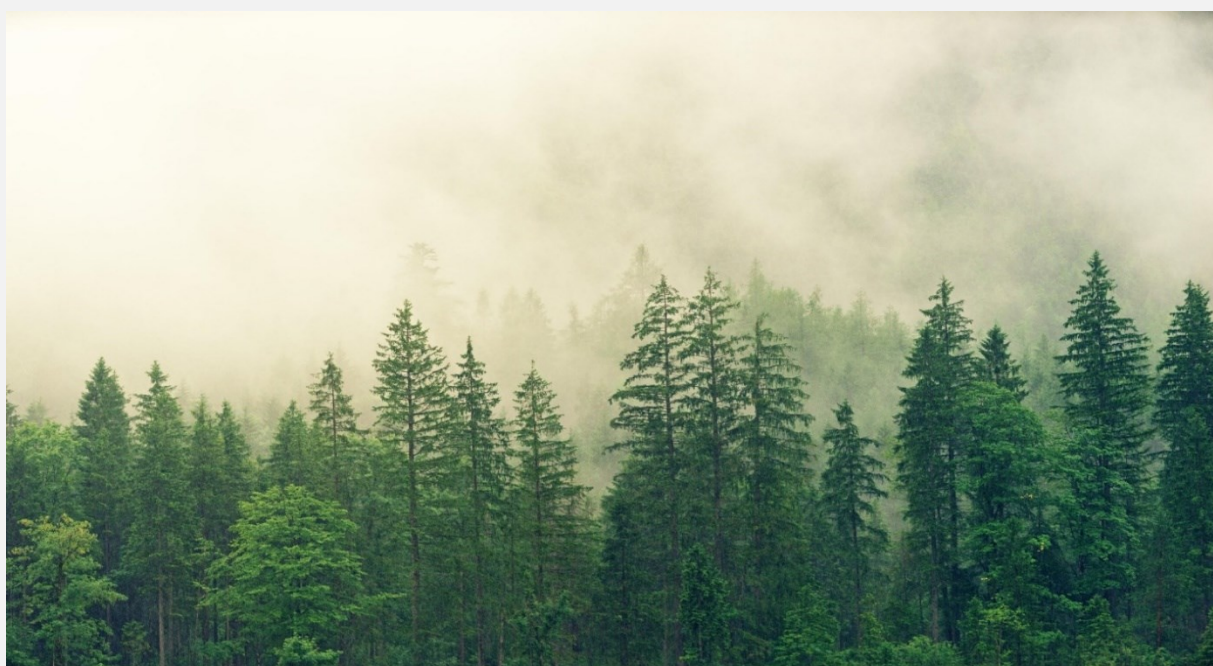


# TOURISM FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC  
CONFERENCE

18-19 MAY 2023, BULGARIA



AVANGARD PRIMA  
2023

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## **LANGUAGE, IMAGE, TOURISM, AND CARNIVAL IN SALVADOR: AN ANALYSIS OF THE SIGNS PRESENTED IN TOURISM ADVERTISEMENTS**

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Group of Culture and Tourism Studies – GCET/Brasil

**Abstract:** *Carnival in Salvador has had a considerable increase in tourism during the revelry period, and much of this behavior can be attributed to the success of publicity campaigns that are created with the hope of luring more and more people from all over Brazil and the world with the claim that Salvador has the best carnival. According to information provided by the Convention and Visitors Bureau-BA, the numbers range from 500 thousand in 2012 to 2.7 million in 2023: a significant increase that is commensurate with the capital having been awarded the Guinness Book record for the largest street party on the planet in 2005. The maintenance of the historically created perception that Salvador is a party city where people are always joyful and enjoy the ideal carnival for those who are traveling also involves the design of carnival themes and tourism ads. The research analyzed advertisement campaigns from 2012 to 2023 with carnival-related themes to figure out how the different languages and signs that make up these marketing materials affect tourists to "choose" this destination over so many others that also celebrate carnival. The results of the descriptive analysis of the corpus confirm that the upkeep of the fabricated image of a state and a people who live in constant celebration collaborate to attract more followers of this "style" of living while they are there, allowing them to partake in all the perfection that is promoted through these campaigns.*

