

Data Poverty, SDGs and Coloniality in the Anglophone Caribbean

Gillian Wilkinson McDaniel *

Abstract

The inability of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) such as Jamaica to meet Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) must be read within the context of systemic data poverty as an outcome of the colonial exercise. Norms of hegemony are characterised by dependence, an over-reliance on external technical assistance and opportunity cost asymmetries.

Persistent efforts to meet international data goals are unsustainable in the absence of a paradigm that is local and indigenized to suit the particular development patterns of the country. One size does not fit all. Implementation of statistical legislations though widespread in the Caribbean and due to the colonial history of census taking which predates independence for all CARICOM countries, is nonetheless characterized by *ad hocery* in data production and limited harmonisation across the statistical system. The article suggests that data production and dissemination in the Anglophone Caribbean is largely to satisfy international obligations rather than to support evidence based policy-making in the public sector.

Keywords

Data poverty, Anglophone Caribbean, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), coloniality, cultural economy

* PhD Candidate, Institute of Caribbean Studies, University of the West Indies, Mona Campus; Principal Director Entertainment Policy and Monitoring, Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport Jamaica.

Data Poverty as Coloniality¹

The inability of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) such as Jamaica to meet Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) must be read within the context of systemic data poverty as an outcome of the colonial exercise. Norms of hegemony are characterized by dependence, an over-reliance on external technical assistance and opportunity cost asymmetries. Persistent efforts to meet international data goals are unsustainable in the absence of a local indigenized paradigm, to suit the particular development patterns of the country. One size does not fit all. Implementation of statistical legislations though widespread in the Caribbean and due to the colonial history of census taking which predates independence for all the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries, is nonetheless characterized by *ad hocery* in data production and harmonisation across the statistical system (PARIS21, 2018). Dissemination also is largely to satisfy international obligations (Bleeker and Abdulkadri, 2020) (Burke, 2019) rather than to provide evidentiary and policy support within the public sector framework. The paper finally uses cultural data collection as an example of data poverty in the Anglophone Caribbean.

In 2015, 193 United Nations member states agreed to adopt a set of global goals to end poverty and hunger, protect the environment and planet and reduce inequalities. UNSTAT in Resolution 71/313 agreed that a solid framework of indicators and statistical data was needed to monitor progress, inform stakeholders and ensure accountability (UN 2017). In addition, the Resolution reaffirmed the need to strengthen national data systems and evaluation of programmes in developing countries. Recalling Resolution 68/261 of 29 January 2014 that among other things endorsed the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (UNFPOS), the resolution reaffirmed the previous commitment to enhancing the national statistical capacity of least and landlocked developing countries (LDCs), developing countries and small island developing states (SIDs).

In order to adopt standards that reduce poverty and inequalities globally, there is the need to have robust data and statistical systems at the local, regional and international levels. Further, building a framework of indicators, developing statistical data, and developing a legislative framework are critical enabling factors for the national statistical system (NSS) which undergirds the "people-centred, universal and transformative" 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN 2017, 2). A legal framework that adequately

1 The title is from personal conversation with Dr. Kim Marie Spence, Lecturer, Queens University Belfast.

2 In the early period of colonial rule, practical guidelines were provided to ensure as much as possible, uniform practices in data collection across the region a practice which was standardized in 1958 by the United Nations. While the rest of the region suspended census taking between 1943-46 due to war, Jamaica conducted its census in 1943 and established a unit within the national statistical office. In 1946 this unit was expanded to serve as a "regional body" providing assistance to other colonies in the undertaking of their census exercises as it was in Jamaica that tabulation and information analysis for the 1946 was conducted whereas the schedules were printed in Trinidad. There was significant regional collaboration and participation in the post-World War II period with all participating member countries utilising a common approach (PARIS21). The post WWII period marked a defining moment in census-taking in the Caribbean and was a blueprint for future data collection given the collaborative and participatory nature of the process which to this day is characterized by regional collaboration and sharing of best practices. See the Website of Central Statistical Office <https://cso.gov.tt/history-of-census-taking/>

responds to the challenges of the data revolution to meet the 2030 Agenda's demand for data (ECLAC 2020) is therefore paramount. In this regard, a legislative review of CARICOM³ countries found that fourteen of the fifteen countries⁴ had statistics legislations but many were in varying stages of incorporating internationally accepted statistical principles in their legislation (Bleeker and Abdulkadri, 2020). The uneven incorporation of statistics legislations has in some instances, hampered data collection and analysis especially that which relates to cultural data a sector often regarded as non-economic and therefore less significant to Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

A 2020 Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) review shows that within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, effective monitoring of and reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) require high quality, timely and disaggregated data and statistics at the sub-national, national, regional and global levels (2020, 9). In CARICOM for example, only Trinidad and Tobago has fully incorporated in its legislation⁵ the principle of national coordination or Principle 8 of the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (UNFPOS)⁶ that recommends coordination among official producers of statistics in order to achieve efficiency and consistency in the statistical system (ECLAC 2020, 53). All other CARICOM nations only partially incorporate this principle of national statistical standard setting and organizational coordination of data among data producers (Bleeker and Abdulkadri 2020). This coordination is essential for countries within CARICOM to meet SDG reporting.

