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**MEDIA REFORM IN JAMAICA: THE NEED FOR CONTINUITY**

by

**Gladstone Mapletoft Wilson**

A Thesis  
submitted to the  
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research  
through the Department of  
Communication Studies in Partial Fulfillment  
of the requirements for the Degree  
of Master of Arts at  
the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

1988

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## ABSTRACT

Over the past two decades, the Jamaican media environment has displayed several features common to media systems in post-colonial societies. The media suffers frequent policy reversals mainly as a result of changes in political administrations. The net result is a lack of continuity which is one factor inhibiting attempts at national consensus and long-term development. Jamaica cannot afford such discontinuities if it is considered that media are important in the development process.

The study concentrates mostly on public broadcasting although some attention is paid to print, particularly at the community level.

Using historical/critical analyses, the study draws on primary sources such as interviews with leading media executives, politicians and journalists to identify key variables which have affected or hindered the public broadcasting system from attaining the type of continuity evident in other sections of the media landscape. Curran's innovative public service model informs this critical work.



The essential challenge is to examine whether continuity can be achieved through reforms of social and political structures.

Essential to continuity is the need to amend the country's Broadcasting Act so as to empower the public media through Parliament and make them less subject to Ministerial governance. Suggested reforms in Jamaica's public media provide the government with full responsibility for policy direction but not for review. This separation is intended to guarantee less partisan manipulation and encourage greater access to the public media by previously disadvantaged groups. Cooperative ownership and community empowerment are also important features of the study's recommendations.

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Give thanks.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ZOI	-	Call letters for first licensed radio station
BBC	-	British Broadcasting Corporation
RJR	-	Radio Jamaica and Rediffusion Radio Jamaica Limited
JBC	-	Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation
PBC	-	Public Broadcasting Corporation
JIS	-	Jamaica Information Service
JAMAL	-	Jamaican Movement for the Advancement of Literacy
CARIMAC	-	Caribbean Institute of Mass Communication
D/N	-	Jamaica Daily News
D/G	-	Daily Gleaner
CPTC	-	Creative Production and Training Centre
ACP	-	African, Caribbean and Pacific
CRTC	-	Canadian Radio-TV and Telecommunications Commission
CBC	-	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
FCC	-	Federal Communications Commission
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
MRS	-	Market Research Services
JAMPRESS	-	Jamaica Press Service
JMC	-	Jamaica Media Commission
PSOJ	-	Private Sector Organization of Jamaica
IAPA	-	Inter-American Press Association
CANA	-	Caribbean News Agency
CPBA	-	Caribbean Publishing and Broadcasting Association
CBU	-	Caribbean Broadcasters' Union
MAJ	-	Media Association of Jamaica
PNP	-	People's National Party
JLP	-	Jamaica Labour Party
WPJ	-	Worker's Party of Jamaica
W/E Star	-	Week-end (Friday) Star
BITU	-	Bustamante Industrial Trades Union
NWU	-	National Worker's Union
ABC 1	-	Upper-income, Executive and Senior Managers
C2	-	Middle-income, professionals and middle managers
DE	-	Lower-income, workers, unskilled labour and artisans

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## CHAPTER 1

### THE SETTING

#### 1.1 Introduction

The Jamaican media environment displays socio-political features common to many media systems of the Third World. Some features are legacies of the colonial period while other features have developed since the attainment of political independence.

Since 1944, the two major political parties - Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) and People's National Party (PNP) - have succeeded each other in ten-year cycles. These regimes have instituted policy changes which very often affected the structure and character of the media environment in fundamental ways. These frequent policy changes have resulted in a lack of continuity in Jamaica's media system which inhibited attempts at national consensus and long-term planning.

After twenty-six years of existence, the public media, in particular, frequently receive opposite and conflicting signals in relation to the country's path to development.



It has become common for political leaders in opposition to admit to the quixotic and expedient nature of media operation on the island, but to do very little to institute sufficient reform when in power to bring about a continuity in administration. Continuity as our title suggests, is something to strive for if it is accepted that public-owned media, entrusted in government's care, should serve larger national goals rather than exclusive partisan interests.

Some reform in the Jamaican media environment will be necessary because the present structure is highly imperfect due mainly to a lack of continuity.

The working definition of reform used here is that it should be in keeping with notions of ordered change not subjected to major shocks or fundamental dislocation of existing social institutions. Reform in the Jamaican context takes into consideration cooperation and agreement among major players of power, chief of which are the two major political parties.

The study proposes therefore to examine the media environment in Jamaica and critically assess the present government's policy against the background of competing

demands for media reform.

Third World economies need to pay more attention to production and dissemination of information in the context of cultural preservation. If media are considered sufficiently capable of assisting or influencing lifestyles and perceptions of self, it would be worthy to explore how mass media serve to perpetuate external notions of social reality.

Most important, the study seeks to identify salient variables which have affected or hindered the public media in fulfilling their mandate as a truly national system. Ultimately, critical examination will produce relevant recommendations designed to make the public media system more responsive and responsible to specificities of the Jamaican nexus.

Our study shall therefore provide an historical backdrop and try to explore whether media reform is possible in the Jamaican environment so accustomed to policy reversals. In addition, the study will be concerned with a very important question. How is continuity achieved and maintained in the public media characterized by discontinuities?

To further understand the context of Jamaica, there is need to review some important historical features.

## 1.2 Background

Jamaica is one of the independent countries of the Caribbean which experienced colonialism under the British. The country has been through several stages of decolonization, inheriting political and parliamentary institutions associated with liberal-democratic juridical traditions.

These liberal traditions have been able to achieve modifications in extreme social inequalities, facilitate upward social mobility for many descendents of slaves and broaden political representation at several important levels in society. Socio-economic and political benefits over the past twenty-six years since independence increased political awareness to the point of tribalizing the society along partisan/class lines. Partisan/class politics in most subtle ways dominate the state sector. The long term impact has been to create reversals in policy at the change of political administrations.

Over the years, much discussion and controversy have surrounded the very way in which public media performed as instruments of nation-building.

What is required is to develop structures and operational frameworks which facilitate some measure of continuity that is neither short-term nor ephemeral. When such policy principles are carefully discussed and evolve out of settled principles, there is a greater chance of imposing discipline on all those involved in the process.

There is less chance of caprice, and social demands and expectations can be kept at responsible levels. Also, these principles provide a reasonable defence of agreed national interest, specifically in relation to undesirable cultural impositions and inappropriate technology.

### 1:3 History and evolution of Jamaican Media

In 1958, formation of the West Indies Federation encouraged the development of mass media regionally and at the local level. Federation was a regional

response to geographical and political fragmentation of colonial-dominated states striving for self definition.

Radio stations and newspapers were seen not as individual media systems but functioning as a cooperative news bureau working towards regional unity (Lent, 1977:61).

Both the idea of a unitary media system as well as federation itself proved unsuccessful for two basic reasons, namely, limited financial support and lack of cooperation among the leadership core in the region as Jamaica's strong territorial nationalism grew. This disunity at the political level also affected relations in Caribbean media.

Thereafter, individual Caribbean nation-states established radio and television systems which in most cases are government owned and operated. Unlike the electronic media, newspapers have an earlier history of private ownership which dates back to the nineteenth century (Lent, pp. 80-81).

Elites in Jamaica had access to radio in the late 1920s, via shortwave, from Radio KDKA in Pittsburgh, USA. Frankie Lyons, a local ham radio operator, made frequent broadcasts from 'The Columbia', a ship docked in the Kingston harbour. Lyons, along with a small group of ham owners on the island, participated in what could be considered local, public, information-sharing. However, it was not until 1939 that radio became more widely used as a vehicle of public information and entertainment.

Radio ZQI, the first licensed broadcasting organization in Jamaica, began as a response to the outbreak of World War II. As a security measure, all ham sets were confiscated by the colonial authorities for fear of important information falling into unauthorized or enemy hands. Additionally, transmission frequencies were needed for strategic military uses.

John Grinan, a wealthy planter, offered the government use of his ham equipment for broadcasting food prices and the latest information on allied forces fighting German fascism.

ZOI started operations on November 17, 1939, and during the hostilities of the war, served as the main source of government information to mainly urban elites. Technology did not allow for greater access and participation in media. Social services were very limited, and at that time, electrification to rural areas of the country was still some time away. A more important reason for limited media access was the presence of social and economic structures modified after almost three hundred years of colonial rule.

The dominance of British institutions in Jamaica meant an adoption of similar class formations, structures and processes. Since the State emerged as an integral part of the British colonial empire, its primary interests was to protect and perpetuate the political culture of the British ruling class (Munroe, 1972:10). The hegemony and power of this dominant class meant maintaining control over the colonized society, even though local political leaders had begun the decolonization process as a result of mass protest and demands from organized trade union groups.

Along with the dominance of imperial British statism on Jamaican development, the mode of production which Beckford describes as Plantation Capitalism, institutionalized race from the outset (Beckford, 1986:74).

Essentially, the Jamaican society was structured with white expatriates, local plantation sectors and a small bourgeoisie controlling the main resources of production, distribution and exchange. They also controlled the main instruments of mass media. A small literate enclave with access to media technology circulated information, which in its content, perpetuated a mode of thinking designed to prolong British rule. In the absence of any socially significant communication mode; other than oral, this dominance was bound to be challenged as part of the decolonization process.

The relationship between underdevelopment and social conditioning is not exclusive to Jamaica. Most Third World countries have been penetrated by the capitalist mode of production. Goulbourne states that within capitalism are features of economic backwardness



which make these Third World countries subordinate in the international division of labour (Goulbourne, 1979:27). For media, it is not different, since information production and its technical transport system were first developed in powerful industrial societies.

So, in order to understand the nature of mass media in the Jamaican context, it is important to establish that media structures in the post-war period were not different from the power relations which characterized larger economic and social arrangements.

ZOI offered mostly classical music, some medical information and copied news from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and USA shortwave stations. To fill the rest of the broadcast day, the Americans who had a military base at Vernamfield, supplied transcription discs while other material came from the BBC Overseas Service. Archie Lindo recalls that "...this was mixed with the best available local talent: Archie Lewis and Carmen Allen singing popular stuff with George Moxey at the piano and Blanche Savage - one of the first singers to perform on ZOI. And there

was Margaret Lauder, Granville Williams and Hazel Lawson" (Lindo, 1980).

At the end of the World War 11, Jamaica, like the rest of the Caribbean, started the transition from colonial outpost to responsible government, and things began to change, if only modestly, in radio. Archie Lindo, a veteran broadcaster and Station Manager of ZQI felt that local output should increase.

After I found my feet, I decided this is Jamaica. During wartime, it was well and good to have war news, overseas news and overseas recordings. I wanted some Jamaican flavour in the station. I wanted to reach the ordinary man on the street and the only thing I could think of to catch his ear was cricket (Lindo, 1980).

Broadcasting a very popular sport made the medium attractive. Lindo stated further,

It gave me great pleasure to be told that crowds were gathered at shops to listen to the cricket and I felt that at last I had succeeded in breaking the class barrier in radio and the little man or masses - a word which I hate - if you will, had been reached (Lindo, 1980).

By May 1950, ZQI ceased and the Jamaica Broadcasting Company, later to become Radio Jamaica

and Rediffusion (RJR), was granted commercial licence.

Outside of the long-standing private sector print publications of the Gleaner Company, Jamaica is not noted for diversity of mass journals and dailies. From 1718 to 1981, over one hundred and fifty (150) daily and weekly mass circulation papers operated in different parts of the island. But the majority were short-lived. It is not surprising, therefore, that the progress of print journalism was promoted by private ownership of the powerful corporate elite. The Gleaner Company which started in 1938 - just at the end of slavery - as an advertising broadsheet, dominated Jamaican media over the past century and-a-half, quickly dispatching all competition. The only exception was the Jamaica Daily News which lasted ten years. Since then, Jamaica returned to a one paper monopoly serving primarily conservative interests and that of private capital. The Gleaner's reach and journalistic power is pervasive.

Several small newspapers with limited circulation are presently serving geographic areas with tailored news for the community. Table 1 lists current publications.

Table 1

Status of Jamaican  
Newspapers

Publication	Frequency	Owner-ship	Affil-iation
Daily Gleaner *	Daily	Private	1
Sunday Gleaner *	Weekly	Private	1
Star *	Daily	Private	1
Weekend Star *	Weekly	Private	1
Jamaica Weekly *	Weekly	Private	1
Rising Sun		Party	PNP (2)
Voice		Party	JLP (3)
Struggle		Party	WPJ (4)
Catholic Opinion	Bi-monthly	Church	Catholic Church
Western Mirror	Bi-weekly	Private	
Twin City Sun	Bi-monthly	Private	
St. Cath. Reporter	Bi-monthly	Private	
Boulevard News	Bi-monthly	Private	
Sports & Arts	Bi-monthly	Private	

\* Gleaner-owned

- (1) PSDJ - Private Sector Organization of Jamaica
- (1) IAPA - Inter-American Press Association
- (1) CANA - Caribbean News Agency
- (1) CPBA - Caribbean Publishing and Broadcasting Association
- (1) CBU - Caribbean Broadcasting Union
- (1) MAJ - Media Association of Jamaica

- (2) PNP - People's National Party
- (3) JLP - Jamaica Labour Party
- (4) WPJ - Worker's Party of Jamaica

The Gleaner also publishes the Jamaican Tourist Guide, Children's Own and a weekly overseas publication in London, New York and Toronto, among other papers prepared for specific markets.

An indication of the Gleaner's pervasiveness is evidenced by its continued dominance of the market through its many established publications shown in Table 2.

Table 2  
Readership Profile

	Total	Sex	
		Male	Female
	'000	'000	'000
	-----	-----	-----
Daily Gleaner *	341	146	195
Sunday Gleaner *	340	133	207
Star *	314	118	196
W/E Star *	339	127	212
Western Mirror	24	8	16
Sports and Arts	7	7	
Twin City Sun	8	4	4
Boulevard News			

\* Gleaner-owned

Source: All Media Survey, MRS, 1986

In all instances, except with the male targeted Sports and Arts, approximately 60% of readers are female in a population of 2.4M with an estimated literacy rate of 76%. Distribution of readers across socio-economic lines is also a significant factor to note.

Table 3  
Socio-economic classification  
of Readers

---

	S/E CLASS		
	ABC1	C2	DE
	'000	'000	'000
	-----	-----	-----
Daily Gleaner *	77	181	81
Sunday Gleaner *	52	166	104
Star *	43	144	138
W/E Star *	18	126	195
Western Mirror	2	8	14
Sports and Arts	2	5	
Twin City Sun	2	4	2
Boulevard News			

---

\* Gleaner-owned

Source: All Media Survey, MRS, 1986

As shown in Table 3, Gleaner publications cover all socio-economic groups residing mainly in parish capitals and rural towns. Where the Daily and Sunday Gleaners

cater mainly to the literate professional and upper income Executives, the Star provides a mixture of popular entertainment, Sports and the more gruesome tales of murder, robbery and rape for lower status groups. However, the Gleaner as an institution is widely supported by a solid core of middle income professionals.

Political parties, trade unions, church groups and other special interests publish to their respective publics periodically over the past forty years.

Party papers tend to be published more frequently either close to elections or as a means of rallying partisan support around specific public issues. Invariably, these papers become inactive mainly because of insufficient liquidity to underwrite high printing costs, as political organs are not likely to attract commercial support from private firms. In a highly political and politicized environment, commercial placement in either party newspapers is immediately interpreted as partisan endorsement. Additionally, party supporters rarely purchase party organs, making regular publication of the People's National Party's

(PNP) Rising Sun and the Jamaica Labour Party's (JLP) Voice an unprofitable undertaking.

The two major trade unions have had greater success at mass distribution of their respective non-daily newspapers. Although the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (BITU) and the National Workers Union (NWU) are affiliated to the two major political parties, union papers tend to cover 'bread and butter' issues which go beyond narrow partisan concerns. However, these publications do not weigh heavily on national policy matters that could alter or greatly influence the structure of information flow.

Between the end of World War II and the dawning of national independence, the print media in particular contributed to the promotion of trade unionism, consciousness-raising, nationalism, ideals of black negritude and political independence. The mass media helped arouse interest in the country's destiny and instilled the importance of Jamaicans participating in the political process. However, centralization of media institutions in the capital, Kingston, did not produce a fundamental change in content when Jamaicans succeeded



foreign owners in managing main media outlets.

Stone points out that the shift in ownership of the State from British colonial officials to local politicians also meant a change between the state and local classes (Stone, 1978:17). Middle-class politicians who inherited state responsibility used their conferred legitimacy to increase the life chances of the poor by expanding social services through bureaucratic institutions. The state, however, in its dependent, underdeveloped phase, exercised very little discretionary powers over major areas of policy. Major economic decisions which impact greatly on Jamaica's social and political life are taken by domestic forces or their external counterparts which leaves the state with less than effective control.

The state is also prone to vacillate (Jones, 1986:14). This refers to an inability in promoting radical transformation that would significantly alter existing notions of development. The turbulent nature of the environment and the unstable development of state and para-statal institutions places the state in a position of performing a mediating role in society.

This mediating role generates the feeling that there is an all-embracing institution which acts on behalf of the nation's interests. Nationalist ideals and a de-emphasis of class conflict are prevalent features of the Caribbean state (Thomas, 1986).

It is the concept of nationalism, articulated by political leaders prior to Jamaica's independence, which propelled, and indeed, was primarily responsible for the introduction of a public broadcasting system.

The Jamaica Broadcasting Company - later to be renamed Radio Jamaica Limited - for about ten years had been the only radio station in Jamaica. It was largely run by expatriates and was mainly the outlet for North American pop, British drama and an assortment of news and variety programmes.

In 1958, the then Premier, Norman Manley, favoured a second radio station that could be both responsible for nurturing and responsive to Jamaican sensibilities. The government didn't think the private sector could undertake the leading role of reflecting society to itself while being an integral part of nation-building. Private sector ethos and the task of building public

institutions were felt to be incompatible. The new station would therefore be started by government, in direct competition with Radio Jamaica, as a partly funded public broadcasting system.

Canadian help was sought and Peter Ayles, then his country's Under-Secretary responsible for Communication at the United Nations was appointed as the first General Manager of the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation (JBC).

There was a burst of enthusiasm as Jamaicans felt a sense of pride in creating radio output from their own energies and creativity. It was equally ambitious but the opportunity "represented one of the very first occasions, if not the first, in which ordinary Jamaicans were given the opportunity to create and direct a major Jamaican institution in direct competition with private enterprise " (Maxwell, 1980).

Maxwell, a Jamaican journalist who was a JBC employee in 1959, recalls several criticisms from the middle classes about the use of dialect and the general thrust in programming. Those who defined taste as well as public opinion objected to the Jamaican character of the JBC. Accustomed to diets of foreign news and

entertainment, the more vocal sections of the population, including the bureaucracy, became very suspicious of this odd creature the political directorate had unleashed.

Before too long, the first General Manager resigned over differences in policy. The tenure of General Managers for the following twenty five years averaged only eighteen months. (See Appendix 1).

At the time of JBC's introduction into the media business, the demand for Rediffusion service declined significantly as the attraction for broadcast programming increased. This was enough to destroy an offering of 24-hour music supplied by a direct, wired service.

Then came the watershed. An industrial strike in 1964 shattered many of the lofty aspirations and triggered politicization of the public media. Lasting three months, the strike symbolized and eventually perpetuated a power struggle for control of the public media between the country's two main political forces.

Both radio stations provided a mixture of news and entertainment with Radio Jamaica always leading the government-owned JBC in income, listenership and credibility. Appendix 2 shows Radio Jamaica's lead in listenership.

However, it was in 1976 that the JBC revamped its format in keeping with its public service role, and as a result, gained 40% of the total radio audience (MRS, 1979). This share is the highest so far in the station's history. Many programmes which contributed to JBC's popularity have been subsequently modified and utilized by RJR to increase its market share.

Television was introduced in 1963. By 1971, there were 70,000 receivers with a national population of 1.9 million. In 1977, a population of 2.1 million owned 150,000 sets. The steady growth in ownership of television sets attracted both advertisers and politicians to the new medium ever anxious to influence viewers with their respective messages. By 1978, Jamaicans owned 307,000 television sets, growing to 387,000 sets in 1984. The increasing demand on the public broadcasting system to facilitate government

information programmes meant the station became a more politicized institution, and thus, operated within the context of Jamaican political realities.

