

ABSTRACT

The Legacy of the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation: A Retrospective Analysis

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The purpose of this research study is to examine the constituent elements of the legacy of the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation (JBC) as developed in the first three decades of its history.

The term legacy is defined as it relates to the research undertaking and acknowledges the role of historical developments in fashioning the character of the entity and dictating several features of its legacy.

The research paper illustrates as well that many significant elements of the JBC's legacy as developed in the period had their beginnings prior to the establishment of the entity in 1959. These were part of the JBC's own historical inheritance and not simply the creation of the Corporation's post independence political leadership.

The period of the '60's, '70's and '80's is viewed as significant in the setting of precedents of political manipulation of the JBC by its political directorate as well as the establishment of landmarks of professional accomplishment.

The study extracts for comparison, the dominant and contrasting decades of the '70's and '80's singled out for analysis, because of the diametrically opposed political policies pursued in each, and which inevitably impacted on the JBC's existence. The two pronged hypothesis tested is that

- (a) The JBC despite political interference made significant contributions to media in Jamaica and
- (b) The JBC was adversely affected by political manipulation.

The research took the case study approach and was conducted over a period of six months. It derives its conclusion from a triangulated method of research and analysis.

This involved the analysis of media artifacts, intensive interviewing and the perusal of text material relevant to the Corporation's history.

The results essentially substantiated the hypothesis that political manipulation in the management of the JBC adversely affected its operations. This was found to be the predominant feature of its legacy. What is also evident is that the JBC made phenomenal and fundamental contributions to the development of broadcasting in Jamaica, its political manipulation notwithstanding.

The ability of the JBC's management to spearhead several accomplishments of the Corporation as a broadcasting entity, despite successive political agendas, was found to be the intervening variable.

Essentially, the general perceptions held of the JBC as a political football as evidenced in texts referenced and articles perused, were corroborated by the managers charged to implement government policy.

The JBC's successive political rulers had deliberately sought to exact control over the entity, for political ends and in that sense had ensured the continuity of political hegemony.

The most positive aspect of the JBC's legacy to Jamaica was found to be its infrastructural development, benefiting the nation at large. These were the result of the collective management's resolve, to effect a comprehensive transmission network for information dissemination and future Broadcast stability.

Having regard to the Corporation's termination in 1997, by a political dispensation which founded it, the study is both relevant and timely in its documented account of the legacy of the JBC.

Keywords: Media, broadcasting, legacy