BOSSA NOVA AS AN OBJECT OF CULTURAL TOURISM IN RIO DE JANEIRO

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Abstract

Using the musical genre Bossa Nova as an example, which originated in the coastal region of Rio de Janeiro in the late 1950s, this research explores how cities can leverage their authentic cultural production to shape their identity and, consequently, enhance tourism. Whether internally, to generate a sense of belonging among their inhabitants, or externally, in gaining recognition and strengthening their image, economy, and politics. The theoretical framework draws on concepts of soft power (Nye, 2005), nation branding (Anholt, 2008), and cultural and creative tourism (Richards; Raymond, 2000), in addition to historical information. Starting from the premise that the lyrics of Bossa Nova songs celebrated Rio de Janeiro, this work proposes tourist itineraries based on these lyrics. Laurence Bardin's content analysis technique (Bardin, 2016) was used to classify words from all the Bossa Nova songs.

Keywords: Rio de Janeiro; Bossa Nova; Cultural Tourism; Soft Power.

Introduction

The Bossa Nova is a musical genre that originated in the southern part of Rio de Janeiro (fashionable neighborhood near the beach) in the late 1950s, becoming particularly associated with a group of young musicians who gathered in Copacabana and Ipanema. It is described as an extremely simplified version of the Brazilian samba beat, with some influence from American jazz. The rhythm was considered a kind of "new beat," never heard before. "As if all the instruments had been removed, leaving only the tambourine" (Castro, 2008, p. 9) – even though this beat could be on the guitar or the drums. This music became associated with the flourishing scene in Copacabana, making Ipanema its larger kingdom.

It's hard to think about Bossa Nova music without recalling the "Christ the Redeemer with open arms over Guanabara," without a girl in Ipanema "walking graciously towards the sea," and a little boat on a "day of light and a sunlit celebration." In other words, it's hard to think of Bossa Nova without thinking of Rio. Physically and spiritually, Rio is the inspiration that surrounds Bossa Nova from all sides. As a musical movement, Bossa Nova transcended its regional character and achieved international status. It was translated into multiple languages and played by musicians from around the globe. The melody with sophisticated and jazz-influenced harmonies, combined with the natural musicality of the Portuguese language spoken in Brazil and the soft, almost minimalist vocal tone, established itself globally as a musical genre alongside rock, jazz, reggae, blues, and emerged independently from the umbrella term we can refer to as Brazilian Popular Music (MPB).

Due primarily to its nature, but also due to the laid-back attitude of its inhabitants, Rio de Janeiro is considered a tourist city "by vocation." This conception is initially related to the perceptions and observations of the early foreign visitors, still in the 19th century, who shared their impressions through travel literature, drawings, and paintings. In the 1930s of the 20th century, American cinema also

significantly contributed to this image that continues to captivate people worldwide with its warm climate and lifestyle.

The city of samba, Bossa Nova, funk, and the distinctive Brazilian cuisine, Rio de Janeiro, is informally regarded as a creative city, although it hasn't officially received such recognition from UNESCO. However, the city underutilizes its cultural assets, particularly its musical heritage, from a tourism perspective, unlike cities like New Orleans, renowned for jazz, and Buenos Aires, famous for tango - just to highlight two examples. In Rio, there is a certain commercialization of samba to tourists, primarily evident during Carnival or in performances with sensual undertones - often featuring women samba dancers in revealing attire. On other hand, Bossa Nova remains relatively little known and little used economically.

Soft Power and Local Branding

The concept of Soft Power was introduced by the political scientist Joseph Nye in 1990, advocating that there are intangible dimensions (such as culture and values) that can generate reputation and influence for nations (cities or territories) contrasting with the concepts of Hard Power. According to Nye (1990), Hard Power is attained through coercion, such as wars and other forms more closely linked to economic and military power. Soft Power, on the other hand, is achieved through gentler methods, where objectives are reached through attraction. Power isn't just the ability or right to control people or things, but crucially also involves influencing others and the capacity to act or produce an effect. "Soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others" (Nye, 1990, p. 31).