The government information service, set up during the 1950s, has had a clear mandate as the propaganda arm of the state, and as such, specifically informs the public on government's policies and programmes. Despite protestations from both parties about political abuse, the law allows the state to fully utilize the agency's resources for effective propaganda work. Government information services are not responsible for reporting opposition activities.

In 1974, the Manley government introduced a bill to change the name and function of this agency. Jamaica Information Service (JIS) was changed to Agency for Public Information (API) charged with the wider role of channelling public information from government to the governed and vice versa (M/P #11). It was envisioned that a restructured agency would encourage participation from the wider public in the formulation of a coherent and integrated public education programme.

Under the present regime, the agency's name has reverted to JIS and its function is once again that of a government information service.

In summary then, print has been under private sector ownership with the Gleaner Company exercising tremendous influence on behalf of conservative business interests. Radio Jamaica is the only non-government electronic media entity, while JBC Radio, JBC Television and the JIS are all government owned and controlled.

Media developed in Jamaica from several related roots. These developments were not atypical of the establishment of mass media in other Caribbean islands. However, any examination has to go beyond the common historical features to observe, in the Jamaican case, a move that is out of step with the rest of the region.

#### 1.3.1. Recent Media Developments

Delivering on a campaign promise, and in keeping with a strong preference for private sector control of economic activity, the present regime announced sweeping divestment of the public media.

Prime Minister Edward Seaga proffered the following reasons to justify divestment.

- a) public service responsibilities limited the JBC's potential to realize a profit
- b) the station had become a financial burden on the public purse (Seaga, 1985)

Divestment of government-owned media involve long-term leases of radio and television channels, as well as privatization of a regional station, strategically located in the western section of the island. Along with privatization of public media entities, government announced the establishment of a Public Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) "to take over all public affairs programmes to ensure that all these programmes of national interest will be maintained and expanded" (Seaga, 1985).

A Media Commission - enacted in 1986 - has a specific role to preserve political impartiality.

Indeed, it is expected that these sweeping changes will open doors of opportunity within a framework of healthy competition, promoting expression of a broader range of views and interests.



Several organizations openly disagreed with the government's proposed media divestment policy.

The Gleaner, in one of its many editorials, opined that a policy which allows a government to continue to own and/or control the island's broadcasting facilities is a major reversal of stated JLP policy. In full page advertisements, the Gleaner warned that there may soon come a time when a government decides to take full political control over what the people hear on radio or see on television.

A government that truly had the people's welfare at heart would give up that control of Radio and Television. Government control of Radio and Television encourages political abuse of Broadcasting! (Daily Gleaner, Sunday October 13, 1985, p. 11).

Obviously, this 'new' arrangement was far from satisfactory for the private sector, a position reiterated by Gleaner's Managing Director, Oliver Clarke, who is also an official of the Private Sector Organization of Jamaica (PSOJ).

Clarke blasted the announcement as "misleading, incomplete, contradictory, depicting a high level of

incompetence and demonstrated a lack of trust in the people" (Clarke, 1985). Mr. Sam Mahfood, PSOJ President was disheartened by the contents of Seaga's presentation, which the organization felt did not serve democratic principles and was actually inimical to the strengthening values of freedom. These fundamentals principles of freedom and democracy could be sacrificed in the ostensible interest of short-term political gains (Mahfood, 1985).

Criticisms came from other sectors of the society, including media organizations, the church, labour unions, media professionals and the general public.

Lester Spaulding (1987), RJR's Managing Director, spoke of undue influence of partisan politics as the biggest hurdle against continuity in the public media, which CARIMAC's Director, Aggrey Brown links to the frequent changes at the leadership level.

... the problem of continuity at the leadership level of the JBC is a serious problem. When one compares RJR, one of the things you notice immediately is the nature of continuity at the top. RJR since 1951 has had three Managing Directors (Brown, 1987).

Those who have been or are immediately connected with administering broadcasting stations, agree that a lack of continuity, of purpose and concept that transcends and survives political administrations, remains an inhibiting factor in JBC's operations (Robinson, 1987; Bennett, 1987).

However, former JBC Board Chairman, Edwin Jones, locates the problem in the nature of policy conflict due mainly to pressures from affected social forces. So the breadth of policy on one hand, and the specificity on the other, create conditions for some amount of confusion. That confusion arises partly from the demands of a public broadcasting system surviving on the vagaries of commercialism. Jones sees a contradiction.

The public broadcasting system, from my perspective, cannot subsist on private sector support. The quality of publicness has to be supported publicly, therefore, makes the institution less dependent on private sponsorship (Jones, 1987).

From a legal standpoint, Carl Rattray, former Minister of Justice argues that it was never intended to establish JBC as a commercial station in the sense that economic considerations would outweigh cultural

considerations. In that sense, "JBC has become too commercialized. Government should feel it has a certain responsibility to use public funds to achieving the high quality of broadcasting which Norman Manley spoke about" (Rattray, 1987). Former JBC General Manager, Wycliffe Bennett concurs:

... you are either a commercial entity, set up to make a profit and to pay your way or that you are expected to perform public service functions. Sometime you are told to pay your way, and at other times, you are accused of not acting in the public interest and not giving people access to what's happening in ways in which only a broadcasting system can (Bennett, 1987).

The credibility of the public media, particularly JBC, has been severely criticized because of what Lester Spaulding calls "the hidden agenda", when the station ends up making five different decisions for the same set of circumstances. Spaulding and Brown call for JBC, in its widest context, to get back on track in terms of how it serves the society, so that public confidence can improve.

In November, 1981, Professor Carl Stone of the University of the West Indies found in a public poll, that only thirty-five per cent (35%) believed JBC had

improved its credibility rating in terms of biases contained in news and public affairs programmes. Polls done immediately before the PNP lost power in 1980 showed the JBC had the lowest rating of media outlets and this was due mainly to perceptions of partisan support.

Under the JLP, these perceptions are no different. Stone concluded that there was a feeling that a reverse pro-JLP bias had been installed at the station (Stone, 1981).

A case in point underlines the gravity of Stone's findings.

In 1983, the JBC was embroiled in political intrigue that led to the dismissal of the entire Board of the Corporation. Commentator and newspaper columnist, Wilmot Perkins observed:

The firing of that Board marks the beginning of the moral deterioration of the Seaga government. A government that respects the people it governs, that respects truth, that is honestly seeking solutions to national problems, that puts the national interest above party advantage would neither contemplate nor tolerate what is now going on at JBC (Perkins, 1983).

The opposition PNP saw an attempt to continue nepotism arising from political motives (Gleaner, May, 1983), while former Board Chairman and erstwhile Executive of the Jamaica Labour Party, Frank Phipps, commented that it was very difficult to resist political pressures "(a) to get people out of jobs and (b) to get other people into jobs" (Phipps, 1983).

Margaret Morris described the dismissal as arrogant, and for the Jamaica Daily News - just before its closure - the JBC was "crumbling under the weight of widespread internal suspicion and allegation of corruption at its very core" (Jamaica Daily News, 1983:4) "while hidden under the beauty and novelty of colour transmissions" (Jamaica Daily News, 1983:3).

Arthur Kitchin writing between the JBC scandal and the Prime Minister's first of two presentations on divestment, opined that the government was merely placing itself in future danger by perpetuating the destructive syndrome of nepotism and political favouritism in their dealings with the media they own (Kitchin, June 1983), while John Hearne lamented, that JBC was "among the most suspect public bodies in our

society" (Hearne, June 1983).

The JBC received the brunt of public criticisms because of the obvious abuse of public facilities to manipulate public opinion. Beth Aub joins most of her colleagues in rejecting such abuse. She sees the JBC as an inept organization in its day-to-day operations, which has clearly been kept alive by doing exactly what the powers that be ask of it. She implores the Corporation to,

...take a long look at its management and the deficiencies of its present level of personnel and production and try to get their act together to be of some positive benefit to Jamaica's future (Aub, 1988:9).

Carey Robinson, another former JBC General Manager, blames many of the weaknesses in media on a lack of confidence in the management skills of Jamaicans. Robinson speaks of a deeper psychological problem rooted in Jamaica's colonial past. Foreign consultants are always advising, taking charge.

We never had the final and important decisions to make and the images that we assimilated when growing up were always somebody else's image, not our own. It is largely subconscious (Robinson, 1987).

Without being explicit, Robinson is critical of colonial domination and later manifestations of imperialism in both media and the country's relationship with the international technical bureaucracies.

There is a lack of confidence, an unwillingness to give Jamaicans the opportunities to make the difficult decisions, make the mistakes, but fashion a home-grown ability to tackle the responsible tasks. Robinson's criticism is well-placed and rooted in history.

... you say, there is no point re-inventing the wheel, but you are not re-inventing the wheel a darn. It is a different wheel on a different road. The point about inventing the wheel, is that it opens up a lot. You get a terrific surge of confidence (Robinson, 1987).

Between 1985 and 1987, the government made some concessions but stood firmly on its commitment to privatize the public media.

The revised position on divestment argued that credibility was at the heart of media operation in Jamaica. Thus, credibility was not whether government is to be believed on any particular issue. Credibility, in the government's view, also involves policies being



pursued and whether media services being offered are relevant to the needs of the society. Given that premise, the government felt that media policies "which are deemed sacrosanct and unchangeable soon become irrelevant to a changing society, and the responsible institutions, government or media in this case, eventually lose their credibility and authority" (Seaga, 1987).

Shifting from an economic rationale which informed the 1985 media policy statement, the government's 1987 statement was predicated on the following considerations.

- a) Government's role in the media should not be overwhelming and stifling.
- b) The old matrix of consensus and gentlemanly understanding are no longer realistic
- c) The need to protect the public from monopolistic ownership based on economic power
- d) To widen public ownership

Selling off profit generating sections of public media coincides with a proposed establishment of a Public Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) charged mainly with generating material in public affairs, culture,

education and sports. These programmes, hopefully, will be transmitted over existing transmission facilities produced at the government-owned Creative Production and Training Centre (CPTC).

It was proposed to assign new frequencies for privately-owned television stations including one specifically for religious programming.

In keeping with these sweeping changes in media ownership, the Broadcasting and Radio Rediffusion Act was repealed and The Broadcasting Commission established in its place (Act, 1986). The Commission is mainly to advise the Minister of Information on granting of licences and allocation of time to broadcast Jamaican programmes of significance. There are also other powers permitted by law. These include monitoring observance of licences as well as ordering, where justified, media to facilitate a right of reply in cases of prejudicial statements against persons, organizations or political parties.

Also of note is the divestment of government's 25.1% holdings in Radio Jamaica Limited and all additional shares in the company being held by the

Jamaica Development Bank will be sold on the market (See Appendix 3).

Gleaner's Financial Editor, Basil Buck takes a different view on divestment. He feels that taken together with other policy announcements, government's divestment of media is simply state capitalism. In the configuration of state capitalism, leasehold rather than freehold ownership of capital assets is a policy of crowding out the private sector in the lucrative areas. As such, "it (state) is trying to divest some of its problems without losing control and physical ownership of real assets. This is not privatization. This is not divestment. It is an investment policy for 'state capitalism' (Buck, 1985:18).

The Jamaican media, therefore, have developed with government dominating electronic media entities and print owned mainly by private sector interests. This arrangement is typical of many developing countries. However, Jamaica is presently pursuing a different strategy, uncommon in the Caribbean, of divesting those sections of the public media which traditionally have attracted the majority of

listeners/viewers. This initiative, among many others, pose several problems that are bound to have far-reaching effects on future government policies.

The unsettled nature of media policy points to a turbulent media environment with little hope of a settled view on the role of media in a changing, highly politicized society.

#### 1.4 Problems associated with Media Fragmentation

Essentially then, the public media (JBC), operating under law as a public broadcasting system, have been woefully underfunded by the State and left to compete in the private domain for survival. Because of a legal obligation to the government in power, the public media has to constantly seek policy direction which is very often unspecific, general and always shifting. As a result of changes in the country's political directorate (each party has been voted out every ten years), policy directions are very often informed by partisan, short-term considerations, effectively derailing gains made in the past. JBC then becomes the focus of political controversy, rather than a supportive instrument of

development. Media development becomes ephemeral and lacking continuity.

However, problems facing the Jamaican media are not just those of political manipulation. Problems associated with development are multi-dimensional and complex.

From our brief history of the Jamaican media, the following problem areas have emerged:

1. Lop-sided and inconsistent nature of policy
2. Absence of guiding principles which broadly indicate the scope of media's role in development
3. Conflict between public service responsibility and economic survival
4. Frequent changes of senior administrators

Other problems usually associated with Third World environments which have a significant bearing on media reform include:

5. Absence of a thinking core
6. Urban-centred system
7. Uncritical dependence on satellite technology
8. Uneven opportunities for training
9. Third World underdevelopment

Therefore, what emerges is that there are areas above transient political institutions that require long-term policy prescriptions.

### 1.5 Related Research

Case studies relating to policy in African, Caribbean, Pacific (ACP) and Latin American countries focus on several related issues of the role of mass media in development.

Given the stormy conflict regarding free expression in post-colonial societies, several authors (Hachten, 1971; Wilcox, 1975; Stokke, 1971; Omu, 1978; Coker, 1968; Jones-Quartey, 1974) provide important analyses of economic and legal structures which shape mass media institutions, particularly in West Africa. Government dominance of mass media has resulted in disastrous consequences in countries where control is the *raison d'etre* for what is termed 'development journalism'. Domatob & Hall while conceding that journalism is viewed as an important tool of liberation, take no comfort in otherwise repressive tendencies, chronicled for example by Terrell (1986), leading to corruption and compliant

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conformity which is bound to impair credibility.

Examples from Africa of transplanted media structures hold good for any examination in Jamaica. British colonialism is a common feature of both historical experiences. Golden (1977) makes a parallel case that African mass media have been transplanted directly from metropolitan centres and broadcasting institutions are derived from those institutions in highly industrialized societies. But most important, Ugboajah (1985) warns that it is erroneous to analyse the overall pattern of media dependence without factoring in specific features of the country's history and economic development.

Other case studies of media in Zambia, Tanzania and Nigeria (Mytton, 1983) also point to worthwhile examples of how radio and television are underutilized in the development process.

Of course, mass media in western Europe, particularly electronic broadcasting, are also state controlled, but with structures which afford greater independence from government. Homet (1979) argues that west European governments are leery of relaxing control

on broadcasting for fear that media institutions might usurp the political prerogative of parliament in the realm of debate and conciliation.

This insistence on retaining political control has not threatened democratic freedoms in Europe although government over-arching control of media reflect an underlying paternalism.

Revolutionary contexts apportion a somewhat different role for media. Unlike state ownership in most African countries, media structures in revolutionary societies are consistent with changing social and economic relations, though Nicaragua and Peru make for contrasting approaches. Mattelart (1986) poses some pertinent questions as to whether Nicaragua exhibits a set communication model patterned on Marxism or contradictory approaches linked by confrontation, negotiation, mediation and complicity.

In the same context, Bresnahan takes a different position, arguing instead that radical mass communication is a fundamental prerequisite of participatory democracy.



On the other hand, Atwood and Mattos (1984) concluded from their analysis of media reform in Peru, that revolutionary communication policies failed, because information was treated as a tangible commodity to be packaged to passive receivers. There is the suggestion that strategies must shift from sender systems to receiver based communication systems. This requires, according to Ortego and Romero (1977), profound transformation in economic, social, political and cultural structures as well as integrating communication policy as a harmonious whole into the country's general development policy.

Both Brown (1987) and Cuthbert (1987) offer useful contextual approaches to policy formation for the Caribbean. They address issues concerning the promotion of national self interest in relation to new communication technologies from North America.

Several authors have explored the efficacy of Canadian and British media institutions which many developing countries adopted as part of their journey into independence. Jamaica operates a hybrid of the two systems.

Edmunds (1977) examined some of the policy and economic constraints evident in restructuring the Canadian broadcasting system while Johnson (1980) details the functions of the Canadian Radio-TV and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) - the main regulatory body for broadcasting and Telecommunications in Canada.

Both the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and the CRTC offer guiding principles of how legal structures and the power of Parliament are used to instill continuity in a single undertaking. Also, the preeminence of public over private interests is not left to chance but specifically stated in the country's Broadcasting Act. As testament to concerns about the CBC's role as a public institution charged with promoting Canadian cultural content, reviews of CBC's operation offer periodic assessment and refinement of media policy (Task Force, 1986).

Canada's struggle to set out and maintain some level of autonomy and diversity (Massey, 1948; Hutchinson, 1954; Weir, 1965; Stanley, 1969; Carr, 1971; Page, 1974) as well as coming to grips with the effects

of US media on Canadian audiences, parallel similar ~~the~~ problems experienced by Jamaican media. Fixed satellite signals are easily accessible in Canada and Jamaica.

The question of media reform can be approached from several theoretical perspectives. Curran (1986) poses five main approaches, which, unlike Tehranian's (1979) strict economic typologies, deal with specific characteristics of public service media and how a more pluralistic broadcasting system has a better chance of satisfying differentiated tastes in socially stratified societies. Crucial to Curran's approach to diversification is the state's ability to effectively devise anti-monopoly strategies and broaden access to capital for alternative forms of ownership.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

#### 2.1 Information-gathering Techniques and Method

Admittedly, the study will concentrate more on broadcasting than on print. It would be counter-productive and patently unrealistic to suggest reform of the Gleaner Company. Rather, the treatment of print as part of an integrated approach to media reform, would of necessity, look at creating alternative means of improving print communication at the regional/community level.

A critical analysis will examine existing structures and processes somewhat analogous to the Jamaican situation which have proven successful, drawing on other experiences in order to refine, re-order, and restructure the public media in keeping with the highest tenets of participatory democracy. The end result should at best be a blueprint, or at least be, a set of guiding principles, keeping in mind the specific nature of this context.

To carry out this critical analysis, a variety of information-gathering techniques were used. These included the use of primary and secondary sources dealing with general issues of media reform, as well as, drawing on specificities of the Jamaican media.

Primary sources of information were drawn from the following:

- 1) Interviews with media executives, journalists and communicators
- 2) Interviews with representatives of political parties
- 3) Speeches by leading political and media personalities
- 4) Articles on media-related matters
- 5) Features by newspaper columnists
- 6) Editorials
- 7) Media surveys
- 8) Personal observations

The importance of these primary sources are described in brief below.

To ascertain whether the public media have fulfilled their parliamentary mandate, opinions were sought from key managers and senior officials, who were,

or are presently responsible for running different areas of media. These individuals are well-placed to assess the public broadcasting system, since they have been responsible for interpreting media policy over the past twenty-five years.

Since any possibility of reform of the Jamaican media depends ultimately on political action, open-ended interviews were done with either individuals who make up the thinking political core or those with ultimate responsibility for policy formation. Their views provide comparisons of policy approaches of the dominant political parties. These views are also considered with available speeches on issues relating to media.

Media surveys have traditionally been market-driven. The use of data from these sources will only serve to substantiate market share rather than trying to establish family time use or entertainment trends.

Articles, columns, editorials and special features on media and media-related issues were drawn primarily from the Gleaner, although the now defunct Jamaica Daily News also provided a very useful source for analysis.

A further dimension has been added by virtue of the author's own involvement with the Jamaican media for over two decades. This participant-observer status in the process of examining media structures provides additional insight.

Secondary sources dealing with media reform, approaches to communication policy and planning, political fragmentation, Third World underdevelopment and the effects of satellite technology are issues to be found in the selected bibliography. The insights gathered from these sources in relation to the Jamaican situation, together with a critical/historical analysis, should lend themselves to accomplishment of the stated purpose of this study.

## 2.2 Institutional Context of Policy

Institutions are managed by people with different agendas much in the same way that policies are produced by a variety of organizations. It is expected, therefore, that policy formation is not usually pre-determined. The policy environment is always complex and turbulent.

