

## The United States Film Industry and Its Impact on Latin American Identity Rationalizations

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**Abstract :** Background and Significance: The objective of this paper is to analyze the inception and development of identity archetypes in early XX century Latin America, to explore their roots in United States culture, to discuss the influences that came to bear upon Latin Americans as the United States began to export images of standard identity paradigms through its film industry, and to survey how these images evolved and impacted Latin Americans' ideas of national distinctiveness from the early 1900s to the present. Therefore, the general hypothesis of this work is that United States film in many ways influenced national identity patterning in its neighbors, especially in those nations closest to its borders, Cuba and Mexico. Very little research has been done on the social impact of the United States film industry on the country's southern neighbors. From a historical perspective, the US's influence has been examined as the projection of political and economic power, that is to say, that American influence is seen as a catalyst to align the forces that the US wants to see wield the power of the State. But the subtle yet powerful cultural influence exercised by film, the eminent medium for exporting ideas and ideals in the XX century, has not been significantly explored. Basic Methodologies and Description: Gramscian Marxist theory underpins the study, where it is argued that film, as an exceptional vehicle for culture, is an important site of political and social struggle; in this context, it aims to show how United States capitalist structures of power not only use brute force to generate and maintain control of overseas markets, but also promote their ideas through artistic products such as film in order to infiltrate the popular culture of subordinated peoples. In this same vein, the work of neo-Marxist theoreticians of popular culture is employed in order to contextualize the agency of subordinated peoples in the process of cultural assimilations. Indication of the Major Findings of the Study: The study has yielded much data of interest. The salient finding is that each particular nation receives United States film according to its own particular social and political context, regardless of the amount of pressure exerted upon it. An example of this is the unmistakable dissimilarity between Cuban and Mexican reception of US films. The positive reception given in Cuba to American film has to do with the seamless acceptance of identity paradigms that, for historical reasons discussed herein, were incorporated into the national identity grid quite unproblematically. Such is not the case with Mexico, whose express rejection of identity paradigms offered by the United States reflects not only past conflicts with the northern neighbor, but an enduring recognition of the country's indigenous roots, one that precluded such paradigms. Concluding Statement: This paper is an endeavor to elucidate the ways in which US film contributed to the outlining of Latin American identity blueprints, offering archetypes that would be accepted or rejected according to each nation's particular social requirements, constraints and ethnic makeup.

**Keywords :** film studies, United States, Latin America, identity studies

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