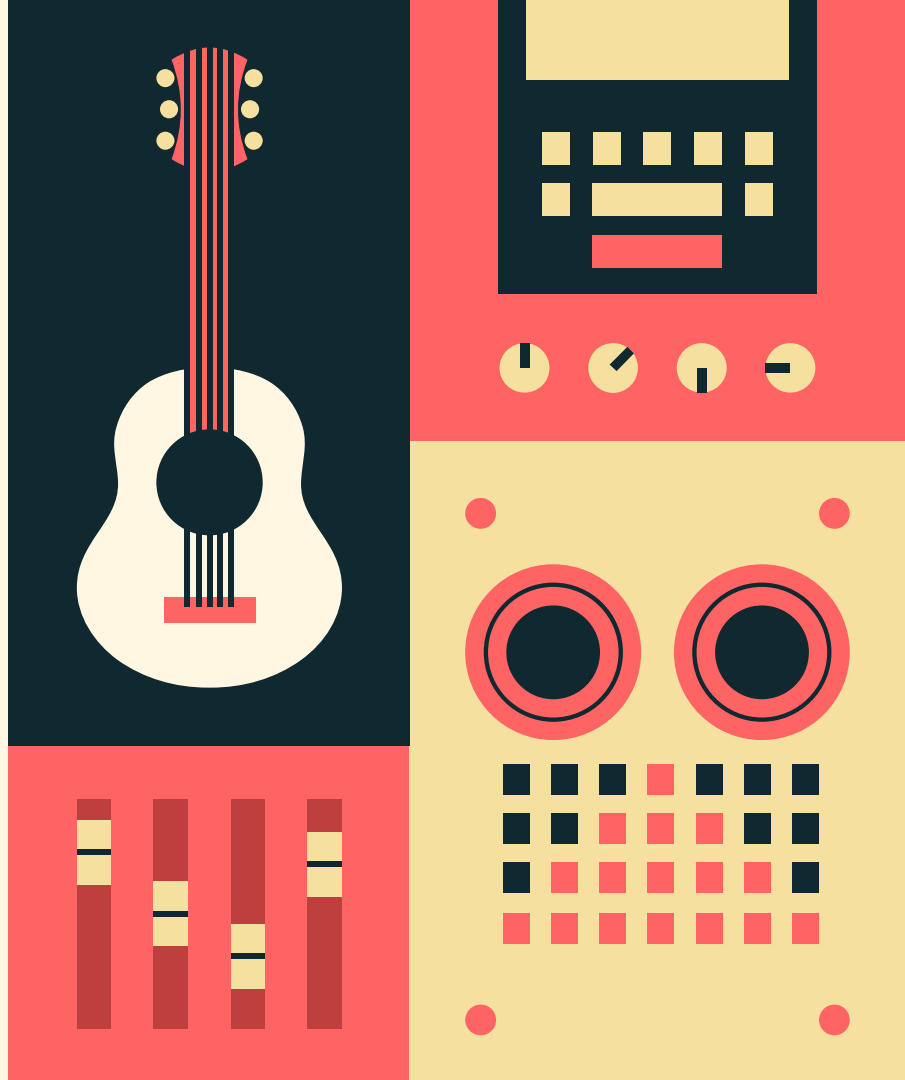




Reverse Engineering- Bad Bunny's Cultural Positioning

Valeria Redhead Giampietri



Introduction:

Since his 2017 debut, 30-year-old Puerto Rican Benito Antonio Martinez Ocasio, better known by his stage name Bad Bunny, has become a worldwide sensation and a major contributor to the mainstreaming of Latin music and representation. Without following conventional industry conventions, he has transformed the global music industry through daring marketing campaigns and strategic external communication. His success proves that Spanish-language music can dominate and has a place in the music industry.

He is a key figure in contemporary pop culture, with an impact that goes beyond music and includes fashion, social activism, and business collaborations. His influence extends beyond music into fashion, social activism, and corporate partnerships, making him a pivotal figure in modern pop culture.

Beyond his commercial success, Bad Bunny stands out from other artists thanks to his external communication strategy, which is firmly based on social advocacy and authenticity. He has advocated for underrepresented groups, questioned social norms, and elevated Puerto Rican identity through his platform.