The policy environment is inevitably represented by an uneven cluster of policy institutions separated by organizational boundaries and group interests. As a consequence, the focus of the policy-making mechanism is shaped by selective perceptions (March & Simon, 1958:13) or by interest group formation and behaviour (Jones, 1984:13). Some of these groups who have particular administrative skills, economically privileged and share certain affinities with bureaucrats, are themselves very important agents of policy determination.

So although participants in the public policy process may be motivated by idealistic concerns for the nation-state, there is bound to be a preponderance of individual interests manifested either in an advancement of class dominance, racial superiority, career advancement or improved status. And no matter the level of inducement offered for agreement on issues of public import, there is the tendency for individuals, and indeed organizations, to fight with more motivation and greater skill when their organization or group interests are threatened.



Scharpf (1986) reminds us that organizational issues are decided by the same decision processes in which conflicts over policy are settled. Many institutional interests have advanced their access to crucial information, while economically weak groups are left dependent upon mechanisms of 'representation' dominated by powerful groups to determine their fate (p.183).

Some governments try to circumvent the power of traditional actors by creating parallel bureaucracies, special assistants or advisors to hasten policy implementation (Jones, 1986:35; Oszlak, 1984:221). However, organizations are changed to accommodate shifts in emphasis rather than in substance, and where policy shifts are intended to improve effectiveness, implementation is very often compromised by those who either misunderstand or are external to the policy planning process (Garlichs and Muller, 1977).

Invariably, serious efforts at policy reorganization are not contemplated until a change of government allows deterioration of previous processes, and when previous commitments are devalued by the change

in political leadership. Only then bureaucrats and state managers begin to discover real problems. From that point, management becomes captive to its own commitments of preserving self-interest.

Equally important is the influence of institutional arrangements upon policy processes. Muller (1984) points out that it makes a difference what kind of ministerial or parliamentary importance is given to policy matters. Further, the organizational proximity to or distance from policy areas within departments is a crucial determinant to substantive compromises which must inform success or failure!

Linkages and what Kingdon (1984) calls "coupling" are also important. Problems are associated with the way policies are developed according to their own incentives and selection criteria or whether or not solutions are responsive to political considerations (p. 210-211). In other words, policy proposals do not necessarily flow from stated social and economic problems but are sometimes "coupled" to fit short-term political objectives.

At appropriate times, "proposals that fit with a political event such as initiatives which fit with a new administration's philosophy, come to the fore and are coupled with the ripe political climate" (Kingdon, 1984:211). Problems that fit are given priority while other are neglected.

Those who advocate new policy thinking within the public management system not only take advantage of politically propitious times, but also claim, rightly or wrongly, that their solutions are directly related to pressing social and economic problems. Likewise, private sector interests with close ties to the state (whether economic, racial, familial or 'old school tie') and who are concerned about problems affecting their entrepreneurial interests, often search for solutions in the public domain to couple to their problems. For example, entrepreneurs who promote an unregulated, competitive marketplace environment seek government incentives for export as well as the state's protection against foreign competition. The private sector then takes advantage of political receptivity or weakness to push through a package that couples problem with solution.

Given the nature of competing interests, public policy formation must refrain from authoritative positions and adopt flexible, negotiated approaches.

If policy reorganization is likely to result from negotiated change, it seems imperative that policy be approached with some recognition of elements capable of putting a brake on innovation. Bargaining, persuasion, dialogue and the use of mobilizing instruments are key elements in institutional change. This is so because institutional evolution is constrained by intra-institutional interests. So Scharpf (1986) contends that possibility of change is at the expense of those participants who are committed to active policy-making, and, hence, potentially most interested in promoting institutional reforms.

It is the level of integrative bargaining (Walton and McKersie, 1965) as opposed to positive coordination of independent organizations (Friend & Jessop, 1969; Friend, Power and Yewlett, 1974) which highlights the importance of common interests in the pursuit of policy-making.

It is true to say that the integrative approach guarantees a better chance at rational, problem-solving mechanisms. However, Bonoma (1976) warns of fragility with the problem-solving decision style because the approach is premised on a commitment to common goals and evolution of mutual trust. Indeed, conditions could be easily destroyed by the disruption of networks of collaboration much needed to sustain continuity of effort. The result is predictable as the capacity for problem solving will naturally be reduced and the quality of public policy is sure to deteriorate.

Oszlak (1986) further elucidates the need to identify other constraints to policy formation and implementation. These constraints are referred to as technological, cultural, clientelistic and political. Technological constraints include the technical requirements of bureaucratic functioning while cultural constraints have to do with established traditions and routines of bureaucratic culture. Clientelistic deals with the nature, significance or degree of access of various clienteles to agencies and highlight changes in regime orientation in conditions of high political instability (Oszlak, 1986:219).

In examining the nature of policy, public institutions cannot be set apart from politics if it is agreed that politics is the principal area within which the content of social activity is defined. Politics becomes very crucial since various agents intervening in policy implementation put certain limits on autonomous behaviour. As a result, these limits are subjected to, and influenced by, a complex network of interdependence among key state agencies involved in the policy process.

Along with politics, Jones (1984) sees political ideology as an essential factor influencing the public policy agenda (p. 13). If there is a commitment to mobilization, then a political role is always pre-defined for key public sectors. Not that this role is necessarily direct. Sometimes, subtle, indirect methods are utilized to re-direct or impose pressures on state management.

Jones draws on institution-building theory as well as practical knowledge of the Caribbean bureaucracy to suggest that regional states tend to identify with centres of power. The state may therefore try to recruit, co-opt or control such centres (Jones; 1984:14).

Equally relevant is the nature of forced correction as a response to any challenge to the status quo. Any real or perceived challenge to settled political forces or long-established orthodoxies is subject to pressures which re-direct that system to the old order.

There is the suggestion about the character of the public policy process, which calls for focussing on the policy environment. This environment operates within a capitalist mode since the laws and motion governing production, ownership and social relations are capitalist. Indeed, the policy environment is dominated by a capitalist outlook, informed in the main by a competitive, marketplace orthodoxy. As a consequence, "the whole planning and policy process will respond, for better or worse, to the imperatives of our dependent capitalism" (Jones, 1984:15)

But more so, the policy environment is always turbulent. As such, the environment affects all institutional processes in the same way that incremental institutional arrangements also influence environmental factors. From this transactional relationship, there is a greater chance of successful institutional building,

if plans adopt relevantly to changing times.

Relevance is stressed because much of the motivation for institution-building in post-colonial societies has been externally derived through contacts with the international technical bureaucracies (Girvan, 1980). Modernization theories emphasizing the efficacy of externally-generated methods to development, engender only limited possibilities for innovative change.

Relevance is also critical in keeping with constraints imposed by different political regimes upon different levels of bureaucratic interdependence. These constraints not only modify the style of state management but also the content and impact of policy.

Cadien & Wildavsky (1974), Jones (1974), Mills (1982) and Oszlak (1986) speak of the need to identify the complex interplay of forces intervening in each concrete situation as a prerequisite, both for judging the viability and pertinence of policies, and of interpreting their meaning and social consequences.

Many developing countries are forced to juggle public policy options not necessarily because of the



absence of technical capabilities, but as Kiviniemi (1986) suggests from increased fragmentation of the public policy process. Growing fragmentation of values and ideas within society enhances the notion that public policies are unimplementable as a result of various factors. These factors could vary from internal conflicts at the bureaucratic, political or social/class levels to external and non-governmental forces shaping policy processes (Kiviniemi, 1986:252)

It can be hypothesized then, that two main factors have largely plagued successful adjustment to policy processes, particularly in post-colonial societies. First, the policy environment produces turbulent times mainly due to the influence of competing socio-economic interests on centres of power. The impetus for institutional-building then becomes conflictual, diffused and non-complementary.

Second, post-colonial societies have inherited bureaucratic institutions concerned more with Weberian stability than administrative efficiency. Hence, there has been limited institutionalization of problem-solving mechanisms developed over time, capable

of innovative change. Complicating this process is the use of symbolism in direct response to demands for change from either weaker client groups or organized social forces.

Approaches to public policy leave us with some definitive, though not problem-free areas, which could be pursued as a part of a specific media reform agenda.

Jones (1984), in addressing a Telecommunication Policy Workshop for the Caribbean, provides us with seven basic components to policy formulation. Bear in mind Jones speaks from a Third World perspective not bound by traditional public policy orthodoxies.

1. Organizations should draw on the environment as a resource much in the same way the Japanese have done. This means looking at opportunities, the culture of the environment for coherence and discipline.
2. Establish clearly defined goals and objectives so that these objectives and goals are measurable, as a self-correcting device.
3. The creation of relevant, enforceable mechanisms of review and control within the context of known professional standards. Without enforced and enforceable mechanisms of control and of sanctions, there is the probability of institutions becoming irresponsible rather than being the engine of development.

4. Insist on all policy processes having the support of a thinking core. This core should be a broadly representative group that habitually analyses processes, review policies, monitor public responses and output, reviews policies, study technology, project trends and devise future developments and strategies. A prerequisite to proper analyses of intended or unintended consequences is the need for research to underpin a basic element of the policy process.
5. Seek to upgrade skills and techniques, producing a production-oriented knowledge and positive attitudes.
6. The need to evolve a policy based on consultation and participation.
7. Establishing a search for a creative mix of participation, decentralization and accountability. It is a settled view that narrow decision-making processes are problematic. Diversifying sources of policy advice guarantees greater participation outside of partisan cadres and those with special class interests.

Implicit in Jones' policy prescriptions is an underlying emphasis on cooperation, consensus planning and community participation.

If these prerequisites are accepted as useful tools for policy formation, they are important points to remember when considering media reform.

In order for media policy to serve national interests, it will be important to retain and

institutionalize those elements that hitherto proved relevant and successful. These elements would of necessity include a greater inclination towards cooperative media ownership, although not discarding involvement of the private sector. Also, a broadly based regulatory body must avoid monopolies in the media sector as well as intensify the drive to stabilize media policy regimes via consensus among competing political forces.

### 2.3 Media Reform and Conceptions of Third World Development

In the immediate post-war period, conceptions of development were greatly influenced by economic models of North-Atlantic industrialization. The prevailing imagery promised an autonomous and universally applicable process through which all states were destined along a standard sequence of stages in their passage to modernity (Phillips, 1982:1).

Political development or modernization of peripheral states was possible, some felt, from travelling the same route of industrialization which characterized economic growth in western Europe and the

United States. Imitation was considered the only route to modernity.

Walter W. Rostow (1960) proposed a theory of economic growth distinguished by a number of linear steps. As such, this view of development is organic, direct, immanent, cumulative, goal-oriented and irreversible (Servaes, 1986:203). Rostow's theory assumed that economic growth would spread benefits throughout the economy and eventually incorporate the rural sector into incremental productive activity. There was a misplaced assumption that developing nations would respond rationally to economic incentives induced by massive transfer of capital, technology and 'management' skills. In the process of 'modernization', traditional societies were expected to change themselves through successive phases after a leap of self-sustaining growth based on processes of institution-building, administrative reorganization and industry-promoting measures.

Third World developmental objectives, circumscribed from models in industrial societies, were unfulfilled, as optimistic predictions of modernization paradigms did

not prove successful.

Several academic and critical scholars challenged both the logical and empirical grounds of the earlier modernization paradigms which were based on an over simplistic dichotomy between "tradition" and "modernity".

Stavenhagen (1966) argued that a clear separation between urban and rural sectors only exacerbated inequalities and underdevelopment, while Gunder-Frank (1969) critiqued the approach as ethnocentric and incapable of generating a development process in the Third World. Implicit in the challenge is the charge that complexities inherent in the process of change are often ignored and not sufficient attention paid to the effects of economic, political and cultural forces at the domestic level. Further, resistance to modernization cannot be blamed on traditional values and beliefs (Raghavan, 1981; Servaes, 1986; Reddi, 1986; Elgabri, 1987).

The conceptions of development drawn from the Rostowian modernization paradigm falsely and arbitrarily imposed a model to modernity that effectively obscured

significant differences between social systems and varying phases of historical development. This same ahistorical approach was subsequently adopted in the communication field by Lerner (1958), Rogers (1962), Hagen, (1962) and Schramm (1964).

Communications researcher, Everett Rogers saw modernization as a process of diffusion where the adoption of cultural innovation rapidly changes individuals from traditional social practices to a more complex, technically-oriented way of life (Rogers, 1962).

Rogers was proposing an approach to development much akin to Rostow's authoritarian model of industrialization. Since communication was considered a one-way process from government to people, media were expected to play an indirect rather than direct role in development. Two very important communication components to achieving development came into vogue. First, the use of traditional media as credible channels to teach the most disadvantaged audiences assisted in effective diffusion. Second, it was essential that communication specialists identify the opinion leaders

among the disadvantaged segment of the total audience and concentrate development efforts on them (Rogers, 1979:142-143).

At an individual level, consideration was given to establishing a relationship between mass communication and modernizing institutions. The media, once equipped with the necessary technology should promote individual values and promote attitude changes (Lerner, 1958; McClelland, 1961; Hagen, 1962; Schramm, 1964; Pool, 1966; Roa, 1966).

Among other theorists, a more technologically deterministic approach promised a solution to problems of development by the introduction and application of new techniques (Innis, 1951; Ellul, 1954; Ogburn, 1964). In other words, technology was conceived as a value-free, politically neutral commodity expected to transform societies regardless of social, economic or historical contexts. In societies like Jamaica, marked by the spectre of increasing polarization and political conflict, the imposition of a highly industrialized model of development, along with advanced technology, was expected to promote a stable, orderly and



accumulated change from backwardness to modernity.

However, these positivistic and behaviouristic approaches gave little attention to contextual factors which decidedly influenced how society develops.

Servaes notes:

"...the static and ahistorical manner of studying communication processes leads to the supposition of a stable social system where social harmony and integration prevails, and where class struggle or social conflicts and contradictions are non-existent" (Servaes, 1986:207).

Many critics of the modernization paradigm insist that the present international economic system decisively determines the course of development within national boundaries (Schiller, 1976; Nordenstreng & Schiller, 1979). However, Baran (1957) articulated the thesis that development and underdevelopment are interrelated processes in which disparities at the international level divide countries at the centre and periphery of capitalism.

Thus emerged the dependency theory. A central focus of this paradigm places the cause of underdevelopment on external factors in which the

development of centre states in industrialized societies determines and maintains underdevelopment of peripheral states in Third World countries.

Though a very useful tool of politico-economic analysis, differing perspectives developed that effectively fissured the dependency paradigm into several theoretical streams.

While there is merit in considering the power of external factors in deciding and directing the nature of international economic relations, Amin (1973) places more emphasis on Africa's historical context, while Wallerstein (1974) argues that the origins and subsequent transformation of contemporary states are determined within and by the logic of an integrated capitalist system. As such, states are not autonomous entities, but constructed within an historical domain of capital accumulation (Phillips, 1982:11).

Within the dependency school, culturalists like Mead (1976), Tunstall (1977) and Varis/Nordenstreng (1973) interpret culture in the nation-state as the main variable responsible for development. Others, such as Hamelink (1978, 1982), Mattelart, (1976) and

Schiller (1969) are more concerned with how western media products transmit, promote and buttress capitalist ideology.

Differences within the dependency school remain minimal, since most proponents emphasize externally-generated economic factors as the chief determinants of dependency in peripheral societies. Most differences arise on the most appropriate route to development.

A striking feature evident in writings of most dependency scholars is that they offer insufficient explanations of complex post-colonial reality. There is a tendency not to examine the dynamics of internal class and state conflicts, an over-emphasis on external variables as the sole cause of underdevelopment, and sometimes, excessive, static, deterministic and monolithic approaches to analyses.

Particularly during the 1970s, several developing countries seeking structural transformation expanded state activities in an effort to change previous patterns of the state's articulation into economic activities.

The theory, known as the "non-capitalist path of development," rested on the analysis that the "underdevelopment of the majority classes" in the capitalist mode of production allows for political leadership from the petty-bourgeoisie to direct far-reaching activities under a "broad alliance of progressive forces" (Thomas, 1980; Ohiorhenn̄en, 1981). In these circumstances, the state gives the appearance of being autonomous, possessing considerable freedom and flexibility to pursue the transition to socialism (Mandle, 1977).

Drawing on Wallerstein's world systems theory, Phillips (1982), critically asserts that although the non-capitalist thesis has much political appeal in its attempt to point to some variance in dependency theory, it is, however, flawed in its representation of the social and historical meaning of contemporary expansive states, particularly in the Caribbean (Phillips, 1982:6.)

Proponents of the non-capitalist thesis tend to characterize a model much akin to the earlier modernization paradigm, in which there is concentration

on the ability of the individual nation-state to transform itself. The necessary interlocking mechanism of a single, global economic system mitigates against such autonomous transformation.

Clearly, then, the non-capitalist thesis of development tends to treat the modern state in isolation from its historical moorings in the world economy. As such, manifestations of state expansionism are themselves inscribed in the changed conditions of capital accumulation which have emerged in the post-war period (Phillips, 1982:7). Both Wallerstein and Phillips emphasize that contemporary states are but part of the world inter-state system and are therefore expressions of capitalist relations of production.

However, attempts by some developing countries to reject imperial domination or hegemonic influence and use the state for political leverage are not fully addressed by the critics of the non-capitalist theory.

Proponents of the non-capitalist path in Jamaica, Guyana, Grenada and Tanzania did not portend revolutionary transformation of social relations as a means to achieving certain development goals. Even

within revolutionary Grenada, the state apparatus, along with the dominant socio-economic relations, experienced gradual rather than radical changes during the life of the Bishop regime.

Working from the general assumption that no single country functions autonomously, nor are there nations whose development is determined by external factors, another theoretical approach to development has gained currency. This thesis opts for a multi-dimensional approach based on specific concepts of self-reliance (Dissanayake, 1981:217, 227; Servaes, 1986:211-220).

These include:

1. Popular participation
2. Grassroots development
3. Integrated village development
4. Use of appropriate technology
5. Fulfillment of basic needs
6. Productive use of local resources
7. Maintenance of ecological balance
8. Definition of development problems by the people themselves, and
9. Regarding culture as a mediating force in development

The above strategic guidelines, proffered mainly by Dissanayake, would appear comprehensive. However, the concepts themselves remain nebulous without deeper explanations.

In this context, self-reliance has to be seen as an integrative, multi-dimensional counterpole to dependency, based on the country's needs and capabilities. This is not to vitiate notions of internal class conflict and the role of the state in economic development. Rather, the concepts set the condition for collaboration both internal and external, using the twin approach of decentralization and participation.

Central to the search for a coherent developmental theory to suit transitional societies is the reality that there is no universal model. Imposing external models only hinders meaningful development, since countries differ in their historical moorings. These developmental models should be tailored to meet national needs, for each country possess resources and strengths to be nurtured and cultivated. Essentially, each society must attempt to delineate its own path of maturation without trying to satisfy universal concepts of development.

As an approach, Elgabri speaks of differed gratification.

Development is a long-term process, requiring foresight and the ability to tolerate present discomforts while waiting for future rewards (Elgabri, 1987, p. 134).

Servaes on the other hand speaks of managing social demands.

When the previous paradigms did not succeed in reconciling economic growth with social justice, the attempt now being made to approach problems of freedom and justice from relationship of tension between individual and society, and limits of growth are seen as inherent to the interaction between society and nature (Servaes, 1986:12).

The development of communication policy and differentiated approaches to media reform stem from the same theoretical conceptions already discussed.

Tehrani's (1979) theoretical approach to media and communication concerns, is cast in traditional epistemological paradigms. His historical analysis takes us through the changing phases of communication theory from the early pessimism of the 1950s, as exemplified by Boeke and Nurkse, through Lerner, Schramm and Rostow, and ending with some additional perspectives offered by Ilich and Schumacher in the 1970s. In that



sense, Tehranian's conceptualizations are limited for two basic reasons. Firstly, there is a narrow theoretical scope that deals mainly with classical and neo-classical notions of development. Secondly, Tehranian ignores conceptions of development articulated by many critical scholars in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean in response to unfulfilled expectations of externally-imposed communication models.

Curran (1986) on the other hand goes further in proposing seven approaches to media reform which incorporate some of the earlier variants of classical and modernization paradigms. Some of Curran's ideas will be included in our examination of the Jamaican media environment.