**Keywords:** *Languages. Images. Tourism. Carnival in Salvador.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Before analyzing the object of this study, a brief history of the origin of carnival in Brazil is necessary. According to Arantes, 2013, the party was brought by the Portuguese in the 17th century, under the name of "entrudo"; a joyful celebration, but considered dirty and violent for throwing on people, besides water, materials such as garbage, urine, soot, etc. According to the author, this practice was active until the middle of the 19th century. Despite the many versions of the true origin of the word "carnival", in this study, it is considered the explanation that it comes from the Latin "carne vale" and that it means to say goodbye to the flesh. This celebration began to take place in the days preceding Lent and, with the "permission" of the Catholic Church, in a kind of farewell to the flesh. The date established for the carnival is linked to Easter until today.

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According to Camargo and Barbosa, 2012, the proposal for carnival has always been to subvert the pre-established order, to celebrate life and joy without concern for the rules in force. The objective of this article is to analyze the language, images, and signs presented in the tourism advertisements for the carnival in Salvador, and, all cataloged marketing materials, in this research, will have a look aimed at a qualitative analysis of which messages are delivered to the interlocutors interested in being part of this event, whether natives (Baianos) or tourists.

When people talk about Bahia, there is a constructed idea of a state in constant celebration, a happy people, gifted with religiosity, sensuality, and characteristics that differentiate the "Baiano people" from other Brazilians. There is a "homogenization" that disregards, according to Mariano 2009, all the other natives of the state who do not share this image built to sell a biotype considered commercial and with high tourist potential. According to O Estadão newspaper, 2005, the Guinness Book of Records consolidated Salvador Carnival as "the biggest street party in the world (the biggest popular party on the planet)". The number of Brazilian and international tourists who attend this party every year has only grown, according to data from the official site of the Government of the State of Bahia. The numbers vary from 500,000 to 2.7 million tourists in the last ten years (excluding the year 2021, because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, there was no carnival). The campaigns carried out, and the themes were chosen for each year of revelry, certainly consider increasing this percentage and, the first step to capture these tourists is the construction of convincing and inviting advertisements and campaigns. In this context, the objective of this study was to analyze the language, images, and signs that make up the tourism advertisements of the carnival in Salvador.

## **METHODOLOGY**

To achieve the objective of this study, descriptive research with a qualitative approach was developed to analyze what image is built through the linguistic signs (text, image, colors) of these marketing materials for attracting tourists and boosting this event that generates so much income for the State of Bahia.

The next step was to catalog advertisements related to the themes of the carnival in Salvador, between 2012 to 2023 (except 2021); collect publicity cards for the themes, observe the conception line of the campaigns made during the period, and compose the corpus of analysis. It was taken as a basis for description: the texts, images, colors, and other signs that could contribute to opinion formation and decision-making regarding the tourist movement of

the event. All the data was collected from articles, specific sites related to the event, newspapers from the State, and electronic cultural magazines.

## RESULTS

According to the Tourism Company of Salvador- Emtursa, the themes began to be part of the carnival campaigns from 1997 on, to honor symbols, dates, and personalities of Salvador that somehow contributed to the growth and dissemination of this event so eagerly awaited every year by the local people (baianos), and tourists from all over Brazil and the world. The table below shows the themes of the carnival in Salvador from 2012 to 2023, except in 2021, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Chart 1-** Themes of Carnival in Salvador 2012-2023

YEAR	THEMES
2012	Carnival in Salvador: The heart of the world beats here.
2013	Guitar from Bahia: people’s heritage.
2014	40 years of Afro groups: It’s different, it’s carnival in Salvador
2015	30 years of Axé Music
2016	Come to enjoy the street
2017	City of Music
2018	Salvador, my Carnival
2019	The world has chosen Salvador
2020	Salvador: The best Carnival of all.
2021	PANDEMIC- There was no carnival.
2022	Carnival 2022
2023	Carnival in Salvador 2023: The best Carnival in the world is back.