By examining how Bad Bunny's strategic messaging, media presence, brand partnerships, and cultural campaigns have established his status as a game-changing figure in entertainment, this case study will reverse-engineer the PR and marketing tactics that have propelled his explosive rise. He has not only elevated Latin music to new heights by defying industry norms, but he has also changed how musicians interact with fans, companies, and social movements globally.



Objectives

1. Establish and Expand Spanish-Language Music as a Mainstream Global Force

- ★ **Cultural Bridging:** Break down linguistic and cultural barriers, positioning Spanish-language music as a key part of the global mainstream music scene.
- ★ **Redefining Global Music:** Elevate Latin culture and language in global music, showing its integral role in shaping contemporary music trends.
- ★ **Industry Shift:** Transform industry standards to normalize Spanish-language music across global platforms and markets.

2. Position Bad Bunny as a Global Cultural Icon Beyond Music

- ★ **Modern Icon:** Establish Bad Bunny as a symbol of evolving Latinx identity, influencing not just music but also fashion, activism, and social issues.
- ★ **Global Influence:** Make Bad Bunny a representation of multiculturalism, transcending traditional boundaries and becoming a universal cultural force.
- ★ **Cultural Authority:** Position him as a thought leader whose influence extends beyond music into broader societal conversations.

3. Leverage Music as a Platform for Cultural & Social Advocacy

- ★ **Empowerment through Art:** Use music to challenge societal norms, raise awareness, and amplify the voices of marginalized communities.
- ★ **Authentic Advocacy:** Position Bad Bunny as an artist actively engaging in social justice, politics, and human rights issues through his platform.
- ★ **Legacy of Impact:** Build a lasting legacy where Bad Bunny's music leads to tangible social and cultural change.

Target Audience:

Demographics:

Age: Primarily Gen Z and Millennials (16-35 years old).

Geography: Strong presence in Latin America, the U.S., and Spain, with expansion into European and Asian markets.

Psychographics:

- Fans of reggaeton, Latin trap,
- Followers of socially conscious artists.
 - challenge gender norms and political issues.
- Highly digital-native and engaged on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube.

Strategy & Tactics

1. Expanding Spanish-Language Music into the Global Mainstream

Strategy: Showcase the Power of Spanish-Language Music

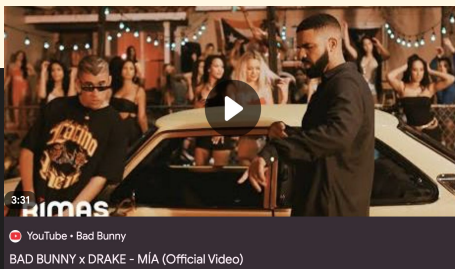
Tactic #1: Breaking Language Barriers with Cross-Cultural Collaborations

Bad Bunny has collaborated with international artists across genres—such as Drake, Cardi B, J Balvin, and Gorilaz—to expand the reach of Spanish-language music.

In May 2018, American rapper Cardi B released a collaboration with Bad Bunny and J Balvin, "I Like It", which topped the Billboard Hot 100.

- 1.6 Billion views
- 10 Million likes

Cardi B, Bad Bunny & J Balvin - I Like It [Official Music Video]
YouTube · Cardi B · May 29, 2018



In October 2018, Bad Bunny released "Mia" with Drake, which reached number five on the Billboard Hot 100.

- 1.5 Billion views
- 8.4 Million Likes

Tactic #2: Leveraging High-Profile Global Media Appearances

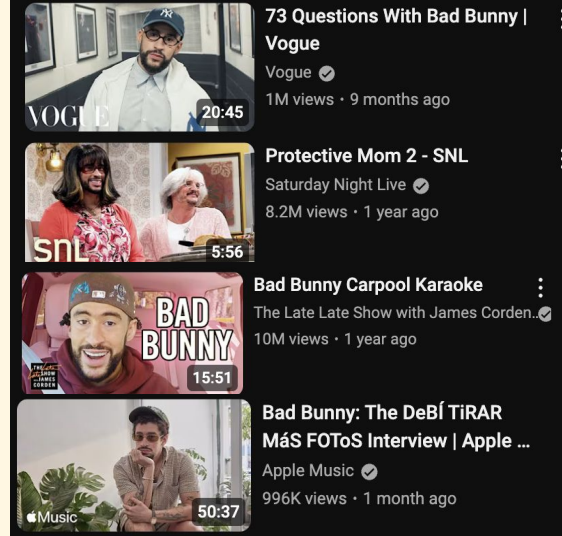
Appearances on major global platforms like *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, *The Daily Show*, *The Late Late Show* and *Saturday Night Live* showcase his charisma, humor, and versatility, making him more relatable to English-speaking audiences.