Mass media in Jamaica are organized on contending or contradictory principles. The print media are based on private ownership while, broadcasting operates on a mixture of public and state regulations. Consensus on media policy is therefore inherently contradictory and unstable (Curran, 1986:89).

The traditional neo-liberal approach to media reform is a variant of neo-classical conceptions of

growth, because of an absence of the restricted state apparatus. Proponents of a free-market press contend free choice means the consumer is the dominant influence in what is published, and so makes publishers compelled to satisfy public demand in order to survive. This makes the press accountable (Curran, p. 91).

Any effort at change through state-linked agencies is an open invitation to political censorship. For there is an abiding belief, jealously guarded by apologists of free enterprise orthodoxy, that elevates the private sector press as the legitimate champion of individual rights and freedoms.

Individuals and organizations even go as far as to assume that citizens always exhibit a strong preference for privately-owned media, and as a consequence, attach less credibility to the views expressed in the publicly-owned media which is considered heavily biased in favour of government policies and programmes (Daily Gleaner, 1985:10).

Neo-liberals, big business and private sector interests have consistently challenged Third World governments to apply the free-market model to

broadcasting in an effort to promote the 'free-flow' of information.

The theoretical underpinning of 'free-flow' had its antecedents after the defeat of Hitler by allied forces in the second world war. Freedom of information was highly desirable following victory over Nazism, but in the wake of human renewal, national needs have been confused with private business interests. Hence, the economic aspects of information were explicitly advocated and provided the US and western Europe with a formidable arsenal against those who promoted any other model of development.

More channels, fewer controls and vigorous competition are desirable expectations of neo-liberalism.

Radical anti-statism - another approach discussed by Curran - is a corporatist response to media reform in which there is bitter criticism of what free-market approaches produce. However, anti-statism, particularly how Curran describes it in the British system, seem to equally dismiss state intervention. The only alternative to the free-market press is using some form

of public intervention or regulation by a state-linked agency. This approach ends up as a libertarian strand within conservatism.

Reform based on voluntaristic social responsibility is equally committed to a neo-liberal conception of media. This is so because this voluntarist approach also finds unacceptable, state-involvement in media. There is a greater preoccupation with editorial shortcomings in which trivial, sensational journalism represent the main weakness of the profession.

Strengthening social consciousness seems to be the foundation of stimulating a vigorous press committed to integrity, public responsibility and most important, 'idealism of journalists'.

Voluntarism tries to reconcile independence with obligation to society. In terms of ownership, media entities are viewed as a kind of public stewardship rather than a private franchise. In reconciling the obvious inconsistencies between individual freedom and choice against media's more important obligation to society, voluntaristic journalism stands by professional responsibility and maintenance of self-regulation by

media themselves (McQuail, 1983). Regulation of advertising, anti-monopoly legislation and establishment of press councils are devices utilized by governments to reinforce the need for social responsibility (Smith, 1977).

In liberal-democratic states like Jamaica, certain sections of the media display characteristics of voluntaristic, social responsibility. Although this is a welcomed feature, the approach depends too much on an idealistic belief that individual journalists determine the democratic nature of media. In Curran's view:

This fails to take account of the way in which the organization of the press constrains what journalists do and shapes even their perceptions of what constitutes professionalism. Unless organizational structures are changed or modified, well-meaning reforms based on admonition or uplift will accomplish relatively little (Curran, 1986:125).

It is difficult to recognize any fundamental differences in Curran's delineation of neo-liberal, voluntaristic, anti-statist or radical market approaches to media reform. The only discernable difference among the first three approaches, and the use of 'radical' market practices, is the use of anti-monopoly

curbs to break or lessen concentration of ownership which undermines the dynamics of competitive, private media. In a sense, Robertson's clear articulation for strengthening Britain's Fair Trading Act, represented in Canada by the Combined Investigations Act, promotes regulatory intervention to stimulate the market for further competition. Since intervention is anathema to principles governing conceptions of free enterprise, these approaches lead to a theoretical cul-de-sac.

Socialist reform of media must be predicated upon several important indices including an examination of the dominant mode of production in society, the nature of social relations, the history of media, and of course, the ideological orientation of the state apparatus.

Williams (1967) discusses the basic underlying rationale of socialist reform as involving common ownership of media for emancipatory purposes.

Best exemplified by the USSR/Cuban model, the socialist approach clearly promotes the public good as defined by the state which embodies the collective interest of the working people. Editorial control would

be vested in political parties or a single party system without due concern for spirited dissent against official dogma.

The most persuasive argument to media reform, promulgated mainly by Curran and Whitehead, is that broadcasting can best achieve diversity of access as well as being responsive to public sensibility by adopting a public service approach directed towards the public good rather than private gain (Curran, 1986:98; Whitehead, 1986:149-156).

A public service broadcasting system, publicly or state-financed, but regulated at arm's length from coercive government institutions, reinforces independence and flexibility in its operation. These two enduring features of independence and flexibility, encourage a greater willingness to take risks than would be the case in a purely commercial venture.

One of the main criticisms levelled at government controlled media is their blinkered approach to current affairs. One of the political strengths of a more flexible public media system lies in its ability to offer universal access to news and current affairs that

help lessen the gap between contending forces. It thus empowers people through the feedback mechanism in a way that the stilted, non-interactive press does not.

Further, a public service concept recommends itself in that it remains accountable through a modified competitive environment, and ultimately by parliament, which is entrusted with the responsibility of public probity.

From a theoretical perspective, the communication paradigms developed since the post-war period have shifted as new forms of media structures emerged. The organic bond between social demands and measurements of development, particularly in Third World countries, have resulted in specific policy choices. Servaes has suggested some important shifts in scientific thought.

1. From a more positivistic, quantitative and comparative to a normative, qualitative and structural approach.
2. From a universal, formally descriptive model to a more substantial and change-oriented and a less predictable model.
3. From a Euro- or ethno-centric view to an indigenistic view and then to a contextual and polycentric view.



4. From a primarily national frame of reference to an international perspective and then to combined levels of analysis.

It is from these shifts in scientific thought which have influenced several contemporary communication thinkers such as Domatob/Hall, Curran, Maslog, Cuthbert, Brown and others to approach problems of media reform from a contextual perspective since political, economic and ethical conditions often decide the success of policy.

Cuthbert (1987) makes the point, for example, that researchers need to critically examine community needs and assess under what circumstances new technology can enhance development. As such, critical, contextual research must precede, rather than follow the introduction of new technology (p. 31). To be meaningful, though, conclusions drawn from policy research must be part of a larger planning process.

It is in this same vein that we approach media reform in the Jamaican context.

## 2.4 Ownership

Central to developing a workable policy is to have clear perceptions about ownership of media. Ownership closely correlates with content, structures and access. Who owns what media is an important consideration which determines the degree of concentration of economic power in broadcasting, the press and other cultural industries.

The debate centres around the dichotomy of divestment vs state ownership; private vs public holdings or urban vs rural locations of media outlets. These choices are heavily loaded with socio-political import.

The traditional reason for government presence in media and the wider business of telecommunication are basically two fold. In the case of telecommunication, its potential for economics of scale has traditionally made the industry a natural monopoly. In other instances, for example in Britain, governments have intervened in the telecommunication sector to protect essential services like the post office from potentially fierce competition within the communications market.

(Littlechild, 1969:229).

It is, however, interesting to note that most governments in developing countries allocate a higher investment priority to their monopoly telecommunication sector. These natural monopolies operate on a commercial basis, exhibiting efficient management, technical and service innovation and technological competencies in an international market dominated by multi-national economic interests. This duopoly can easily be understood as the telecommunication sector interfaces directly with advanced technologies much more than internal structures, and as such, exercises less control over mass media content. The business of a unified carriage system can allow for greater involvement in commercial enterprises.

Governments in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean have maintained control over electronic broadcasting, because, with limited resources at their command and impoverished conditions, the mass media are seen as one of the social institutions that could help alleviate illiteracy, serve educational purposes and foster a sense of national pride.

Mytton quite rightly points out that for all the competitiveness and political conflict, the western mass media give overall support to the status quo (Mytton, 1983:138). Revelations in the Watergate or Irangate scandals do not question the dominant ethos in the USA or indeed the nature of the country's governmental system. Free-market orthodoxy is a settled ideological view in North America. There might be calls for changes in style or procedure, but never demands for changes in substance.

Mass media have proven a vital institution in developed countries in which they promoted a system of values that encourage cohesion, unity and a sense of validity of the existing social order (Porter, 1965:460-486).

In Canada, where Porter studied media and social structures, the mass media fulfilled their ideological role by rationalizing the country's socio-economic, political and juridical systems all of which flowed from Canada's tradition and culture.

In developing countries, there is no such established pattern. Mass media have drawn on external

traditions which very often are at variance with local realities. Increasingly, also, governments in developing countries see media as a scarce resource to be used in achieving developmental objectives. But they were equally cognizant of the power of the mass media.

Knowing what it is capable of doing and undoing, would not be far wrong if I said that the international press qualifies as one of the many invisible governments. At other times and in certain situations it can form a formidable opposition party where there is organizationally none (Kaunda, 1968).

At the time when many developing countries were preparing for national independence, the mass media were seen as having both negative and positive possibilities, which had to be controlled by the state to achieve more positive than negative results. Kaunda was obviously wary of this new beast.

The press is capable of making or destroying governments given appropriate conditions; it can cause war or create conditions for peace. It can promote development or create difficulties in the way of development (Kaunda, 1968).

Inexperienced and unstable governments fear the press providing conflicting signals in a context where

developing societies possess limited room-for flexibility in the international political arena. Former President Nyerere of Tanzania felt that in a country faced with problems of poverty and underdevelopment on a gigantic scale, press freedom should be limited similar to what was done in the liberal democracies in times of war (Wilcox, 1975). It is not surprising, therefore, that governments, particularly in African, Caribbean, Pacific and Latin American countries exercise increasing control as media criticisms grow.

Thus, most governments in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, whether civilian or military, democratic or dictatorial, look upon the media as instruments best suited for promoting national goals.

While the printed press grew with the development of urban centres, radio and television provide the 'political class' with their primary means of reaching national audiences, in an effort to unite the nation around preserving a national identity.

But for governments, there is also an underlying fear that changing social relations brought on by

ownership of modern mass media instruments, can very well mute the influence of the state on rural or upwardly mobile groups. The modern mass media do not replace traditional means of communication but foster new social relationships by their abilities to reach large, scattered, undifferentiated audiences with a single, tailored message. The ability to transmit messages independent of any socially structured line of authority, and above powerful bureaucratic barricades, is an alluring feature attracting governments to exercise ownership of, and political control over mass media. This control serves to enhance authority over the nation's future and pace of development.

Dominant also in developing countries are arguments favouring divestment and towards more private ownership of media. These arguments take on even greater significance in Jamaica for two reasons related to direct government ownership. First, the country's proximity to the United States results in tremendous influence from media content closely associated with ideas of unregulated media structures. Secondly, both major political parties have opted for control and regulation of the only television outlet on the island.

Partisan feelings run high immediately following an election victory as the government-owned station is 'captured' as part of the larger political prize.

A primary reason for wanting to deregulate the telecommunications sector and allow competition and private enterprise to develop is to mobilize financial and entrepreneurial resources to the sector for sake of expansion (Littlechild, 1969). It is argued that, as telecommunications technology advances, extensive government regulation in developing countries or franchised government monopoly may not be the best way to create an innovative communication sector. Therefore, it is suggested, governments should seek to decrease their control of resources allocated to this sector, and concentrate an adequate provision on monopoly local exchanges such as telephones and long distance services.

As international telecommunications develop at a rapid rate, technology begins to converge (Pool, 1979). This means large changes are occurring in communication costs and overlaps are emerging in key financial and social institutions in both developed and developing



countries. The proponents of divestment feel, given these convergences, the need for monopolistic ownership by government, will, of necessity, be counterproductive.

If this proposition proves correct, the concept of natural monopolies reducing unit costs to individual sector user may be less a factor in dictating sector organization.

Littlechild is suggesting that if the public-owned telecommunications sector is divested as what happens in the United States, it seems that the proponents of divestment are seeking the same access to profitable markets as presently enjoyed by telecommunication structures in developing countries.

It is unclear why governments should relax restrictions on privately-owned, profit-oriented entities, while publicly-owned telecommunications structures are themselves operating efficiently.

In essence then, private sector interests, in pursuing the free enterprise ethos, call for a change in state-owned telecommunication enterprises given the inadequate supply of highly sophisticated technologies relative to the demand in developing countries. Such

de-regulatory policies could attract additional capital and lower cost solutions in satisfying the, integrated multi-sector communication needs of expanding economies.

Arguments supporting divestment and private ownership of media draw to a very great extent on conceptions of 'freedom' which dominate political and communication discourse in the United States.

Interestingly enough, both the present Jamaican government and the local private sector extoll the virtues of Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations in dealing with the vexed question of media ownership.

In justifying its restriction on cross-ownership, the Jamaican Government says the FCC forbids the owners of a radio or television station from owning, operating or controlling, directly or indirectly, another radio or television station within the same market area. It would place the same prohibition on those who already own or control newspapers. In an effort to shore up the government's divestment credentials, the government asserts that the FCC would deem cross or multiple ownership as "inconsistent with public interest,

convenience or necessity" (Seaga, 1985)

On the other hand, some elements of the private sector invited a FCC representative to Jamaica to help strengthen their case. Of course, the FCC of 1985 operated on three basic philosophical concepts.

First, to the maximum extent possible, governments should create and foster an unregulated, competitive, marketplace environment for the development of communication and eliminate unnecessary regulations and policies. By extension, government is morally obliged to eliminate action that infringes the freedom of speech and the press (Fowler, 1985).

Second, rectifying the central mistake of previous FCC policy of treating the electronic press different than the printed medium. Third, make the marketplace the fountain of ideas (Fowler, 1985).

Based on First Amendment Rights, ideas are left to flourish and broadcast entities must continually innovate to beat their competition. In Fowler's view,

They've got to be free to do that: unimpeded by government regulations, unrestricted by government raised eyebrows or wagging fingers, unafraid that some programming misstep will result in the loss of their licence (Fowler, 1985).

Central to the proposition of divestment is to appropriate a certain area of activity to the state not concerned with commercial activity.

Public broadcasting should and can be a source of information, educational, culture and national pride, just like museums, parks, national theater companies and libraries are (Fowler, 1985)

There is a need, even and perhaps especially in a developing country, for quality programming which informs, educates and entertains without the prima facie requirement of commercial attractiveness (Seaga, 1987).

No government, in any free society has any business in owning a commercial, profit making medium of communication. Any government that owns such a medium will either end up abusing its right or making blunders in the way it runs it that are worse than crimes against the proper exchange of information (Hearne, 1983).

There is also a striking similarity in the choice of institution to which Prime Minister Seaga ascribes a 'public education' role and that which operates in the

United States.

But we have steadfastly maintained separation between the government and the content of programming even where public broadcasting is involved. We've established an intermediary funding organization - the Corporation for Public Broadcasting - to shield government from public broadcasters and public broadcasters from the government (Fowler, 1985).

The new Public Broadcasting Corporation will take over the broadcasting of public affairs, education, sports and culture (Seaga, 1985).

While there are justifiable criticisms of Jamaica's state-owned public media, those who support divestment and advocate private sector control of information structures, do so on the premise that the only way to ensure the best service is to open the sector to free-market competition in order that listeners, viewers and readers can decide for themselves what is in their public interest.

However, open competition always benefits the financially powerful who possess the necessary resources to exploit ownership of key communication instruments.

Economic and political disparities at the international level have also affected the uneven pace of development within Third World nation-states.

Similarly, disparities in communication resources place greater and more developed media in urban centres much to the neglect of rural areas.

There are many developing countries where television covers only the main cities and surrounding areas. Hundreds of villages do not have telephones. In some instances, nine-tenths of the daily press is regularly sold in main cities, so circulation of the print media serves a small portion of the population (McBride, 1980:123).

It is the question of illiteracy that has been one of the inhibiting factors against communities effectively using the scribal media to aid the development process. This drawback limits the production and distribution of newspapers, books, magazines as well as educational material.

Reports of successful use of community newspapers to aid development projects in selected rural areas in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia and the Philippines

recently, depended on three community-related factors.

In Maslog's study of four Asian community newspapers, success was guaranteed, because in a large population where economic activity is relatively high, those who are educated and have high income levels, tend to buy and read newspapers (Maslog, 1985:123). In addition, high literacy rates together with homogeneity of language are also factors which contribute to successful communication in the rural sector.

Finally, Maslog pointed to the socio-economic milieu as a common factor in all four countries which aided the success of these community newspapers (Maslog, 1985).

The successes outlined by Maslog are atypical of Third World countries, in general, because Maslog carefully selected areas with literacy rates well above national averages. Evaluations on a much wider scale reveal an opposite picture (Becker, 1984).

Ownership of television sets and the bulk of expensive media facilities are concentrated in capital cities or towns. This concentration helps to reinforce

urban dominance on media content. Very often rural audiences are culturally disadvantaged as media content may be completely alien to the spectator's background. In the final analysis, urban-centred media develop and are heavily influenced by externally-produced structures that serve the more privileged in society.

\*Conceptions of modernization are applied which create a dichotomy between the resource-rich urban and the deprived-poor rural areas. The pursuance of this approach has not met the interests of the rural sector as rural audiences are assigned roles of recipients in the communication process, not of active participants (Bordenave, 1977; Sinha, 1978).

A study of broadcasting in ninety-one (91) developing countries showed that of all programmes broadcast by national stations, rural populations were heavily disfavoured (Katz & Wedell, 1978). In another study of radio programmes in Afghanistan over a 30-day period, 87 per cent of news dealt with events in the capital city (UNESCO, 1978).

Disparities between urban and rural centres are quite marked in the Latin American region. An example



from Brazil is a case in point. Out of 991 newspapers, 444 are published in only two of the twenty-two states - Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo. The two states are also responsible for 512 of the country's 700 radio stations. Statistics for television are no different. Residents in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro own 83.2 per cent of television sets in the country (UNESCO, 1975).

The foregoing analysis posed some salient issues facing developing countries limited by scarce resources, but needing to respond to the imperatives of development:

Problems that arise can be located in instances with fundamental epistemological differences over the route to 'modernization'. At other times, there are differences in emphasis whether media should be active agents in achieving literacy, higher agricultural yields, healthier lifestyles, or place greater trust in the mechanism of unbridled competition.

The achievement of national unity, cultural sovereignty and political self-determination are also heavily dependent on the nature of ownership. Whose

cultural codes are being transmitted and the nature of ideas contained in these codes are key items for consideration in the larger question of a media policy.

Finally, the dichotomy between the concentration of media in the main cities to the neglect of rural areas is still a problem that needs attention from policy makers. Urban-centred media structures together with passive sender processes have proven inadequate in any quest for national integration.

#### 2.5 Constraints & Obstacles

The best laid plans for the more efficient management of the media systems under study are subject to general and specific constraints. Communication theory from liberal to paternalistic; from anti-statist to voluntaristic or from dependency to public service, offer specific prescriptions. When applied, though, these theories operate under certain constraints to a greater or lesser degree.

Bureaucrats and the dominant 'political class' in Jamaica are traditionally hostile to developmental planning (Jones, 1984:18). To this grouping, broadening

access to decision-making means bargaining away their reason for existence. It is a paternalistic view honed over years of managing the Westminster/Whitehall public bureaucracy. Historically, the state bureaucracy possess scarce technical expertise and experience, part of which help to guarantee continuity, considerable power and permanence (Lee, 1967:7)

Because the bureaucracy has tended to be ill-adapted to changing environmental conditions and their mobilized commitment to the status quo, changes in public policy can sometimes be plagued by difficulties, if not by deliberate reversals.

During the ~~BNP~~'s tenure (1972-1980), Prime Minister Michael Manley gradually drew on a 'parallel bureaucracy' of special advisors when the traditional bureaucracy began to oppose his party's declaration of "Democratic Socialism." Rhetoric became a stumbling block and popular participation in many economic activities never really moved beyond conceptualization (Jones, 1981; Henry, 1981; Stone, 1986). Further, many citizens blamed the 20 - 30 per cent drop in living standards between 1972 to 1978 on excessive bureaucracy,

government red tape and bungling, and corruption and maladministration in the state sector (Stone, 1986:131) despite anti-corruption rhetoric at the time.

