

MUSIC IN THE CARIBBEAN ISLANDS: ROLE OF REGGAE MUSIC AND TOURISTIC CULTURE IN JAMAICA

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Reggae music is more than a popular music style. It has been an essential part of tourism development in Jamaica. The way in which reggae music has been interpreted since its inception is critical to understanding the music's effect on Jamaica's touristic culture. This touristic culture describes the established social atmosphere of the community and attitude of local residents and visitors toward tourism within the region. The Jamaican government's effort to control the social movement and the role of reggae music in relation to tourism are viewed by understanding reggae music with respect to the Rastafarian movement. Governmental approaches played an important part in allowing the development of touristic culture with reggae music and the Rastafarian movement. The purpose of this study was to view the role of reggae music in Jamaican tourism development along with a social movement, the Rastafarian movement. This study was important because it served as a vehicle to understand the interplay of social movement and touristic culture. Such an understanding of touristic culture could be useful in tourism dependent regions. This study used an extensive review and analysis of the literature to make observations and conclusions.

Reggae, touristic culture, tourism, social movement, music

INTRODUCTION

Jamaica provides distinctive natural tourism attractions with touristic culture. In this study, touristic culture is described as an intangible tourism product that is generated naturally by local residents and visitors through social, political, and economical changes that positioned the environments that harmonized with tourism development. Therefore, touristic culture describes the established local atmosphere toward incoming tourists to the region.

As Waters (1985) discussed the movement, the Rastafarian movement was initially viewed as an anti-social movement supported mainly by low-class societies, and it later spread to the middle class. As reggae music gained international popularity, Rastafarianism began to be considered an important cultural form without criticism from non-Rastafarian Jamaicans (Chevannes, 1990). Rastafarianism was no longer depicted as a social and political movement engaged in the task of reforming Jamaica's neo-colonial society and returning to its African roots. Instead, it became appealed as a potential tool to the development of tourism that could generate economic sources. This resulted in making the government easily co-opt the Rastafarian movement (King & Foster, 2001).

As Duffy (2000) explains that music reveals the changing identities, communities, and subculture, reggae music within the Rastafarian movement was a major attribute in the process of establishing touristic culture. Seen as an attractive tourism product, reggae enhanced tourism development in

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Jamaica. Reggae music brought Jamaica economic improvement and caused the Rastafarian movement to be transformed as a part of touristic culture in Jamaica. Reggae music has been viewed as a popular music genre, but has not been viewed from a tourism standpoint that has built a positive touristic culture in Jamaica. The way reggae music has been interpreted since its creation, is important in understanding the effect it has had on the process of touristic culture in the tourism development of Jamaica.

The purpose of this study was to view the role of reggae music in Jamaican tourism development, which paralleled the social movement, Rastafarianism. This study was important because it served as a vehicle to understand the interplay of social movement and touristic culture. Such an understanding of touristic culture could be useful to tourism dependent island regions such as the Caribbean, Samoa, and Micronesia. This study did not imply any statistical analyses; instead, this study used an extensive review and analysis of the literature to make observations and conclusions.

TOURISM IN JAMAICA

Jamaica is located in the Caribbean Sea between North and South America. It is an island nation with an economy that accommodates a population of 2.6 million people (Ferguson, 2001). Jamaica could be described as a paradise with a natural setting for tourists to experience different exclusive hideaways and cultures (Conway, 1983). Attractive climates and beautiful terrain made the Caribbean region the site of a booming tourist industry for several decades since Castro's reign over of Cuba in 1959 (Campbell, Perkins & Mohammed, 1999). According to Voyles (1956), Cuba appeared to be the most popular destination in the Caribbean region for international travelers until the mid 1950s. With Cuba's increasing isolation in the international community, the international tourists, especially American tourists, began to select three alternative sites: the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, and Jamaica (Conway, 1983). Jamaica was one of the first Caribbean countries to benefit from the tourism boom because of its comparatively well-developed accommodations, air transport facilities, and its economic ties to North America, and the United Kingdom (Geography c, 2001). The Jamaican government has also supported tourism because of the limited potential resources for economic expansion, the lack of viable economic alternatives, and the rapid expansion of international tourism demand (Erisman, 1985; Matthew, 1977).

As tourism was particularly relevant for island nations, tourism became a source of economy in Jamaica with its disproportionate share of sun, sea, and sand (Carey, 1991). In addition to its natural beauty, Jamaica also provides distinctive, cultural tourist attractions based on touristic culture in the region. Jamaica has marketed tourist attractions with rich touristic culture despite the developmental drawbacks of tourism expansion because it was a way to achieve prosperity in a resource-limited economy (Mullings, 1999).