*Source: The author, 2023.*

The analyses will start with the official theme card of the 2012 carnival: "The Country of Carnival", in honor of the 100th anniversary of the writer Jorge Amado. The theme took its name from the first novel written by him and published in 1931.

**Figure 1-** Theme for the Carnival in Salvador 2012



*Source : [http://www.carnaxe.com.br/history/2012/fev/fev\\_09.htm](http://www.carnaxe.com.br/history/2012/fev/fev_09.htm)*

Next, observe that the composition of the campaign continues with the presence of Jorge Amado himself in front of several important characters from his work, such as Tieta, Gabriela, Quincas, Dona Flor, and Vadinho. The scenery presenting the theme is the set of colorful *sobrados* (townhouses) that line the streets of Pelourinho. Although the official theme was "The Country of Carnival", this idea was implicit in the images of the card represented by Jorge Amado and his creations. The phrase of effect "The heart of the world beats here" ("O coração do mundo bate aqui") partnered with a colorful logo and a figure with a heart-shaped body and open arms in a kind of invitation for everyone to attend the party.

Figure 2, shows a mosaic of several themes with a descriptive analysis, taking as a starting point some characteristics in common among the images and that allow grouping them in this same block of study and description. It is understood that the language to be analyzed in the collected material is not only the written text, which appears in a smaller proportion in the campaigns. All manifestations of information will be considered: images, colors, and implicit speech that may appear through words, phrases, colors, characters, and elements. Everything will be subject to description and analysis. The figure below shows one of the mosaics that make up this research.

Figure 2- Carnival themes Mosaic (2014-2018-2019-2020-2023)



Source : <https://www.google.com/search?q=tema+carnaval+salvador>

The use of the word "Salvador", appears in five of the ten themes: 2014, 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2023. The construction of these slogans brings some subliminal messages that can be understood as 2014- What is "different" (considering this characteristic as a quality peculiar to the city), only happens because it is in the Capital of Bahia, which could induce the tourist's desire to live this experience; Already in 2018, "Salvador, my Carnival", delivers the sense of belonging, both of baianos who give prestige to the party and of other tourists from Brazil and the world who choose to be in Salvador and not in other capitals where there is also Carnival; In 2019, with the slogan "The world chose Salvador" ("O mundo escolheu Salvador"), it reinforces the title of the largest popular party on the planet, according to the Guinness Book (2005). This statement works in the sense of inviting tourists to be part of this "choice"; in 2020, the exaltation of the capital and the event continues, implicitly qualifying it as the best among all others: "Salvador: The Carnival of Carnivals"; in 2022, there was no campaign with a specific message; only the name of the event, the current year and a handshake with arms full of ribbons of Senhor do Bonfim, in a gesture of union. The absence of qualifications, exaltations, or other attributes may be linked to the fact that it was the first big post-pandemic event and, it was preferred to maintain certain sobriety out of respect for the sad moments experienced around the world; the previous idea can be confirmed with the following year's theme: "Carnival in Salvador 2023: The Best Carnival in the World is back" ("Carnaval de Salvador 2023: O melhor carnaval do mundo está de volta"), resuming the language of exaltation and optimism when considering the Bahia party, once again, as the best in the world.

