

## CURRENT DEBATES

# Defining British Cinema: Transnational and Territorial Film Policy in the United Kingdom

---

Nick Redfern

Since 1995, film policy in the United Kingdom has comprised two strands: selling the UK as a 'film hub' of locations, skills and services to the international film industry, and the emergence of a different kind of institutional intervention geared towards nurturing regional film industries and regional film cultures (Redfern 2005). In this contribution to the debate about film policy in Britain, I want to explore the relationship between the transnational and the territorial in British film policy since the mid-1990s. I will argue that policy makers in the United Kingdom have sought to construct a British national cinema through encouraging productions to come to the United Kingdom by enhancing the locational non-substitutability of the British film industry, and that these functions have been devolved to the Regional Screen Agencies since 2000. The British film industry that is emerging from this process is a hybrid space of interactions between a transnational film industry which crosses national boundaries, and a highly territorialised national film industry which is increasingly organised at the regional level. In this contribution, I will describe three possible interactions between the transnational and the territorial in contemporary British cinema.

### *Film Policy in the United Kingdom*

From 1927 to 1984, policymakers in the United Kingdom sought to develop a stable national film industry through a combination of a series of protectionist measures imposed on distributors and exhibitors, and subsidy via the National Film Finance Corporation (NFFC) and the Eady Levy. These policies were motivated by 'an economic and ideological imperative to foster an alternative to Hollywood' (Street 1997: 9) and based on the concept of a national cinema as a means of




*Defining British Cinema*

asserting national autonomy in the face Hollywood's domination of the British market.

The era of protection and subsidy came to an end with the Films Act 1985, which abolished the quotas and used public subsidy as seed funding to attract private finance into the industry. The emphasis of film policy shifted towards the commercial and international appeal of British films. However, the industry did not respond warmly to these reforms. British Screen, the public funding body that replaced the NFFC in 1986, stated its brief as being to

encourage the making of British films on a commercially successful basis. There should therefore be a considered relationship between the cost of the film and its income potential sufficient to demonstrate the potential profitability of the project. Sadly, most films must therefore have commercial appeal outside the United Kingdom. (1987: 3)



In the 1990s, policy makers and filmmakers were no longer coy about the prospects of producing a film with commercial appeal outside the UK, and moved from tentatively recognising the existence of the outside world to pursuing actively international success as the cornerstone of national film policy. This realignment is clear from the two official reports which shaped British film policy in the 1990s. *The British Film Industry*, issued under the Conservatives by the Department of National Heritage in 1995, concluded that if British films were to gain a greater share of the domestic box office then this would require a popular and commercially competitive cinema. The report also effected 'a shift of the notion of a national film industry based predominantly on indigenous production (production by British directors and creative teams along with the remit of cultural diversity), towards a British film industry offering production services and location' (Harbord 2002: 108). In *A Bigger Picture*, published in 1998, the Film Policy Review Group made a series of recommendations to encourage the emergence of a distribution-led industry, to invest in training, to raise the quality and commercial viability of British films and to encourage an increase in cinema-going, but it also recognised that these measures would prove effective only if they were implemented with a view to enhancing internationally the status of the British cinema:

Film is an international business. Even if our plans to boost the domestic market have the major impact that we intend, receipts from overseas, in the form of export earnings and inward investment, will still be of crucial importance to the UK film economy. We need to build on our strengths in these areas by creating an environment that is attractive to foreign investors and supportive of British exporters. (1998: 42)



*Nick Redfern*

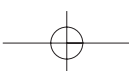
Kim (2003) has shown that in the 1990s the allocation of funding by a diverse range of organisations demonstrated a common preference for films which had the potential to secure an international distribution deal. For example, in a presentation to the British film industry, the chairman of the UK Film Council, Sir Alan Parker (2002), stated that it was necessary to ‘abandon forever the “little England” vision of a UK industry comprised of small British film companies delivering parochial British films. ... That “British” film industry never existed, and in the brutal age of global capitalism, it never will’. In setting out his vision of a sustainable British film industry he argued that in order to ‘stimulate the growth of an industry that embraces the international market’ it was necessary to reposition the UK within the global film industry:

This means reinventing the UK as a ‘film hub’ – a creative core. A film hub which is a natural destination for international investment. A film hub which is a natural supplier of skills and services to the global film market. A film hub which consistently creates British films that attract worldwide distribution and large audiences, while still using subsidy to support cultural productions and new talent. (Ibid.)