3 CARICOM is the acronym for the Caribbean Community and Common Market and includes Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

4 The ECLAC review included the Dominican Republic and Suriname as well as CARICOM Associate member countries.

5 This is enshrined in the National Statistical Institute of Trinidad and Tobago Bill of 2018 (NSITT).

6 The ten principles are **Principle 1:** Relevance, impartiality and equal access Official statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society, serving the Government, the economy and the public with data about the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation. To this end, official statistics that meet the test of practical utility are to be compiled and made available on an impartial basis by official statistical agencies to honor citizens' entitlement to public information. **Principle 2:** Professional standards and ethics To retain trust in official statistics, the statistical agencies need to decide according to strictly professional considerations, including scientific principles and professional ethics, on the methods and procedures for the collection, processing, storage and presentation of statistical data. **Principle 3:** Accountability and transparency. To facilitate a correct interpretation of the data, the statistical agencies are to present information according to scientific standards on the sources, methods and procedures of the statistics. **Principle 4:** Prevention of misuse The statistical agencies are entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics. **Principle 5:** Sources of official statistics Data for statistical purposes may be drawn from all types of sources, be they statistical surveys or administrative records. Statistical agencies are to choose the source with regard to quality, timeliness, costs and the burden on respondents. **Principle 6:** Confidentiality Individual data collected by statistical agencies for statistical compilation, whether they refer to natural or legal persons, are to be strictly confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes. **Principle 7:** Legislation The laws, regulations and measures under which the statistical systems operate are to be made public. **Principle 8:** National coordination Coordination among statistical agencies within countries is essential to achieve consistency and efficiency in the statistical system **Principle 9:** Use of international standards The use by statistical agencies in each country of international concepts, classifications and methods promotes the consistency and efficiency of statistical systems at all official levels **Principle 10:** International cooperation Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics contributes to the improvement of systems of official statistics in all countries. Source: United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/68/26 adopted on 29 January 2014

Jamaica for example has administrative procedures in place to facilitate collaboration but an outdated legislation passed in 1984 and amended in 2003 prevents enumeration in law. Full incorporation of the UNFPOS principle of impartiality and equal access to the statistics for all users is seen only in Belize's legislation. Trinidad and Tobago have partially incorporated accountability and transparency in their legislation although no CARICOM country has fully incorporated the principle of prevention of misuse of data⁷ (ECLAC 2020, 50). This in itself creates the risk of political interference which reduces transparency and accountability of the National Statistical Office (NSO), a fundamental principle enunciated in the General Assembly's Resolution 71/ 313 dated 6 July 2017 (UN 2017).

The data collection experience in the Caribbean shows that targets set by external agencies which includes the SDG reporting requirements, are often beyond the scope and capabilities of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) given these key legislative, policy and resource challenges. Examples show the inability of Jamaica's planning agency to meet the 2030 targets (Henry 2022), and the inability of regional governments to meet the reporting requirements with half of the countries not having met in 2010, the Millennium Development Goals' reporting deadline for 2005. None met their reporting record for 2010 in 2013 (Abdulkadri, Evans, and Ash 2016). Burke, quoting Shin and Stevens (2013) argues that support to developing countries via international donor agencies "often brings into sharp focus the tensions between the various stakeholder groups within the policy domain and lay bare the limitations of imposing global frameworks and 'best practices' at the local level" (Burke 2019, 272). These results point to asymmetry in policy design, and alignment of human and fiscal, resources.

Systemic Legislative Challenges and Data Poverty

Regional research and ECLAC data further suggest that challenges exist within the structure of the various legislations that stymie data collection of regular economic data. As statistics are produced, analysed and disseminated within a particular economic and political context (Otero 2018), statistics legislations in the Anglophone Caribbean do not for the most part, prevent misuse of data, neither does it wholly support data sharing among producers and users of the data. It further, does not enhance accountability and transparency, a paradigm which is necessary to facilitate the overarching and country-wide nature of indicator development and reporting on SDG targets.

The Caribbean is considered "data poor" due to the data quality and data not being widely disseminated in a timely manner (Abdulkadri, Evans, and Ash 2016; Bleeker and Abdulkadri 2020). For the production of official statistics, the framework within which statistics are produced, and its public policy applications⁸ are intricately linked with statistical governance systems being characterized as centralized, decentralized

7 Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic were part of the study and the former has fully incorporated prevention of misuse of data and Dominican Republic partially incorporated this in their legislation.

8 There are four types of government data available to National Statistical Offices (NSOs) worldwide: census, survey, administrative (official) and big data. It is widely accepted that the vast majority of statistical information is directly from administrative/ official sources and indirectly from analyses of secondary microdata.

or devolved (Holt 2008). Centralized systems have a single authority focused on an identifiable institutional identity (in the case of Jamaica this is the Statistical Institute of Jamaica STATIN) which is separate from a Ministry. A decentralized system has thematically based groups of statistical producers that are responsible for the sector (such as education, health, environment et al.) usually situated within a policy department, whereas a devolved system has parallel statistical activities based on delegated powers within a geographic area and statistical production is replicated in each geographic area (Holt 2008).

While there is overlap of all three elements in the statistical systems of the Caribbean, the most widespread NSS form is the decentralized system with thematically based groups of statistics producers within Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) (PARIS21 2017). Labelling any statistical system in the manner of centralized, decentralized or devolved however is "something of a caricature" as countries typically utilize a mixture of approaches within their statistical systems: centralized systems contain decentralized components as in the case of Jamaica; and devolved systems may preserve powers at the national level (Holt 2008, 332).

Although arguments have been made that closer reporting to a minister of government or other high officials allows for better allocation of resources, the counterargument that such a reporting relationship may stifle independence and transparency (Iglesias 2006) is considered within the framework of statistics legislation in the region. Otero argues that "statistical institutions do not exist or function in a vacuum, they are articulated, in a complex and sometimes contradictory manner, with a general background of broad social and political demands"(2018, 18). Implementation of statistical legislations though widespread in the Caribbean and due to the colonial history of census taking which predates independence for all CARICOM countries, is nonetheless characterized by piecemeal data production and insufficient and limited harmonisation across the statistical system (PARIS21 2018). Dissemination has been found to be largely to satisfy international obligations (Bleeker and Abdulkadri 2020; Burke 2019) rather than to provide evidentiary and policy support within the public sector framework.

The Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN) and other national statistical offices (NSOs) across the region that "manufacture and produce the figures" (Gonzalez Bollo quoted in Otero 2018), are constituted by "[a] set of institutions, norms and practices that determine the production of numbers" (Otero 2018, 15). Indeed, the institutional approach used in Latin America to measure statistics production is a useful one for the Anglophone Caribbean⁹ as it becomes possible to evaluate NSOs on the basis of their administrative capacities and via evaluation of the legislative frameworks (Otero 2018, 16) that legitimise statistics production. Using six variables to test the strength or weakness of the statistical system in Latin America, Gonzalez Bollo devised a comparative model by reviewing the following capabilities within NSOs:

9 The Anglophone Caribbean includes the English speaking countries of CARICOM in addition to the British Virgin Islands and Bermuda but excludes Haiti and Suriname.

1. The ability of the NSO to pass laws (or to get statistics related laws) passed;
2. The level of internal specialisation;
3. The evolution of employee numbers and evolution of the allocated
4. The conduct/organisation of successful surveys and censuses;
5. The publication of official reports; and
6. Specific advice given to executive or congressional committees.

Figure 1. Statistical Systems in CARICOM

Source: Compiled by the author from information contained in the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. "A Review of Caribbean National Statistical Legislation in Relation to the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics."¹⁰

Countries	Legislative framework: able to pass laws? y/n	Internal specialization? y/n	Number Employees Budget allocation	Organise surveys and censuses?	Publish official reports? y/n	Provide data-centered advice to executive or parliamentary bodies?
Antigua & Barbuda	√		Resource challenged	√	√	
Bahamas	√ *	X	Resource challenged	√		
Barbados	√ *	√	Resource challenged	√	√	
Belize	√	√	Resource challenged	√	√	
Dominica	√	X	Resource challenged	√		
Grenada	√	√	Resource challenged			
Guyana	√ *	√	Resource challenged			
Jamaica	√ *	√	Resource challenged	√	√	STATIN via PIOJ
St Kitts & Nevis	√ *		Resource challenged			
St Lucia	√ *	√	Resource challenged	√	√	
St Vincent & the Grenadines	√ *	X	Resource challenged	√		
Suriname	√ *	√	Resource challenged			
Trinidad & Tobago	√	√	Resource challenged	√	√	

Key: * Legislation needs amendment | + Legislation amended but not passed into law | – no legislation | x A Division within a larger Ministry of Finance

¹⁰ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. 2020. *A Review of Caribbean National Statistical Legislation in Relation to the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics*. Publication | Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, CEPAL, 29 Jan. 2020. <http://www.cepal.org/en/publications/45100-review-caribbean-national-statistical-legislation-relation-united-nations>.

Using Gonzalez's 6-point test for the strength of NSOs, the information was applied to Anglophone Caribbean NSOs to test the strength of their statistical systems. **Table 1** illustrates that the majority of CARICOM would be considered relatively strong as all 14 countries¹¹ have statistics legislation, and all have some level of statistical and accounting specialization (despite one quarter directly reporting to a Ministry of Finance rather than being an autonomous NSO). The analysis shows that it is in the area of budget and the application of data to support policy that most regional NSOs are anaemic. Unfortunately, it is this same area that supports the institutionalization of the SDGs at the community level as data-centred policymaking enables better, more indigenised strategies and more targeted indicators.

The experiences of Latin America are corroborated by a 2009 ECLAC commissioned survey¹² which found common challenges across statistical offices in the region of high staff turnover and under-resourcing of NSOs. Although all NSOs conduct at a minimum the census and publish such census data, the same study found region-wide challenges to be a lack of visibility and inadequate focus on data, data collection and data analysis as evidence-based tools for effective policymaking (ECLAC 2009). Jamaica's own performance in five of the six areas though acceptable, is stymied by insufficient public policy application and limited budget allocation which impacts the conduct and quality of its statistical functions (PARIS21 2018; CARICOM 2018).

Jamaica Case Study

Though amendment to Jamaica's Statistics Act in 1984 established a semi-autonomous national statistical office in the STATIN with four key functions¹³, paradoxically the Act does not empower the very institution charged with data collection to mandate such collection within and across the public sector. Section 3(1)(a)(b) and (d) grants the power to "collect, compile, analyse and abstract...collaborate with public agencies and develop integrated social and economic statistics..." yet this power is diminished by Section 3(2)(b) and (c) which make data collection voluntary on the part of MDAs. Accordingly, independence and autonomy are reduced in practice between producers of statistics and the NSO. The relevant functions require ministerial approval to "collect information relating to any matter", other than those relating to the census, "so however that information collected pursuant to this provision shall be furnished on a voluntary¹⁴ basis..."¹⁴. The voluntary nature of data collection across MDAs therefore restricts STATIN's (and all NSOs within the Anglophone Caribbean's) ability to analyse, abstract and harmonise data which the SDGs and the global indicator framework demand.

11 No data is available for Haiti.

12 This was a 2009 survey on the statistical infrastructure of Caribbean countries.

13 The salient piece of the legislation states, Section3(1) (a)(b) and (d) (a) collect, compile, analyse, abstract and publish statistical information relating to the commercial, industrial, social, economic and general activities and condition of the people; (b)to collaborate with public agencies in the collection, compilation and publication of statistical information including statistical information derived from the activities of such agencies; (d) generally to promote and develop integrated social and economic statistics pertaining to Jamaica and to co-ordinate programmes for the integration of such statistics.

