

ABSTRACT

The Role of the Press as an Opinion-Maker In the Foreign Policy Process of Small States: The Case of Jamaica, 1972 - 1980.

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For a small and economically weak state, the actions and postures it adopts towards other states is important for its survival. Such actions and postures are affected by several variables in a society, including the press which is a powerful opinion-maker.

This study examined the causal relationship between the press as an opinion-maker and foreign policy and was based on a content analysis of news stories, editorials and commentaries published in The Daily Gleaner on Jamaica-Cuba relations between 1972 and 1980.

The study found that while the press impacted on public opinion, personal experiences and ideological biases also played a role. It also highlighted the important role leaders play in the formulation of foreign policy and the low rating placed on mass opinion.

The study emphasised that journalists in small states need to move beyond narrow ideological biases and to generate wider interest in foreign policy. Educating readers on the factors influencing the making of such policies and available options should be a primary aim.