Julia Zardo, a Brazilian professor specializing in innovation environments, defines soft power as the "influence of a locale that magnetizes and inspires desire through its ideas, cultures, values, heritage, and lifestyle. This metamorphosis of the intangible into tangible assets generates distinctiveness and value for its offerings, thus positioning it as a sought-after destination for tourists and investments" (Zardo, 2004).

Zardo and Neto (2024) stress the importance of measuring a territory's Soft Power to make it easier to understand where to allocate resources, improve performance and be assertive when drawing up public policies.

According to The Global Soft Power Index, a ranking published by Brand Finance (the world's leading independent brand valuation and strategy consultancy): "India, Brazil, and South Africa struggle to fulfil their soft power potential, as all three nations have relatively high Familiarity and Influence, especially in their home regions, but rank lower for Reputation. (...) the highest ranked Latin American nation brand Brazil stagnated in 31st (...)" (Brand Finance, 29 Feb. 2024).

This research argues that Bossa Nova functioned as a powerful Soft Power tool for Rio de Janeiro and Brazil, especially in the 1960s and 1970s. The music not only exported a distinctive sound style, but also an idealized image of Rio de Janeiro as a tropical and culturally sophisticated paradise. This cultural export helped shape a positive perception of Brazil abroad, attracting tourists and promoting Brazilian culture in a gentle way.

Also in the late 1990s, British consultant and professor Simon Anholt, a specialist in public sciences and diplomacy, introduced the concept of Nation Branding, proposing that countries, like companies, can be strategically managed and promoted to improve their image and international reputation.

Anholt (2007) advocates that the image of a nation (which can be expanded to other territories) is created by six dimensions that form a hexagon. The geometric shape indicates that these dimensions interact with each other and contribute to the formation of a country's overall image. They are: (1) Governance – which refers to the effectiveness of a country's political system, including political stability, transparency, respect for human rights, and the rule of law; (2) Investment and Immigration – which concerns the attractiveness of a country to investors and foreign companies, as well as to people

who want to live, study, or work there, including economic stability, business opportunities, regulatory environment, and innovation; (3) Culture and Heritage – which pertains to the cultural heritage and cultural appeal of a country, such as its music, art, literature, cinema, fashion, and cuisine; (4) People – which refers to the reputation of the country's population in terms of hospitality, friendliness, talent, and skills; (5) Tourism – which relates to a country's tourist appeal, including natural beauty, historical and cultural sites, leisure options, and service infrastructure; (6) Exports – which represents the reputation of a country's products and services, including their quality, innovation, authenticity, and value for money.

City branding aims to encapsulate the identity and image of a place to attract visitors, investors, and residents. It seeks to convey its distinctive attributes, whether its history, culture, urban landscape, or lifestyle, in an appealing and memorable way.



Figure 1 – Example of a graphic representation of city brand - Milton Glaser for New York

Considering that one of the dimensions proposed by Anholt (number 3) is Culture and Heritage, and given that Bossa Nova, as a unique expression of Brazilian culture that transcends borders, was declared Intangible Cultural Heritage of the State of Rio de Janeiro in 2023, we argue that it is possible to devise strategies that leverage elements of Carioca music and lifestyle to promote the city as a cultural destination, capable of creating an emotional connection with its visitors. Brazilian music is an important asset that can be monetized, especially Bossa Nova. For Rio de Janeiro, with its fusion of rhythms, smooth melodies, and poetic lyrics, it captures the soul of the city and its relaxed vibe. However, the city underutilizes its cultural assets.

