

# LEGITIMATION AND LEGISLATION: THE CINEMATOGRAPH FILMS ACT OF 1927 AND FILM AS A SERIOUS FORM OF ART

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*This paper elucidates the rationales to design and justify the Cinematograph Films Act of 1927 in the United Kingdom by analysing the relationship between the discussion in policy sector and discourse about the values of film in cultural sector. The rationale of the governmental intervention to support domestic film industry was established by the claims about values of film as a form of high art which can represent and enhance supremacy of British culture. The stakeholders, including national newspapers, educationalists, interest groups and intellectuals, repeatedly promoted the importance of British film and these claims were referred to and used as justification of film policy. Considering the characteristics of the Cinematograph Films Act (CFA) of 1927 as the first governmental support to domestic film, the legitimation of film as national high art was essential to persuade political elites into realising the CFA of 1927.*

The purpose of this paper is to identify why and how the first governmental policy to encourage the British film industry through the CFA of 1927 by the British government was realised and its relationship with the contemporary film culture<sup>1</sup>. The target of governmental support under the CFA of 1927 was British film and increase of its production and its wide distribution in the domestic and imperial markets. The point is that the Film Act was discussed to promote British film industry in order to not only increase the number of British film itself but also to promote film trade within the British Empire and enhance image of the Great Britain through

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1. The author appreciates useful and detailed comments to the earlier version of this paper. They cast critical questions on some concepts and terms in this paper so that the author was able to clarify the main arguments and key concepts in this paper.

representations in domestic films. Although several factors and actors had an influence on the realisation of the film policy at that time, I am going to focus on the discourse of the legitimization of film as a form of art and its impact on the realisation of the CFA of 1927. While the history of the British film policy and that of British film culture have been mainly analysed as separated fields, I am going to identify the connection between these two historical phenomena. Through analysis of the legislation process of the Films Act and legitimization of the British film as a form of art, I am going to elucidate the relationship between political process and cultural sector in the 1920s.

In order to achieve this goal, firstly, I am going to introduce the general information of the CFA of 1927 and its hidden policy intention by analysing the discussion in Parliament. Secondly, I am going to elucidate the background of the legitimization of film as a form of art and discussion about the values of British film by analysing the discourse of several actors in the contemporary film culture: the newspapers, cultural elites, interest groups and educationalists. The discourse about British film in the 1920s demonstrates that British film started to be recognised as a part of national art such as paintings and theatre performance so that the increase of the number of British film and their promotion was thought as desirable to enhance political prestige and cultural image of the UK. This new idea about value of film as national art was able to be identified in both political debates and articles of various media. By analysing several articles and activities in that time, the process of legitimization of film as part of national culture can be identified, which drove the discussion and realisation of the CFA of 1927.

The analysis of ideas about the rationale of film policy and beliefs about the values of film in both cultural and political sectors

were elucidated by referring to wide varies of historical documents: from political documents (parliamentary debates and Commission Reports) and media resources about film culture (weekly journals and newspapers).

### LEGISLATION OF THE CFA OF 1927

The CFA of 1927 was the first legislation by the British government to support the British film industry by implementing protectionist policies to encourage the production of domestic British films instead of popular Hollywood movies. The CFA of 1927 was introduced to protect and promote the British film industry, especially the production sector, by introducing the so-called quota system. The quota system forced the exhibitors in the UK to exhibit certain amounts of the British film in their theatres. Furthermore, the legislation also banned commercial customs called the block-booking and advanced-booking which benefited the Hollywood film companies. Advanced and block-booking were commercial customs commonly introduced between the Hollywood production companies and British cinema exhibitors. These booking customs forced the British exhibitors to buy certain numbers of Hollywood films in advance and these films blocked the schedule of the British national theatres. Thus, the banning of these commercial customs was expected to give a chance for British producers to make and promote national films. The purpose of the legislation was explained as to protect and encourage the British film producers from the threatening expansion of the Hollywood film industry in the domestic market of the UK and the British Empire.<sup>2</sup>

Even though its impact and usefulness was controversial and minor amendments were constantly made, the quota system to protect the British film industry was sustained and accepted as necessary governmental policy until the emergence of the New

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2. Rachael Low, *The History of the British Film 1918-1929*. London, Allen & Unwin, 1971.