Figure 3- Carnival themes mosaic (2013-2015-2016-2017-2022)



Source : <http://www.carnaxe.com.br/historia/hist10a.htm>



Continuing the descriptive analysis of the other themes in which the city is not explicitly mentioned in the ad, according to figure 1, there are some textual constructions to be observed: in 2013, the theme was the 70th anniversary of the creation of the "Guitarra Baiana" ("Baiana guitar"), and the invention of the "electric car", later called trio elétrico. Two creations typically from Bahia that printed their characteristics to the carnival in Salvador, and, one of them (the trio elétrico), has figured until today not only in Bahia but in other states and even countries where carnival is celebrated; in 2015, the celebration of the anniversary of a musical style created in Bahia, the theme "30 years of Axé Music", although not mentioning the word Salvador, still makes mention to the capital regarding the type of music that was revered with the choice; in the year 2016, the theme: "Come enjoy the Street" ("Venha curtir a Rua"), the implicit proposal is an invitation to the biggest popular party on the planet as it was consecrated by the book of records in 2005.

The carnival in Salvador has always been seen as a party for everyone because it happens from different perspectives: from the glamorous balls in indoor spaces only for the public with higher purchasing power, to the street drags with the "popcorn" revelers: characterization given by the pulsating movement of people jumping to the sound of the trios in the streets in an analogy to the bursting and transformation of corn into popcorn; and, in the last theme analyzed, the campaign in 2017: "The City of Music" ("A cidade da Música"), in a clear reference to the recognition by UNESCO in mid-2016, as the only Brazilian city to integrate the network of Creative Cities in the music category. According to the official website of the United Nations Brazil, this vocation of the city is an element of economic and social development. Bringing this reference to the construction of the tourism dissemination campaign of the event, increased the engagement and appreciation of what is most peculiar in this party: the music.

**Figure 4.** The theme of the Carnival in Salvador 2013



Source : [http://www.carnaxe.com.br/history/2012/jun/jun\\_40.htm](http://www.carnaxe.com.br/history/2012/jun/jun_40.htm)

Besides the analysis of the themes of the Carnival in Salvador from 2013 to 2023, a description of the languages that figure in some of these themes was made. The first card to be analyzed will be the theme of the 2013 carnival, which was a tribute to the 70th anniversary of the *Guitarra Baiana* (Baiana Guitar), the creation of the duo Dodô and Osmar in 1942. According to "Jornal do Dia" newspaper, 2023, under the name "Dupla Elétrica," they were also the creators of the *trio elétrico*, which was part of the first carnival in 1950 parading through the streets of Salvador. The *trio elétrico* is the trademark of Carnival in Salvador and, for a long time, was only seen in Bahia.

The image that makes up the theme of the 2013 Carnival brings several signs that refer to the atmosphere of Salvador and the characteristics said to be predominant of the local people:

- 1- The scenario of the campaign is the Pelourinho neighborhood. The lower base of the ad is represented by the stones that pave the streets of the neighborhood. According to historian Vércia Gonçalves, 2016, these stones are called "cabeça de nego" (they were brought, on the head, by slaves to pave the place); one can make an analogy to the people that crowds below the electric trios during the party: Note the similarity of the image of the stones with the information described above;
- 2- The circle that supports the "trio elétrico" has the symbol that featured in the themes of the carnivals from 2005 to 2013 with the premise: "Carnival in Salvador: the heart of the world beats here", placing the city as a stage that receives all people during the event ;
- 3- The card presents four main elements that are part of the history of the neighborhood in the composition of the ad-theme: 1- in a highlighted dimension, is the figure of the "Guitarra Baiana" ("Baiana guitar"), characterized as the people's heritage. This information is reinforced by the presence of four iconic characters of Pelourinho and carnival: the figure of the guitar creator, a female figure that reminds us of the "quituteiras/baianas" that have worked in the neighborhood; a black man with a typical hairdo and dressed in the colors of Olodum and a son of Gandhi: Playing the instrument theme of the party; it is worth noting that, both the Bloco Afro Olodum and the Afoxé Filhos de Gandhi, have headquarters in this location; The top image is finished with white background used intentionally to receive the variety of colors that build the scenario composed by the image of Pelourinho, historic neighborhood of the city and listed as a World Heritage Site since 1984. The profusion of colors and figures that make up the ad symbolically portrays the joy that is one of the most widespread characteristics of the state, especially the Baiano people.

