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"The Measure of America: American Human Development Report 2008-2009."

Sarah Burd-Sharps, Kristen Lewis and Eduardo Borges Martins

BY J. EDWARD SUMERAU



"The Measure of America: American Human Development Report 2008-2009" By Sarah Burd-Sharps, Kristen Lewis and Eduardo Borges Martins

AUGUSTA, GA - For the first time ever Americans have been given a detailed example of the status of health care and the structure of inequality to be found in this land. In a well-written, smoothly decorated report, a collection of researchers provide the first human development index ever compiled for a prosperous nation with the release of "The Measure of America: American Human Development Report 2008-2009."

Compiled by a collection of researchers working together, this report is a fastidious example of collaborative research done well. Headed by the combination of former deputy director of UNDP'S Human Development Report Office Sarah Burd-Sharps and the author of extensive publications concerning gender, development, and the environment Kristen Lewis, this report breathes with a professional air on every page. Assisted in an admirable fashion by statistics director Eduardo Borges Martins, this index is the result of a combination of talent, experience and dedication in the field of empirical study.

Though one may expect a small percentage of Americans to actually read a report like this, one can take hope in the fact that this data set is saturated with informative connotations and pristine comparative studies. Taking gender, race, education and earnings, the study undertakes an attempt to compile a human development index based upon the configuration of life built upon a long and healthy lifespan, access to knowledge, and a decent standard of living in the realm of daily activity. Furthermore, the collection of data amassed here provides an intriguing display of the disparities to be found in this society despite the amount of advancement often touted by officials in the American government.

This collection raises a plethora of question built around differences. Whether urban or rural, whether male or female, whether immigrant or native, whether rich or poor, the collection of reality within the American experience spans the length of possibility within a continuum of pleasure and pain in the day-to-day experience.

Particularly intriguing for those interested in comparative questions are the collection of maps at a glance in the back of the report. Within these stunning graphics, readers can find the amount of development for various states, congressional districts, ethnic groups, educational squadrons and other pertinent stratification indicators within American society. Furthermore, the use of visual aids allows readers to visualize the myriad of options available and determinant in the life cycle of the American citizen.

Compiled with skill and detail surpassing the usual pronouncements about American life, "The Measure of America" is a wonderful tool and informative guide for readers in search of a deeper understanding of the complex nature of American society.

Burd-Sharps, Sarah, Kristen Lewis, and Eduardo Borges Martins. "The Measure of America: American Human Development Report 2008 – 2009." New York: Columbia University Press and the Social Science Research Council. 2008. 246pp. \$75.00 Cloth or \$24.95 Paper. ISBN: 9780231154949 Cloth or 9780231154956 Paper.





Rich McCracken guitar solo





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