Yet another constraint on media reform is fragmentation at the decision-making level. There is fragmentation along race, class and colour lines. Brown (1984) also speaks of a disjuncture between technical competence and political authority. In the tradition of the British style of public administration, Jamaican civil servants are expected to be politically neutral, offering only advice on which the political directorate bases its decision. In the final analysis, "technically correct decisions are often not politically expedient decisions" (Brown, 1984:10).

The mal-distribution of authority within bureaucratic structures is considered a major obstacle to policy formation because very little attention is paid to internal organization. There is a sense that the top knows very little of what is happening at the bottom. A disconnection within the bureaucracy promotes negative expressions of immobility and contradictory policy signals, for example, of what the media ought to

be doing.

Another inhibiting factor concerns the quick turnover of governments at regularly held elections. This results in political discontinuities and changes of political emphasis often make understandings difficult and ephemeral. At all times, policy planning must be patently sensitive to Opposition demands and different conceptions articulated by those who constitute 'opposition forces'. The nature of Jamaican politics allows both extra-bureaucratic and opposition groups to mobilize sufficient support to render any policy programme ineffective.

One major obstacle which continues to mitigate against the development of a relevant communication policy is the priority very often given to private sector interests over public interest in times of crisis. This arises from private sector abilities to organize much better and exert much more pressure on the state than the comparatively fragmented public sector. For example, Jamaica spent an estimated US\$21 million between 1976 and 1980 on the importation of video equipment at a time when the government had to

reluctantly impose austerity measures at the insistence of the International Monetary Fund (Forth, 1982).

Therefore, the picture of interest groups is lop-sided, which means numerically small, but particularly powerful groups are able to exercise informal, private interactions with the centres of power in the state sector. In another way, too, elite groups mobilize consensus around core issues which are not necessarily part of a wider public agenda. This undermobilizes the polity to the internal workings of bureaucratic operations, effectively limiting change-inducing policies within the public domain.

Two remaining factors constitute further constraints to the policy-making process. These involve limits on technical capability and the tremendous influence of external media content and technology.

To summarize, the diffusion of authority, the fragmented decision-making process, a competitive party system, scarce technical resource and the alluring quality of satellite technology, are potential constraints to relevant reform and to a unified policy-making process.

## CHAPTER 3

### REQUIREMENTS FOR MEDIA REFORM IN JAMAICA

#### 3.1 National Objectives/Sectoral Expectations

National media objectives are very often stated in general, all-embracing terms to reflect complexities or hard choices. However, the state sector has the ultimate responsibility to rise above narrow sectarian demands and set the tone along national lines. This means being specific about certain objectives.

Former JBC General Manager, Carey Robinson, feels the public media cannot sit back and say the society is developing along its own lines (Robinson, 1987). The duty of the public media must go beyond only entertainment and seek to encourage those who wish to broaden and increase their horizons by presenting them with programmes that inspire and motivate.

Generally, it is accepted that media should entertain, inform and educate. These are universal concepts devoid of any contextual notion of particular circumstances in developing societies.

In 1976, the Board of the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation (JBC) issued broad policy guidelines that in a very real sense reflected some contextual realities. The Board's charge to the station is worth stating in full.

The fundamental concept underlying Independence and Nationhood is the recognition of the need for social change. The fact that Jamaicans overwhelmingly and definitely rejected Colonialism and the Old Order and embarked upon nation-building and the creation of a New Society involves a commitment to change. The Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation recognizes that if it is to fulfill its function in giving expression to the will of the people it must consciously accept the responsibility to reflect accurately this implicit and explicit national will for change, fully conscious of the regulative principles that underlie all change.

Jamaica as a nation has accepted as an agent of change, the democratic way of life based on universal adult suffrage, and cannot therefore reflect only the views of a small privileged minority. Rather, JBC aims at the constructive policy of giving full expression to the outlook, aspirations and cultural values of all sections of the society. This does not involve suppression of the views of any minority, but it does involve a conscious effort to reach a balanced position which fosters clear articulation of the new ideas and policies of change at work in the nation, while permitting the full, frank and uninhibited criticism of those policies.



In the fields of entertainment and the arts, JBC seeks, as far as possible, to minimise the traditional dependence on imported canned programmes based on certain stereotyped entertainment formulae and to produce instead programmes which reflect the best in truly popular Jamaican entertainment and satisfy the growing cultural awareness and the rising national cultural aspirations.

In its constant aim of improvement of its services and the pursuit of excellence, the JBC internally is working towards an organizational system which will recognize, develop and utilize fully the spirit of dedication, creative talent, technical expertise and managerial potential amongst all its members (JBC, 1976).

A clear national objective concerns the use of public media facilities to assist and complement the country's educational institutions with programmes tailored to educational excellence. At another level, the public media have a duty to set standards of esthetic quality that children could emulate (Aub, 1987).

During the 1970s, the national emphasis on literacy utilized the public media, among other resources, to produce significant changes in literacy levels.

Table 4

FUNCTIONAL ILLITERACY AND LITERACY BY PARISH 1975 AND 1981

Parish	Total 15 Years and Over Population 1975		Functionally Illiterate		Functionally Literate %	Non-Response	Total 15 Years and Over Population 1981	Functionally Illiterate		Functionally Literate %	Un-classified
	No.	%	No.	%				No.	%		
JAMAICA	1,165,153	32.0	373,280	47.0	21.0	1,334,556	323,725	24.3	73.1	2.6	
KINGSTON	84,532	20.3	17,123	49.6	30.1	93,807	10,272	11.0	85.2	3.8	
ST. ANDREW	296,647	21.8	64,714	46.5	31.7	345,750	49,962	14.5	82.8	2.7	
ST. THOMAS	45,666	30.5	18,509	48.1	11.4	50,116	16,471	32.9	63.3	3.8	
PORTLAND	41,747	40.2	16,803	45.3	14.5	48,101	15,137	31.5	65.2	3.3	
ST. MARY	57,373	29.0	16,632	53.5	17.5	66,771	22,091	33.1	63.7	3.2	
ST. ANN	72,258	32.0	23,123	44.5	23.5	83,624	22,637	27.1	70.8	2.1	
TRELAWNY	37,085	38.3	14,199	43.2	18.5	49,546	16,575	33.5	65.6	0.9	
ST. JAMES	64,922	38.7	25,143	53.4	7.9	79,311	17,457	22.6	75.7	1.7	
HANOVER	33,934	35.0	11,877	49.5	15.5	36,319	10,571	29.1	68.2	2.7	
WESTMORELAND	64,127	48.7	31,214	39.5	11.8	76,261	27,750	36.4	60.9	2.7	
ST. ELIZABETH	74,386	44.0	32,725	43.8	12.2	77,012	27,574	35.8	60.0	4.2	
MARCHESTER	78,307	31.3	24,480	49.0	19.7	93,353	24,218	25.9	72.3	1.8	
CLARENDON	102,541	38.3	29,243	52.7	9.0	116,072	35,038	30.2	67.9	1.9	
ST. CATHERINE	111,628	24.9	27,617	44.1	31.0	120,511	27,969	23.3	74.3	2.4	

Table 4 shows that there was a significant mean increase in literacy levels of 26.1% between 1975 and 1981, and a corresponding decrease of 7.7% among functional illiterates.

However, results from a recent survey among industrial workers recorded a reading level of approximately 57%, while 62.2% of illiterates now town radios (MRS, 1986).

Table 5

Results of Reading and Writing Tests

(a) Reading	% of workers interviewed
Able to read all 15 words	57.0
Able to read some of the 15 words	21.0
Able to read none of the 15 words	22.0
	<hr/> 100.0
(b) Writing	
Able to legibly write name of company	66.0
Unable to write name of company	34.0
	<hr/> 100.0

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Source: Stone, 1987

Table 5 shows that one out of every three workers interviewed in Stone's (1987) literacy study was able to write. Sixty per cent (60%) demonstrated reading competence while 43% had reading deficiencies.

It is obvious, that since 1981, when the present government down-graded the national literacy programme, a rise in functional illiterates meant their increasing reliance on radio for information.

While protecting all civil liberties including freedom of expression, the public media must give active support in creating the conditions for freedom of access. Creating freedom of access could be adequately served by community participation within the framework of public ownership, not private dominance.

Canada has been able to maintain a judicious mixture of public and private ownership, but reaffirming the clear pre-eminence of the public sector (Peers, 1983).

The use of media in Canada to assist national objectives is based on the need to preserve national unity, particularly the divergence of language and

regions, promoting cultural development, and most important, serving the country's economic interests.

That quest for the public media to avoid 'profit and loss' values and make the media responsive to national sentiments came early in the game.

The first of these driving motives was the national motive, and it was predominant. The second motive was the free use of broadcasting by all sections of opinion. The positive aspect of the national motive was the use of broadcasting for the development of Canadian national unity, and the native aspect was the apprehension of American influence upon Canadian nationality, particularly as it concerned public opinion (Spry, p. 107).

There was, and still is, the simple notion that if broadcasting is to be dominated by private sector thinking, it will eventually become a means of entertainment, a by-product of the advertising business. And in such instance, as the Massey Report concluded, broadcasting is open to commercial exploitation limited only by certain public controls (Massey Report, 1949).

In order to carry forward its public responsibility as a truly national institution, JBC must be free from such fetters. Aggrey Brown observes the net effect of JBC's total dependence on commercial resources.

If you don't give the station the wherewithal to fulfill its mandate, it has to do what the JBC has been doing over the past number of years... When you have a monopoly, you are not in a situation where you ought to have the market dictate to you... The station went overboard, not recognizing...you are able to define, broadly, the tastes of viewers (Brown, 1987).

Brown's criticism of local media, particularly television, underscores the point that media reform should appeal to individuals as active, creative persons, rather than to passive consumers of media products.

Jamaica's public media must, therefore, be an interactive, participatory mechanism, seeing itself as part of popular education, as well as responsive to sectoral needs and expectations.

Equally, too, Jamaica cannot be indifferent to the impact of satellite technology and the way in which its growing demand has placed tremendous pressure on

national sensibilities.

Satellite technology puts the society in touch with the global community. In most instances, though, the process is one-way, where messages, externally-derived, are fed beyond the country's capacity to absorb. Here, the importance of technology is not being questioned, but rather whether the content assists or hinders larger developmental concerns.

The economic profile of Caribbean countries is known, not only for high rates of unemployment and illiteracy, but also for the poverty in communication facilities which hinder national communication systems from transmitting information regionally in the face of round-the-clock US television.

One regional body, the Caribbean Publishing and Broadcasting Association (CPBA) contends that it is impossible for countries with tender communication systems to compete with powerful multi-media television corporations. In their view:

Once people are allowed to receive these television stations in their homes and their life style is changed to accommodate it, it will be virtually impossible to withdraw the service. (Hoyte, 1986:5).

This rapid development and wide range of satellite technology covering the entire Caribbean area has a momentum of its own. It is seductive, compelling, attracting audiences with images of another social context.

It is Lent's view, well supported by evidence, that multinational corporations and government institutions feed a fascination with technology by applying more and more gadgetry. This cycle of dependence deepens (Lent, 1987:33).

In terms of content, reliance on foreign, mainly US, programmes in the Caribbean increased by 10% between 1976 and 1986. In Jamaica, imported content jumped from 73% to 76% over the same period (Brown, 1987).

In 1981, JBC television increased its transmission time by 51%. Foreign content amounted to approximately 30 hours or 67.21% of air-time. Of the 18 hours



allotted to children's programmes, which represents an increase of 15 hours over 1980, 94.44% were accounted for by imported material from the U.S. (Wilson, 1981)

By 1985, Jamaican television had 88.3% of foreign programmes; all entertainment programmes and those for children were produced outside the region (Wilson, 1985).

There are those who feel blame should not be attributed to U.S. producers. Attention, instead, should be directed to audiences who obviously approve by their continuing attraction to the product. Politicians tend to view satellite content as important to social stability. Also, there is a reluctance to take away a satisfying and status-conferring activity from influential citizens who very often articulate and influence communication policy options.

Cultural sovereignty then becomes debatable. The CPBA strongly objected to this type of dominance.

Neither our cultural identity nor our political sovereignty, nor indeed, our territorial integrity should be eroded by any foreign power as a result of our location or size. It is a process of deculturalization which is painless, but also very thorough and long-lasting (Hoyte, 1986:5).

Addressing satellite technology as part of the country's national objectives must be an important task when considering the integration of communication into the fabric of Jamaican life. This integration looks at the prospect of motivating the society around a change in taste patterns and consumption habits, as well as exposing the society to very helpful and innovative approaches to national development.

White and McDonnell (1983) insist that trying to catch up with industrialized countries is not the answer. Post-colonial societies like Jamaica have inherited a very unbalanced structure of communication, and it is more beneficial to try and manage the pace and integration of that technology (p.13). In other words, technology has to be appropriately applied, because the unthinking and uncritical acceptance of externally-generated technology might just homogenize and devalue local flavour.

Another dimension which must be factored into Jamaica's media reform programme is in itself a challenge to conventional political orthodoxy. This challenge leads to an appreciation of participation as

crucial to integrative planning both at national and community levels. This reciprocal flow of ideas, not symbolically administered, leads to empowerment.

The purpose of emphasizing community communication is to open the political process to a higher level of participation by citizens than now exists (Berrigan, 1979, 8-9..

In economic and social terms, greater community access and participation in the communication process, stimulated and facilitated by community-based media, can serve more useful developmental purposes, mobilizing human resources around settled objectives. Healthy, competitive debate and disagreement, would, it is argued, take place at the planning rather than at the implementation stage.

Taking all the above factors into consideration, the problem which still persists in Jamaica, is a reluctance of the 'political class' to see media policy as an essential cog in the wheel of national development.

### 3.2 Integrating Media Policy with National Policy

A policy framework for the Jamaican media has not traditionally been integrated in the country's planning process. In a sense, media, particularly broadcasting, have not been adjunct to the broader, national planning process. So at the preparation of annual budgets or five-year development plans, media are never seriously considered as major players in development. It is only at times of economic crisis or loss of popular support that some attention is paid to the importance of the public media in larger national aspirations.

It is not being suggested that public media should serve propagandistic purposes. Rather, important national planning processes should consider the media sector, not as peripheral, but integral to economic survival, social stability, production and cultural development.

The fundamental flaw with the traditional approach of not considering media policy as essential to national policy stems from the notion that media are channels of 'entertainment and news'. As such, media are not key movers of industrial and economic growth, and possess

minimal institutional clout in the marketplace, within the public management system or among political institutions.

As part of a specifically stated policy, mass media in Peru evolved out of national political circumstances.

Peru's 1969 "Press Laws" included decrees aimed at reduction of dependence on foreign imports and foreign communication enterprises. It was felt that these measures would result in a significant increase in citizen participation. Additionally, these laws directed mass media to participate in a national self-sufficiency programme so that media systems could meet the information needs of Peruvian society (Mattos, 1981; Philip, 1978).

The Telecommunications Law of 1971 stipulated telecommunication and media as integral to Peru's socio-economic development. As such, these telecommunication resources had to be consistent with "public necessity, utility, security and of preferred national interest" (Ortega & Romero, 1977:29)

Consistent with the country's self interests, foreign ownership of media was significantly reduced, structures shifted towards worker ownership and other requirements for broadcast media content acceptable for national development goals (Gerbner, 1977).

The context for nationalizing media and placing telecommunications services at the total behest of the state converts media into a single instrument for promoting socio-economic development. In that way, broadcasting is placed under state control and slants programming for adequate humanistic, cultural and social training to back up the educational reform and the structural changes required by the development of the country (Ortega & Romero, p. 42).

Peru's attempts at integrating media reform into larger national, socio-economic planning did not achieve that 'revolutionary' change for reasons which Jamaica could well take note.

Atwood and Mattos (1984) note that it is the first time in Peru's history that a cohesive set of regulations was created to guide mass media organizations and reduce dependence on the importation

of foreign media software and technology (p. 316). However, the reform measures failed because the regime tried to solve political problems before addressing economic restructuring (Peirano, 1981). Capitalist structures and the commercial nature of mass media remained unchanged.

Integration of media policy into national development policy in Jamaica has a greater chance of success mainly because settled bureaucratic structures are in place to effect these reforms. More important, Jamaica makes no pretensions about instituting 'fundamental', 'drastic' or 'revolutionary' changes based on the rapid dismantling of current economic relations and social structures. These reforms contained in a media policy could easily be integrated into a larger national plan within the context of the country's liberal-democratic tradition.

### 3.3 National Media System

First, a review of the major players in the Jamaican media.

The Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation (JBC) is a public service institution with the added responsibility of income generation through commercial advertising. JBC operates AM, FM-monaural and FM Stereo radio services and the only television station. Both radio and television cover approximately seventy-five per cent of land area and serve the main population centres. JBC owns and operates all transmission facilities and produces approximately ninety-five per cent of programme output. (See Appendices 6,7,8,9).

Radio Jamaica Limited is another radio station providing islandwide transmission and programme services. These services cover similar physical locations on AM and FM Stereo frequencies. In a divestment programme, ownership of station was exercised through twenty-two (22) local organizations. These organizations control 50.1% of stock units, RJR's employees 24.8%, and the government, through the Accountant General, retains the remaining 25.1% equity.

Another radio entity with its own transmission facilities is the proposed Public Broadcasting Corporation (PBC). It is expected that the PBC will be



responsible for broadcasting material in public affairs, culture, education and sports on the present JBC FM-Stereo frequencies.

The Jamaica Information Service (JIS) has a clear role as the government information agency charged with providing radio, television and printed material for general release. As a programme provider, the JIS is guaranteed free broadcast time on both JBC and RJR.

Other programme providers include the Educational Broadcasting Service (EBS) and Jamaican Movement for the Advancement of Literacy (JAMAL). These two statutory bodies are assigned set available time as part of government's free broadcast allocation.

All public information facilities are expected to be housed in one location, while the Creative Production and Training Centre (CPTC) is proposed as the production kernel of the public service broadcasting system in radio and television.

This leaves the regional radio stations which are expected to be both transmission facilitators and programme providers.

Suggested adjustments in Jamaica's media landscape into a pluralistic, participatory model recognizes the need to create a single system with enough scope for broader representation at national and community levels.

It would be instructive to graphically represent the differences between what existed, what now obtains and what our study proposes.

Before 1985, as Figure 1 shows, Radio Jamaica was the only non-government, electronic medium. Gleaner publications were and are still privately owned newspapers. The remaining entities were government-owned and controlled. Note that arrows run in one direction indicating a "top-down" model of operation.