Rachael Low, *The History of the British Film 1929-1939: Films of Comments and Persuasion of the 1930s*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1979.

Conservative government in the 1980s.<sup>3</sup> The CFA of 1927 can be evaluated as historical example of governmental intervention to protect domestic economic sector, which is totally opposite to the logic of the Neoliberalism, which is quite common in contemporary film policies and the *laissez-faire* principle in the 19th century cultural policy in Britain. Therefore, understanding the background of the realisation of the CFA of 1927 shows us how the British public policy was characterised and structured before the emergence of the Neoliberalism.

The film policies to support and protect domestic film industries were commonly introduced in other European countries including Germany and France in the same period. The existence of these policies implies the common background which required the governmental intervention to protect the national film industry, which was the emergence of the Hollywood film industry in the European market. Therefore, the pieces of prior researched about the film policies in the inter-war period has been mainly discussed and analysed in the contest of the relationship between Hollywood-European film industries.<sup>4</sup> These pieces of research show that the quota system in other European countries demonstrates that the spread of the Hollywood film was recognised as not just economical but also cultural threat to the domestic audiences. The cultural aspect of protectionist film policies is important in understanding why these policies were justified and supported by wide variety of stakeholders in the 1920s, and the foundation of such claims about the film policy rationale can be identified in articles from cultural sectors.

Although some researchers refer to the contemporary discourse about cultural importance of film, prior research of the CFA mainly

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3. John Hill, "British Film Policy", in A. Moran, ed., *Film Policy: International, National and Regional Perspectives*. Ch. 6. London and New York: Routledge, 1996.
  4. Thomas J. Saunter, *Hollywood in Berlin: American Cinema and Weimar Germany*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.  
Jens Ulf-Møller, *Hollywood's Film Wars with France: Film-Trade Diplomacy and the Emergence of the French Film Quota Policy*. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2001.

focuses on the economic aspect of the CFA of 1927 and activities of industrial organisations such as the Federation of British Industries.<sup>5</sup> However, the CFA of 1927 can and should be re-evaluated as cultural policy to promote not just the British film industry but also the British film culture. This is because the political elites intended to promote the British film culture and realise not only economic but also cultural or political goals of promoting British prestige and legitimacy of the British Empire through representations in British films supported by film policy. The promoters of the CFA of 1927 claimed the political rationale of film policy by claiming film will enhance the prestige of British civilisation and realising the political integration of the British Empire. In order to achieve this political goal, film is the ideal medium because of its popularity and reach to the international audiences. In this sense, film was recognised as new form of valuable medium which can realise the political and cultural interests of the UK and British Empire.

The implicit ideas underlie the rationale of the CFA of 1927 can be identified in the discussion in Parliament. The speech by Philip Cunliffe-Lister, the president of the Board of Trade, is one of the most representative statement about the importance of the governmental support for the domestic film industry. "It is based on a realisation that the cinema is to-day the most universal means through which national ideas and national atmosphere can be spread, and, even if those be intangible things, surely, they are among the most important influences in civilisation".<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, before the legislation of the quota system, the concept of CFA was discussed in Parliament and educational and political values of film was referred there as below :

But the cinema is not merely a means of entertainment. It is really one of the most, if not the most, important instruments at present for the furtherance of trade and of education and, more than anything else perhaps, of political propaganda.<sup>7</sup>

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5. Sarah Street, *Financial and political aspects of state intervention in the British film industry, 1925-1939*. Ph. D. University of Oxford, 1985.