RASTAFARIAN MOVEMENT IN JAMAICA

The Rastafarian movement was seen as a non-violent social movement that demanded repatriation back to Africa. The Rastafarian movement began in the early 1930s when Leonard Howell started encouraging Jamaicans to reject the authority of the King of England and give their loyalties to the new emperor of Ethiopia (Campbell, 1987; Murrell, 1998). Rastafarianism was not seen positively in the beginning of the movement. Patterson (1964) stated that in the mid-1950s, the Rastafarians were increasingly viewed as representing drug addicts and a cult of outcasts. The Jamaican government initially viewed the Rastafarian movement as a threat to national security, and attempted to suppress the movement (Beckford & Witter, 1982).

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The Rastafarian movement, as a form of social and political protest in Jamaica, gave expression to the plight of Jamaica's poor and disenfranchised classes (King & Jensen, 1995). Rastafarianism served as an explicit medium of protest against the economic situation and government leadership. Since the movement was increasingly becoming associated with reggae music and its popularity among the lower class societies, the government continued to control the Rastafarian movement. However, the government strategies toward the Rastafarian movement generally failed due to the growing international popularity of reggae music (Waters, 1985; King & Jensen, 1995; Mordecai & Mordecai, 2001).

The Rastafarian movement slowly appealed to and spread into other class societies in the 1960s (Gray, 1991). By the late 1960s, the Rastafarian movement increasingly provided ideological content through the voice of reggae music. The Jamaican government has changed its attitude toward the movement from employing strategies to suppress the movement and reggae music, to employing the popularity of the movement and reggae music as a successful strategy in political issues (King, 1998).

REGGAE MUSIC

African rhythms are the heart of all Caribbean music, and almost every island culture has a root music that is almost unchanged from its original African source (McLane, 1991). Reggae music has been viewed as a popular style of music that originated in the Caribbean islands. The reggae music eventually spread via the routes of mass media and tourism to other Caribbean islands (Reggae music, 2001). Reggae originated with Kumina, Mento, Ska, and Rock which were the main music styles in Jamaica (King & Jensen, 1995; McLane, 1991). North American Rhythm & Blues and the music of Trinidad, Calypso, influenced Reggae as well. McLane (1991) valued reggae music as the best-known Caribbean music in the world.

Reggae music began as protest music. Politically segregated anti-government groups in the early 1950s developed reggae music in Jamaica. Reggae music was widely perceived as Rastafarian music until the mid-1970s (Ahkell, 1981). Along with the Rastafarian movement as a form of social and political protest in Jamaica, reggae music played an important role in delivering the movement's messages (King & Jensen, 1995). Through reggae's lyric and rhythm, messages of social, economical, and political issues were delivered to lower class societies (King & Jensen 1995). Chang and Chen (1998) stated that reggae music served as protest music during Nicaragua's civil war, China's Tiananmen Square demonstrations, and the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Early in its development, like Rastafarianism, reggae music only appealed to the poor classes of Jamaican society. Reggae songs usually represented lower Jamaican societies, delivering their voices to others. It was viewed as a vehicle for sharing personal experiences, and was almost classified as protest music (King & Jensen, 1995). Attempts to market Jamaica's popular music to an international audience failed in its earlier stages (Jones, 1988). That changed however, when the Wailers established their music among the Americans and Europeans (Reggae Music, 2001; Mordecai & Mordecai, 2001).

As reggae music's popularity increased in Jamaica, as well as worldwide, its popularity grew among the Jamaican middle class (Prahla, 2000; Beckford & Witter, 1982). When reggae music was delivered to the rest of the globe, Jamaica, along with Rastafarian symbols, became an increasingly popular commodity for international tourists (Bilby, 1995).

The role reggae music has played can be viewed in three different ways; as a tool in spreading a social movement, as a popular music style in Jamaican life, and as an important tourism product which has

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drawn a number of international tourists to Jamaica and its neighboring Caribbean islands. Jamaicans also adopted the Rastafarian movement with reggae music into their cultural products instead of viewing it as a social movement.

The image of Rastafarians and reggae music has increasingly become an important part of Jamaica's touristic culture and has been widely used in developing Jamaica's tourism industry (Nagashima, 1984; Waters, 1985). As Connell and Gibson (2004) indicated, music could transport listeners to distant places and could provide a more permanent reminder of their experiences. Places with distinctive and authentic music could be revealed as a tool that enhanced the development of tourism. Reggae and symbols of Rastafarianism were eventually accepted and used to market Jamaica's tourism along with the country's natural beauty.