Cultural Tourism

"Culture and tourism have a mutually beneficial relationship which can strengthen the attractiveness and competitiveness of places, regions, and countries" (Richards, 2001, p. 57). According to Richards (2021, 2022), up until 2020, cultural tourism progressed through three distinct phases. These phases were outlined based on Sacco (2011), who argues for a historical evolution in cultural engagement. Initially, culture was predominantly associated with high culture, emphasizing erudition in the arts and music, primarily catering to the education of privileged European youth (Culture 1.0 - prevalent in the 18th and 19th centuries). Subsequently, there was a shift towards the democratization of culture, coinciding with the phenomenon of mass consumption (Culture 2.0 - emerging in the latter half of the 20th century). Finally, there arose a trend of self-created culture, facilitated by the advent of the Internet (Culture 3.0 - characteristic of the 21st century) "The successive phases of cultural development have seen a progression from elitist to more inclusive forms of culture and from top-down to bottom-up styles of cultural provision" (Richards, 2022). Therefore, the three phases of cultural tourism are: Cultural Tourism 1.0, when "Government and corporations provided high culture for the enlightenment of citizens, which could also be enjoyed by (elite) tourists"; Cultural Tourism 2.0, when "Tourists became viewed as consumers, whose tourism activities helped to generate externalities for the destination in terms of income and jobs"; Cultural Tourism 3.0, when "Cultural tourists became peers using technology platforms to create content and inform each other about cultural experiences". In the evolution of the first three phases, Richards notes a driven development to consumer-led development

Source: Canny, 2022

to co-creation, which increased during and after Covid-19, what he considers as "Cultural Tourism 4.0" (Richards, 2022).

Considering that tourism is always changing, Richards points to a certain exhaustion of the options offered by cultural tourism, which led him to come up with the concept of Creative Tourism. "The rise of the creative tourist reflects a broader trend in contemporary culture towards more active forms of participation and the desire for more meaningful experiences" (Richards, 2011, p. 123). According to Richards and Raymond (2000), there is a need for the creative sector to find new markets, and the tourism sector to provide new experiences. They argue that cultural tourists are disillusioned with crowded museums, with many having already seen their main attractions and now seeking something different and distinctive. It is important to emphasize the significance of cultural tourism as a major market for an increasingly interested audience in cultural and creative activities, beyond heritage and scenic attractions.

The possibilities of creative tourism involve visitors engaging with local culture, offering them new ways to enjoy their trips and giving locals the opportunity to deepen ties with their own identity. Identity is an essential part of creative tourism because it differs from place to place. Each community nurtures local identities through freely expressed creativity. In this way, there is no model to follow, and each community must create and develop its own unique approach (Molina, 2016, p. 210).

Richards and Raymond (2000) point out that creative tourism provides visitors and tourists with opportunities to develop their creative capacity by participating in courses, workshops, and learning experiences as part of the activities at the travel destination. From this perspective, various practices involving the genuine music of a city or country can be the focus of creative tourism activities.

The result of this research has led to the proposal of tourist routes around the city of Rio de Janeiro, inspired by the lyrics of Bossa Nova songs. Additionally, other activities, even more immersive and interactive, could also be developed based on this music.

O Rio de Janeiro in Bossa Nova songs

There is a well-established understanding that Bossa Nova is genuinely a movement rooted in Rio de Janeiro, drawing inspiration from the city and spreading its fame beyond Brazil's borders. However, it's noticeable that only a few songs—always the same ones—are frequently mentioned in this context: "The Girl from Ipanema" by Tom Jobim and Vinicius de Moraes; "Samba do Avião" by Tom Jobim; "O Barquinho" by Roberto Menescal and Ronaldo Bôscoli; "Carta ao Tom" by Toquinho and Vinicius de Moraes; "Rio" by Roberto Menescal and Ronaldo Bôscoli.

Figure 2 - Roberto Menescal in homage to the 50th anniversary of the song "O Barquinho."