6. UK Parliament, 1927. Cinematograph Films Bill, 16 March 1927, HC vol 203 cc2039-112.

7. UK Parliament, 1925. British Film Industry, 14 May 1925, HL vol 61 cc273-94.

These speeches can be characterised by their stress on the values of works of the British film not just as economic commodity but also as cultural and political instrument to implement political propaganda and cultural promotion. The policymakers intended to realise the film policy to present national atmosphere and political propaganda to the audiences. In this sense, the CFA of 1927 should be identified as not just an example of industrial policy but also as cultural policy to make use of cultural potential of national film because they were designed to shape and influence national culture which was expected to be represented in authentic national cinema.

The policy intention of the cultural and political use of film can be identified in the discussion by those in the opposite position for the film bill as well, such as the Labour Party politician, Ramsay MacDonald. His comment in the discussion in Parliament against the Film Bill in 1927 shows such intention as below :

There is one serious reason—I am sorry the right hon. Gentleman did not seem to be aware of it; at any rate, he said nothing about it—why every one of us is interested in British films being shown abroad, and that is that British films should uphold to foreign nations a better conception of the moral conduct and social habits of people who profess to belong to the leading nations of the world than, unfortunately, is the case with so many films that are being exported, for instance, to China.<sup>8</sup>

Again, it should be stressed that even the protests against the CFA of 1927 itself shared the concept and recognised the necessity of governmental support for the British film industry. The common belief behind such consensus was the identification of political and cultural value of films.

As the quota system did not contribute to the increase of the number of highly evaluated film works, the CFA of 1927 has been underestimated in the historical analysis of the British film industry and film policy. However, the realisation of the CFA of 1927 implies two essential shifts of the film policies. First, the CFA of

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8. UK Parliament, 1927. Cinematograph Films Bill, 16 March 1927, HC vol 203 cc2039-112.

1927 shows the characteristics of the film policy from restriction to promotion. Before the CFA of 1927, the film and film industry had been recognised as cheap entertainment consumed by the people in the working-class. The attitude of the government was represented in the policies before the CFA of 1927. As Hunnings and Low show, the main policies dealing with the domestic film industry before the CFA of 1927 were censorship and taxation on the film industry and the production of the British film had never been encouraged before the legislation of the CFA of 1927.<sup>9</sup>

The second important trend reflected on the CFA of 1927 was the identification of plural values of the British film. As is shown in the discussion in Parliament, the British film was identified as not only economically but also as a cultural and political value. The justification of the film policy was valued in this respect and film was expected to influence the audience to identify the political prestige and cultural excellence of Britain represented in film. Film started to be recognised as educational medium rather than just an economic commodity or cheap entertainment.

As Bennett discusses, the identification of multiple values of arts and justification for the governmental support for such art works was common trend in the history of the British cultural policy. He claims that the use of culture in the civilising mission was one of the rationales of cultural policies and such policy concept can be identified since the statement in the Nineteenth Century thinkers such as Matthew Arnold and the Romantics. In this respect, the CFA of 1927 was the first governmental policy which reflects the such rationale of the cultural policies in the United Kingdom.<sup>10</sup>

The research of the CFA of 1927 shows that it was the first governmental policy to encourage the British film industry in order

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9. Neville March Foreword Hunnings, *Film Censors and the Law*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1967.

Rachael Low, *The History of the British Film 1918-1929*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1971.

10. Oliver Bennett, "Cultural Policy in the United Kingdom: Collapsing Rationales and the End of a Tradition". *The European Journal of Cultural Policy*, 1(2), p. 199-216, 1995.

to realise political and cultural goals. The point is that such legislation was realised under the recognition of legitimisation of film itself as a form of high art rather than cheap entertainment. Considering the fact that before the CFA of 1927, the film industry was restricted through taxation and censorship, such identification of the value of film was quite epoch-making phenomenon in the 1920s. In the next section, I am going to overview why and how such legitimisation of the film as serious form of art occurred in the United Kingdom in the 1920s.