Parker specifically aligned the development of the British film industry with that of the international film industry, and in doing so recognised that no absolute structural line of demarcation exists between indigenous filmmaking in the UK and filmmaking in the rest of the world:

We need to stimulate the growth of an industry that embraces the international market. At the same time, we must maintain an environment which supports the production of British films of enduring cultural significance. It’s not either/or. It’s both. We must stop talking about the British film industry and start considering our film industries. (Ibid.)

In order to reinvent the UK as a ‘creative core’ in the global film industry, the UK Film Council has assumed responsibility for the British Film Commission (established in 1991) which attracts production capital by promoting the UK as an international production centre to the world’s film and television industries; collects and disseminates information on locations, services, facilities and personnel in the UK; liaises between international producers and the UK’s network of regional and local film commissions; and lobbies for fiscal and regulatory changes which will make the UK a more attractive prospect to both international and domestic filmmakers. The Council has also assumed control of the British Film Office in Los Angeles (opened in 1998) which, as UK Film Council USA, acts as the UK industry’s ‘eyes





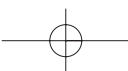
*Defining British Cinema*

and ears' in the US; provides an 'early warning system' alerting the UK to potential US projects that might be filmed in the UK; promotes British films and talent in the US; facilitates US-based training initiatives for UK talent; and services US enquiries about the British film industry.

The UK Film Council also supports the export of British films overseas, and, in partnership with the British Council's Film and Television Department, has established a fund to promote both British films culturally and the film industry of the United Kingdom. The fund provides support mechanisms for UK sales agents at overseas film markets, gathers intelligence related to the export potential of British films, and trains UK film executives in export marketing and distribution. The Film Export Group, a sub-group of the Creative Export Group at the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), is charged with providing co-ordination and information for the industry and government on film-related export-activity; developing policies for promoting the export of British films, including a coherent branding strategy for the British cinema; supporting national distributors' marketing of British films; promoting British films at festivals and sales markets; and supporting producers and sales agents in raising production financing. British Trade International, through its operating arm Trade Partners UK, also provides travel grants for companies taking part in missions to film festivals such as Cannes and to sales markets such as the American Film Market, along with financial support for exhibitions and seminars at such events; it has also contributed funding to the British Film Office.

This focus on the transnational has been accompanied by a territorial restructuring of the British film industry at the regional level. A new institutional structure has emerged in the UK as regional screen agencies (RSAs) have taken on the functions of the previous regional media production agencies and regional screen commissions, as well as assuming responsibility for developing educational programmes and regional screen archives. This process began in 1997 with the establishment of Scottish Screen, the Northern Ireland Film and Television Commission, and Sgrîn Cymru Wales. Following the UK Film Council's *Film in England* (2000) report, this structure has been extended to the nine English regions (see Table 1).

As they combine regional autonomy with national film policy, RSAs act as 'threshold organisations' that operate on the boundary line 'between policy formation and implementation' (Evans and Taylor 1994). They perform a variety of functions in order to attract investment to a region from British and international producers and to enhance their capacities for endogenous development. These are:

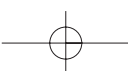


Nick Redfern

Table 1 Regional screen agencies in the UK

<i>Region</i>	<i>Regional screen agency</i>	<i>Website</i>
Northern Ireland	Northern Ireland Film and Television Commission	<a href="http://www.niftc.co.uk">www.niftc.co.uk</a>
Scotland	Scottish Screen	<a href="http://www.scottishscreen.com">www.scottishscreen.com</a>
Wales	Sgrîn Cymru Wales	<a href="http://www.sgrin.co.uk">www.sgrin.co.uk</a>
North East	Northern Film & Media	<a href="http://www.northernmedia.org">www.northernmedia.org</a>
North West	North West Vision	<a href="http://www.northwestvision.co.uk">www.northwestvision.co.uk</a>
Yorkshire and Humber	Screen Yorkshire	<a href="http://www.screenyorkshire.co.uk">www.screenyorkshire.co.uk</a>
East Midlands	EM-Media	<a href="http://www.em-media.org.uk">www.em-media.org.uk</a>
West Midlands	Screen West Midlands	<a href="http://www.screenwm.co.uk">www.screenwm.co.uk</a>
East	Screen East	<a href="http://www.screeneast.co.uk">www.screeneast.co.uk</a>
London	Film London	<a href="http://www.filmlondon.com">www.filmlondon.com</a>
South East	Screen South	<a href="http://www.screensouth.org">www.screensouth.org</a>
South West	South West Screen	<a href="http://www.swscreen.co.uk">www.swscreen.co.uk</a>


- *Production:* RSAs are responsible for the effective use of public funds (National Lottery funding and the Regional Investment Fund for England [RIFE]) in the support of production and project development, and for encouraging investment from the private sector.
- *Promotion:* RSAs promote awareness of locations, crews and facilities within their respective regions to producers nationally and internationally. They also promote regional films nationally and internationally.
- *Business Development:* RSAs work with regional development agencies to ensure the growth of sustainable businesses and the development of an innovative media sector at the regional level.
- *Training:* in partnership with national bodies such as Skillset and PACT, RSAs provide careers advice and guidance, training bursaries and travel grants for those attending training courses, and advice and support for training providers. RSAs also encourage productions in a region to take on, where appropriate, trainees from that region.
- *Information:* RSAs function as information forums within a region, collecting and disseminating data on the film sector at the regional level and co-ordinating the activities of other organisations, both private and public, in the regions.
- *Education Policy Development:* RSAs seek to broaden access to, and develop awareness and understanding of, moving image culture ('cine-literacy') in formal and non-formal education; to foster links






*Defining British Cinema*

- between the film industry and educational institutions; and to support student filmmakers through educational and work-placement programmes and through student-oriented film festivals.
- *Heritage*: the Regional Screen Archives of the UK help to preserve the audio-visual heritage of the UK regions, and are either directly controlled by or receive funding from RSAs. RSAs also promote the visual heritage of the regions through film festivals, television programmes and educational schemes.
  - *Exhibition*: RSAs seek to increase the size and diversity of the audience and to increase the range of films available in a region through organising film festivals which showcase not only regional films but also films from around the world, providing financial support to exhibitors and initiating schemes which will bring under-represented communities into the cinema.



In order to attract to the regions investment from producers both within the UK and beyond, RSAs emphasise the territorially specific or place-dependent, establishing their uniqueness through their *locational non-substitutability* (Cox 1997). RSAs promote the landscapes and urban environments that can be used for location filming, stressing the uniqueness of each region and the diversity which is to be found within it. Scottish Screen, for example, operates a location database containing some 45,000 images of over 5,000 locations which range from the 'darkest inner cities to the grandest mountainscapes'. The range of locations which afford scenic backdrops for song-and-dance sequences has, in particular, attracted Indian productions to the UK (Bateman 2000). More than 80 per cent of Rajiv Rai's *Pyar Ishq Aur Mohabbat* (2001) was filmed in Scotland, making it the first Indian film to shoot exclusively overseas and the single largest production to shoot in Scotland in 2000.