2025 GRAMMY Highlights About Awards News Videos Genres Shows

11 Essential Bad Bunny Collaborations: Drake, Rosalía, Cardi B, Bomba Estéreo & Others

Collaborations have helped make Bad Bunny one of the most unique artists in Latin music and his latest album, 'Un Verano Sin Ti' has no lack of features. GRAMMY.com breaks down some of El Conejo Malo's most memorable collabs.



2. Positioning Bad Bunny as a Global Cultural Icon Beyond Music

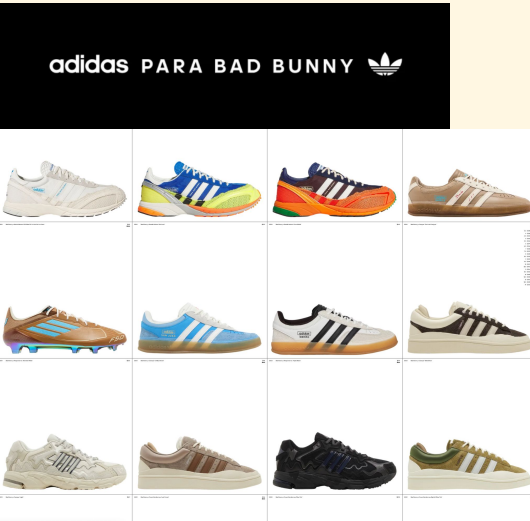
Strategy: Expansion Beyond Music

Tactic #3: Strategic Brand Collaborations

Bad Bunny has partnered with major global brands like Adidas and Cheetos, showcasing his fashion influence and broadening his appeal beyond music.

Adidas

Bad Bunny has collaborated with Adidas on several sneaker models, including the Forum Powerphase, Gazelle, and Campus totalling around 18 shoes



Gucci

Bad Bunny stars in Gucci's Savoy luggage campaign, blending luxury with his signature streetwear style. His presence highlights the fusion of high fashion and Latin urban culture, reinforcing Gucci's modern, inclusive image.



Corona

Corona partnered with Bad Bunny to create the campaign "La Vida Más Fina." His influence helps the nearly 100-year-old brand embrace its Hispanic roots while breaking stereotypes. The Spanish tagline highlights Corona's heritage and the growing Hispanic community in the U.S.



Super Bowl Ad- Ritz Crackers

Bad Bunny appeared in Ritz's 2025 Super Bowl ad, where he joins Aubrey Plaza and Michael Shannon in a humorous "Salty Club" skit.



3. Leveraging Music for Cultural and Social Advocacy

Strategy: Cultural Advocacy through Music and Media

Tactic #4:

Political, Advocacy and Social Commentary through Music and Media

Bad Bunny has utilized his platform to speak out on political issues, especially through his music.

- ★ **"Estamos Bien"** became an anthem after the devastation of Hurricane Maria, and his activism regarding Puerto Rican independence has been central to his public persona.
- ★ **"El Apagon"** referenced the electricity crisis that has severely impacted the quality of life and welfare in PR
 - In the music video for the "El Apagón" titled "el apagón/aquí vive gente" that accompanied the release, he tackles the issue concerning the appropriation of land in PR.
 - 15 Million views , 680 Thousand likes
- ★ Bad Bunny released the almost 6 minute long hit **"Andrea"** which talks about the struggles of women in today's world and ultimately becoming a rallying cry against femicides and violence against women.
- ★ **"Lo Que Le Pasó a Hawaii"** a track in Bad Bunny's new album- critiques gentrification and Puerto Rico's political struggles, addressing the impact of Americanization and the sovereignty debate. The song highlights how external forces are reshaping the island's identity.

Latino Rebels -

'Estamos Bien' and the Forced Resiliency of Black and Brown Communities

Released nearly a year after Hurricane María, Bad Bunny's "Estamos Bien" became the anthem for Puerto Ricans in the wake of a tragedy.