14 Section 3(2)(b).

Jamaica's Vision 2030 National Development Plan (Vision 2030) is the country's first longitudinal development planning document. The stated objective of the Plan is for Jamaica to achieve developed world status by 2030 (PIOJ 2008). Vision 2030 contains four national goals and 15 national outcomes that have been aligned with the SDGs. Since 2016, Jamaica via STATIN has convened national consultations to determine the country's ability to monitor the seventeen SDGs and has aligned the Vision 2030 national goals against the SDGs. Consultations were conducted in 2016 and grouped around three thematic areas: economic, social and environmental and multi-domain indicators which were further broken down by subject areas hence social indicators were broken down into health, education, poverty and gender (STATIN 2016) and so on. Following this consultation, the STATIN conducted a data collection and verification exercise and findings from this exercise showed that only 29.6 percent of the total indicators were being produced locally. This represented 66 of the 223 unique and applicable SDG indicators. Of the 157 remaining indicators, 69 or 30.9 percent were not being produced but data was available to produce them. Further, it was found that 39.5 percent or 88 of the total SDG indicators were not being produced and there was no data available to produce such indicators (STATIN 2016). Though the UN Development Programme's (UNDP) Rapid Integration Assessment found a 91% alignment between the Vision 2030 National Development Plan and the SDGs, for almost 40% of the total SDG indicators data was neither being produced nor was data available to produce this data in Jamaica. By the UN's own admission, the realization of SDGs in both the developed and developing world will require "substantial investment" and the mobilization of "significant resources – in the trillions of dollars"¹⁵ which CARICOM countries like Jamaica have not been able to commit without overseas development assistance all within the context of overcoming the difficult history of slavery and colonialism.

Developing cultural confidence, tourism-dependent economies, developing and implementing disruptive concepts, policies and platforms, fast tracking the development of the Caribbean technology economy are among the related themes that Barbadian Prime Minister and regional thought leader, Mia Mottley explored at an Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) seminar in 2020¹⁶. In order to be relevant however, these

15 United Nations. (2016). United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda-retired/#:~:text=The%20new%20Goals%20are%20universal,action%20in%20developing%20countries%20only.&text=A%20core%20feature%20of%20the%20SDGs%20is%20their%20strong%20focus,well%20as%20data%20and%20institutions>

16 Prime Minister Mia Mottley of Barbados addressing an Inter-American Development Bank seminar on the impact of COVID-19 on the Caribbean region entitled, "Time to Pivot: The Caribbean As a Global Leader" accessed at <https://youtube.com/watch?v=Dxb6tH4slql> noted, "...We must become developers of ideas and technologies that allow us to overcome the disadvantages of being Small Island Developing States - overcoming the difficulties of small economies, vulnerabilities to natural disasters and...overcoming the difficult history of slavery and colonialism. COVID-19 and its impact on our tourism dependent economies means that the time is now for regional governments to develop and implement disruptive and forward-thinking programmes, concepts, policies and platforms that fast track the development of a Caribbean technology economy. Transformation must be the sustainable maximisation of our most highly valued assets: our people, our ideas, our geography, our climate and our culture, It is only when we increase our cultural confidence and thus maximise the power of our creative imagination that we will be able to build technologies that unlock our region's true potential" (Mottley, 2020).

extracted themes depend on the availability of high quality statistics, systematic data collection, data research and analysis and timely data dissemination. In this context, data collection and statistical measurement matter because they help to monitor and evaluate public policies, delivery of services, and more importantly allow for evidence based policy making (Holt 2008; Contreras 2011; Clarence 2002). Data also plays a critical role in achieving sustainable development – from planning to implementation, monitoring and reporting (ECLAC 2020). Data further bolsters the indicator framework for SDGs. As a result, the availability of high quality statistics, data collection, data research and analysis are imperatives for developing and recording development trends in the bid towards sustaining Brand Jamaica and becoming a sustainable economy. Of the four types of data available to NSOs, big data poses the greatest challenge for the Caribbean region given the stated infrastructural and legislative challenges. Big data refers to voluminous data that is so complex that it cannot be stored or processed in traditional formats or with traditional methods¹⁷. Jamaica's 2016 Vision 2030/SDG alignment consultations and the results are therefore a stark reminder that data requirements place tremendous pressure on countries like Jamaica that have under-capitalized and under-resourced NSOs—a situation which has only been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Measuring Culture – The Global South as a Muse

Undoubtedly developing and implementing disruptive concepts, policies and platforms are essential to the development of the Caribbean region as is the need to confront the impact that colonialism has had on the region's cultural policy development and the quest to implement statistical systems that measure what is essential. Previous studies on Culture Satellite Accounts (CSAs) have been limited to industrialised nations save for that done by countries within the Agreement Andres Bello (CAB) bloc and particularly work done for Uruguay, (Asuega, Trylesinski, and Medeiros 2013) Mexico, (Feria 2004) and Colombia (Hara 2015). In light of the above, Jamaica and other English speaking Caribbean countries can reasonably be said to be woefully behind in establishing baseline indicators and developing methodologies for measuring the contribution of culture to their respective economies.¹⁸ Related work on culture accounting in the English-speaking Caribbean have not gone far enough in developing sustained statistical systems of economic measurement of culture¹⁹. Jamaica and other English speaking Caribbean countries have attempted to advance

17 "Big Data: what it is and why it matters" found at http://www.sas.com/en_us/insights/big-data/what-is-big-data.html accessed 25 October 2021.

18 This is notwithstanding Burke et al's mapping of Trinidad and Tobago's arts and cultural industry sector, James' mapping of the masquerade sector in Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados' project to map the creative industries, CARICOM efforts to guide regional strategies for statistics (CARICOM, 2018) and recently Jamaica's British Council funded mapping of the culture and creative industries and the recent EU funded project to map Kingston's creative ecosystem (KNOC).