### LEGITIMATION OF FILM AS A SERIOUS FORM OF ART IN THE 1920S

The CFA of 1927 was based on the recognition of the value of British film as a form of art and such recognition was presented by several actors in the 1920s including, the intellectuals, newspapers, interest groups and educationalists.

The first factor which influenced the CFA of 1927 was the intellectual movement which attempted to legitimate film and establish the status of film as a form of legitimatised national art. In analysing the process that value and importance of film in national culture is identified and shared as legitimacy of film policy, the framework proposed in *Hollywood Highbrow* by the Sociologist Shyon Baumann is applicable.<sup>11</sup> The main research question of Baumann is how cultural status and legitimacy of the Hollywood film was realised. He analyses the key factors which encouraged the legitimisation of Hollywood films such as critical reviews in newspapers and intellectual movements in the academic and Art world. Even though Baumann's framework is used to explain the situation in the Hollywood film industry in the 1960s, the same perspective can be applied to the situation in the United Kingdom in the 1920s because such legitimisation can be used in explaining the reason why film started to be recognized as such important medium especially in the 1920s.

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11. Shyon Baumann, *Hollywood Highbrow: From Entertainment to Art*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.

Firstly, the intellectuals in that period started to spread their critical reviews about film works and contributed to the legitimization of British film. As Wasson's research about the history of critical reviews of the British film in newspapers such as *the Daily Mail* and *the Spectator*, the intellectuals' writings about film at that period was an attempt to answer "the questions about how to write about film's social, political and cultural significance."<sup>12</sup> This movement was parallel with that in the 1960s' US shown by Baumann and resulted in the similar transformation of the film from just a form of entertainment to a genre of high art.

The emergence of critical reviews which contributed to the promotion of the status of film in the 1920s corresponded with the appearance of new genre of films. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, new kinds of films such as literary film started to be distributed<sup>13</sup>. These works stimulated the critical reviews and encouraged the statements about the cultural and artistic importance of the British film.

Secondly, the intellectual circles including the Film Society launched their projects to establish "alternative film culture in Britain in the 1920s".<sup>14</sup> The Film Society not only attempted to establish the critical discourse about film review, but also provided the opportunities to exhibit highly evaluated art films in the UK. These movements also accelerated the rise of the status of film as a genre of high art. The intellectuals' attitude toward British film in that period was starkly contrasted with the discussion about moral threat of film a decade ago.

The important point of the intellectual movements at that time was that they were not isolated from political and economic trends

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12. Haidee Wasson, "Writing the Cinema into Daily Life: Iris Barry and the Emergence of British Film Criticism in the 1920s", in A. Higson, ed., *Young and Innocent? The Cinema in Britain, 1986-1930*. Ch.20. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002.
  13. Jon Burrows, "Big Studio Production in the Pre-Quota Years", in R. Murphy, ed. *The British Cinema Book*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
  14. Jamie Sexton, "The Film Society and the Creation of an Alternative Film Culture in Britain in the 1920s", in A. Higson, ed., *Young and Innocent? The Cinema in Britain, 1986-1930*. Ch. 18. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002.

or rather they actively tried to influence the political and economic conditions surrounding the British film industry. One of the most prominent examples was a writer, Ivor Montagu. Whereas he published artistic reviews about contemporary films and played an important role in establishing the Film Society, Montagu provided educational programs to inspire the British film industry and attempted to reform the censorship organised by the British government.<sup>15</sup>

The direct causal relationship between the CFA of 1927 and legitimization of British film as a form of national art could not be identified, but considering the discussion in Parliament about film as not just economic commodity but influential art work, the intellectual movements in the same period can be evaluated to have had an impact on the legislation of the CFA of 1927 by proposing ideas about importance of film as part of national culture. The claim of cultural importance of film presented by cultural sector and its role in policy discussion as rationale of film policies implies the connection between political and cultural actors.

The newspapers in that period played essential role in realizing the CFA of 1927 by spreading the claims about the value and importance of the British film in three ways: attracting public interest on film by providing increasing number of the articles about the British film, establishing the common understanding about political and economic conditions surrounding the film industry, and presenting wide variety of values of films including political, educational and artistic values of the British film.