Dec 21, 2018

Billboard

Purple Nails, Friendships, and Mental Health: the Message Behind Bad Bunny's 'Estamos Bien' Video

The video is tropical, fun, vibrant, and a major '90s throwback but there's an important message behind Bad Bunny's "Estamos Bien" that you probably missed.

Jul 12, 2018



Menu **Refinery29** 50-46 45-41 40-36 35-31 30-26

23

'Andrea,' Bad Bunny feat. Buscabulla

"Andrea," a collaboration with indie-pop duo Buscabulla, has become a rallying cry against femicides and violence against women. Though some thought the song was inspired by the death of Andrea Ruiz, Bad Bunny has said he wrote the lyrics — which are some of his best — about someone who is alive and who wants to be free. Luis Alfredo Del Valle and Raquel Berrios bring power to the track, adding a distorted disco break and Berrios' alluring vocals, which give voice to women who know they deserve it all. —E.R.P.

El Apagón

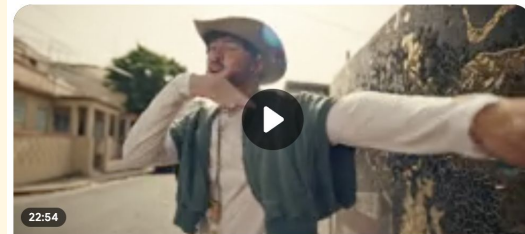
Song by Bad Bunny · 2022

Overview

Lyrics

Listen

Artists



YouTube · Bad Bunny

Bad Bunny - El Apagón - Aquí Vive Gente (Official Video) | Un ...

RefineryStone

Menu

Q

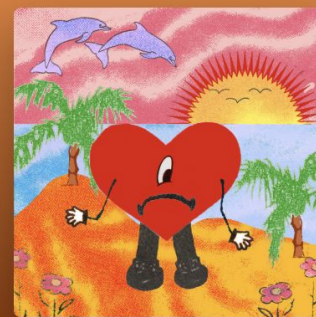
MUSIC POLITICS TV & MOVIES CULTURE RS RECOMMENDS

AQUÍ VIVE GENTE

BAD BUNNY'S VIDEO FOR 'EL APAGÓN' IS A BLISTERING CALL TO ACTION THAT EVERYONE NEEDS TO SEE

The Puerto Rican superstar used his latest music video to share an 18-minute documentary about displacement and other injustices his home island is facing.

By JUAN J. ARROYO
SEPTEMBER 16, 2022



Andrea

Bad Bunny, Buscabulla



DtMF - Debi Tirar Mas Fotos

Bad Bunny's latest album: *DeBÍ TIRAR Más FOToS* aligns closely with the concept of **leveraging music for cultural and social advocacy** in several ways:

- ★ **Positioning Bad Bunny as a Global Cultural Icon Beyond Music:** The album blends reggaetón with Puerto Rican culture, making Bad Bunny a global cultural figure addressing universal themes.
- ★ **Expansion Beyond Music:** Bad Bunny incorporates **activism** and **political commentary**, using his platform for broader cultural influence and societal change.
- ★ **Expanding Spanish-Language Music into the Global Mainstream:** The album pushes Spanish-language music into the global mainstream, attracting both Spanish-speaking and non-Spanish-speaking audiences.
- ★ **Showcasing the Power of Spanish-Language Music:** The album highlights the global appeal of Spanish-language music as a tool for cultural expression and social advocacy.
- ★ **Leveraging Music for Cultural and Social Advocacy:** Bad Bunny addresses issues like Puerto Rican sovereignty and gentrification, using his music to raise awareness and inspire action.
- ★ **Social Media Traction:** **The Sapo Concho character** and the album's film have gone viral on social media, generating memes and discussions that amplify the album's cultural and political messages.
- ★ **Social Media as Advocacy:** The viral moments on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter expand the album's reach, helping Bad Bunny use social media to promote advocacy and further establish his influence as a cultural icon.

