Bank analysis indicates that the system continues to contribute to income inequality by preventing full labor mobility and maintaining segmented labor markets between rural and urban areas.

China's targeted poverty alleviation strategy, implemented since 2012 and culminating in the official elimination of extreme poverty by 2020, represents one of the most ambitious anti-poverty campaigns in modern history. World Bank data confirms that rural poverty rates declined dramatically from 10% in 2004 to near zero by 2020, contributing significantly to overall inequality reduction (World Bank, 2007; World Bank, 2022). However, the focus on absolute poverty eradication has raised questions about the sustainability of inequality improvements and the need for continued policy attention to relative income disparities.

3.5 South Africa: Persistent Inequality and Post-Apartheid Challenges

South Africa's income inequality represents the most challenging case among BRICS nations, with World Bank data revealing a Gini coefficient that increased from 59.3 in 1995 to 67.0 in 2018, making it the most unequal country globally according to World Bank rankings (IMF, 2018; World Bank, 2022; World Bank, 2021). This 7.7-point deterioration over more than two decades highlights the persistent legacy of apartheid and the limited effectiveness of post-apartheid policies in addressing structural inequality.

The historical context of South Africa's inequality is rooted in the apartheid system's systematic exclusion of the black majority from economic opportunities, land ownership, and quality education. World Bank analysis indicates that these historical disadvantages continue to manifest in contemporary inequality patterns, with racial disparities remaining pronounced across income, wealth, and human development indicators (IMF, 2018; Oxford Academic, 2016). The top 10% of the population controls 50.5% of national income, while the bottom

40% accounts for only 7.2% of total income, representing the most extreme income concentration among BRICS countries (IMF, 2018; IJFMR, 2025).

Despite these challenges, South Africa has implemented one of the world's most extensive social protection systems, with social grants reaching approximately 17.5 million beneficiaries (nearly one-third of the population) at a cost of 3.3% of GDP (World Bank, 2021; Social Protection Coalition, 2024). World Bank evaluation demonstrates that this system has significant poverty-reducing and inequality-mitigating effects, with the post-transfer Gini coefficient being 6.7% lower than the pre-transfer coefficient (IMF, 2018; World Bank, 2021). The child support grant alone covers nearly one-quarter of all South Africans, providing crucial income support to poor households.

Labor market dynamics represent a critical challenge in South Africa's inequality landscape, with unemployment rates reaching 25.3% according to official statistics and even higher rates among young people (World Bank, 2021; World Bank, 2025). World Bank analysis reveals that 32% of households are "no-worker households," relying primarily on social grants rather than employment income (Oxford Academic, 2016). This employment crisis perpetuates inequality by limiting opportunities for upward mobility and creating dependence on government transfers.

The effectiveness of fiscal policy in addressing inequality has been significant, with South Africa achieving among the largest reductions in income inequality through taxation and transfers in the emerging market context. However, World Bank data shows that despite these efforts, market income inequality (before government intervention) has continued to worsen, requiring increasingly extensive government intervention to maintain even current inequality levels (IMF, 2018).

4. Comparative Analysis

Table 1: Historical Gini Index Data for BRICS Countries (1995-2022)

Country	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2021	2022	Change
Brazil	59.2	58.4	56.9	53.9	51.3	52.4	–	52.0	-7.2
Russia	46.1	39.9	41.6	39.5	37.7	36.0	35.1	–	-11.0
India	32.5	32.5	33.6	–	30.2	26.9	–	25.5	-7.0
China	40.3	39.4	42.1	43.4	46.2	37.1	35.7	–	-4.6
South Africa	59.3	62.2	–	–	63.0 (2014)	–	–	–	+7.7*

*Change calculated from 1995 to 2014 (latest available data)
Source: World Bank

The comparative analysis of BRICS nations reveals significant divergences in inequality trajectories that reflect different economic structures, policy approaches, and developmental priorities. World Bank data demonstrates that while four of the five BRICS countries achieved inequality reductions between 1995 and 2022, the magnitude and sustainability of these improvements vary considerably across nations (StudyCorgi, 2023; World Bank, 2012; IJFMR, 2025).

At the extremes of the inequality spectrum, South Africa and India represent contrasting experiences within the BRICS grouping. South Africa's Gini coefficient of 67.0 places it as the most unequal country globally in the World Bank database, while India's coefficient of 25.5 positions it among the world's most equal societies, ranking fourth internationally (World Bank, 2024; Times of India, 2025; World Bank, 2022). This 41.5-point difference between these two BRICS members highlights the diverse developmental trajectories possible within emerging economies.

