

# ABSTRACT

## INFORMATION SUPPORT FOR CULTURAL STUDIES, WITH A FOCUS ON THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES, ST. AUGUSTINE CAMPUS

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The paper evaluates the West Indian collections of the libraries of the three campuses of the University of the West Indies ( St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago; Mona, Jamaica; Cave Hill, Barbados), and Institutions on the respective campuses which are responsible for the development of popular culture studies. This task was undertaken in order to determine whether there is enough information support available to provide a basis for scholarly research in the area of Caribbean popular culture studies.

Popular culture is defined as those Caribbean culturally historic expressions which are widely supported and enjoyed by significant numbers of the population in the areas of sport/cricket, carnival, steelband, calypso and reggae.

The perceptions and opinions of researchers in the field in Trinidad and Tobago about existing resources on popular culture, were solicited by way of a questionnaire. Similar information was sought from the Heads of West Indian collections and Institutes on the three campuses. The contents of collections as they relate to popular culture have also been evaluated and described.

One of the challenges faced in the study was the scarcity of commercial bibliographic guides to Caribbean popular culture. This led to checklists having to be devised in order to create a resource against which the collections could be evaluated.

Among the problems highlighted by the study was that of the scattered nature of resources among a variety of institutions and individuals, which made the accessing of materials problematic for researchers. The need to initiate networking among libraries/institutions, to set up computerised databases for enhancing the bibliographic control of information and to serve as a guide to resources is identified. A lack of funding for the acquisition of material, and the need for dedicated personnel to acquire and organise resources is also highlighted by the study. A number of solutions to some of these problems, as well as areas for future research are proposed.

Findings are significant in terms of identifying the steps which are needed to be taken in order to fill gaps in resources, and to strengthen access to resources on Caribbean popular culture.