

Pop culture and IR: violence and/in popular culture

Friday, 20 June 2025 10:45 (1h 30m)

What does Charli XCX's music album 'Brat' have to do with militarism or international politics? How may we understand militarisation as a process by considering the aesthetics of Swedish military reality TV or Lord of the Rings' influence on military technology moguls and Silicon Valley? In which ways could women's funk music challenge colonial and capitalist aspects of militarisation in Brazil? The panel brings together scholars interested in exploring pop culture representations – music, memes, reality shows and films – as important sites of military power and/or militarism. This is key since public audiences increasingly relate to domestic and international security politics through mediatized or visualized stories of war and military service. As Jutta Weldes (1999, p.119) makes clear, "Popular culture [...] helps to construct the reality of international politics for officials and non-officials alike and, to the extent that it reproduces the content and structure of the dominant foreign policy discourse, it helps to produce consent for foreign policy and state action". The panelists engage with the intersection of pop culture and politics of representation, identities and audiences – considering how (military) violence manifests in pop culture or how it may be harnessed to contest violent and gendered forms of militarisation.

Track Classification: Critical Military Studies Working Group