RSAs also seek to make the regions more attractive to producers by adding to these 'already existing' resources by increasing the number and range of businesses in the audio-visual sector within a region, and by developing a highly skilled and diverse workforce. In co-ordinating the activities of the various 'stakeholders' in a region, RSAs encourage the creation of a dense network of links and clusters between film companies in a region, specialised suppliers, service providers, firms in related industries, and associated institutions. Such networks and clusters allow for the diffusion of knowledge and technology, thus enhancing a region's capacity for production, and RSAs play a key role in promoting trust and co-operation within a defined area (Bassett *et al.* 2002). North West Vision, for example, is the focus for a number of



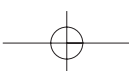
*Nick Redfern*

media networks which bring together facilities and personnel in the region (North West Vision 2004). Thus:

- The *Post-production Network* brings together ten post-production houses from across Cheshire, Greater Manchester, and Lancashire to 'co-ordinate a programme of collective activity including marketing and promotion that will develop this particular sector'.
- The *North West Producers Network* brings together independent producers from across the region to discuss issues surrounding film and television production including funding, festival attendance, legal advice and contracts.
- The *Film-friendly Hotels Network* seeks to inform accommodation providers about 'the advantages and disadvantages of the filmmaking process', and Marketing Manchester and North West Vision have agreed to work together to draw up a criteria of eligibility for a 'film friendly badge'.
- The *North West Producers and Directors Group Ltd.* (NWPD) is run by producers and directors from the region and was created to 'maximise levels of film and TV production in the North West, to be a lobbying group, and to act as a champion for the Film and TV sector'. The NWPD is also a forum for 'news, communiqués, and information exchange'.

This restructuring of the UK film industry has increased awareness of the role which territory plays in the organisation of the British cinema. The regional is increasingly seen as the most suitable level at which to formalise film policy, the institutional infrastructure and the discourses surrounding the cinema, and, as a consequence, the industrial and cultural activities of film production, distribution and exhibition are carried out at this level. The eligibility criteria for the programmes of the RSAs are all based on an awareness of territory at the regional level. For example, the eligibility criteria for investment funding through the East Midlands Media Initiative, a partnership between EM-Media, the European Regional Investment Fund and private and public sector organisations, are clear in their geographical bias: individuals applying to the scheme must be based in the East Midlands, and companies must either be based in the region, or their production must be based there, or they must be working with a partner based there, or otherwise creating opportunities for regional media and creative talent (Hancock and Wistreich 2003: 123).

Since the mid-1990s, the transnational and the territorial have been placed at the centre of film policy in the UK, and this is evident in the



## *Defining British Cinema*

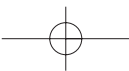
changes to the official definition of a British film introduced in 1999 and 2006. The need to amend the definition of a British film arose as the existing provisions under the Films Act 1985 were considered to be unfair and confusing, and led to a series of anomalies. Thus in 1996, the Advisory Committee on Film Finance, chaired by Sir Peter Middleton, reported that:

It is important to have a clear idea of what constitutes a British film. The existing definition of a British film included in Schedule 1 of the Films Act, 1985, is held by many in the industry to be complex, restrictive and a deterrent to potential investors. The Committee proposes an alternative definition based on a straightforward economic test of where the bulk of the expenditure on each film takes place (1997: 7 [16]).

Prior to 1999 a film could be denied certification if more than 7.5 per cent of total playing time was photographed or recorded in a studio outside the UK. This 'running time requirement' was seen to be an obstacle to the development of the British film industry as it was too inflexible in an increasingly international film industry. The official definition of a British film was thus amended in 1999 to reflect the highly transnational nature of the British film industry. As set out in schedule 1 of the Films Act 1985 (1999 Amendment), the criteria for certifying a film as British now reflect the relationship between the transnational and the territorial:

1. *The maker test*: a film must be made by a company which is registered and centrally managed and controlled in the UK, in another state of the European Union/European Economic Area, or in a country with which the European Community has signed an association agreement.
2. *The production cost test*: 70 per cent of the production cost of the film must be spent on filmmaking activity in the UK.
3. *The labour cost test*:
  - (a) 70 per cent of the total labour cost, minus the cost of one non-EU/EEA or non-Commonwealth person if desired, must have been paid to citizens or persons ordinarily resident in the EU/EEA or Commonwealth or a country with which the European Community has signed an association agreement; or
  - (b) 75 per cent of the total labour cost, after deducting the cost of two non-EU/EEA or non-Commonwealth persons, one of whom must be an actor (and engaged in making the film in no other capacity), must have been paid to citizens or persons ordinarily resident in the EU/EEA or Commonwealth or a country with





*Nick Redfern*

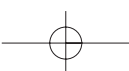
which the European Community has signed an association agreement.