19 Additionally the development of national cultural policies across the region with a groundbreaking movement by Trinidad and Tobago to develop the first National Registry of Artists and Cultural Workers that delineated the cultural fields to be incentivized via the registry; Trinidad's Registry as a vehicle to incentivize the culture sector and its attendant link to provide the Art and Culture Allowance in the Corporation Tax Act; as well as Barbados with the Cultural Industries Development Act (2015) and their

this activity through the development of policies in the region but the data and statistical systems necessary for measurement have not been similarly strengthened.

The Convénio Andrés Bello (CAB) definition used throughout Latin America²⁰ favours the interpretation of culture as an "object of research in economics...recognising that culture economy describes a discrete portion of culture itself, taking into consideration economic flows associated with the processes of creation, production, distribution and enjoyment of the cultural activities and products" (2009, 32). Using the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's "cultural field" definition as the building block, the CAB enunciates this as,

Human activities and their manifestations whose raison d'être consist of the creation, production, dissemination, transmission, consumption and appropriation of symbolic contents related to the arts and heritage. (2020, 61)

Culture and the cultural economy are therefore a system of relationships among social actors that are directly linked with the production, circulation, consumption and appropriation of artistic works (OAS/CAB 2020, 48). The CAB is the most faithful to the "classic" UNESCO definition and explicitly includes the creative value chain, intangible cultural heritage (ICH) referred to as 'symbolic contents, arts and heritage' and WIPO's explicit economic enunciation. Favouring the umbrella definition of "culture economy" CAB uses this to mean,

an object of research in economics...recognising that culture economy describes a discrete portion of culture itself, taking into consideration economic flows associated with the processes of creation, production, distribution and enjoyment of the cultural activities and products" (2020, 40).

The CAB enunciates thirteen core sectors²¹ and countries in the region have used this as a guide to develop their own satellite accounts based on the availability of administrative surveys, population and household surveys as well as a robust system of national accounts.

From this expansive approach specific countries in Latin America have utilized the cultural industries model (Chile), the copyright approach to culture measurement (Mexico), the creative industries/orange economy approach (Colombia), the cultural economy (Uruguay) and others have mixed approaches. Exposition on national experiences related to statistics are necessary in the case of Latin America due to the availability of data on public statistical institutions (Otero 2018, 15). For Latin America and the Caribbean, the former has the most sustained examples of culture satellite accounting in the Global South

National Cultural Industries policy; and finally, the model CARICOM Registry of culture workers all show evidence of policy advancement but not an attendant statistical advancement to measure culture. The 2003 National cultural policy of Jamaica and the development of the National Cultural and Creative Industries Commission/Council and Jamaica Creative between 2012-2021 also evince national policy rather than statistical advances across the region. See also the recent launch and implementation of the Creative Caribbean – An Ecosystem of "Play" for Growth and Development.

20 The MERCOSUR Cultural took a decision in 2006 to have a harmonized approach to generating cultural data among the region and moved to develop CSAs to build a platform for economic information circumscribing the culture of each country, to facilitate decision-making, both public and private agents and to provide input for the evaluation and implementation of public policies.

21 Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Audiovisual, Publishing, Cultural and Artistic education, Music, Design, Gaming, Material heritage, Immaterial heritage, Natural heritage.

even with development patterns similar to that of countries in the Caribbean. Chile for example beginning in 2007 used a phased approach to develop their Cuenta Satélite de Cultura (CSC) de Chile by identifying 3 'sectors' for measurement: music, books (literature) and audiovisual (film) and in 2008 added theatre, dance, visual arts and photography. Chile utilized population and housing census data to measure cultural practices and cultural participation focusing on consumer expenditure on cultural goods and services. Later estimations on the contribution of culture to GDP in Chile used the product-wide approach that measured the total supply and demand of culture products, industry production and inputs (Hara, 2015). In 2010 Colombia²² also began with an exploratory measurement exercise with emphasis on production done by Ortiz²³ to provide estimates based on a large group of activities and classifications.

Latin America's strategic and visionary approaches to documenting and measuring the impact of culture on their respective economies consequently gives value to and enable the valuation of culture thereby facilitating policy-making intra-regionally and within municipalities²⁴. Countries such as Mexico, Costa Rica, Uruguay, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Colombia et al, began measurement of culture with sectors for which there was available data, introduced a phased approach to implementation, utilised definitions based on their own development patterns, set out to measure culture's contribution to their respective economies²⁵ and measure at a minimum, the contribution of visual arts, audiovisual, publishing, books/literary arts and recorded music to their nations' development and economies (CAB/OAS 2020)²⁶.

Cultural Policy and Indigenisation in the Anglophone Caribbean

The current phase of the cultural problem in the Caribbean which Burke calls the "cultural industry development model" dates back to the mid-1990s. According to Burke it privileges export-oriented trade in cultural goods and services over the traditional

22 Colombia's investment agency defines the Orange Economy as "[those sectors of the economy] whose main purpose is the production or reproduction, promotion, dissemination and/or the marketing of goods, services and activities that have cultural, artistic or patrimonial content."

23 See Tadayuki Hara's 2015 examination for UNESCO Institute of Statistics on Current Methodologies for CSAs.

24 Colombia for example is represented at major music, film, literary festivals globally including a presence at the world music expo (WOMEX), MIDEM MIPCOM. Beginning with its investment promotion agency's "Colombia es Pasión" brand campaign in 2008, the country has led through visionary approaches to culture. Using these same statistics, Bogota, Colombia became one of the first UNESCO creative cities (the first in Latin America to join the network) and is now consistently viewed as a leader in cultural statistics and place-making.

25 Colombia's CSA was compiled via a 2005 Memorandum of Understanding between the National Administrative Department of Statistics of Colombia (DANE) and the Ministry of Culture and consistent with a generalised policy objective to consolidate cultural information for decision making, elaboration and follow-up with a Cultural Satellite Account and the generation of specialized statistics for this sector.

