

# Indicators for a Caribbean reality: critiques of the Human Development Index and the Social Progress Index.

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# Introduction

- Seers (1969): *“The questions to ask about a country’s development are therefore: What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result ‘development’, even if per capita income had doubled.”*

# A mean of means: The Human Development Index

The human development index (HDI) is a composite index that measures the average achievements in a country in three basic dimensions of human development:

- 1) a long and healthy life;
- 2) access to knowledge;
- 3) and a decent standard of living.

# Human Development Index (HDI) in the Caribbean

Country	Rank (2012/2013)	HDI (2012/2013)
Barbados	38/59	0.825/ 0.776
Bahamas	49/51	0.794/ 0.789
Grenada	63/79	0.770/ 0.744
Antigua and Barbuda	67/61	0.760/ 0.774
Trinidad and Tobago	67/64	0.760/ 0.766
Saint Kitts and Nevis	72/73	0.745/ 0.750
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	83/91	0.733/ 0.719
Jamaica	85/96	0.730/ 0.715
Saint Lucia	88/97	0.725/ 0.714
Belize	96/84	0.702/ 0.732
Suriname	105/100	0.684/ 0.705
Guyana	118/121	0.636/ 0.638
Haiti	161/168	0.456/ 0.471

Source: UNDP: Human Development Reports (2013/2014)

# The Social Progress Index

- *the capacity of a society to meet the basic human needs of its citizens, establish the building blocks that allow citizens and communities to enhance and sustain the quality of their lives, and create the conditions for all individuals to reach their full potential.*

# The Social Progress Index

Social Progress Index component-level framework



# Social Progress Index

Country (PPP GDP per Capita)	SPI Rank	SPI Score
Jamaica (\$7,083)	43	70.39
Trinidad and Tobago (\$23,260)	47	69.88
Guyana (\$2,930)	82	60.06



# Critiques of the HDI and SPI

- *“any attempt to understand the state of the world- which is what the HDI purports to do- is only as good as its ability to reflect the realities of the world” Sagar and Najam (1998);*
- *“..in principle choices can be infinite and change overtime” UNDP (1990)*

# Critique of the HDI and SPI

- Six (6) main economic problems that Caribbean economies will face, in common, in the near term
  - the collapse of preferential arrangements for traditional exports;
  - overnight liberalization in the context of globalization (the World Trade Organization [WTO] and new trading agreements with the European Union- Economic Partnership Agreement [EPA]);
  - stubborn unemployment, particularly among youths, and concomitant growing social deviance, including violence, crime, and drugs;
  - foreign debt burdens;
  - market risks faced by more dynamic sectors of recent years—tourism, offshore finance, and information processing.
  - Vulnerability to natural disasters, exacerbated by climate change, is a sixth and longer-term concern.

# Conclusion

- E. H Carr :

*“Before you study economics study the economist, before you study the economist, study his historical and social environment...”*

Seers, 1963:79