The maker test and the labour cost test recognised the transnational quality of the British cinema, in particular the United Kingdom's colonial history and the impact of European law on determining the identity of cultural products. There was no requirement that the maker of a film or the labour employed in the production of a film be specifically British. The Amendment contained no official definition of a 'culturally-British' film, and none of the statutory definitions of the British cinema concerned a film's cultural content. The definition of a film as 'British' was therefore based on a straightforward economic test of *where the bulk of the expenditure on each film took place*.

However, following a consultation on the reform of tax relief for film production and the introduction of a cultural test for British films in 2005, the DCMS issued the Film (Definition of 'British Film') Order 2006 (DCMS 2006), which modifies the statutory definition of a British film by replacing the expenditure and labour cost requirements of the 1999 Amendment with a cultural test reflecting the content of a film, where it is made, and the persons who are involved in the making of it. (At present, the maker test still remains in place, but it will be updated to bring it in line with the provisions of the Finance (No. 2) Bill 2006.) The Order introduces a points-based system in which a film is pre-certified as British on the basis of its cultural content (to a maximum of four points), the location of production and post-production activities (to fifteen points) and the nationality of key practitioners (to thirteen points). A film will pass the cultural test and be identified formally as British if it is awarded sixteen points out of a possible thirty-two. The 2006 Order continues to reflect the locational non-substitutability of contemporary British cinema and the transnational nature of the film industry, whilst at the same time extending that definition in cultural terms and setting a limit that defines the sufficient 'Britishness' of a film.

The majority of the points are available for film production and post-production in the UK, maintaining where filmmaking activity takes place as the most significant aspect of defining British cinema. In laying the draft Order before the House Of Lords, Lord Davies of Oldham emphasised the promotion of the UK as a cultural hub in an international film industry:

The fact that fifteen of the points are allocated to where the film is made is a response to the overwhelming view from consultation respondees that greater weight should be given to this section than to the others, so as to







*Defining British Cinema*

incentivise the use of UK talent and facilities and to build a sustainable British infrastructure for filmmaking. Visual effects, in particular, are eligible for more points, as this is the biggest below-the-line spend for large budget feature films, and the UK's facilities are world leading and need to be incentivised to meet increasing competition from overseas. (Hansard 2006)

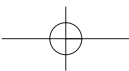
A sliding scale determines how many points a film is awarded for studio/location shooting, visual effects and music recording: for example, if at least 75 per cent of principal photography is completed at a studio and/or on location in the UK, a film is awarded six points, but only one point is awarded if at least 10 per cent of principal photography takes place within the UK. A single point is awarded in each instance where at least 75 per cent of the work on audio post-production, special effects and laboratory processing is carried out in the UK.



The principle of locational non-substitutability is, for the first time, extended to a film's cultural content. A film is awarded a point if its story takes place in the United Kingdom or in a 'fictionalised version' of the UK, irrespective of where a film is produced. Under this condition a film is British not just in terms of where the activity of filmmaking takes place, but also in terms of where the action of the film takes place. Points are also awarded if a principal character is a British citizen or a resident in the UK, if a film is based on British subject matter or underlying material, and if at least 50 per cent of the dialogue is recorded in English or one of the six minority languages of the UK. With regard to cultural practitioners, points are awarded where a variety of roles (director, screenwriter, producer, composer, principal actors, the majority of the cast, key staff and the majority of the crew) are fulfilled by qualifying persons. As in the 1999 Amendment, the definition of a qualifying person reflects the highly transnational nature of the film industry and refers to citizens of or residents in the UK or any EU/EEA state. Qualification, then, is a matter of territory – it is a question of where a person is from and/or ordinarily resident – while the location of their employment (either within the UK or without) is not an issue, allowing for the movement of personnel across the industry.