The Broadcasting Authority which ostensibly operated as an independent body was appointed by the Minister of Information to oversee the operations of broadcasting. The authority had several other functions pertaining to the granting of licences, instructing stations to withdraw offending material and submitting yearly reports. However, the Authority demonstrated very little independence and so had limited success in regulating media. This was so because the law

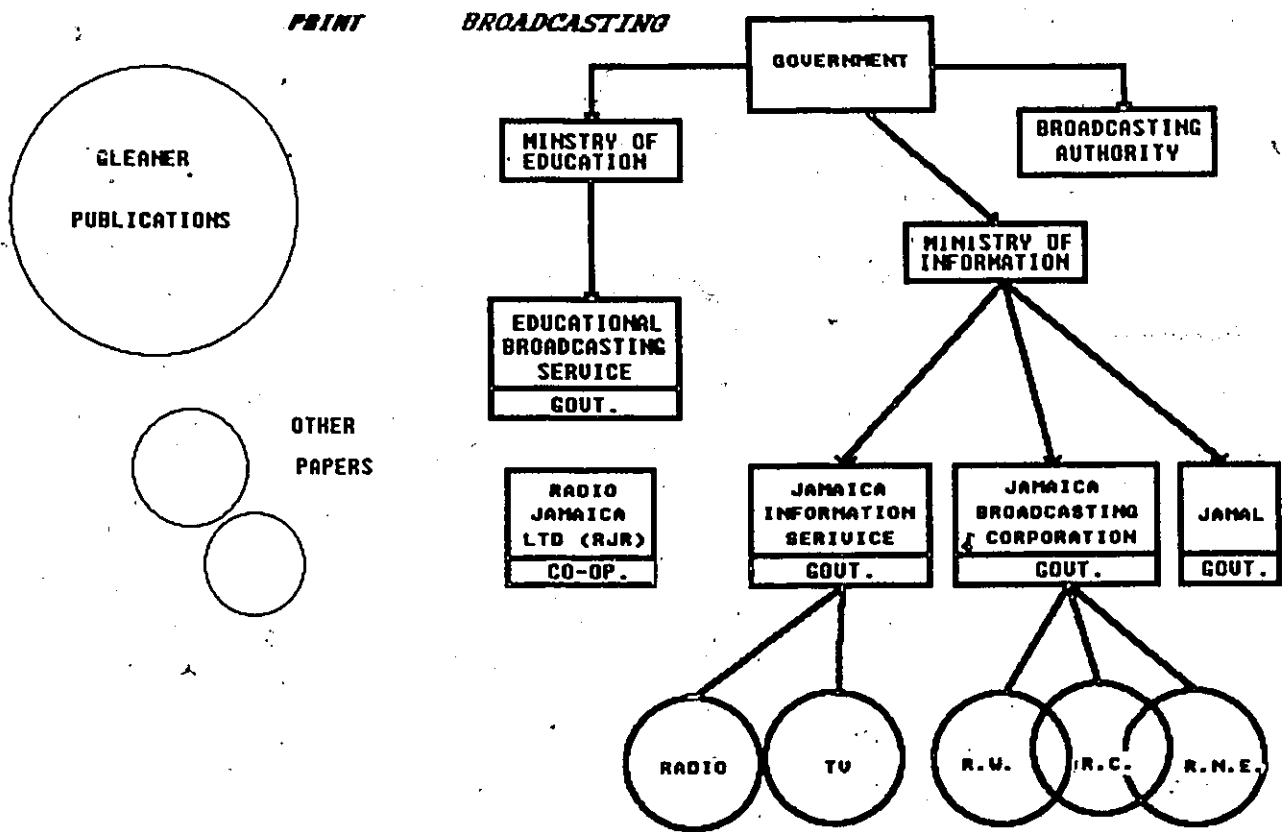
establishing the Authority in 1963 did not separate its operations from the governing political directorate which increasingly developed the penchant of subverting the authority's power. Appointment to the Broadcasting Authority was the sole preserve of the Minister who also had direct political responsibility for all other broadcast outlets in the country. This body was therefore reduced to submitting occasional reports which were seldom made public.

In the case of Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation (JBC), the Board of Directors is empowered by law but appointed exclusively by the Minister of Information who has no obligation to consult with any group or individual regarding choice. In turn, the Board appoints the General Manager and oversees the corporation at a policy level. Again, direct partisan appetite for control has made little distinction between government's wish and administrative acquiescence to political pressures.

Very often, therefore, the functional lines between Jamaica Information Service (JIS) and JBC become blurred as the Minister of Information expects the same kind of

**Figure 1**

**PRE-1985 MEDIA STRUCTURE**



JBC - Radio 1 (AM/FM)  
Radio 2 (FM Stereo)

RJR - Supreme Sound (AM/FM)  
FAME (FM Stereo)

R.W. - Radio West  
R.C. - Radio Central  
R.N.E. - Radio North-East

JAMAL - Jamaica Movement  
for the Advancement  
of Literacy

operation from both organizations. JBC's credibility has always been questioned. Thus, the public media, except in few instances, lost its public character.

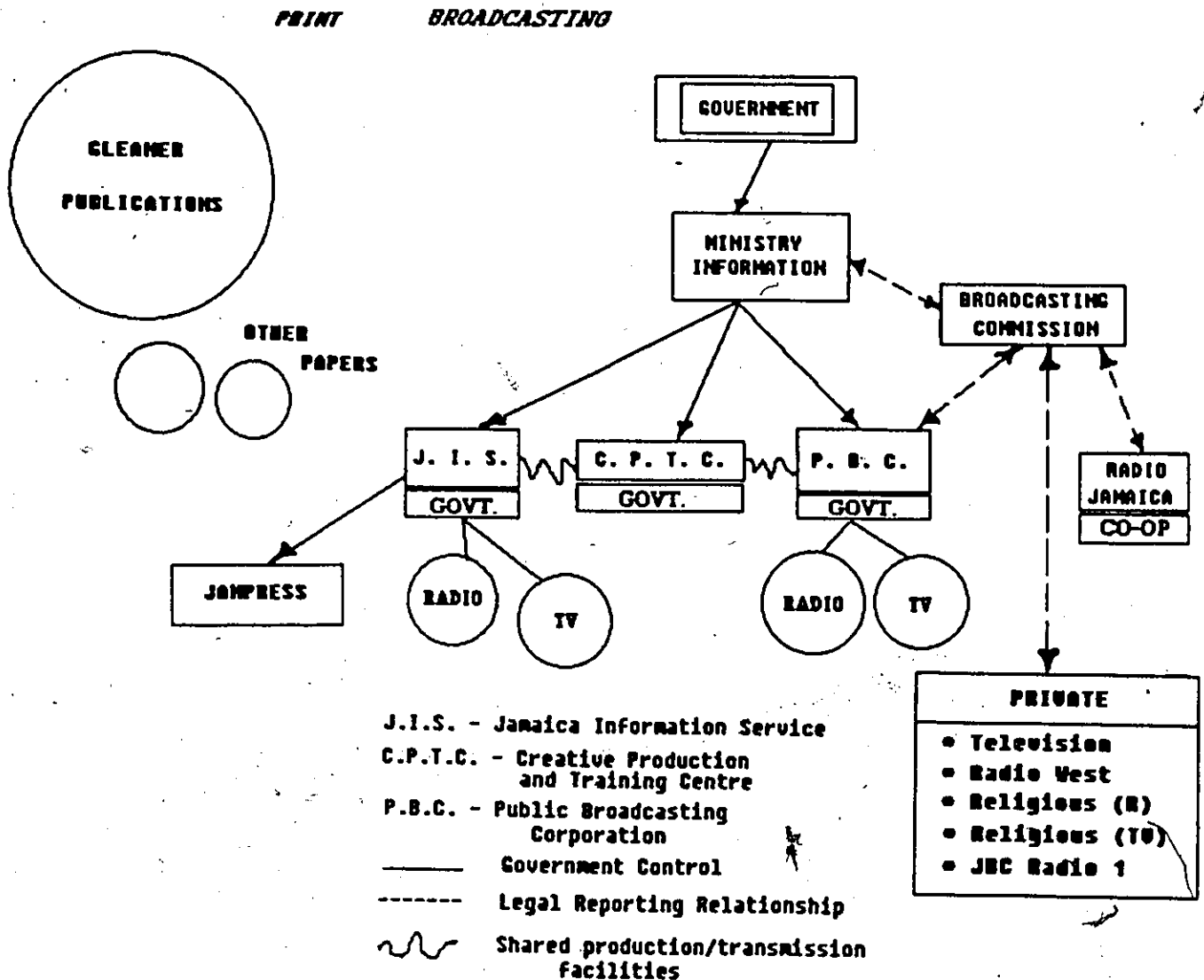
Between 1985 and the present, a proposed divestment of government-owned media changed the media landscape in several ways as illustrated by Figure 2.

For the first time in Jamaica's history and probably a first among developing countries, the government proposes to divest the traditional entertainment channels, opting instead to launch a Public Broadcasting Corporation (PBC). This corporation has been charged with developing public affairs programmes for broadcasting on an existing FM-Stereo frequency now providing an alternative source of music.

Note that the Public Broadcasting Corporation (PBC), the Jamaica Information Service (JIS) and the Creative Production and Training Centre (CPTC) are all government entities and so they share production and transmission facilities. In fact, CPTC will serve as the common production centre for public affairs programmes for broadcast on the PBC.

**Figure 2**

**1987 DIVESTMENT STRUCTURE**



Unlike Public Radio in the US which subsists mostly on public donations and corporate funding, Jamaica's PBC will be largely financed by government.

The Broadcasting Commission replaced the Broadcasting Authority for the purpose of issuing licences and ensure a measure of fair play with the necessary legal checks and balances.

The new and important changes in the Amended Act, 1986, empowers the Governor General to appoint members whose revocation can only take effect in the following circumstances.

1. By the Governor General
2. Resignation, sickness or infirmity
3. If the revocation is recommended by Parliament by means of a resolution of each House of Parliament, approved by not less than two-thirds of all members of that House (Broadcasting Act, 1986:11).

In addition, the Commission can instruct licensees to offer a public apology or facilitate right of reply to injured parties.

However, on closer examination, the Commission's power changes very little from what obtained under the

old Authority.

For example, the Commission must advise the Minister on terms and conditions for granting of licenses (p. 30.a) and submit reports of the broadcasting performance of licensees as well as decisions taken during the year (p. 4/19 a, b).

In instances where a licensee contravenes the licence, the Commission must also inform the Minister who will act if there is failure to satisfy the Commission's instructions.

There is no mechanism for appeal or review. Also, the Commission in its operation is not accountable to Parliament but must seek the Minister's political legitimacy to enforce a properly constituted law. Contravention of laws should be determined through the legislative branch, not the executive wing.

On any occasion involving the Minister's political party in a dispute over the right of reply, there is not sufficient guarantee in the Act for impartial judgement beyond members of the Broadcasting Commission.



Composition of the Broadcasting Commission is also in dispute.

The Act provides for a minimum of three or a maximum of five members for five-year appointments. The Press Association of Jamaica feels,

that a Media Commission should not be dominated by those who are not associated with the industry, but who instead serve as lieutenants for partisan interests. Any regulatory body overseeing the media in Jamaica, must in our view, comprise those who are in the industry. If a suggestion like this is ignored, and appointments made of persons who lack institutional support, we are likely to be in that position which the Gleaner and the private sector complain about so bitterly (Wilson, 1985).

On balance, though, the Broadcasting Commission is a useful regulatory tool to oversee professional use of the broadcast spectrum.

The other major, and indeed significant area of the government's divestment policy, is the creation of five privately-owned media entities operating on sub-franchise leases (See Figure 2).

The government-owned JBC Radio 1, including transmitters, will be sold for the pursuit of commercial

business, while an additional television channel will also be granted.

Additionally, there is provision for a regional radio service which must expand operations to islandwide coverage after four years.

Granting of licenses to religious organizations on a non-commercial basis has had mixed responses. For the Small Business Association of Jamaica (SBAJ), the franchise provides a wonderful breakthrough for the Church and the State, and can only help in promoting democracy (Dunkley, 1987:10). Going beyond the SBAJ obvious support for the present regime, religious commentator, Billy Hall, points to unsettling questions which are bound to arise.

For example, approximately US\$15 million would be needed to underwrite capital and initial recurrent expenditure.

The cost of purchasing and maintaining such a station would seem an insurmountable hurdle for nearly all church groups except perhaps the big time tele-evangelists and those connected to them (Hall, 1987:14).

Questions have also been posed regarding what seems to be special privileges for religion. In fact, religious groups have no right of access to the airwaves which is superior to the right of any other body of citizens who have the means and desire to invest in a broadcasting enterprise (Insight, 1987). Further, there is a problem of defining a religious organization. Would, for example, the rastafarian movement be eligible to participate in ownership of a religious station along with pentecostals and fundamentalists? There is even the suggestion, widely held but seldomly stated, that the present regime is anxious to win favour with the religious majority in an election season, especially the fundamentalist congregations, who may be suspicious of the People's National Party's left-of-centre policies.

There is no stated reason for granting radio and television licenses to certain religious bodies, and therefore, there is an insufficient presumption about granting such special privilege.

Although the Gleaner empire still dominates print media, Amiee Webster, herself a veteran journalist and

regular Gleaner columnist, criticizes the government for omitting print media from the its recent policy statement.

Webster's (1985) contention does not stem from a desire to reform print. Instead, her observation is that,

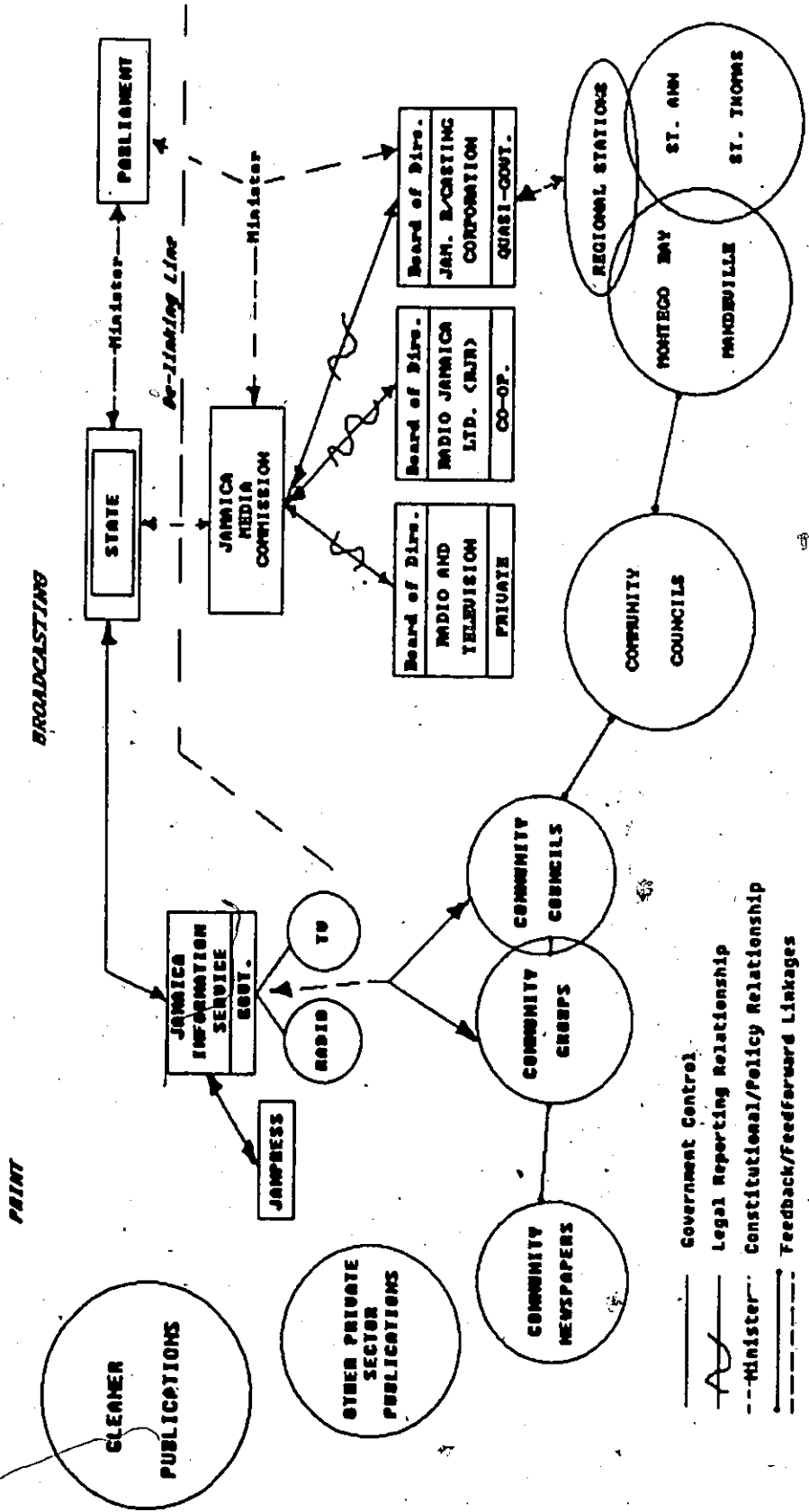
Prime Minister Seaga omitted print media from his policy statement because of his personal conviction that readers are so few as not to matter in the making of national policy (Webster, 1985:21).

It is the above concern that partly explains the reluctance of successive Jamaican governments to pay attention to print. One suspects that Webster's reasonable reflections on the need to address all members of the media family would include a hope that government encourages the expansion and growth of print without abridging principles of free expression.

Figure 3 represents what this study proposes. There are several features of this proposed structure which differ fundamentally from the two phases, previously discussed.

**Figure 3**

**PROPOSED MEDIA SYSTEM**



Firstly, there has to be a conceptual distinction between government and the state. In the case of government as a political instrument, there is not a distinction between that body and the governing political party from which it draws its legitimacy.

It is quite understandable, therefore, that the Minister of Information operates as the political representative implementing policies formulated and articulated within his party's political fora.

The state, though, represents a much broader concept incorporating Parliament; the bureaucracy and federal regulatory bodies.

The second fundamental feature concerns the preeminence of Parliament as the repository of power to provide broad policy directions through binding institutional forms. These institutional forms would require the same commitment to high broadcasting performance from both private and public media, as well as maintaining a strong Jamaican character.

In Canada, the 1968 Broadcasting Act was specific about broadcasting policy that where a conflict arose

between the public and private broadcasting sectors, the public element should predominate (Task Force, 1986). The determination of how technological change could be accommodated within the confines of the Act has not altered the basic and overriding concept of a public broadcasting system. Broadcasting goals are enshrined in legislation which emphasizes that all licensees are granted a privilege from the state since the electromagnetic spectrum is public property.

Parliament insulates regulatory bodies and broadcasting careers from constant caprice caused by shifting political choices. Policy emanates from the Cabinet but subject to parliamentary debate and protection.

This shift to Parliament as the source of empowerment guarantees the third fundamental difference in our proposed media reform.

Probably the most challenging reform would require de-linking the public broadcasting system from direct Ministerial control. This would not vitiate Ministerial responsibility, only lessen temptations for partisan manipulation.

Media managers, journalists, columnists, media experts and politicians, on sober reflection, all agree that a rational mechanism for keeping the political directorate at arms length is desirable, making sure that people who sit on boards are people of integrity, and that professionals are allowed to prudently administer the broadcasting system (Patmos, 1983; Kitchin, 1983; Clarke, 1985; Brown, 1987; Bennett, 1987; Spaulding, 1987; Jones, 1987; Rattray, 1987).

Carl Rattray, Opposition spokesman on Information and former Minister of Justice draws on his own experiences in addressing this very sensitive question of managing power.

I don't think it is impossible.  
The Minister has a different sort of role in terms of policy. In fact, what really happens is that policy is hammered out by all of us meeting together and getting a consensus. It is how you approach it and recognise that the board are people of integrity... they are professional people and the Minister is not a professional in that area (Rattray, 1987).

The privately-owned media have also been partisan whenever their interests have been threatened. So there is a sense where access to media and fearless



journalism have been jeopardized, by servants of power.

Stone contends that the trap has been compounded by weak public opinion which has yet to demonstrate a treasured need for vigorous dissent (Stone, 1985).

Since Jamaica operates within a quasi-democratic, socio-political culture, adversary though not necessarily enemy relations develop particularly between political parties and the media. In this context, the 'political class' becomes over-sensitive to media content considered to be 'bad news'. The adversarial relation very often absorbs energies and aborts well-intentioned attempts at development.

In proscribing a different relationship between media and legitimate political representatives, the Minister responsible not only sets out government policy, but is also responsible to Parliament for the implementation of that policy.

The single regulatory body - Jamaica Media Commission - is an upgraded Broadcasting Commission. However, it would be necessary to strengthen its function by making decisions challengeable only by

reference to the courts.

Another distinctive feature of media reform requires making it easier for private and community interests to participate in an expansion of media opportunities. Private interests should be allowed to compete along side government-owned entities; but, also, media entities must be accessible to communities across the country. It is this community ownership that will empower the rural folk or less powerful groups access to information in order that they might articulate community concerns politically independent of those who govern. This dynamic, interactive process would lead to more meaningful policy formation.

Unlike previous models (Figures 1 and 2), our proposed model emphasizes a two-way communication process and an integrative link among institutions at the community level.

If these reforms are accepted as a logical outgrowth of problems previously discussed, there is need to take specific action regarding constitutional and institutional changes.