Two marketing strategies have been extremely successful in attracting international tourists to Jamaica; promoting established Jamaican touristic culture based on reggae music and Rastafarianism, and promoting tourism products based on natural and cultural heritage. In a wide range of promotional materials, the reggae image, including Rastafarians, have been portrayed as eager and happy hosts that are willing to help fulfill a tourist's vacation desires (Mullings, 1999). Reggae music, with support from the Jamaica Tourist Board, is pursuing a marketing strategy of capitalizing on Jamaica's reputation as a lively vacation spot (Oumano b, 2000). An increasing number of international visitors now visit Jamaica to experience not only its warm climate and sandy beaches, but also the sound of reggae music with the touristic culture of Jamaicans (Consoli, 1999).

The commercialism of the Rastafarian movement and reggae music has been successfully transformed from a threatening social movement into a valuable tourism product in Jamaica (Jahn & Weber, 1992). Oumano (2000 a) described music's role in Jamaican life by stating that no other country on the globe churns out as much recorded music per capita, and no moment of day-to-day Jamaican life lacks musical accompaniment. It is vital to understand the role reggae music played as a part of Jamaican life and in Jamaican tourism development. Music as a tourism product can be viewed differently by hosts and visitors; however, its role as a touristic culture in tourism development can be shared by both sides (Morphy, 1991; Myers, 1994).

Panton (1993) described Jamaican society in the 1970s as a place where people appeared to rise up to improve their social and economic conditions. Many politicians have attempted to appeal to the Rastafarians and Jamaica's Black Power movement, by promising the Jamaican people deliverance from oppression, and declaring Jamaica to be a democratic socialist country (King, 1998). Reggae music became more popular and was viewed by many as the voice of the Jamaican working-class (Johnson, 1976). More politically oriented Rastafarians hoped to exploit reggae's new popularity to enhance the movement. Reggae's international popularity increased the visibility of the Rastafarian movement around the world. Reggae was used as an advertisement to spread the Rastafarian movement around the globe (King, 1998). The popularity of reggae music led the Rastafarian movement to become more of a cultural and economical fad than a serious religious and political movement (King, 1998).

A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REGGAE MUSIC, RASTAFARIANISM, AND TOURISTIC CULTURE

The characterization of a place and its relationship with tourism could be found through the popularity of films or music (Craik 1991; Boniface & Fowler, 1989). Cohen (1997) stated that music could be used to represent or symbolize a destination, distinguishing the destination from other places, and associating it with particular images and values. The role that music has played in tourism development can be also found in many tourism destinations (Evans, 1978; Smith, 1977; Bendix, 1989; Maurer &

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Zeigler, 1988; Mckean, 1989; Swain, 1989). Lincoln (1993), Cwi (1982), and Myerscough (1989) indicated that popular cultural music is a powerful and accessible resource in the production of a place, which would be transformed into a tourism destination.

Reggae music was a major attribute in establishing touristic culture by generating a positive attitude towards tourism in Jamaica (Nettleford, 1990). Reggae music, as revealed by the Rastafarian movement, was looked down on by society but over time became a part of Jamaica's cultural heritage. This transformation improved the Jamaican economy and established touristic culture. The balance of the Jamaican government, reggae music and touristic culture redefined the intention of the movement as a role that could maximize future tourism development in Jamaica. The Jamaican government viewed this transformed cultural form as something positive and distinctive rather than viewing reggae music as a pathological religious response by a segment of the Jamaican population (White, 1992). The appropriation of Rastafarian symbols for economic gain reflects the Rastafarian movement's inability to redefine or reconstitute its powerful cultural symbols. The Rastafarian symbols; dreadlocks, Ganja, Rastafarian colors, which once rejected Jamaica's neo-colonial society, are now part of a cultural heritage that represents Jamaica as tourism destination.

PSEUDO-RASTAFARIAN

Besides economical benefits from tourism in conjunction with the symbols of the Rastafarian movement and reggae music, drawbacks have been also revealed. By selling Jamaica as a tourism destination with reggae music, rich natural tourism products, and touristic culture to international travelers, the increasing influx of the international tourists created a new social class, Rent-a-Dreads also known as Rentas. Since the Rastafarian movement has increasingly become associated with reggae music, it also has created a schism between true believers and simple followers of reggae fashion, pseudo-Rastafarian groups (King, 1998). Reggae music, dreadlocks, and Rastafari became synonymous with Rastafarians for much of the international community (Pruitt & Lafont, 1995). Pseudo-Rastafarian groups imitated the cultural trappings of Rastafarianism without adopting the religious and ideological tenets. The influence of Rastafarianism on the Jamaican culture is shown by the fact that most reggae artists have attached some of the principles of the Rastafarian movement to their music (Campbell, 1987). The increasing use of Rastafarianism and reggae images in tourist brochures has also created a proliferation of pseudo-Rastafarian and has presented the continuing influx of pseudo-Rastafarian groups into Rastafarian communities (Pruitt & LaFont, 1995).