In terms of film policy, the principle of a national cinema in the UK is thus no longer motivated by defence against the dominance of Hollywood. Rather, it represents a positive attempt to develop a sustainable film industry through the development of an indigenous film industry in a highly transnational market. The 2006 Order establishes the sufficient conditions for certifying a film as British, but



Nick Redfern

at the same time does not specify that those conditions are necessary, as the qualifying criteria are intended to be flexible in an industry where capital, personnel and films move easily and regularly across national borders.

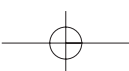
### *Modelling British National Cinema*

British national cinema emerges from the interaction of the transnational and the territorial. Three possible interactions are represented in Figure 1.

On the horizontal axis is the degree of territorialisation of the cinema and on the vertical axis is the level of transnational flows associated with the cinema. This tripartite model of the British cinema reflects the findings of the House of Commons Select Committee on Culture, Media and Sport (2003) that the British film industry fulfils three functions: the provision of services to enable the major Hollywood studios to make high-budget and technically demanding films; the production of indigenous, usually distinctively British, films shot in the UK; and the involvement in film production abroad under co-production treaties.

The first cell (type 1) comprises those films that are both highly territorialised and highly transnational. This class of films may be divided into two sub-groups which have two features in common: they are produced in the UK and are aimed at a broad international audience. This cell comes closest to the ideal of the British film industry as a 'creative core' servicing the international film industry and producing commercial films which attract the worldwide distribution and large audiences envisaged by the UK Film Council. Type 1 (a) includes films which are, in some way, 'culturally British', *Notting Hill* (1999) being an example of a product of such a highly territorialised, highly transnational British cinema. The cultural impetus for the film is British, originating with writer Richard Curtis and producer Duncan Kenworthy, and *Notting Hill* was shot on location in London. But *Notting Hill* is also aimed at an international audience, particularly the American market, and, like many recent British films, seeks to enhance its transnational appeal by featuring a non-British (in other words, Hollywood) star in Julia Roberts. The film was produced by Working Title, a British company with backing from a Hollywood major (Universal), and is a UK/USA co-production.

Type 1 (b) comprises films that are not 'culturally British' but are produced in the UK. Typically such films are Hollywood productions which are attracted to the UK by the diversity of locations and the high



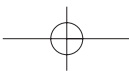
*Defining British Cinema*

		Territorialisation of the Cinema	
		High	Low
Transnational Flows	High	(Type 1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produced in the UK</li> <li>• Cultural and financial impetus may be from the UK</li> <li>• Broad international cultural appeal</li> </ul> <i>Notting Hill</i> (1999) <i>Star Wars: Episode 1 – The Phantom Menace</i> (1999)	(Type 3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not produced in the UK</li> <li>• May be some UK involvement</li> <li>• Distributed in the UK</li> </ul> <i>Fargo</i> (1996) <i>Lola Rennt (Run Lola Run)</i> (1998)
	Low	(Type 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produced in the UK</li> <li>• Cultural and financial impetus is from the UK</li> <li>• Limited international cultural appeal</li> </ul> <i>When Saturday Comes</i> (1996)	

Fig. 1. Territorialisation and transnational flows in the British film industry.

quality of British performers, technicians and production and post-production facilities. For example, *Star Wars: Episode 1 – The Phantom Menace* (1999), an American film produced by Twentieth Century-Fox and Lucasfilm Ltd. and filmed on location in Tunisia and Italy, and in the studio at Leavesden in Hertfordshire. The production involved many talents from the UK, including producer Rick McCallum, cinematographer David Tattersall and costume designer Trisha Biggar, and features many British actors such as Ewan McGregor, Terence Stamp and Ian McDiarmid.