Firstly, the British newspaper contributed to the recognition of the importance of the film at that period by providing increasing numbers of their articles and editorials. For example, *the Times* started a series of articles about films titled “the film world” in 1919 and even in 1921, it published the special issue for the film. The intention of this series of articles featuring British film was

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15. Gerry Turvey, “Toward a Critical Practice: Ivor Montagu and British Film Culture in the 1920s”, in A. Higson, ed., *Young and Innocent? The Cinema in Britain, 1986-1930*. Ch. 10. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002.

explained as: "It is the intention of *The Times* to review every week some of the most notable of these pictures so that the public may be kept in touch with the development of what is destined to become in a very short time one of the most important of all British industries."<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, in 1919 the *Manchester Guardian* also presented important article about the British film titled "Progress of the Film; British Work Coming to the Front". It said,

For the greater part of the war the import of foreign films was heavily restricted, and the shade they had cast over the less pretentious home productions was for the first time definitely lifted. People began to realise that film-making was not an American stretch of the territory of art into which we had no right to trespass; they grew interested in the efforts of this country and in the differences between them and the more familiar type. A film became "British" or "American" instead of being just a film with a Californian birthplace taken for granted.<sup>17</sup>

This article shows how the concept of "British film" itself was presented on the quality newspaper. The existence and importance of the British cinema was presented by the quality newspapers by distinguishing American and British film. The idea of national cinema was critically important in driving the discussion of the CFA of 1927, which was designed to protect the British cinema from cultural invasion of the Hollywood film industry.

Considering the fact that there was no article about British films before 1913, the expansion of the articles about British film was quite characteristic trend in that period and it resulted in the enhancement of the general public's and political elites' interest on film.

In addition to the increase of the number of articles about film itself, the quality newspapers contributed to defining the common understanding about the political and social condition surrounding the British film. The most important factor determining the situation of the British film industry was its rivalry with and pressure from the Hollywood film industry. *The Times* published the articles about relationship between British and Hollywood film industry even in

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16. Times, 1919. "The Film World", *The Times*, Dec. 15, p. 18.

17. Manchester Guardian, 1919. "Progress of the Film: British Work Coming to the Front", *The Manchester Guardian*, May 30, p. 5.

1914 and warned that the British film industry and its audience were harmed from the domination of the Hollywood film industry in the British and international market.

Numerous letters have been printed in "*The Times*" from readers who have been called attention to the fact that the daily and repeated exhibition in Great Britain of films of the American patriotic class, stories of the American wars, incidents in which American uniform, the American flag, and American prowess hold the centre of the screen (not to speak of the American "comic" and the films of the Wild West, revolver-flourishing cowboy and desperado school), must inevitably have a deplorable influence upon children and upon persons of little education.<sup>18</sup>

Furthermore, in 1919, *the Times* used more direct expression such as "the invasion of this country by an American film" to describe this situation<sup>19</sup>. Of course, such statement was not an original invention by newspapers but claimed by the weekly magazine published by the interest group of British film industry named the *Kinematograph Weekly*. However, the unique contribution of the newspapers was that they were able to spread such statement to wider audience because of its accessibility. Therefore, the impact of newspaper about the defining and spreading the recognition of the British film and environment surrounding it.

Above all, the most important contribution of the British newspaper to enhancing the importance of the British film was by presenting several values of the British films. Most of the pieces of prior research of the British film in that period focused on its economic aspect. However, by analysing the discourse of the contemporary newspapers it can be identified that they also made statement about not only economic but also several values of the British film such as educational, political and artistic values of the film.

In the article by the *the Times*, the educational value of film was claimed by picking up the example of using film in school education and dominion in the articles such as "Cinemas In Schools" in 1918.

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18. Times, 1914. "Films OF Canadian Life And History", *The Times*, May 7, p. 20.