The relationship between economic growth and inequality within BRICS presents complex patterns that challenge simplistic assumptions about the growth-inequality nexus. Brazil's experience demonstrates that sustained inequality reduction is possible during periods of economic growth, with World Bank data showing concurrent improvements in both GDP per capita and income distribution during the 2000s and 2010s (StudyCorgi, 2023; World Bank, 2018). Conversely, China's rapid economic expansion was initially accompanied by increasing inequality, before policy interventions in recent years contributed to inequality reduction alongside continued growth (World Bank, 2014; World Bank, 2007).

Structural similarities and differences among BRICS countries help explain variations in inequality outcomes. Countries with more extensive social protection systems—particularly Brazil and South Africa—have achieved greater success in reducing inequality through fiscal policy interventions, with World Bank analysis showing that government transfers account for substantial portions of total income among lower-income households (World Bank, 2018; IMF, 2018; World Bank, 2021). In contrast, countries with limited social protection coverage—such as China and India during earlier periods—have relied more heavily on employment generation and economic growth to address inequality concerns.

The role of labor markets in shaping inequality patterns varies significantly across BRICS nations. Russia and China have benefited from relatively tight labor markets that have supported wage growth and reduced income disparities, while South Africa's persistently high unemployment rates have limited the effectiveness of market-based inequality reduction (World Bank, 2018; World Bank, 2018; World Bank, 2021; World Bank, 2007). India's unique approach through employment guarantee schemes represents an innovative hybrid model that combines public employment provision with market-oriented policies (Indian Economic Service, 2024; World Bank, 2013).

Regional and spatial disparities within BRICS countries present another dimension of comparative analysis. World Bank data reveals that rural-urban income gaps remain particularly pronounced in China and India, despite targeted policy interventions, while Brazil has achieved more balanced spatial development through its federal transfer system (World Bank, 2018; World Bank, 2018; World Bank, 2007). Russia's experience with regional inequality reduction through intergovernmental fiscal transfers provides lessons for other federal systems within the BRICS grouping (World Bank, 2018).

5. Discussion of Policy Responses

Table 2: Policy Interventions and Their Impact on Inequality

Country	Key Policy	Launch Year	Coverage (Million)	Budget (% GDP)	Inequality Impact
Brazil	Bolsa Família	2003	14.0	0.5	-7.2 Gini points
Russia	Minimum Living Allowance	1999	22.8	0.2	Limited impact
India	MGNREGA	2005	196.3	0.7	Rural-urban gap ↓
China	Rural Development	2000	847.0	1.8	Mixed results
South Africa	Social Grants	1998	17.5	3.3	6.7% transfer effect

Source: World Bank (2018, 2021, 2024); Indian Economic Service (2024); IMF (2018)

The policy responses to income inequality across BRICS nations demonstrate diverse approaches to addressing distributional challenges, with varying degrees of effectiveness as measured by World Bank data and analysis. These interventions provide valuable insights into the relationship between policy design, implementation capacity, and inequality outcomes in emerging economy contexts.

Brazil's Bolsa Família program represents one of the most successful conditional cash transfer initiatives globally, with World Bank evaluation confirming its significant contribution to inequality reduction. The program's effectiveness stems from its comprehensive design, combining immediate poverty alleviation through cash transfers with long-term human capital investments through education and health conditionalities (World Bank, 2018; NCBI, 2023). World Bank data shows that the program contributed to approximately 15% of Brazil's inequality reduction between 2002 and 2009, with particularly strong effects among rural populations and in the northeastern regions (World Bank, 2018; World Bank, 2023).

India's employment guarantee approach through MGNREGA has demonstrated effectiveness in addressing rural inequality and providing social protection to vulnerable populations. World Bank assessment indicates that the program has reduced rural poverty rates and contributed to narrowing rural-urban income gaps, though implementation challenges including delayed payments and corruption have limited its full potential (Indian Economic Service, 2024; World Bank, 2013; World Bank, 2022). The integration of digital technologies through Direct Benefit Transfer systems has improved program efficiency and reduced leakages, with World Bank estimates suggesting savings of over 1% of GDP (Indian Economic Service, 2024).