The second cell (type 2) describes films which are highly territorialised but have low levels of transnational flows. Such films are produced in the UK and derive their funding primarily from national sources. They are aimed at the national market due to their limited international cultural appeal. For example, *When Saturday Comes* (1996) which is a British film whose financial impetus came from British producers (Guild, Pint O’ Bitter Productions) and which was produced in the UK (on location in Sheffield) with a British cast and crew. The film is ‘culturally British’, deriving its title from a British football fanzine, and focuses on the lives of non-league footballers in South Yorkshire. *When Saturday Comes* has limited appeal beyond the UK as it



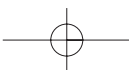
*Nick Redfern*

lacks the stars, the subject matter and the budget to attract sales in other territories. Mike Wayne (2002) describes the relationship of this class of films to the British national cinema as 'embedded'.

The third cell (type 3) describes films which have low levels of territorialisation and high levels of transnational flows, and which may be divided into two sub-groups. Type 3 (a) comprises those films which have some British involvement in their production but are not produced in the UK. An example of this type of film is *Fargo* (1996). Though set in the American mid-West, it was produced in Minnesota and North Dakota with an American cast and crew and was written and directed by Joel and Ethan Cohen. However, *Fargo* was produced by the (Universal-backed) British production company Working Title, as a consequence making it an Anglo-American co-production.

Type 3 (b) includes films which move across national borders and are territorial to the extent that they are distributed and exhibited in a specific national cultural context. In the context of the British cinema this represents films which are not British productions but are distributed in the UK. For example, *Lola Rennt (Run Lola Run)* (1998) is a German film from director Tom Tykwer and producer Stefan Arndt, and was produced in Germany with German finance and with a German cast. The (comparatively) limited success of *Lola Rennt* in the UK is attributable to uniquely British circumstances (the failure of the distributor, Columbia TriStar, to market the film properly and to work with exhibitors) which were not repeated elsewhere (Jäckel 2003: 122-3). The example of *Lola Rennt* also demonstrates that the categories into which films are placed in this model are not absolute but are relative to the national cinema under consideration. In the UK, *Lola Rennt* is a lowly territorial and highly transnational film with no British involvement (type 3 [b]), whereas if the German cinema were to be modelled in this way, the film would be classed as being highly territorial and highly transnational (type 1 [a]).

It may be argued that, historically, the British cinema has been composed of indigenous productions which, with only a few exceptions, have failed to achieve international success, and that it is non-British films which have dominated the box-office (namely Hollywood films) and enjoyed critical respect (in other words European art cinema). Since the mid-1990s, the efforts of policymakers have been directed at creating a highly transnational and highly territorialised cinema, and thereby shifting the British cinema from one that is dominated by type 2 and type 3 (b) films to one which is composed primarily of type 1 (a and b) films.





---


---

## *Defining British Cinema*


### *Conclusion*

Paul Swann has questioned the grounds on which a film is defined as British: 'Is a film "British" if it is produced by a British national? If it is made with British talent or technicians? If it is made on British soil? Or with British money? Or based on British history or mythology?' (2000: 29). These questions have been at the forefront of film policymaking in the United Kingdom since 1995, and from the above discussion of film policy in the United Kingdom since 1995, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- The film industry in the UK is highly transnational.
- The film industry in the UK is highly territorial.
- A film is more or less transnational and more or less territorial according to its circumstances of production, distribution and exhibition.
- Policymakers in the UK act in such a way as to enhance the locational nonsubstitutability of their domestic film industries in order to attract inward investment.

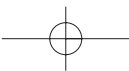


It is therefore essential that debates surrounding the place of national cinemas in the international film industry take into account not just the deterritorialising forces by which national cinemas are increasingly becoming decentred and assimilated within larger transnational systems of entertainment (Kinder 1993: 440), but also the territorialising forces – those conditions and those social relations which 'result in enduring commitments to particular places, which can in turn be a source of competitive advantage and so serve to reinforce those commitments' (Cox 1997: 5). The film industry in the UK which is emerging in the early twenty-first century may be understood as a product of the relationship between the transnational and the territorial, and may be described as a hybrid space of interactions between a transnational film industry which crosses national boundaries and a highly territorialised film industry which increasingly is organised at the regional level.