### 3.4 Adjusting the Broadcasting Act

Jamaica's Broadcasting and Radio Re-diffusion Law (Cap. 47) coincided with the 1959 commercial licence establishing the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation (M.D. 231/48/010). As such, this law, which gave force to the JBC, was patterned from provisions of the Telegraph Control Law, and stated inter alia,

The Licensee may establish so many and such broadcasting stations and at such stations maintain such apparatus for receiving and transmitting sounds by wireless telephony as may be necessary for the full and effectual exercise of the privilege conferred by this Licence and the due performance of all obligations imposed by this Licence upon the Licensee: Provided that the radio frequency output power of the transmitters used by the Licensee shall not, without the express permission of the Governor in Council exceed what is required to provide a clearly audible signal throughout Jamaica (JBC Licence, 1959, Sec. 4).

The remaining clauses contained in the Act deal with physical transmission, granting time to government and the establishment of the Broadcasting Authority.

Since the Act was drawn while Jamaica was still a Crown Colony, the role of broadcasting was never

envisioned in the broader context of nationhood. Neither could the framers predict technological developments in radio, television, satellite and video.

Preliminaries to the Act empowering the Corporation were primarily concerned with establishing good quality transmission.

There shall be a Corporation... whose function shall, subject to the provisions of sub-section (3) be to provide in accordance with the provisions of this Act, broadcasting services of high quality both as to the transmission and as to the matter transmitted (JBC Act, Law 65 of 1958, Act 22 of 1963).

Amended in 1963 to usher in television, the Act broadened the definition of broadcasting to include undertakings transmitted over a closed-circuit television and radio rediffusion systems.

In essence, the Broadcasting (JBC) Act emphasized only physical transmission services without addressing context, purpose or interconnection with national aspirations. This has left the way open for dubious, self-serving interpretations from successive governments.

Reforming Jamaica's Broadcasting Act must be directed at making it an instrumentality for the control of broadcasting while setting the parameters with respect to media. There are obvious limitations in law within the context of political reality, but the Act has to be the power base for shaping of general media policy, or more specifically, broadcasting policy.

The suggested reforms are set out in the following summary statements.

1. That broadcast undertakings should strive not only for variety in programme output in terms of issues and educational content, but also in terms of responsibility to provide access to the widest range of subjects and opinions.
2. Under the Act establishing the JBC as a public broadcasting system, adequate funding should be voted for by Parliament for the JBC's efficient operation across the country in keeping with stated policy. The JBC should continue selling advertising time.
3. In keeping with national desires to develop a national broadcasting system serving Jamaican interests, sensibilities and enlightenment, JBC must strive to provide between (30) and forty (40) per cent content produced locally or in the region.

4. That the Act accepts the right of freedom of expression, freedom of the press, protection of news sources and access to public documents apart from those directly related to national security, relations with foreign governments and restrictions designed to protect the integrity of the individual such as medical records. On the matter of access to public documents, Jamaican governments operate under colonial rule of confidentiality and secrecy which deny journalists and the public, information important to public policy. All public documents should be accessible to interested parties including the media.

~~The~~ present divestment of government shares in Radio Jamaica and the renewal of the station's licence has stalled over a fundamental disagreement on protection of news sources. The government wants to retain the right for the Minister of Information to require the station to submit information on the nature and source of its information. The Government's position is worth quoting as this development spells trouble for the operation of media in Jamaica.

We, therefore have to indicate that the Government does not intend to go any further than it has in the liberalization of this provision. The Government must retain the right where it can ensure that, in the national interest, under certain circumstances, material ought not to be broadcast (Seaga, 1988:1)

5. That the public broadcasting system should promote national unity and be sensitive to problems associated with Third World development.

6. Codify the law in relation to libel, slander, sedition, treason, defamation and public mischief as they relate to media. The law on defamation is often abused by persons who impose "gag" writs on media institutions to silence disclosures or public criticisms without using the courts in a final determination of the matter. Laws governing other infringements are not in writing, but are determined by precedent through common law. As a result, breaches are open to different interpretations. Therefore, stating what is defamation, slander or libel would assist greatly in defining the boundaries of free expression.
  
7. Remove clause 9(i)a from the Broadcasting and Radio Re-diffusion Law. The law requires the JBC to reserve thirty minutes weekdays between 9.15 a.m. and 9.45 a.m. for use by the Educational Broadcasting Service (EBS). Since the inception of the Act, the reserved time served as an instructional outlet for science, history, and music at the primary and pre-secondary levels. However, the straight instructional format has proved unattractive, ineffective and routine.  
  
Clause 9(i)a should be replaced with a general statement which encourages the JBC to collaborate with the Ministry of Education, the Jamaica Teachers' Association and professional communicators in the use of media as a support of Jamaica's educational curricula. This will allow for the innovative use of radio and television to complement the efforts of the classroom teacher.
  
8. That the Jamaican media encourage private, public and cooperative ownership, but where conflicts arise particularly between national objectives and private interests, the State (not just government) is obliged to resolve such differences in the public interest.

9. JBC should as far as resources will allow encourage the development of regional broadcast entities to serve regional and rural audiences without total reliance on the central broadcasting network.
10. All broadcasting entities, both private and public, should collaborate with other regional stations in order to include Caribbean material in their programme output.

There are two matters worthy of consideration by the public media which would not necessitate inclusion in a revised Broadcasting Act. These matters mainly concern internal administrative decisions.

One of the problems identified as contributing to discontinuity was the lack of trained personnel to manage the public broadcasting system.

Former General Manager, Wycliffe Bennett, highlighted training as one of the main weaknesses still plaguing the JBC. He insists,

...You can't run a broadcasting system in Jamaica without paying attention to training. One of the sad experiences I've had is by the time I left JBC in 1981 we had developed a powerful cadre of trained people... which cost over J\$1M not only to the Government of Jamaica but to other governments and agencies (Bennett, 1987)



That training programme was de-emphasized in the JBC at the same time untrained journalists, broadcasters, engineers, technicians, producers, directors and foreign advisors replaced more experienced, trained personnel. Programme quality is woefully lacking.

It seems the question of continued training has to be an integral part of JBC operations supported by the Board of Directors. Alternatively, the State must seriously consider establishing a National Broadcasting Training Centre to constantly upgrade practical skills in specific disciplines. This level of practical training would complement opportunities overseas and at the University's Caribbean Institute of Mass Communication (CARIMAC).

The other matter worthy of consideration concerns daily access to interactive radio programmes. Both stations presently offer free medical, legal and nutrition advice and opportunities for open discussions through 'phone-in' programmes. However, many callers wishing to benefit from this commendable service cannot afford long distance or 'pay-phone' charges.

The answer is to institute toll-free numbers with the assistance of the state-owned Jamaica Telephone Company. Establishing toll-free numbers for exclusive use by the electronic media would certainly facilitate a deepening of the democratic process.

### 3.5 Jamaica Media Commission

The importance of strengthening the Jamaica Media Commission (JMC) as an independent regulatory body, not subject to political or private sector pressures, is to avoid situations that now threaten the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).

This apparent threat and the subsequent debate surrounds the Commission's status as an independent body. Independence allows the CRTC to make its own regulations and decisions following government's broad policy objectives, but not guided or directed by government intervention.

This is not a new issue. One would have expected, though, that the CRTC's independence was a settled matter coming sixty years after the Aird Commission Report and the unequivocal statement of Minister Cardin.

He insisted then,

...a change must be made in the broadcasting situation in Canada. We have reached the point where it is possible for a member of the government or for the government itself to exercise the discretionary power which it is given by law...for the very reason that the moment the Minister in charge exercises his discretion, the matter becomes a political football (Cardin, 1932, quoted in Bureau, 1988:2).

The Aird Commission and Cardin's view that things should change so as to take broadcasting "away from the influences of all shades of political parties" (Ibid), led to the creation of the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission in 1932, the forerunner to the CRTC.

In 1987, the CRTC, in keeping with its Parliamentary mandate, granted the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) licence for an all-news channel. Two important provisions give the CRTC independent power to exercise such rights. Section 3(h) of the Act states inter alia,

Where any conflict arises between the objectives of the national broadcasting service and the interests of the private element of the Canadian broadcasting system, it shall be resolved in the public interest but paramount consideration shall be given to the objectives of the national broadcasting service (Broadcasting Act 1968, c. 25, s. 3h).

Further,

Subject to this Act... the Commission shall regulate and supervise all aspects of the Canadian broadcasting system (B/Act, 1968, Sec. 15), prescribing classes of broadcasting licences (Sec. 16 (i)a) and revoke any broadcasting licence other than a broadcasting licence issued to the Corporation (Sec. 16c).

However, Canada's Communications Minister, Flora McDonald announced in early 1988 that the Cabinet felt it would "not be prudent" for the CBC to proceed any further until the application for Allacron Limited has been considered. In other words, the Cabinet wants to reconsider what the CRTC had already approved.

Technically, the Canadian Government is empowered under section 23 of the Broadcasting Act to review CRTC's decisions within sixty days, but what is at issue is government's intention to overturn a decision already concluded by a federal body created by Parliament.

Section 23 of the Broadcasting Act empowers the Canadian Cabinet (Governor in Council) to set aside or refer a decision back to the CRTC for reconsideration. Because the relationship between the CRTC and the

government is structured somewhat differently on broadcasting than on telecommunications, a decision, not changed by the CRTC, may be set aside in specific situations. Andre Bureau, Chairman of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission explains:

The power allows the Governor in Council to set a licence aside or refer it back to the Commission for reconsideration, but does not allow the Governor in Council to vary the decision (Bureau, 1988:4).

The Minister's chief concern is a "concentration in management and operation of broadcasting news in Canada, as as such, the CBC should seek private sector partners to service francophone viewers" (Rose, 1988:19).

The fact that the Caplan 1986 Task Force had proposed such a licence based on CBC's assurance that an earlier search for private sector partnership was unsuccessful did not convince the government. Cable TV subscribers in western Canada would have to pay about five times more per month than for the English service based on a smaller subscriber base. The Task Force felt CBC's capacity to develop a high-quality, truly Canadian, news channel at relatively modest cost is

unique (Caplan, 1988).

But Caplan feels the merits of the decision is a secondary issue. In question is the propriety of political interference in the cherished autonomy of a regulatory tribunal.

Much of the fairness of our system of governance depends upon the autonomy of these tribunals. They are the pillars of the efficient fair and non-partisan administration of this nation (Caplan, 1988)

Several individuals have condemned Cabinet decision as unwarranted interference in the operation of the CRTC, an agency designed to be at arm's length from government. Louis Applebaum, co-chairman of the 1982 cultural review committee contends that:

The government has the right to set general policy for the CRTC, but it certainly should not participate in decisions to this degree (Rose, 1988:19).

Setting aside a CRTC decision is unprecedented in Canadian history. In creating the CRTC, Parliament thought it important to create a body free from political interference because of potential misuse for partisan purposes. At the same time, Cabinet had a

clear political responsibility to devise broad policy guide. The framers of this Act were obviously trying to strike a balance between political responsibility and regulatory independence.

However, the government's direction power must not undermine the integrity of its quasi-judicial, independent and public regulatory processes (Bureau, p. 6).

The 1986 Task Force recommended that if government decides to amend the Act for entitlement to set aside or refer decisions back to the CRTC, such power should be exercised so as to comply with the principles of due process (Task Force, 1986:175). Prior to giving any directive, Cabinet should be guided by public opinion in the form of public hearings (p. 176).

It is obvious, therefore, that the present Canadian government stands on weak ground with respect to its request for reconsideration of the all-news channel decision at a time when the 1986 Task Force on Broadcasting, the CRTC and the Law Reform Commission of Canada argue convincingly against diminution of the CRTC's public purpose.

Hudson Janisch adumbrates the essence of our discussion by stating:

...political second-guessing of the decisions of administrative tribunals will lead to a diminution in the quality of their decisions and in the quality of persons who will be prepared to serve on such tribunals. It is one thing to be reversed by a Court of Appeal; quite another to have a carefully thought decision swept aside in the vortex of partisan politics (Janisch 1978).

The burden of Janisch's argument centres on the super-imposition of a political appeal on a judicial process which is but a search to blend two incompatible processes.

Having given the parties their 'day in court', it is the height of folly to turn around and preemptorily reverse that decision in a secret cabinet session. Once a decision has been made in an open manner, the only credible way in which it can be reversed is in a similarly open manner (Janisch, 1978).

To provisions amending the Jamaica Media Commission, consideration should be given to the following:



1. The State retains the right to give broad policy directions in keeping with national objectives. Any thinking affecting policy issues must be discussed and communicated to the Commission well in advance of any determination.
2. Making decisions enforceable by law with allowances for appeal or review to the Commission or Minister responsible for Information. However, determination of any dispute between the Media Commission and any licensee is resolved only in the courts. This way the courts can best decide whether the Commission, in reaching its decision, correctly interpreted the spirit and letter of the State's policy direction.
3. Each JMC member should be appointed for a period of seven years but not exceeding ten years and cannot be removed except for causes stated in Clause 20 (3) of the 1986 Broadcasting Commission.
4. This single regulatory body has complete jurisdiction over the legal operation of local broadcast undertakings. However, renewal of licences should not be necessary unless contravention warrants review.

Operation of the Jamaica Media Commission (JMC) must ensure a certain openness and fair play in its quasi-judicial practices. And its independence does not hinder the State's wish to exercise its constitutional responsibility. Instead, it stands as a buffer against abuse. The State is therefore encouraged to make policy

prospectively rather than retroactively. Bureau advises:

Not only is it important that the Commission be independent, it is important that it be perceived to be independent. We believe that any other perception would harm the Commission, its processes and, ultimately, the quality of its decisions (Bureau, 1988:11).

### 3.6 Cooperative ownership/Community Involvement

One of the expressed differences suggested in reforming the media calls for decentralizing the national broadcasting system and promoting a greater link among community groups and community media.

Decentralization as a concept is not a guarantee or precondition for deepening democracy. It is more the flexible, dynamic, responsive and compatible relationship between centralization and decentralization of main bureaucratic structures.

Cooperative ownership already exists in the 'RJR model'. (See Appendix 3). Here, the station's ownership structure expresses common interest in equity, while its programming provides access for many to express freely on matters of national concern. There is need to

spread this concept of access and ownership outside the main capital, Kingston.

Community ownership of local media such as newspapers and radio stations is a clear possibility while adaptation of appropriate technology create new opportunities for participation and access.

Participation by decentralizing the broadcast stations in Montego Bay, St. Ann, Mandeville and St. Thomas is highly desirable because this allows programmes to reflect local/rural/community interests and needs. (See Appendix 5).

The physical structures for three of these four entities already exist, but at present, Radio North-East and Radio Central remain closed. Radio West is woefully under-funded, surviving only on the dedication of a small staff.

Radio Central was added to the national network as the communication component to an Integrated Rural Development Project in Central Jamaica to serve as a facilitator in the process of integration and social change. The 'bottom-up' rather than 'trickle-down'

planning approach was utilized, establishing a clear needs assessment of the intended audience.

Community involvement and participation were key elements in a 'systematic approach' to programme development at Radio Central. An important aspect of this 'systematic approach' was,

...people involvement inn. listening groups. Here, special groups gather to listen to radio programmes and discuss issues raised as well as take whatever decision might be required for community action (Robinson, 1980).

Between 1981 and 1985 when the service was discontinued, government withdrew support from the project mainly as a result of a shift in policy. Radio Central floundered on hard times. There are those who suggest that this sort of 'systematic approach' concerns "a demand for access and participation in political life" (Servaes, 1987:9)

Of course, local radio can integrate local needs with national policy, where, very often, conflicts exist. This notion of access and participation allow individuals and groups to create their own cultural and political environment. The most developed form of

participation is self-management. This principle implies,

- ... the right to participate in the planning and production of media content. However, not everyone wants to or must be involved in its practical implementation. More important is participation in decision-making about the content of messages and the criteria and procedures of selection (Servaes, 1987:9).

What is being emphasized is that local, public service radio must be encouraged to be responsive through quasi-autonomy. Links remain with the national system, but all interest groups, including government, are important participants in media interaction.

• Community newspapers and local tabloids deserve encouragement for it is the use of the scribal medium that helps with the development of literature so often neglected in traditionally oral societies. Media technology, such as television, satellite and video, has not helped with the growth of a literary tradition.

However, Jamaica is now experiencing the growth of small, community papers as local neighbourhoods rely less on the Gleaner. The State could very well

experiment with the idea of financial support of community papers through, for example, the Small Business Development Agency.

These groups wishing to establish community papers or those in need of short-term financing for expansion, must as a pre-requisite, be legitimate representatives of community interests. A mechanism for screening such applications could be organized by independent agencies like the Small Business Development Agency with loans attracting concessionary interests.

Cooperative ownership and community involvement build alliances particularly among low-status sectors, creating a consensus that can be addressed much easier in the larger question of a public media policy. These alliances also link communities into a national information network.

White and McDonnell (1983) contend such alliances generate a new language that is a communicating vehicle and new symbols that have deep emotional roots in the culture (p. 12). In the ferment of social change,

...the old hierarchical patterns of communication which routes all information through a single central controlling elite - often outward-looking, Westernized group culturally alienated from the nation as a whole - is broken down, and horizontal more participatory patterns of communication are established (White & McDonnell, 1983:12).

Community media are more attuned to their environment, and are able to use other forms of non-traditional, folk media that are easy to manage and appropriate to local needs.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSIONS

This study has attempted to provide a critical analysis of the Jamaican media environment within which to contemplate reforms in the public media. It has also concentrated on public broadcasting although some effort was made to address alternative approaches to encourage development of community newspapers through a participatory model of ownership.

Implicit in earlier arguments is the fact that the media environment has been turbulent, resulting in discontinuity as successive governments tinkered and manipulated a very important national resource for partisan interests. Other problems specifically cited in the Jamaican case, as well as features common to Third World countries, created tremendous difficulties which in effect limited attempts at continuity at administrative, scientific, cultural and production levels.

The public media were therefore, left to caprice in a situation where there were conflicts between public



service responsibilities and economic survival.

Criticisms of the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation (JBC) by various key individuals and institutions have created a potential for adoption of a more flexible, less urban-centred approach to media reform. Arguments to improve access, discourage private sector or government monopoly, to improve the quality of the broadcast product, lessen dependence on foreign content and improve management efficiency are in keeping with the public service theory articulated mainly by James Curran (1986).

Earlier modernization theories were found to be woefully inadequate conceptions of development since their arbitrarily imposed solutions are devoid of historical, political and cultural realities. On examining various theories associated with developmentalism, our study found Curran's sensitivity to the role of public broadcasting attractive. Public service theory approaches media reform from a contextual perspective since political conditions ultimately decide the success or failure of policy reform.

The major principle to be accepted is that the state (rather than government) should be the principal architect of media policy. The state in its wider context includes powerful interest groups in the bureaucracy, political parties, the judiciary and the governing Cabinet. Where conflicts arise in terms of policy formation, public consideration must take preeminence over private sector demands.

The second principle is the use of Parliament as the source of empowering public media, so that administrators are truly sheltered from direct political control. Our study supports significant reform to Jamaica's Broadcasting Act which makes public broadcasting accountable to Parliament rather than to any Minister. A regulatory body responsible for the conduct of licensees must also be empowered by Parliamentary mandate.

Another principle which emerged from our critical analysis concerned proper funding of public media on an annual basis for expenditure both in technical and non-technical areas. In an effort to neutralize market distortions where the industry is presently slanted

towards private funding, the state in principle will be required to make operations less precarious by offering budgetary support for the production of quality programmes at the national and regional levels.

Difficult though it may seem, reform means de-centralizing regional stations into quasi-autonomous units under community ownership. This de-centralization does not exclude the state's participation. However, it would be expected that regional stations plan and execute operations based on local information needs and objectives.

Although the study concentrated mainly on broadcasting, some attention was paid to print at the community level. In keeping with the principle of community participation through cooperative ownership, multiple newspapers are needed to satisfy a diversity of viewpoints and coverage presented. Such efforts could be supported by granting soft loans at concessionary rates for capital improvements administered through independent organizations such as the Small Business Development Agency.