Source: Copyright by Quinho Mibach

With the aim of identifying, classifying, and quantifying all Bossa Nova songs that feature words associated with Rio de Janeiro, we employed the content analysis methodology of Laurence Bardin (BARDIN, 2016). We utilized a repertoire of 312 songs from various authors, divided into five song books edited by Almir Chediak, a Brazilian music producer and researcher. Chediak conducted pioneering work in compiling these songbooks, which contain a significant portion of the works of major Brazilian popular music composers, featuring chords, and lyrics. The transcription process was meticulously carried out and cross-checked, measure by measure, with the composers themselves (ALBIN, 1999).

Figure 3– The 5 volumes of Chediak's songbook.



Source: Authors' Collection

The characteristics of the content analysis methodology were described by the authors as follows:

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Table 1: Characteristics	of documentary	analysis and	content analysis

Documentary Analysis	Content Analysis		
Focus on documents	Focus on messaging (communication)		
Classification/Indexing	Theme (one possibility)		
Objective: Condensed representation of information for consultation and storage	Objective: Manipulation of messages to confirm indicators that allow inference about a reality other than the message.		

Source: Bardin 2016

According to Bardin (2016), in a quantitative analysis, the important is the frequency which certain characteristics appear, creating an inference from the results of these analyses. A cause-and-effect

aspect is attributed based on these research findings. It also defines that this method allows classifications of the components of the message's meaning.

Ultimately, any communication, i.e., any vehicle of meanings from a sender to a receiver, controlled or not by the latter, should be writable, decipherable by content analysis techniques (BARDIN, 2016, p. 38).

Content analysis can be of meanings (thematic) and also of signifiers (lexical and procedural). The five songbooks by Almir Chediak formed the main corpus of this analysis. There was a documentary analysis aiming to provide the maximum possible documentation, quantitatively, with maximum relevance qualitatively.

Furthermore, content analysis is a deep reading of certain conditions offered by linguistic study and its exterior. A set of methodological instruments that apply to diversified contents. It is important to emphasize that it oscillates between two poles of the rigor of objectivity and the fertility of subjectivity (BARDIN, 2016).

The coding stage is extremely important in Bardin's method. It is the transformation into precise rules of the raw data that are aggregated into units that can be elucidated.

Coding is the process by which raw data are systematically transformed and aggregated into units, allowing an accurate description of the pertinent characteristics of the content (BARDIN, 2016, p. 133, APUD HOLSTI, 1969).

With the analysis of the 312 songs from the mentioned publications, we were able to establish the documentation that originated a database. We analyzed all the songs, and as a premise, we established that the selected ones would be those that brought some word alluding to Rio de Janeiro, its geography, its people, its tourist spots. From a first, more general reading, we defined some hypotheses to establish the classifications. Of the 312 songs, we adopted, as a selection criterion, the words that represented Rio de Janeiro, directly or indirectly.

We cataloged the 312 songs and found that only 49 carried elements alluding to Rio de Janeiro. These elements were classified as words directly related to the city, its terrain, its people, and its tourist spots.



Figure 4: Characteristics of documentary analysis and content analysis

source: authors diagram

In the case of the 49 songs, we used the words as theme words. Theme is widely used in content analysis. According to Bardin (2016), full words would be those carrying meaning: nouns, adjectives, and verbs. The categorization criterion was semantic. This system resulted from the analog and progressive classification of the elements. The title of each category was only defined at the end of the operation.

Conducting a thematic analysis involves uncovering the "cores of meaning" that comprise communication and whose presence or appearance may signify something for the chosen analytical objective (BARDIN, 2016, p. 135).

The theme used was words that could bring elements of Rio de Janeiro. Initially, specific words like "sea", "wave", "beach", "sand", "boat", and "ocean" were classified as "coastline". The aspect of "coastline" encompasses everything related to the "sea". Here, we found 79 occurrences. The subcategory "terrain" had six occurrences, and the category "climate", 93. In the "geographical landscape" category, 187 occurrences were observed, with the word "sea" having the highest number of occurrences, with 64 mentions.

