

Food power: the rise and fall of the postwar American food system

McDonald, Bryan L., author

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Abstrak

This book brings together the history of food, agriculture, and foreign policy to explore the use of food to promote American national security and national interests. During the first three decades of the cold war, Americans struggled to understand how an unprecedented abundance of food could be best used to advance the nations goals and values. Was food a weapon, a commodity to be valued and exchanged through markets, or a substance to be provided to those in need? Food power was essential to Americas postwar modernization strategy and vision of what it meant to be a stable, secure, and technologically advanced nation. America helped build a new postwar food system based around the steadying influence of American agricultural surpluses that helped maintain stable prices and food availability. This system averted a global-scale food crisis for almost three decades. The end of this food system in the early 1970s ushered in a much more unstable period in global food relations. The book argues that efforts to understand both Americas role in the world during the mid-twentieth century and to address contemporary food problems will be enhanced by a more complete understanding of the ways postwar American policymakers and experts sought to shape the politics of security and prosperity by linking people and places around the world through food.