The need for media reform in Jamaica approximates the tension between liberty and access. In that sense, the society must continue to promote press freedom while at the same time striving for greater access to media especially for those who do not enjoy economic or institutional power. Many countries have made strides in removing some oppressive government restrictions without sacrificing political sovereignty. But outside of powerful economic or political groups, access and/or ownership of media has steadily eroded mainly due to prevailing conservative orthodoxies.

Without media reform in Jamaica based on settled policy prescriptions, the furtherance of participatory democracy will remain quixotic and ephemeral.

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Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, UWI,  
Jamaica

Carl Rattray, Q.C., Legal Advisor, People's National  
Party (PNP) former Attorney General  
and Minister of Justice and  
presently Opposition Shadow Minister  
of Information

Carey Robinson, General Manager, Jamaica Broadcasting  
Corporation, 1970-1972 and 1987-1988

Lester Spaulding, Managing Director, Radio Jamaica  
Limited (RJR), President, Caribbean  
Broadcasting Union (CBU)

# APPENDIX 1

## GENERAL MANAGERS OF THE JAMAICA BROADCASTING CORPORATION

1.	Peter Ayles *	1959 - 1960
2.	Capt. William Strange *	1960
3.	Mickey Hendricks	1961 - 1964
4.	Harvey Ennevor	1964 - 1965
5.	William McLurg	1965 - 1966
6.	Merrick Needham O.D.	1966 - 1968
7.	Wycliffe Benett	1968 - 1971
8.	Carey Robinson	1971 - 1972
9.	Dwight Whyllie	1973 - 1976
10.	Wycliffe Bennett C.D.	1976 - 1981
11.	Newton James (Acting)	1981 - 1982
12.	Dr. Joyce Robinson O.J.	1982
13.	Tino Barovier (Acting)	1982 - 1983
14.	Gloria Lannaman	1983 - 1985
15.	Garth Rose	1985 - 1987
16.	Carey Robinson	1987 - 1988

\* Canadian

~ ~ Executive Director

## APPENDIX 2

### RESULTS OF MEDIA SURVEYS FOR RADIO 1959 - 1986

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>RESEARCH ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>JBC/AM %</u>	<u>RJR/AM %</u>	<u>JBC/FM %</u>	<u>RJR/FM %</u>
1959	PULSE	30.0	70.0		
1962	MAS	25.0	75.0		
1963	MAS	22.0	78.0		
1965	MAS	25.0	75.0		
1967	MAS	27.0	73.0		
1968	MAS	37.0	63.0		
		27.8	72.2		
1969	MAS	33.0	67.0		
		31.0	69.0		
1970		26.0	74.0		
1971	GRAM	21.4	78.6		
		27.7	72.3		
1973	MRJ	21.0	79.0	50.0	50.0
1975		12.5	87.5		
1976	PWR	21.0	79.0		
1977	MRS	25.0	75.0	40.0	60.0
1979	MRS	40.0	60.0	56.0	43.0
1981	MRS	32.0	68.0	52.0	48.0
1986	MRS	21.0	66.8	7.3	7.9

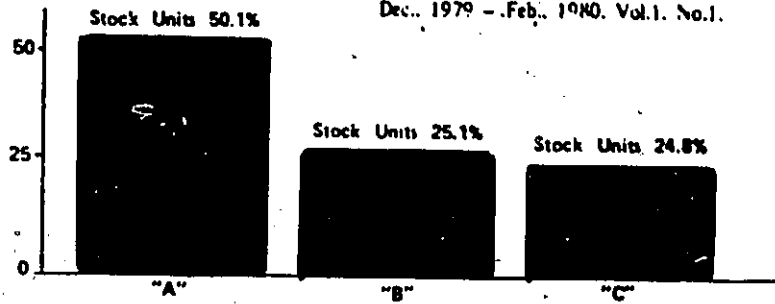


# APPENDIX 3

## DIVESTMENT OF SHARES NOW A REALITY AT RADIO JAMAICA



Dec., 1979 - Feb., 1980, Vol. 1, No. 1.



The public in general and workers at RJR in particular were happy to learn that the plan for the divestment of the shares in Radio Jamaica Ltd. has been approved by Cabinet in late November.

As early as September 1977 when ownership of the Station was transferred from the international Rediffusion Company, this transferral was described as an interim measure until the divestment process was formulated. The Board which was appointed was given the mandate by Government to plan a method by which the shares of Radio Jamaica Ltd. would be divested to:

1. Organisations which had a mass-representative base.
2. Workers who should be allowed significant ownership in the structure in order that their influence on everyday decisions of the Company would be reflected in the ownership.

Prime Minister Michael Manley, in handing down the mandate stated the two main objectives of the divestment programme:

1. To ensure that the ownership of RJR resides in the hands of a wide cross-section of Jamaican interests;
2. For control of the Station to be exercised through the workers of RJR and mass-representative organisations on behalf of these interests.

### PARTICULARS OF DIVESTMENT

The present stock position is 1,429,690 ordinary "A" stock units (50.1%), 716,270 ordinary "B" stock units (25.1%) and 707,710 ordinary "C" stock units (24.8%)

owned by the Government of Jamaica through the Accountant General.

The Government of Jamaica through the Accountant General proposes to retain all of the "B" ordinary stock and to dispose of the "A" and "C" ordinary stock in the following manner:

i. to offer for sale the "A" ordinary stock to various organisations and institutions representative of a wide cross section of Jamaican interests.

ii. To offer for sale the "C" ordinary stock to the workers of Radio Jamaica Limited.

This is a private offer for sale and RJR workers will be the only persons to own shares on an individual basis.

The Offer for Sale of "A" shares is being made to the following organisations:

1. Building Societies Association of Jamaica
2. Bustamante Industrial Trade Union
3. Dockers and Marine Workers Union
4. Jamaica Agricultural Society
5. Jamaica Association of Local Government Officers
6. Jamaica Civil Service Association
7. Jamaica Association of Evangelical Churches
8. Jamaica Co-operative Credit Union League
9. Jamaica Council of Churches
10. Jamaica Union of Public Officers and Public Employees
11. Jamaica Teachers Association
12. Independent Trade Unions Action Council (ITAC)
13. National Consumers League
14. National Union of Co-operative Societies
15. National Union of Democratic Teachers
16. National Workers Union
17. Nurses Association of Jamaica
18. P.S.(J)
19. Sugar Workers Co-operative Council
20. Trade Union Congress
21. Union of Technical and Supervisory Personnel
22. University & Allied Workers Union

In the purchase of "A" and "C" shares which are being offered at 69¢ per stock unit, credit facilities are being offered by the Accountant General. There is an option to pay over a ten-year period at an interest rate of 8% on the outstanding balance. The dividends accruing to the block of shares purchased will go towards payment for these shares.

Mr. Lester Spaulding, Managing Director of Radio Jamaica Ltd. points out that with an opportunity to own shares in the Company, the workers will have access to a greater share in its profits, provided, of course, we continue to operate with financial viability as one of our objectives. Mr. Spaulding further stated that divestment of shares ensures that the authority exercised in the decision-making process through worker participation, carries with it the corresponding responsibility for equity investment.

The Jamaica Development Bank is the organisation which will act as trustee on behalf of the Government.

The three classes of shares will be equal in every respect, except in the rights to elect directors. The articles provide that

"A" Shareholders will elect seven, directors

"C" Shareholders will elect two directors

"B" Shareholders will appoint two directors with the Managing Director completing a board of twelve.

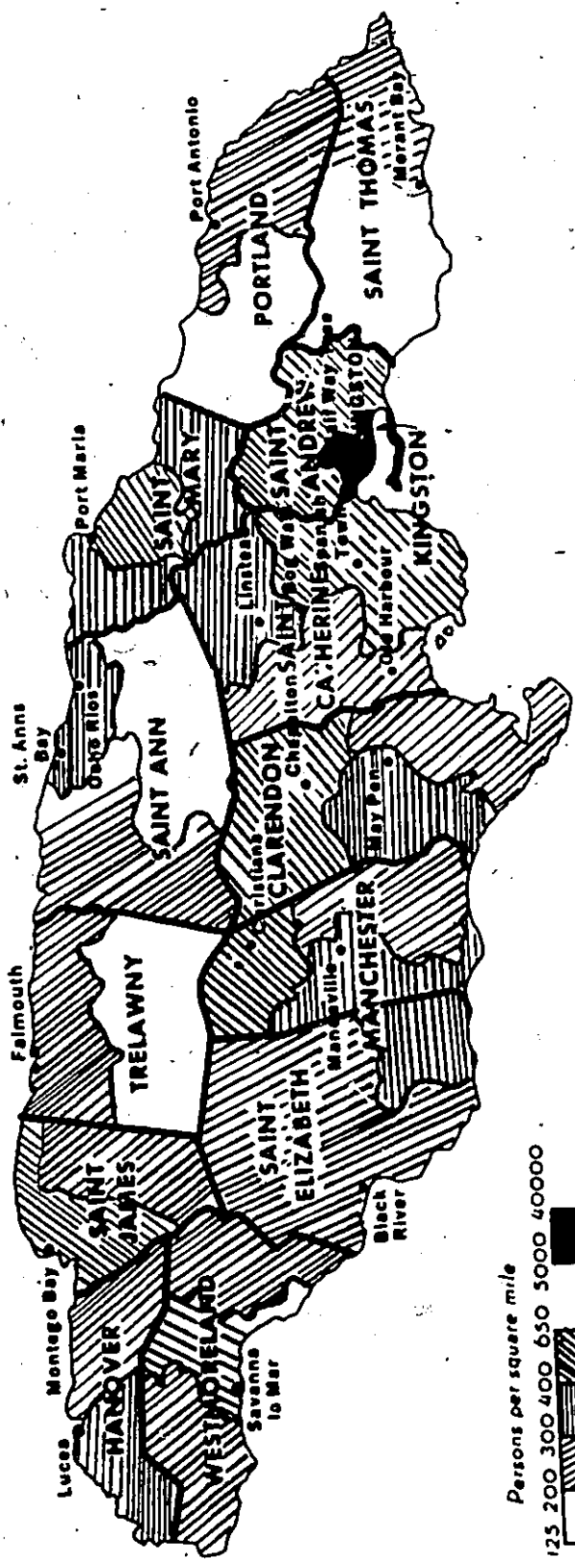
These limitations are intended to ensure that representation on the Board of Directors is proportionate to class investment.



# APPENDIX 5

## JAMAICA

### POPULATION



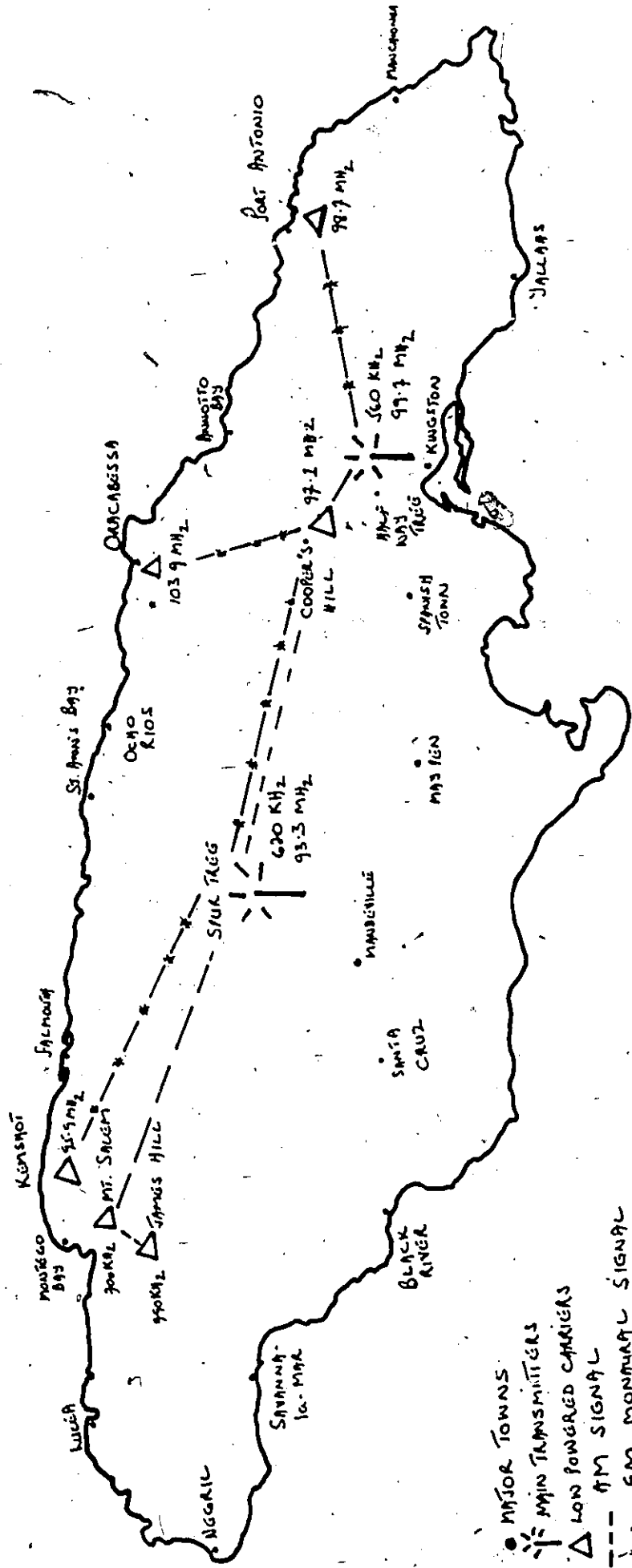
Persons per square mile  
 125 200 300 400 650 5000 40000

Persons per square kilometer  
 48 77 116 154 251 1937 15044

Data are plotted by constituency and taken from the 1960 census

# APPENDIX 6

## JBC RADIO 1 TRANSMISSION CHAIN



# APPENDIX 7

## AREAS SERVED BY JBC RADIO-1 TRANSMITTERS

Half-Way-Tree - 99.7 MHz  
560 KHz

1. Havendale
2. Meadowbrook
3. Duhaney Park
4. Stony Hill
5. Constant Spring
6. Mona
7. Forest Hills
8. Red Hills
9. Armour Heights
10. Pembroke Hall

Cooper's Hill - 97.1 MHz  
560 KHz

- All of Kingston & Port Royal  
Highgate  
Port Maria  
Spanish Town  
May Pen  
Ewarton  
Old Harbour  
Four Paths  
Spaulding  
Christiana

Montego Bay - 95.9 MHz  
700 KHz

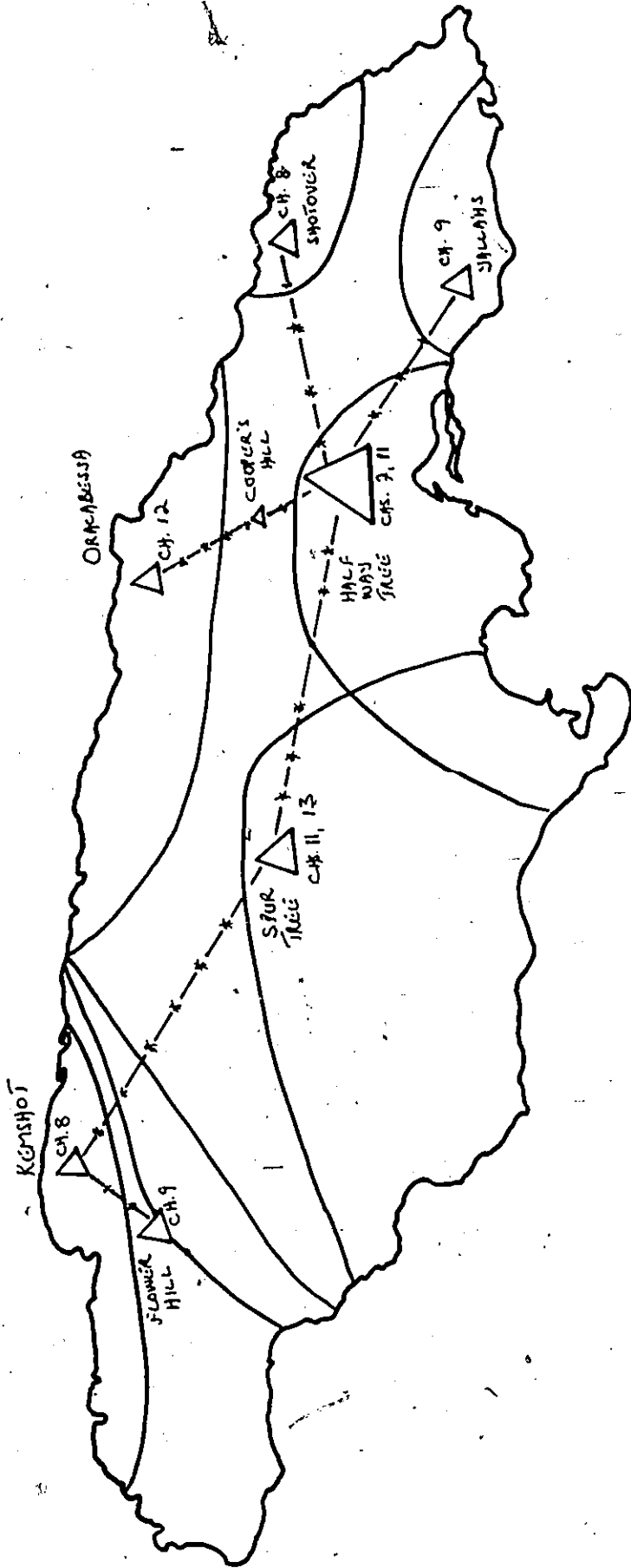
- |                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Montego Bay | 9. Savanna-la-Mar |
| 2. Duncans     | 10. Negril        |
| 3. Falmouth    | 11. Maroon Town   |
| 4. Hopewell    | 12. New Market    |
| 5. Anchovy     | 13. Sign          |
| 6. Montpelier  | 14. Welcome Hall  |
| 7. Bethel Town | 15. Adelphi       |
| 8. Lucea       | 16. Springfield   |

Spur Tree - 93.3 MHz  
620 KHz

- |                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Mandeville      | 7. Black River    |
| 2. Williamsfield   | 8. Royal Flat     |
| 3. Santa Cruz      | 9. Malvern        |
| 4. Lacovia         | 10. Bull Savannah |
| 5. Maggotty        | 11. Brown's Town  |
| 6. Middle Quarters |                   |

# APPENDIX 8

## JBC TELEVISION TRANSMISSION CHAIN



## APPENDIX 9

### AREAS SERVED BY JBC TELEVISION TRANSMITTERS

<u>CHANNEL</u>	<u>GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS</u>
7, 11	KINGSTON AND ST. ANDREW
13 (Spur Tree)	MANCHESTER, ST. ELIZABETH CLARENDON AND SOME PARTS OF WESTMORELAND
9 (Flower Hill)	ST. JAMES, HANDOVER, PARTS OF WESTMORELAND, TRELAWNY AND ST. ANN
12 (Oracabessa)	PARTS OF ST. MARY, ST. ANN AND PORTLAND
8 (Kempshot)	PARTS OF MONTEGO BAY AND ADJOINING AREAS
9 (Yallahs) 13 (Spur Tree)	PARTS OF ST. THOMAS
8 (Shotover)	PARTS OF PORTLAND



VITA AUCTORIS

Gladstone Wilson is a Jamaican broadcaster who worked at the government-owned Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation (JBC) Radio and Television Centre between 1968 and 1985.

After attending St. Andrew Technical High School where he graduated with a General Certificate in Education, Mr. Wilson joined the JBC as an Announcer, holding several posts in production and administration over seventeen years of association with the station. He has accumulated tremendous experience in radio and television broadcasting, rising to the position of Director of Radio.

Between 1983 and 1985, he was appointed Programme Planning and Development Officer at the JBC with specific responsibility for long-term programme development, particularly in radio.

Mr. Wilson is a graduate of the University of the West Indies where he read for a post-graduate Diploma and Bachelor of Arts Degree (Hons.) in Communication.

A past President of the Press Association of Jamaica (PAJ), Mr. Wilson is presently a Communication Consultant with the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI), a sub-regional agency of PAHO/WHO.\*

\* PAHO - Pan-American Health Organization  
WHO - World Health Organization