The second categorization was what we called "human landscape," with 33 occurrences. Here, we find elements like "movement," "music," and "people." In the "movement" subcategory, we have actions such as "swaying body," "way of walking," and "samba dancing." In the other subcategory, "music," the words "bossa nova" and "samba" appear, and in the "people" subcategory, we identify "carioca," "tanned body," and "brunette."

In the "landscape" category, there were 35 occurrences, with notable subcategories being "country," "city," "neighborhood," and "points of interest." In the "country" subcategory, "Brazilian" stands out; in "city," "Rio de Janeiro"; and in neighborhoods, "Ipanema," "Copacabana," and "Leblon." Under the "street" item, we have "Rua Nascimento e Silva"; and in the "points of interest" subcategory, we find "Corcovado," "Redentor," "trail," and "tram."

The inference stage is more interpretative and can also rely on classical communication mechanisms - sender and receiver - meaning and code. In the case of the sender, it would be the composers, the receivers, the audience, and the message. The theme present in these songs addresses aspects of Rio de Janeiro, but out of 312 songs, only 49 were classified with this content. However, we can affirm that this content was highly significant, and these songs are the most widely performed nationally and internationally.

Out of the 49 songs, we highlight 9 with the strongest allusion to Rio de Janeiro. "Garota de Ipanema" by Tom Jobim and Vinicius de Moraes; "Carta ao Tom" by Toquinho and Vinicius de Moraes; "O barquinho" by Roberto Menescal and Ronaldo Bôscoli; "Samba do carioca" by Carlos Lyra and Vinicius de Moraes; "Ela é carioca" by Tom Jobim and Vinicius de Moraes; "Rio" by Roberto Menescal and Ronaldo Bôscoli; and "Corcovado" and "Samba do avião" by Tom Jobim, were the ones that brought Rio de Janeiro to Brazil and to the world the most.

"Garota de Ipanema" is the second most recorded song of all time (source: https://www.tropicalfm99.com.br/, 2020), and the other songs are also part of the most popular repertoire of Bossa Nova. With these songs, Rio de Janeiro was exported to the world. "Garota de Ipanema" brought the beach and the carioca lifestyle to new frontiers. It has been recorded by numerous artists such as Frank Sinatra, Amy Winehouse, Cher, and Madonna (Wikipedia). Additionally, the Carnegie Hall concert not only exported the music but also its artists to the world.

This set of words, with 256 occurrences, reinforced aspects of Rio de Janeiro in the minds of listeners. During a time of offline communication, Rio de Janeiro, still the federal capital until 1960 and the cultural center of the country, had Bossa Nova as its propagating voice of lifestyle.

In other words, this collection of words, appearing 256 times, emphasized elements of Rio de Janeiro in the minds of listeners. In an era of offline communication, Rio de Janeiro, once the federal capital

until 1960 and the cultural epicenter of the nation, was epitomized by Bossa Nova as its messenger of lifestyle.

Bossa Nova as a Tourist Route

This research leads us to believe that Bossa Nova is underexplored both as an identity appeal of the city and its inhabitants and as a tourist attraction. This internationally significant movement needs to be remembered not only through the songs that will be forever present but also through the creation of landmarks and tangible elements of memory, and above all, through innovative and creative tourism that, alongside the songs, immortalizes the names, the addresses, and creates space for the great legacy that is Bossa Nova, ensuring its place in future generations.

Despite being a cultural heritage of the city, Bossa Nova has been underexplored and has not received the same treatment given to music, from a tourist and cultural perspective, as in New Orleans. The rediscovery of jazz in New Orleans and the popularization of Dixieland happened gradually, through marketing initiatives, concerts, festivals, musical tours, and even through the formation of new bands, always with the focus on shaping the public's memory and formatting it into a comprehensive tourism package. This package also includes the revitalization of historical areas of the city, such as the French Quarter, where the vibrant Bourbon Street is located, which hosts many bars, clubs, and cafes dedicated to jazz and its historical roots. This is a notable example of how music can be explored as a touristic possibility, using the creative aspects to enhance the economy. Besides a cultural heritage, it needs to be preserved and disseminated for the perpetuation of collective memory.