26 Costa Rica's CSA is published by the Ministry of Culture and Youth (Ministerio de Cultura y Juventud), the Interagency Commission on Culture Satellite Accounts (Comision Interinstitucional de Cuenta Satelite de Cultura (CICSC) National Statistics and Census (Institute via the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos) among others. Mexico's Cuenta Satélite de la Cultura de México, Costa Rica's *Cuenta Satelite de Cultura de Costa Rica: Metodología y Resultados*, and Colombia's *General Methodology Cultural Satellite Accounts*.

arts institutions and resources and takes a more instrumentalist view of culture (Burke 2010, 74) with its main focus being the utilization of culture as a vehicle for economic development. Although the evolution of the policy terrain can be divided into these phases a la Burke, there are commonalities that underlie all three eras. Primarily culture has never been central in the policy discourse and has generally been dependent on other spheres for its orientation.

It is therefore unsurprising that across the Anglophone Caribbean region of fifteen member and five associate member states, there remains no regionally accepted terminology for culture though culture is believed to be intrinsically valuable to the people of the region²⁷. The 2011 Regional Development Strategy and Action Plan for Culture enunciated a policy framework for *cultural industries* thereby preferencing a particular terminology [emphasis added]²⁸. The countries of the region continue to construct meaning from methodologies and frameworks that have yet to be indigenized to reflect the peculiarities of our small island developing states, the diasporic nature of their people and their roles as cultural metropolises. In fact, the meanings and methodologies are devoid of the peculiar idioms or ways of operating in the localized space, what Nettleford refers to as "ethos" or, the fundamental character of culture displayed across the Caribbean region preserved in such spectacles as the Caribbean Festival of the Arts (CARIFESTA), carnivals, religious and other practices. The antithesis of this argument however is that an indigenized ethos is unnecessary as by virtue of a culture's adoption and adaptation, indigenisation has in fact occurred whether acknowledged or not (Appadurai 1990, 295).

Despite this mandate for a regional data and statistical system²⁹, evidence from assessments conducted throughout CARICOM³⁰ shows despite best efforts, asymmetry in data coverage across the region with the infrastructure and resources necessary to develop these systems, remains largely in embryonic stages. Low technology and data integration, under-resourcing and inadequate legislative framework to enable the NSOs to realize their full statistical system functions are listed as some of the challenges (PARIS212017). Decentralization is also evident in the Regional Statistics Programme which does not collect primary data but relies on the NSOs or central banks to supply it with information

27 The most likely place for this definition would be the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas which established CARICOM. The Treaty is silent on this although in 1974 a culture desk and a culture officer tied to the education desk was established at the Secretariat.

28 The preference for the term cultural industries appears in the title, "Regional Development Strategy and Action Plan for the Cultural Industries" CARICOM settled on cultural industries as the preferred nomenclature and proposed the development of cultural industry development legislations, incentive schemes and financing mechanisms for arts and culture, ratification of treaties relevant to culture, establishment of registries of artists and cultural workers, harmonized customs regime for cultural goods, free movement of cultural practitioners within CARICOM, institutional support for the arts and dedicated education programmes in the arts. See page 195 of the Strategy.

29 The National Statistical System (NSS) refers to the combination of statistical organisations, Ministries, Departments, Agencies and units within a country that jointly collect, process and disseminate official statistics on behalf of a national government.

30 PARIS21 or Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st century was founded in 1999 by the United Nations, European Commission, OECD, International Monetary Fund and World Bank in response to the UN Economic and Social Council's resolution on the goals of the UN Conference on Development.

depending on the nature of the data (CARICOM). The mandate therefore for regional data and statistics to be harmonized, is hamstrung by weak infrastructure that is dependent on external donor funding to strengthen statistical capacity beyond that of census-taking which has had a longer history of implementation³¹.

Measuring Culture against GDP

An additional challenge for nation-states within CARICOM is the long-standing effort to measure and report on the robustness of culture in a manner similar to what has been done for the tourism, manufacturing and agricultural sectors. While GDP does not measure the digital economy or big data, nor measure inequality, and ignore important values like social cohesion, the environment and facets of culture (Coyle 2015; Durand, Fitoussi and Bourguignon 2019; Fioramonti 2014, 18), it has been called the world's most powerful number (Fioramonti 2014), and one of the greatest inventions of the 20th century (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis 2022) and remains the most powerful statistical figure in human history (Lepenies and Gaines 2016). An important critique of this culture to GDP discussion is from those who question in the first instance, the economic measurement of culture and its contribution to GDP³². This debate implicates the question of economic value versus cultural value. Admittedly, "GDP systematically disregards key sectors in the economy and neglects critical costs" (Fioramonti 2014, 15) and its measurement has the effect of making that which is not counted valueless in public policy and social debate as it is a lens (sometimes the only lens) through which policy-makers, media and society see the human economy. The argument is that culture is one such sector that has been consistently disregarded in economic accounting in Jamaica essentially rendering it valueless in public policy and discourse.

O'Connor argues that it is the economy itself that needs to be reframed to take account of culture rather than the other way around. Like Caribbean economist Vanus James, who asserts that culture cannot simply be reduced to economic value despite it being productive of economic value (James 2007, III), O'Connor continues that culture has its own economy of production, distribution and consumption (2016, 5). That

31 According to Fanny Malegue in an insightful piece entitled, "The Empire in a census table: Enumerating the population and governing the French Caribbean colonies after the Seven Years' War." *Histoire and Mesure 2* (2018): 93-114, colonial enumerations are linked to the development of statistics...and census table figures continue to help to write the history of the territories. Complex use of the census especially at the local level makes it an imperial tool (97).