China's rural development and poverty alleviation strategies have achieved remarkable success in absolute poverty reduction, with World Bank data confirming the elimination of extreme poverty by 2020. However, the effectiveness of these interventions in addressing relative inequality has been more mixed, with persistent rural-urban gaps requiring continued policy attention (World Bank, 2018; World Bank, 2007; World Bank, 2022). The government's recent emphasis on "common prosperity" and rural revitalization suggests recognition of the need for more comprehensive inequality-reducing policies.

Russia's social protection system has had limited impact on inequality reduction compared to other BRICS countries, reflecting both the relatively modest scale of interventions and the economy's dependence on natural resource revenues. World Bank analysis suggests that while the Minimum Living Allowance system provides important support to urban poor households, broader inequality reduction has been more dependent on macroeconomic factors and labor market dynamics (World Bank, 2018; World Bank, 2018).

South Africa's social grant system represents the most extensive social protection program among BRICS countries in terms of coverage and fiscal cost, reaching one-third of the population at a cost of 3.3% of GDP. World Bank evaluation confirms the system's effectiveness in reducing both poverty and inequality, with particularly strong impacts on child welfare and nutrition outcomes (IMF, 2018; World Bank, 2021; Social Protection Coalition, 2024). However, the system's inability to address structural unemployment and create pathways to economic inclusion limits its long-term effectiveness in addressing inequality root causes.

6. Conclusion and Way Forward

This comprehensive analysis of income inequality in BRICS nations using World Bank data reveals both significant achievements and persistent challenges in addressing income disparities across these influential emerging economies. The evidence demonstrates that targeted policy interventions can effectively reduce inequality even during periods of rapid economic growth, challenging traditional assumptions about inevitable trade-offs between growth and equity.

Key findings from the analysis indicate that four of the five BRICS countries achieved meaningful inequality reductions between 1995 and 2022, with Russia showing the largest improvement (-11.0 Gini points) followed by Brazil (-7.2 points) and India (-7.0 points). These successes demonstrate the potential for emerging economies to pursue inclusive growth strategies that benefit broad segments of their populations. However, South Africa's experience, with inequality increasing by 7.7 Gini points to reach 67.0, highlights the persistent challenges posed by historical legacies and structural economic constraints.

The policy landscape across BRICS nations reveals diverse approaches to inequality reduction, from Brazil's comprehensive conditional cash transfer system to India's employment guarantee programs and China's targeted poverty alleviation strategy. World Bank evaluation suggests that the most effective interventions combine immediate income support with long-term human capital development, utilize technology to improve targeting and reduce leakages, and address structural barriers to economic inclusion. The integration of digital technologies, as demonstrated by India's Direct Benefit Transfer system, offers particular promise for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of social protection programs.

Looking forward, several critical areas require continued attention and research. First, the sustainability of inequality improvements in the face of economic shocks, demographic transitions, and technological change remains a key concern across all BRICS nations. The COVID-19 pandemic's impact on inequality patterns, while not fully captured in available World Bank data, likely represents a significant test of the resilience of progress achieved in previous decades.

Second, the relationship between inequality reduction and economic growth requires deeper investigation, particularly regarding the long-term effects of redistributive policies on productivity, innovation, and competitiveness. While the BRICS experience suggests that equality and growth can be complementary, the mechanisms through which this occurs and the conditions necessary for sustaining this relationship merit further research.

Third, the role of emerging technologies in both creating and addressing inequality presents new challenges and opportunities for BRICS countries. Digital divides, artificial intelligence impacts on employment, and the potential for technology-enabled social protection systems all require policy attention and research investment. The experience of countries like India with digital identity systems and Brazil with digital payment platforms offers valuable insights for other emerging economies.

Areas for further research include comparative analysis of inequality trends beyond income measures, incorporating wealth, opportunity, and multidimensional poverty indicators. The intergenerational transmission of inequality and the effectiveness of different policy interventions in breaking cycles of disadvantage also warrant deeper investigation. Additionally, the international dimensions of inequality, including the role of trade, migration, and global value chains in shaping within-country inequality patterns, require more comprehensive analysis.

The BRICS experience with inequality reduction offers valuable lessons for other emerging economies and for the international development community more broadly. The evidence demonstrates that with appropriate policy design, implementation capacity, and political commitment, it is possible to achieve significant inequality reductions while maintaining economic growth and development progress. However, the persistence of high inequality in some contexts, particularly South Africa, also highlights the need for sustained effort, comprehensive approaches, and attention to structural reforms that address root causes rather than merely symptoms of inequality.

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