No. 1 on Billboard's Top Streaming Albums chart

Bad Bunny's "Debí Tirar Más Fotos" Tells Puerto Rico's History

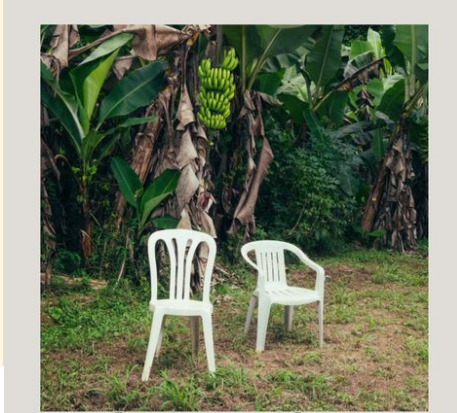
By Miguel Machado
Published on Jan 8, 2025 at 2:41 PM



BAD BUNNY - DeBÍ TIRAR Más FOToS (Short Film)



The 'Sapo Concho' toad, native to Puerto Rico, is facing extinction. Gaining attention on social media, it highlights the risks of ignoring cultural and environmental history. Bad Bunny featured the toad in his visual album to raise awareness about both its endangerment and the loss of culture.



DEBÍ TIRAR MÁS FOTOS 2024
by BAD BUNNY

Media Coverage

Article Name/Publication	Message	Intended Target Audience	Effective or Ineffective
“How Bad Bunny Is Building A Brand Empire” (Forbes Australia, February 25, 2024)	“He [Bad Bunny] has one finger on the pulse of culture like no one else.. He is dictating what culture becomes” — Jeremy Erlich, Spotify’s head of music	The article appeals to those interested in the intersection of celebrity branding and business. It focuses on how Bad Bunny is building his brand empire, highlighting his marketing strategies, and collaborations with major companies.	The article is effective in highlighting Bad Bunny’s brand-building through testimonials from industry experts who praise his business strategies and global cultural impact. These emphasize how he’s successfully bridged Latin music with the mainstream, making the article valuable for business and marketing audiences.
“Bad Bunny Becomes the First Latin Artist to Tally 100 Career Hot 100 Hits” (Billboard, January 14,2025)	The article highlights Bad Bunny becoming the first Latin artist to have 100 hits on the Billboard Hot 100, marking a historic milestone in his career and the global impact of Latin music.	The intended target audience of this article includes music industry professionals, fans of Bad Bunny, and those interested in Latin music’s rise in global charts.	The article is effective due to Billboard’s credibility and its wide reach, ensuring Bad Bunny’s milestone receives significant attention. As a trusted source in the music industry, Billboard adds authority to the achievement, making it impactful for both industry professionals and fans alike.
“Unpacking Bad Bunny’s personal and political ‘DeBÍ TirAR Más FOToS’ (NPR, January 10, 2025)	Bad Bunny’s album “Debí Tirar Más Fotos” is a politically charged exploration of Puerto Rican history and identity.	The album targets both Puerto Rican residents and the diaspora, aiming to educate and connect listeners through its cultural and political themes.	The album has been well-received, topping the Billboard Top Streaming Albums chart and sparking discussions on Puerto Rican political issues.

Media Coverage

Article Name/Publication	Message	Intended Target Audience	Effective or Ineffective
"In 2022, Bad Bunny made pop stardom a subversive act" (NPR, December 15, 2022)	The article highlights how Bad Bunny's subversive approach—blending authenticity, rebellion against traditional industry norms, and breaking expectations of Latin masculinity—has made him the biggest pop star of 2022.	Music fans, critics, and those interested in the intersection of pop culture and social movements.	The article effectively conveys how Bad Bunny's subversion of traditional music industry standards, along with his unapologetic approach to identity, has led to his rise in fame.
"How Standing Up For Social Causes Helped Bad Bunny Become Spotify's Most Streamed Artist In 2020" (Forbes, Dec 03, 2020,)	Bad Bunny's active support for social causes has significantly contributed to his success, leading him to become Spotify's most-streamed artist in 2020.	Music industry professionals, social activists, and fans interested in the intersection of music and social advocacy.	The article effectively illustrates the correlation between Bad Bunny's social activism and his commercial success, providing insights into how his advocacy resonates with a global audience.