32 Dr. Dennis Howard of the University of the West Indies, Mona in the first seminar presentation by this researcher posed this dichotomy in measurement and questioned whether the focus of culture's measurement to GDP is a valid one. While understanding that GDP has challenges, the preference is for some measurement of culture rather than none at all. Global and regional (Latin American) evidence is that tailoring measurement to be commensurate with national development and economic goals, yields better outcomes. Throsby argues that the challenge is one of valuation of cultural goods and services in the economy which are distinct from the economy and society. Belfiore concurs, noting however that the question of measuring value in culture in the context of policy making is one of balance: how can we capture, measure, quantify and qualify the value of the arts and culture in their cultural, social and economic dimensions for more robust outcomes. Belfiore, E. et al., https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272353527_How_do_we_value_and_undervalue_culture_Commissioner_Day_3_brief

is, having cultural value translating itself into economic value (i.e. valued in relation to GDP), "culture is not just infrastructure or economy but imaginary...they all work together"(O'Connor 2021).

Kuznet one of the main architects of GDP in the 1930s, acknowledged that GDP focuses on formalized economic transactions which make it unsuited for countries largely dependent on informal economic structures (Lundberg Quoted in Fioramonti, 1971). Measuring culture's contribution to GDP therefore is fraught with challenges for countries like Jamaica, which in 2015³³ was found to have more than 37% of the working population in the informal sector (STATIN 2020)³⁴ weak data sharing systems, inadequate statistical frameworks related to culture, and resource challenges including inadequate technical capacity in the field of culture and economics.

Despite these drawbacks, the necessity of having consistent, credible and empirical data for the cultural economy is imperative, as is finding a credible valuation of non-material goods in a common money metric way (Murtin, Boarini, Cordoba, and Ripoll 2015). "Of course measurement is hard. But roughly measuring the right concepts is a better way to make policy than using more precise measures of the wrong concepts"(O'Donnell 2021).

A Brief Word on Informality and Illegality in Jamaica's Cultural Economy

Jamaica in the eight years prior to the coronavirus pandemic, was host to an average of 20,000 events per annum³⁵. These activities broken down into round robins³⁶, festivals, nine nights³⁷, street dances, carnivals and cultural activities, meant that every week in Jamaica, across the 14 parishes and five police divisions³⁸ there were on average 1,000 events being staged (MCGES, JCF 2019). In 2001, Jamaica's informal sector was said to account for 43% of the official GDP (Torero, Robles, Hernandez, De la Roca, and Webber 2006) but in 2014 represented 37.1% or 340,335 employed persons according to STATIN (2020, 4). A study of the informal economy in Jamaica in 2003 listed music and entertainment as two of the

33 The 2015 IDB funded study was published in 2020.

34 An earlier report funded by the IDB in 2001 saw the number as high as 40% . See Miller (2018).

35 JCF, Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment (2012-16) and Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment & Sport (February 2016- 2020) internal data.

36 A round robin is a community savings party around entertainment in which a group of persons or 'partnership' host an event or 'drink up' for a specified sum, and is supported by other members of this 'partnership'. Each member will rotate the venue, usually a bar, and is supported by the other members in terms of attendance hence the term 'round robin'. Funds from each will be held by the person hosting to offset expenses. The aim is to publicize the event such that your earnings are more than your expenses and is considered an entertainment partner or savings compact.

37 Nine nights are funerary celebrations that happen nine days after a person dies. It is celebrated with music, food and community gathering to remember the deceased.

38 The JCF breaks down the parishes as **Area One:** Westmoreland, St. James, Hanover, Trelawny; **Area Two:** St. Ann, St. Mary, Portland; **Area Three:** St. Elizabeth, Manchester, Clarendon; **Area Four:** St. Andrew South, St. Andrew Central, Kingston Eastern, Kingston Western, Kingston Central; **Area Five:** St. Thomas and St. Andrew North.

specific goods and services that were in demand by locals and tourists alike (Miller 2018).

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) a United Nations agency charged with advancing social and economic justice by setting international labour standards, devised a technical guide³⁹ for NSOs on the informal sector and informal employment. The International Labour Conference characterises the informal economy as,

...consisting of units engaged in the production of goods or services with the primary objective of generating employment and incomes to the persons concerned. These units typically operate at a low level of organization with little or no division between labour and capital as factors of production and on a small scale. Labour relations where they exist – are based mostly on casual employment, kinship or personal and social relations rather than contractual arrangements with formal guarantees. (ILO 2013, Appendix A2 para 5(1))

The 17th ICLS⁴⁰ also enunciates the links between the informal sector, informal economy and non-observed sectors (ILO 2013, 45). The 2008 SNA characterizes the "non-observed" economy as one that has activities that are not captured in the regular statistics due to informality, concealment of a legal activity or illegality (UN Statistics 2009, 6.39-6.40). The OECD et al situate the non-observed economy as a broader contextual framework that encompasses four concepts with which it is often confused: i) underground production, ii) illegal production, iii) household production for own use and iv) statistical underground or production missed due to deficiencies in data collection programmes (OECD 2002; ILO 2013).

The informal sector applies to those activities within the economy that are not collected or recorded by conventional existing statistical sources⁴¹. The concept enunciated above is an analytical/political one rather than its original enunciation as a statistical and data analysis device (OECD 2002). The informal sector contributes greatly to the labour market and is considered an important but often overlooked component of many economies especially in the Global South as informal activities provide sources of income for a large swathe of persons (Torero, Robles, Hernandez, De la Roca, and Webber 2006; OECD 2002; ILO 2013, Appendix A2 5(2)) and this is particularly true for those in the culture sector. While the STATIN has concluded studies on the informal sector in Jamaica with overseas development assistance, there is further need to incorporate and take account of localized cultural activities such as round robins, nine nights and street festivals and their economic contribution to the economy.