To sell merchandise to international tourists, one must act, dress, and resemble a local Rasta in Jamaica. Indeed, many stores were decorated with the Rastafarian colors of red, green, and gold (Walters, 1992). It made Jamaican society establish touristic culture and those Jamaicans, who were in a tourism related business, at least become pseudo-Rastafarians without becoming involved in Rastafarianism. Many pseudo-Rastafarians adopted the Rastafarian dialect and developed an outfit that expressed the Rastafarian emphasis on simplicity and living with nature. Although the Rastafarian movement was opposed to the Western system of exploitation, pseudo-Rastafarianism tends to maximize exploitation (Pruitt & LaFont, 1995). The pseudo-Rastafarians' desire for easy money and material gain was in direct opposition to authentic Rastafarians who repudiated material accumulation and participation in the system of exploitative lifestyles. As expected, Rentas were rejected by the normal Jamaican society, for exploiting their culture, in their dealings with foreigners (Pruitt & LaFont, 1995). This has made, in part, the Rastafarian movement to decline; however, in spite of the declining Rastafarian movement and reggae music in Jamaican society, roles of both the movement and the music are still strongly sustained in Jamaican tourism. Nevertheless, the reggae rhythms with lyrics of the Jamaican culture are one aspect of the rich touristic culture, which still strongly exists on the island.

CONCLUSION

Reggae and the Rastafarian movement were considered a part of a political movement in the beginning and used as a tool for political force and social gain in Jamaica, until reggae music gained popularity. While the Rastafarians redefined Jamaica's cultural identity and became an international phenomenon, the movement and its protest music, reggae, have been co-opted into a symbol of Jamaica's cultural heritage and transformed into a tourist attraction. As Sloan (1995), Warneke (1994), and Hogg (1995) noted the growing phenomenon of movie-induced-tourism, music as seen in movies might be seen as a successful tool to increase international tourism to Jamaica.

While Rastafarian imagery and music were becoming integrated into the mainstream of Jamaican society, Rastafarians and reggae continued to be kept as an important player in Jamaica's social structure. The Jamaican government seemed to have accepted symbols of Rastafarian and reggae as symbols that represent Jamaica, but not the movement's religious and political goals. Reggae became an important tool to attract more tourists through its cultural image that carries lyric and rhythm.

Following the popularity of reggae in the 1970's, the Jamaican government began implementing reggae and Rastafarian images as a means of developing tourism. King and Foster (2001) indicated that the Jamaican government has marketed the Rastafarian movement and reggae music as part of Jamaica's cultural heritage. The reggae "rhythm" attempts to capture the emotional experience of visiting Jamaica. As Bain (1993) described, many marketing materials use reggae as a metaphor for describing image of the island of paradise. Promotional materials have emphasized reggae's joyous and peaceful themes (King and Foster, 2001). In many brochures describing Jamaica (Bain, 1993), the Rastafarian movement and reggae music were clearly represented as an important part of the image of Jamaica linking the movement to touristic culture. Along its tourist culture of Jamaicans, reggae music is viewed as promotional tool to express the island through reggae rhythm and lyric.

As touristic culture becomes one of the most valuable tourism products in Jamaica, touristic culture should be kept within local communities. If cultures lose their uniqueness as a tourist attraction, they also lose much of their touristic appeal (Belk, 1995). Toh, Khan, and Lim (2001) stated that a result of tourism development in island nations, they lose their original flavor and appearance and become isolated from the ordinary flow of life and natural texture of the host society. However, if these differences are stylized, the tourists receive at least a commoditized and simplified version of uniqueness (Belk & Costa, 1995).

There may be a need for more studies of cultural products on island nations not only in the Caribbean, but also in the Pacific and other regions. Empirical studies on social and political movements may need to be conducted to identify how and what factors played a role in transferring negative attitudes into positive attitudes and positive attitudes into negative attitudes in the study of tourism development. Further studies on these issues may help policy makers understand the importance of touristic culture in tourism development. Since tourism is considered to be a human based service industry, touristic culture needs to be positioned with local residents and governmental support may be needed in establishing positive tourism development. This study may enhance people in understanding; how touristic culture with positive support from local residents and government can influence tourism development; and what a musical genre from domestic, internal identity marketing mechanism to international tourism marketing tool (King and Foster, 2001)

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