Media Analysis:

Bad Bunny uses the PESO model effectively across various media channels. Paid media includes brand collaborations with Adidas, Gucci, and Cheetos, along with music video promotions on platforms like YouTube and Spotify. Earned media is generated through high-profile media appearances on shows like *The Tonight Show* and through social advocacy, particularly surrounding Puerto Rican issues in songs like "El Apagón." Shared media thrives with viral hits like "I Like It" and "Mía," boosted by cross-cultural collaborations and political activism, sparking social media engagement. Finally, owned media includes control over his music releases and official platforms, such as YouTube, streaming services, and his merchandise, shaping his artistic narrative and brand.

Evaluation

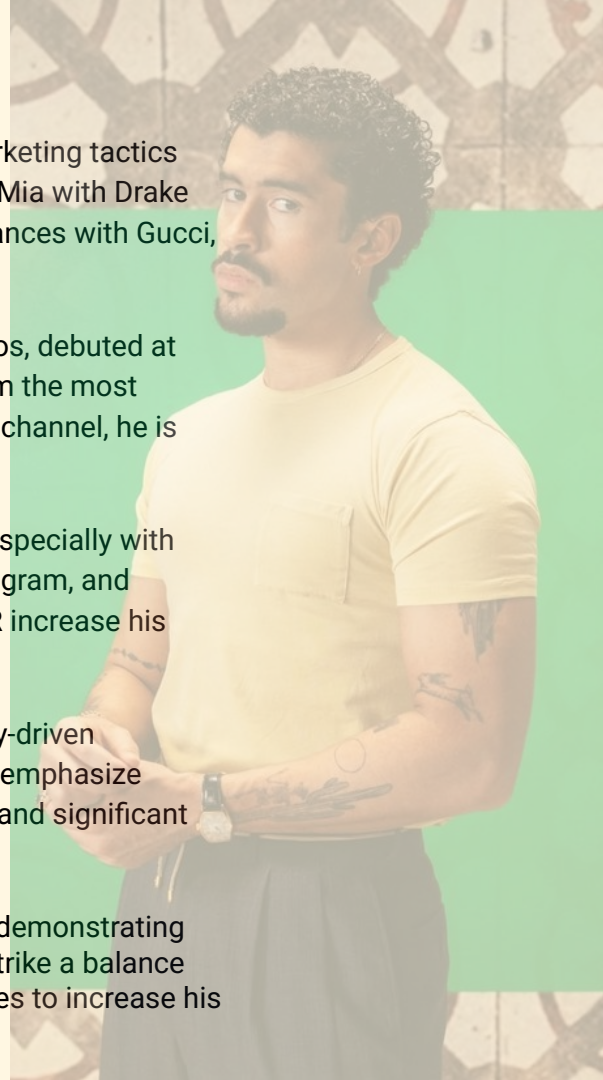
In the areas of music, brand collaborations, and cultural advocacy, Bad Bunny's PR and marketing tactics have produced great results. His partnerships, such as I Like It with Cardi B (1.6 billion views) and Mia with Drake (1.5 billion views), contributed to the mainstreaming of Spanish-language music. His strategic alliances with Gucci, Adidas, and Corona allowed him to influence fashion and lifestyle in addition to music.

His dominance was further demonstrated when his most recent album, *Debí Tirar Más Fotos*, debuted at the top of Billboard's Top Streaming Albums chart. He had 18.5 billion streams in 2022, making him the most streamed artist on Spotify in both 2020 and 2021. With more than 33 billion views on his YouTube channel, he is ranked higher than international celebrities like Taylor Swift and Ed Sheeran.

Campaigns from Bad Bunny successfully connect with his Gen Z and Millennial fan base, especially with socially conscious, tech-savvy consumers. His popularity on social media sites like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok increases interaction, and his well-known appearances on SNL, The Tonight Show, and NPR increase his appeal to audiences who do not speak Spanish.

His political and social commentary demonstrates the profound resonance of his advocacy-driven messaging. His brand as an artist and an activist is strengthened by songs like "El Apagón," which emphasize Puerto Rican issues, and "Andrea," which tackles gender violence. He continues to have a genuine and significant voice in world culture through his music, media appearances, and brand partnerships.

The global music scene has changed as a result of Bad Bunny's PR and marketing tactics, demonstrating the popularity of Spanish-language music. He is a major worldwide icon because of his ability to strike a balance between cultural advocacy and financial success. His legacy extends beyond music as he continues to increase his influence across industries through media visibility, strategic branding, and genuine storytelling.