19. Times, 1919. "The Film World", *The Times*, Dec. 15, p. 18.

Furthermore, according to the articles of quality newspapers, film could be evaluated as a medium of spreading British culture and establishing integrity in the British society and the whole empire. The example is the article by *the Manchester Guardian* in 1922 titled Art or Propaganda as:

The recent suggestion that films might be conscripted into the service of patriotic propaganda led Captain Barber to speak. He, too, would like to see his industry an "empire welder." From time to time similar suggestions have been made. The kinema, it has been argued, might profitably be used to inculcate the lessons of religion and morality. It might be used to illustrate the wonders of natural science. Mr. Belloc has sketching of history.<sup>20</sup>

These articles contributed to the establishing political value of the British film and resulted in the recognition of necessity to provide governmental support the the domestic film industry. The important point is that the articles which claim social and political importance of the film were provided not only in the UK but also in the quality papers in other part of the Empire such as *The Sydney Morning Herald* in Australia. It said, "there is little doubt that this new industry will grow considerably and be of direct help In bringing British habits, methods, and Ideals to the notice of all who have the opportunity of viewing the products of British studios".<sup>21</sup> It should be noticed that film was not just thought as commodity but as a medium to show "British habits, methods and Ideals".<sup>22</sup>

Finally, the British newspapers contributed to establishing the status of the British film as legitimised national culture. In the research of the legitimation of film as fine art in the case of the 1960s' Hollywood film industry, Shyon Bauman identified the importance of critics of film works as essential discourse of enhancing the artistic status of film. In case of the British film, such process already started in the 1920s and newspapers were the place

20. Manchester Guardian, 1922. "Art or Propaganda", *The Manchester Guardian*, May 11, p. 6.

21. The Sydney Morning Herald, 1931. "British Film Industry", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Dec. 23, p. 11.

22. The Sydney Morning Herald, 1931. "British Film Industry", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Dec. 23, p. 11.

to provide such critics. For example, the Film World in *the Times* provided reviews of the British film as they did to other genre of high arts such as theatre play or opera. The Manchester Guardian also claimed that

It is right in expecting art of the kinema rather than propaganda or education in the narrow sense, though until it can have the first of these it might well be more patient of the last, for which, at least as side-line, the screen is well suited.<sup>23</sup>

And this statement reflects the trend to establish artistic value of films in the 1920s. The title of this article “Art or Propaganda” itself implies the plural aspects of values of the British film.

One of the most important critic of the British film at that period was Iris Barry. As the research of Haidee Wasson clarifies, Barry provided the reviews of the British films in Daily Mail as well as the articles which overviews the current situation of the British film industry in articles such as “Films the Public Want” and “Films We Do Not Want”.

Even though film used to be recognised as a form of entertainment rather than serious form of art by the intellectuals, such critical discourse on the quality newspapers resulted in the legitimation of the British film. In considering the relationship between film and newspaper, it is worth claiming that the legitimation of film as a form of serious art became possible and was accelerated by the transformation of the film itself. In the 1920s, new genre of film emerged such as literature films based on the authorized novels, and documentary films which dealt with social and industrial phenomena. The emergence of such new genres films in the 1920s was quite important in realizing the discussion about governmental support for the British film industry and the potential educational, political and artistic values of the British film were claimed in the newspapers.

One of the most important example is the Observer’s article “Future of British Films: Mr. C. F. Higham’s Enterprise, Door of

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23. Manchester Guardian, 1922. “Art or Propaganda”, *The Manchester Guardian*, May 11, p. 6.

the World's Markets Opened", which was the interview of the one of the M.P. and started new film enterprise, and he claimed

I (Mr. Higham) believe the British public and the American public also are a little tired of so-called comedy-drama films. They want strong, natural, clean human plays. There is quite enough in the literature of this country to satisfy the most discriminating and amusement-loving cinema audiences. The taste of the cinema-going public is improving, and it is our business to inculcate a desire for better film plays by producing them. I am sure, in fact, that the twenty million persons who visit the cinema each week in this country can look forward both from America and from English producers to film plays infinitely superior to those they have seen in the past.<sup>24</sup>