Conclusion: Data Poverty as Coloniality Revisited

39 The guide provides practical assistance on implementing standards adopted by the 15th Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) .

40 The International Conference of Labour Statisticians.

41 All economic activities by workers and economic units that are—in law or in practice—not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements. Activities are not included in the law, which means that they are operating outside the formal reach of the law; or they are not covered in practice, which means that— although they are operating within the formal reach of the law, the law is not applied or not enforced; or the law discourages compliance because it is inappropriate, burdensome, or imposes excessive costs.

This article shows the linkage between colonialism, cultural data, statistical measurement and attainment of SDGs in the Anglophone Caribbean. Theorists argue that hegemonic dominance remains embedded within Jamaican cultural policy practice (Spence 2018; Thomas 2005; Nettleford 2003) and this dominance is seen even more in the treatment of information and data in the Caribbean context. According to Ledgister, the institutions of democracy which developed in the tutelary⁴² period were governed by bureaucrats whose primary purpose "was social discipline in the interest of the colonisers who were interested in social amelioration" (2003, 4-5). These bureaucrats he continues, took and kept the institutions and practices going (16), leaving the social discipline and interests of the colonisers intact (Ledgister). Foucault's theory of governmentality in which power is elaborated, rationalized and centralized under the auspices of state institutions can be applied to the statistical offices in the region and dovetails with Ledgister who maintains that the systems and institutions of the colonisers did not end but were continued by the once colonized. Quijano calls this system "Cultural Europeanisation," a state in which a mystified image of [their] own patterns of producing knowledge and meaning which was initially withheld from the colonized, is then partially and selectively taught to co-opt some of the dominated into their own power institutions (Quijano 2007, 169). The absence of Anglophone Caribbean indigenized statistical systems and processes that take account of local development patterns and activities (nine nights, round robins et al) is juxtaposed against the claim that statistical offices are constituted by "[a] set of norms and practices that determine the production of numbers" (Otero 2018, 15) Unlike the census which has been called an imperial tool, the full effect of finance and economic planning has not been applied to culture due to its "persistent informality", "lack of structure", and lack of "business or market readiness."

Data collection and statistical measurement in the Caribbean lend themselves to a postcolonial "outer field of reality"⁴³ reading especially where the very institution charged with statistical collection, analysis and dissemination lacks the effective power to fully realize its mandate. Postcolonialism as a theoretical construct interrogates these paradoxical counter-discourses that are seen in the construction of statistics around the cultural economy. Brathwaite's reflection on the Caribbean tendency to historicize in "fragments/specialisations" (2021, 91) argues that this tendency stems from a few key factors: colonialism or the European political subdivision of the West Indies/ Caribbean; the impact of "European empirical scholarship" and the economic and strategic interest which North America, more proximal than Europe, has had in the Caribbean region since the 1900s⁴⁴ (Brathwaite 2021). The rigid hierarchical pyramid structure that shows the "classic"

42 Even Ledgister's use of the term "tutelary" here suggests a parent/child or guardian/ward relationship which is reflective of the colonial period.

43 Brathwaite, Edward Kamau "Caribbean Man in Space and Time" *Small Axe* 2021 (90-104).

44 Brathwaite also references the absence until 1937 of locally based tertiary educational institutions concerned with Caribbean history. This was not included given the proliferation of locally based tertiary institutions throughout the region and at the secondary level that teach Caribbean history.

45 To be read as white European.

aesthetic⁴⁵ at the pinnacle, with the folk or ethnic at the base, reflects the assumptions underlying the tenacious imperialist hegemonic hold over the Western psyche. As a result, postcolonial debates on re-definitions and the search for appropriate perspectives on human interaction grapple with this fact of slavery and colonialism (Nettleford 1996) and its impact on institutions of power that determine how the economy is measured, what is a nd is not measured and by what metric the selected sectors that are measured.

Once a researcher has described the patterns, linkages and plausible explanations via inductive analysis, it is important to look for competing or rival explanations (Patton 1999, 1191). Cautionary views on the importance of data harmonization, standardization of definitions and methodologies *et al* are that while harmonisation allows for comparisons across countries, the standards themselves often have biases in their development and are devoid of national and cultural context. That is they are not indigenized. Additionally, there may be mismatch in local versus global interpretations, as standards are set by "developed" countries with greater resource allocation to statistics, data collection and measurement (IAOS 2022). The Caribbean, due to data being limited and not being widely disseminated in a timely manner, coupled with resource constraints that are legislative, fiscal and human, is considered "data poor" in comparison to developed countries.

As this article shows, data poverty which is a part of the colonial vestige of counting people via census-taking rather than applying inferential models to the postcolonial economies, is characterized by inadequate human and financial resource allocation, limited autonomy and technical weakness within NSOs that make the quest for indigenized data systems that are harmonized and disseminated across the statistical system (especially in LDCs and SIDS) burdensome. Within CARICOM, the harmonization agenda is largely geared towards satisfying international obligations, especially the SDGs that are data intensive (Bleeker and Abdulkadri 2020; Burke 2019). When set against the backdrop of national statistical systems that are not only constrained by insufficient resources and limited application of the legislative frameworks that govern the system⁴⁶ a seismic culture shift will be required among and between users and producers of statistics and data in the Anglophone Caribbean. Though technical and capacity building has allowed for the training of CARICOM statisticians, a shift to indigenizing the way the Caribbean considers data, considers what counts and what is counted, requires seismic culture change among and between users and producers of statistics and data.

46 The 2009 study on statistical systems in the Caribbean found common challenges across statistical offices of high staff turnover, under-resourcing of NSOs, lack of visibility and inadequate focus on data, data collection and data analysis as evidence-based tools for effective policymaking.

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