#### **References**

- Advisory Committee on Film Finance (1996), *Report to the Secretary of State for National Heritage, July 1996*, London: Department of National Heritage.
- Bassett, Keith, Griffiths, Ron and Smith, Ian (2002), 'Cultural industries, cultural clusters and the city: the example of natural history film-making in Bristol', *Geoforum*, 33, pp. 165-77.
- Bateman, Louise (2000), 'Dreaming of Britain', *Britain in the Picture*, 1, pp. 6-7.
- British Screen (1987), *Basic Information for Producers*, London: British Screen.
- Cox, Kevin R. (1997), 'Introduction: globalisation and its politics in question', in Cox,



*Nick Redfern*

- Kevin R. (ed.), *Spaces of Globalisation: Reasserting the Power of the Local*, New York: Guildford Press: 1-18.
- Department of Culture, Media, and Sport (2006), *The Cultural Test for British Films – Guidelines*, [http://www.culture.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/E0494673-2A8C-4881-8E8E-7DOC2C56466E9/0/CulturalTest\\_British\\_Film\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.culture.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/E0494673-2A8C-4881-8E8E-7DOC2C56466E9/0/CulturalTest_British_Film_Guidelines.pdf). Accessed 4 April 2006.
- Evans, Bernard J. and Taylor, Andrew J. (1994), 'The rise of the intermediate level institution in British public administration: the case of the arts and training', *Public Administration*, 72: 4, pp. 551-72.
- Film Council (2000), *Film in England: A Development Strategy for Film and the Moving Image in the English Regions*, London: Film Council.
- Film Policy Review Group (1998), *A Bigger Picture: The Report of the Film Policy Review Group*, London: Department of Culture, Media, and Sport.
- Hancock, Caroline and Wistreich, Nic (2003), *Get Your Film Financed – UK Film Finance Guide 2003/2004*, London: Shooting People Press.
- Hansard (2006), HL Deb, 30 March 2006, cols 925-6.
- Harbord, Janet (2002), *Film Cultures*, London: Sage.
- Kinder, Marsha (1993), *Blood Cinema: The Reconstruction of National Identity in Spain*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- North West Vision, 'Networks', <http://www.northwestvision.co.uk/networks/>. Accessed 19 March 2004.
- Jäckel, Anne (2003), *European Film Industries*, London: BFI.
- Kim, Jeongmee (2003), 'The funding and distribution structure of the British film industry in the 1990s: localisation and commercialisation of British cinema towards a global audience', *Media, Culture and Society*, 25: 3, pp. 405-13.
- Parker, Alan (2002), 'Building a sustainable UK film industry: a presentation to the UK film industry, 5 November 2002', <http://www.ukfilmcouncil.org/usr/downloads/BaSFI.pdf>. Accessed 21 January 2004.
- Redfern, Nick (2005), 'Film in the English regions', *International Journal of Regional and Local Studies*, 1: 2, pp. 52-64.
- Scottish Screen (2004), [http://www.scottishscreen.com/index.taf?\\_P=LOC10028](http://www.scottishscreen.com/index.taf?_P=LOC10028). Accessed 11 May 2004.
- Select Committee on Culture, Media and Sport (2003), *The British Film Industry, Volume 1*, London: The Stationary Office.
- Street, Sarah (1997), *British National Cinema*, London: Routledge.
- Swann, Paul, (2000) 'The British culture industries and the mythology of the American market: cultural policy and cultural exports in the 1940s and 1990s', *Cinema Journal*, 39: 4, pp. 27-42.
- UK Film Council (2000), *Film in England: A Development Strategy for Film and the Moving Image in the English Regions*.
- Wayne, Mike (2002), *The Politics of Contemporary European Cinema: Histories, Borders, Diasporas*, Bristol: Intellect Books.

**Nick Redfern** is lecturer in film and media studies at the University of Central Lancashire.