This citation in the interview shows how people in the British film industry and an editor *the Observer* recognised the advantages of British film. They believed improvement of tastes of film audience must contribute to the popularity of British film. Such claims reflected the assumption of British film promoters that British film is culturally more sophisticated than Hollywood film so that it would be welcomed by the sophisticated audiences. Such assumption about the supremacy of British film justified the film policy to increase the productions of British film. In this sense, the ideas and beliefs about value of British film repeatedly promoted in national newspapers was essential foundation of policy discussion about the CFA of 1927.

In order to enhance the status of film as a part of important national culture which should be supported by the state, the role of interest groups and their publishing were critically important. The role of industrial groups is also identified by the research of the history of the British film (Street, 1985). These organisations directly made contribution to the realisation the CFA of 1927 by lobbying on political elites and presenting the idea of the film policy.

Furthermore, the contribution of the interest group in realising the film policy was not restricted to such direct promotion. The publishing of these organisations provided the chance to learn

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24. The Observer, 1919. "Future of British Films: Mr. C. F. Higham's New Enterprise, Door of the World's Markets Opened". *The Observer*, Sep. 21, p. 8.

about the situation of the British film industry and British film policy. For example, representative filmmakers or producers were given the chance to present their opinions about the film industry and importance of the British film. Furthermore, the information of the Exhibition was presented in every week through the journal published by the Federation of British Industries named *the Kinetograph Weekly* for the readers and such information established and promoted the domestic film culture, which resulted in the recognition of the importance of the British film industry. The presentation and promotion of the British film culture by interest groups contributed to enhancing social status of the British film, which was reflected on the political discussion about the CFA of 1927.

In considering the process of the legitimation of film as a form of medium, it should be noticed that the educational value was also identified in the 1920s and such educational use was closely connected with the film policy. The educational use of film started to be discussed in the context of the film distribution in the empire. For example, the writers of the weekly cinema magazine named *Bioscope* made presentation about the value of film in distribution in the empire, and made presentation in the Imperial Educational Conference. According the articles in the *Bioscope*, the educational value of the film was presented to the participants of the Empire Conference and they visited the production studio to learn about the usage of film.<sup>25</sup> This historical event implied the impact on the realisation of the educational film and the CFA of 1927. This is because the CFA of 1927 was presented in the Imperial Conference of 1926 and the policy was discussed in the context of the empire. In justifying the usage of the film in the context of the empire, its educational value should be stressed and because the educational value of film was presented and persuaded, the policymakers were able to accelerate the discussion of the governmental film policy.

Furthermore, the educational value of film was also discussed in domestic context. For example, the London County Council set

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25. *Bioscope*, 1927. "Educationalists visit Studio: British Instructional's Fine Work", July 14, p. 23.

up the Education Sub-Committee to discuss how to use film as an educational medium in 1921 and the Report on the Use and Value of the Cinematograph in Education was published in 1923.<sup>26</sup>

The idea of the educational or cultural value of film and necessity of governmental support for it was also identified in other governmental bodies. One of the most important examples was the statement by the Commission on Educational and Cultural Films in 1929. The fact that the chairman of the Committee was an educationalist Sir Benjamin Gott implied the education-focusing aspect of this Committee.<sup>27</sup>

In the official report named *The Film in National Life*, the Committee made suggestion about educational film policy as below:

1. To consider suggestions for improving and extending the use of films (motion pictures and similar visual and auditory devices) for educational and cultural purposes, including use as documentary records.
2. To consider methods for raising the standard of public appreciation of films, by criticism and advice addressed to the general public, by discussion among persons engaged in educational or cultural pursuits, and by experimental production of films in collaboration with professional producers.
3. To consider the desirability and practicability of establishing a central permanent organisation with general objects as above.<sup>28</sup>

The importance of the educational use of film was presented in this report and such statement resulted in the realisation of the establishment of the British Film Institute.