Figure 5 is part of an exhibition held in the subway station of Salvador in 2022, organized by the artist Gringo Cardia, presenting several images of the first carnivals until

today. The photo above with the caption: "Salvador: Carnival all year round", reinforces once again the idea spread in Brazil and in the world that, in Bahia, everything is joy and there is partying all year round, not only during the carnival period. To Risério (1993, p. 114): "... the myth was built on the exaggeration of real elements. The land was fantasized as beautiful and happy; exotic and erotic; mystical and solar; playful and wise; lazy and deep; and so on." These characteristics, already incorporated into the imagination of people and the world, are constantly present in the materials for publicizing Carnival, whether in the form of text, slogans or in the combination of colors and images used to compose the advertising and commercial campaigns about the party.

**Figure 5** - Exhibition: "Salvador: Carnival all year round".



Source : <https://portaldoadannascimento.com.br/entretenimento/pagina/7>

The initiative of CCR Metrô, in partnership with Casa do Carnaval, according to information from *Jornal à Tarde*, 2023, aimed to promote local tourism and make available, besides the artwork, a guide with information about the use of the subway and the access routes to the main attractions and sights of the city.

After describing the themes and some cards in particular, it can be observed that, in all the data analyzed, there are common characteristics that cannot be disregarded: 1- the striking presence of a variety of colors that refer to the feeling of "eternal joy" culturally linked to the people from Bahia; 2- the symbology that permeates the use of the name of the capital Salvador as being the "best place; the most joyful carnival; the one that is chosen by the majority and, even when this specific word is not used, linguistic artifices (phrases of effect) are used to link all the good characteristics to the place and the event; 3- Many symbols and historical figures are presented in the ads/themes of the carnival celebrations, namely: Pelourinho, Castro Alves, Elevador Lacerda, Farol da Barra, folkloric figures as icons of the history of carnival and

common people circulating in the streets of Salvador and that have been part of the tradition of the party, for example: the Filhos de Gandhi, the musicians of Bloco Afro Olodum, mentions of Dodô and Osmar, percussors of street carnival in the state, allusion to musical instruments in the composition of the campaigns; 4 - The idea of subversion, previously widespread in the past, was subtly replaced in these campaigns by diversity, constant joy and acceptance in all areas, corroborating the utopia of absence of sadness throughout the period of the festival, confirming the conception that was built around the ideal of "baianidade" (life style of the people from Bahia), as previously described by Risério, 1993.

### **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Through this research, which aimed to analyze the language, images, and signs present in tourism advertisements of the carnival in Salvador, it was possible to detect what subliminal messages were present in advertisements of tourism and themes of carnival, in the research between 2013 to 2023 and how these campaigns contribute to the maintenance of a constructed image of the state and the people of this place with a stereotypical ideal that, not always, matches the reality of everyone.

When it comes to the analysis that was carried out with the research data, it was observed that all the publicity material of the themes related to the festival, contemplate the continuity of affirmation of a place that lives in constant celebration and a people always happy and exotic; characteristics reinforced by the intelligent use that was made of the name Salvador in the construction of the campaigns, where even in the absence of this word, it was sought other peculiar characteristics that only apply to this city.

Besides the aspects observed in the written language, a very strategic combination of colors and iconic images of the city that also refer to the idea of party, joy, pride, choice, and belonging were used. The diversity of languages that make up the data analyzed was aligned to the purposes of capturing a greater local tourist activity during the entire period of the festival, where every historical moment was taken advantage of, and even the titles directed to the city were incorporated into the themes/advertisements of the campaigns to attract more people to participate during the carnival.

It was clear the relationship these advertisements and the conception of the themes have with the attraction of tourists through the maintenance of the overvaluation of the place implicitly described as the best place, with the best carnival, the best music, and the most joyful people; synonyms that match the ideal of perfect carnival. This study opens space for other