Cultural tourism is growing, as tourists are increasingly interested in learning about the culture, heritage, and history of the destinations they visit. And this is the potential of culturally associating Bossa Nova with the city's tourism.

We consider it important to highlight the addresses and landmarks of the city and to add an association with cultural tourism to further highlight the concept of a creative city. Although Rio de Janeiro has not yet officially received this UNESCO designation, it attracts people from around the world and creates an imagery that is reinforced by the lifestyle of its residents. The Bossa Nova as a tourist route has a greater territorial limitation as it originated and grew in the South Zone of Rio de Janeiro. But since it has its roots in samba, it could include important landmarks of the city related to it in its route and geographically expand the ideas of the routes.

In terms of diverse possibilities, as an illustrative example of how a touristic route based on Bossa Nova could work. If we take "Garota de Ipanema" the famous song by Vinicius de Morais and Tom Jobim, this itinerary will primarily showcase Ipanema and its key points in the context of Bossa Nova: the bars, the beach, the address of the girl from Ipanema and Tom Jobim's, concluding at the lagoon.



Figure 5 – Itinerary The Girl from Ipanema

Source: Google Maps, s.d

Figure 6 – Pictures of the itinerary of the Girl from Ipanema



Source: Pictures by Renata Mello, moodboard from the authors.

The following itinerary draws inspiration from the song "Rio" by Roberto Menescal and Ronaldo Bôscoli. It will focus on Copacabana and conclude at the Carioca Mountain Range in the Botanical Garden, representing the "Velvet Mountains."

Figure 7: Itinerary of the song Rio



Source: Google Maps, s.d

Figure 8 – Pictures of the itinerary of the song Rio



Source: Pictures by Renata Mello, moodboard from the authors

Final considerations

Genuinely carioca, Bossa Nova revealed, whether through its songs or the daily lives of the artists involved in the movement (through their words and the settings of their photos), their connection to Rio's most famous beach neighborhoods: Copacabana and Ipanema. Thus, both this research methodology and the resulting product are closely tied to the specificities of this musical genre.

Certainly, from an academic standpoint, it would be important to discuss to what extent the methodological approach and practical proposal of this research can be applied to other contexts – in this case, to other musical genres. Thus, it becomes important to emphasize that Bossa Nova is a musical genre inscribed within specific historical periods and territories. While new songs based on its beat and rhythm may be created today, they would not truly constitute Bossa Nova. It was specifically the temporal and spatial circumscriptions allowed for the gathering of all its songs and the analysis of all its lyrics – something that would not be possible, for example, with samba and funk, just to mention two musical genres also related to Rio de Janeiro's culture. However, it is understood that the proposal to create tourist itineraries based on lyrics from other genres is feasible, but the criteria for selecting the songs from which the itineraries would be created would have to be completely rethought.

The city of Rio de Janeiro, renowned for its rich cultural heritage and breathtaking landscapes, has played a pivotal role in shaping the essence of Bossa Nova, a musical genre that transcends borders and captivates audiences worldwide. With its distinctive blend of rhythm and melody, Bossa Nova serves not only as a form of artistic expression but also as a potent catalyst for tourism, functioning as a soft power tool that showcases the vibrant cultural tapestry and allure of Rio to the global community. Consequently, Rio could enhance its potential as a destination for cultural tourism, offering visitors an immersive experience amidst the rhythmic beats of Bossa Nova while exploring the city's storied landmarks and dynamic neighborhoods. This interplay between Rio's rich cultural heritage, the evocative strains of Bossa Nova, and the magnetic pull of cultural tourism underscores the city's

enduring status as a cultural capital and its ability to captivate and enchant visitors from every corner of the globe.

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