The vision of the BFI as an organisation to realise educational film policy was clearly stated in the pamphlet distributed for its spon-

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26. Alex Southern, *The Ministry of Education Film Experiment: From Post-War Visual Education to 21st Century Literacy*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

27. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, "Foundation and Early Years", in Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, and Christophe Duplin. *The British Film Institute, the Government and Film Culture, 1933-2000*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012.

28. The Commission on Education and Cultural Films. *The Film in National Life*. Manchester: University of Manchester, 1932.

sors. BFI explains its objects were “[t]o influence public opinion to appreciate the value of films as entertainment and instruction”, “[t]o advice educational institutions and other organisations and persons on films and apparatus”, “[t]o link up the film trade and the cultural and educational interests of the country” and “to certify films as educational, cultural or scientific”.<sup>29</sup>

The point is that the educational film policy also emerged in the 1920s and these policies share the evaluation of the film as not just economic commodity but form of art which can present the political message to the audience. The identification of educational value of film should be evaluated as important factor to drive the discussion of the CFA of 1927 because as is shown in the speeches in the previous sections, the educational use of film to educate supremacy of British culture to the audiences and present the prestige of the British civilisation was expected benefit of encouraging the British film production through the CFA of 1927. Unless the educational value of film was identified, the justification of the governmental intervention was impossible.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper, I elucidate the relationship between the legislation of the first governmental policy to support the domestic film industry and the process of legitimation of film as a form of art. Although the first governmental policy in the UK named the CFA of 1927 has been mainly evaluated as an example of economic policy to realise the goal of industrial interest, the policy was also based on the recognition of artistic and political importance of the British film industry.

It should be stressed that whereas it is common these days to evaluate film as not just commodity but as art, such recognition was historically shaped and a brand-new concept in the 1920s. The recognition of such importance of film as a genre of national high art was shaped by the stakeholders in contemporary film culture.

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29. British Film Institute. *The British Film Institute: Its Aims and Objects* (ED 121/276). London: The National Archives, 1933.

Firstly, the quality newspapers presented articles and statements about the artistic importance of film and presented the opportunity to attract the interest of general readers and policymakers. Secondly, the interest group also presented information about the social and political importance of the film industry. Thirdly, contemporary intellectuals in the Film Society stressed the aspect of the artistic value of the film works, which contributed to the recognition of the necessity of developing the domestic film industry. Finally, the educational aspect of the film was also presented in the context of political discussion in the British Empire and such recognition was shared in other film policies. The stress of the educational value of film was also implicational in understanding the necessity to develop the film industry. Contemporary policymakers understood that audiences don't just consume but also are educated by the film. Therefore, the spread of foreign film in not only in the UK but also in the whole empire was recognised as serious danger to the morality of British citizens. The governmental policy to support the domestic film was shaped by such recognition of the value of film.

What is discussed in this essay is the relationship between the legislation of the British film policy and British film culture in the 1920s. Although the governmental policies are designed and justified by contemporary social and cultural structure, the relationship between film culture and film policy is rarely discussed. However, as I have shown in this essay, there are connection between the history of the British film policy and the history of the British film culture, which was implied in the statements about the values of the British films. In order to clarify the common rhetoric to identify the values of film in both the political section and cultural sector, I have shown the direct citations about values of film in several media. Of course, this paper could not be analysed the whole aspects of the British film culture and political discussion in that period, the approach to elucidate the connection between policy sector and cultural sector is applicable in analysing why and how certain cultural policies are realised and what is the rationale behind them.

The case study of the CFA of 1927 in this paper about the relationship between policy rationales and discourse about values of

film in cultural sector presents the interdisciplinary approach of cultural policy research and cultural industry research. This perspective is useful in understanding how and why the policy ideas and rationales of governmental intervention on cultural sector is established and promoted, which is applicable to the wide variety of research of not only film policies but also cultural polities in several cases.