



Popular Culture and US Foreign Relations

Andrew J. Falk

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Summary

Americans in and out of government have relied on media and popular culture to construct the national identity, frame debates on military interventions, communicate core values abroad, and motivate citizens around the world to act in prescribed ways. During the late 19th century, as the United States emerged as a world power and expanded overseas, Americans adopted an ethos of worldliness in their everyday lives, even as some expressed worry about the nation's position on war and peace. During the interwar period of the 1920s and 1930s, though America failed to join the League of Nations and retreated from foreign engagements, the nation also increased cultural interactions with the rest of the world through the export of motion pictures, music, consumer products, food, fashion, and sports. The policies and character of the Second World War were in part shaped by propaganda that evolved from earlier information campaigns. As the United States confronted communism during the Cold War, the government sanitized its cultural weapons to win the hearts and minds of Americans, allies, enemies, and nonaligned nations. But some cultural producers dissented from America's "containment policy," refashioned popular media for global audiences, and sparked a change in Washington's cultural-diplomacy programs. An examination of popular culture also shows how people in the "Third World" deftly used the media to encourage superpower action. In the 21st century, activists and revolutionaries can be considered the inheritors of this tradition because they use social media to promote their political agendas. In short, understanding the roles popular culture played as America engaged the world greatly expands our understanding of modern American foreign relations.

Keywords: [popular culture](#), [public diplomacy](#), [political culture](#), [propaganda](#), [media](#), [foreign relations](#), [foreign policy](#), [motion pictures](#), [television](#), [theater](#)

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The Spread of American Popular Culture. Globalization enables foreign companies to distribute American cultural products, including music and books. The spread of American restaurant chains and consumer products worldwide is accompanied by the spread of American popular culture. In recent years, American movies, music, and TV shows have consistently gained more and more audiences worldwide. It is interesting to note that foreign media groups contribute to the spread of American popular culture as well. Foreign corporations earn profits by selling U.S. products, and U.S. products become more accessible worldwide. Canada is one of the best examples of a country where U.S. cultural products dominate despite the Canadian government's efforts to preserve local culture. Popular culture features centrally in the increasingly pervasive state practice of nation-branding (Anholt 2014). Sports play a diverse and particularly important role in foreign policy and state action. What famously became known as 'ping pong diplomacy' (DeVoss 2002) signalled a breakthrough in Cold War US-China relations when, in April 1971, 'at the invitation of the Chinese government, a nine-person United States table tennis team ... visited China for a series of exhibition matches' (Campagna 2011). This visit ultimately led to Nixon's visit to China and the re-establishment of US-China diplomatic relations (Griffin 2014). US-China trade relations, for example, have a massive popular cultural component. If we're speaking about American cultural influence, of course it is very great in the field of popular, mass culture. But all forms of pop-culture are now filled with national meaning, for example songs people listen to more in their own language than in English. Who is asking anymore, where the ballet or symphony orchestra were invented? These phenomena have long been perceived as the expansion of the French, Italian or German culture. Ivan Kurilla, Professor of History and Political Science, European University in St. Petersburg. All rights reserved by Rossiyskaya Gazeta. u.s.-russia r... Politicians need to care about popular culture because it is one of the common bonds that tie increasingly segmented Americans together. Whether you live in a red state or a blue state, or an urban or rural environment, you are aware of popular culture. And a politician who can skillfully navigate the use of pop culture references and appearances in pop culture venues can increase his appeal to the American public. Barack Obama, for example, has been quite adept in his use of pop culture, and in three distinct ways. First, he is fluent in the language of pop culture, and makes easy references US is a multicultural nation influenced by almost every other culture of the world. Here is a compilation of some famous culture and traditions to help understand the USA better. Other sports such as motorsports (auto racing), Mixed Martial Arts, golf, tennis and extreme sports like sailboarding, mountain biking, and sports climbing are also popular in the country. Famous Americans.