Sources

- Madera, S. R., Varas-Díaz, N., Nevárez Araújo, D., Adubato, S. G., Allende-Goitía, N., Bruno, S., Collado, E., La Barrie, D. L., Martins, O. M., & McCabe, J. (2024). *The Bad Bunny Enigma: Culture, Resistance, and Uncertainty* (1st ed.). Lexington Books/Fortress Academic.
- Garcia-Borbón, A. (2024). *Bad Bunny and the extraordinary rise of Latin music* (SAGE Business Cases Originals). SAGE Publications.
- Gargiulo, M., & Lugo-Vélez, M. E. (2024). Queer Bunny: Gender, Nostalgia, and Coloniality in Bad Bunny's *X100PRE*. *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies: Travesía*, 33(3), 407–423. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569325.2024.2404096>
- Díaz, V., & Rivera-Rideau, P. R. (2024). “Esta es mi tierra/Esta soy yo”: Teaching US colonialism and Puerto Rican resistance through Bad Bunny. *Latino Studies*, 22(3), 562–570. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41276-024-00489-9>
- Westword. (n.d.). Bad Bunny's influence on local Latino culture. Retrieved from <https://www.westword.com/music/bad-bunny-influence-local-latino-culture-13409813>
- Billboard. (2023, October 10). Bad Bunny's P.FKN R concert in Puerto Rico: Highlights from a historic show. Retrieved from <https://www.billboard.com/music/latin/bad-bunny-p-fkn-r-concert-puerto-rico-highlights-1235008384/>
- Everything-PR. (2023, August 22). Bad Bunny: Mastering PR and marketing. Retrieved from <https://everything-pr.com/bad-bunny-mastering-pr-and-marketing/>
- Grammy. (2023, July 19). 11 essential Bad Bunny collaborations: Un Verano Sin Ti, Cardi B, Drake, Rosalía & more. Retrieved from <https://www.grammy.com/news/11-essential-bad-bunny-collaborations-un-verano-sin-ti-cardi-b-drake-rosalia-bomba-estereo>
- KTSW Blog. (2023, February 6). Bad Bunny's influence on the American music industry. Retrieved from <https://ktswblog.net/2023/02/06/bad-bunnys-influence-on-the-american-music-industry/>
- NPR. (2022, December 15). How Bad Bunny became the biggest pop star of 2022. Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/2022/12/15/1134910331/how-bad-bunny-became-the-biggest-pop-star-2022>
- Forbes. (2025, January 6). 4 key takeaways from Bad Bunny's new album *Debí Tirar Más Fotos*. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/laurenalvarez/2025/01/06/4-key-takeaways-from-bad-bunnys-new-album-deb-tirar-ms-fotos/>
- Spotify. (2022, December 13). Spotify celebrates 3 years of record-breaking Bad Bunny streaming with a Mexico City fiesta. Retrieved from <https://newsroom.spotify.com/2022-12-13/spotify-celebrates-3-years-of-record-breaking-bad-bunny-streaming-with-a-mexico-city-fiesta/>

- Medium. (2025, February 18). *Debí tirar más fotos* by Bad Bunny album review. Retrieved from <https://medium.com/modern-music-analysis/deb%C3%AD-tirar-m%C3%A1s-fotos-by-bad-bunny-album-review-0e1ead821ecf>
- Teen Vogue. (2025, February 15). Bad Bunny's *Debí Tirar Más Fotos* political lines explained. Retrieved from <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/bad-bunny-debi-tirar-mas-fotos-political-lines-explained>
- ChartMasters. (2025, February 7). Bad Bunny surpasses 100M album sales milestone, fueled by *Debí Tirar Más Fotos* success. Retrieved from <https://chartmasters.org/bad-bunny-surpasses-100m-album-sales-milestone-fueled-by-debi-tirar-mas-fotos-success/>
- WeAreMitu. (2025, January 5). Bad Bunny's *Sapo Concho* and the visual album. Retrieved from <https://wearemitu.com/wearemitu/entertainment/bad-bunny-sapo-concho-puerto-rico-visual-album/>
- Time. (2025, February 18). Bad Bunny and the rise of salsa in Latin music. Retrieved from <https://time.com/7206918/bad-bunny-salsa-tracks-latin-music/>
-