

Revisiting British Genre Fandom & the Regulation of Film Violence in Britain

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Structure

1. Research context
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3. Regulatory model
4. Cultural regulation
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Research Context

Empirical Research (1995 – 2000)

- Qualitative audience research

Theoretical Research (2000 – 2007)

- Revisionist approach to film regulation (Kuhn 89, Hendershot 98)
- Film cultures approach to Film Regulation (Turner 2002)

British Genre Fandom

- Distinctive regulatory context
- Marginalisation & sub-cultural lifestyle

Francis (Genre Magazine Editor)

Yeah, there is definitely a fan community and most of them are here...and...the fan community so to speak has been helped by censorship, it actually created a climate where that sort of environment was inevitable by ghettoising the genre. The Laws that have been passed in the last 15 years have focused the attention of these people and brought them together because the only way they can see the types of movies they want to see is to get together with other people that are interested in the same thing and get to know them...so they can trade" (Interview)

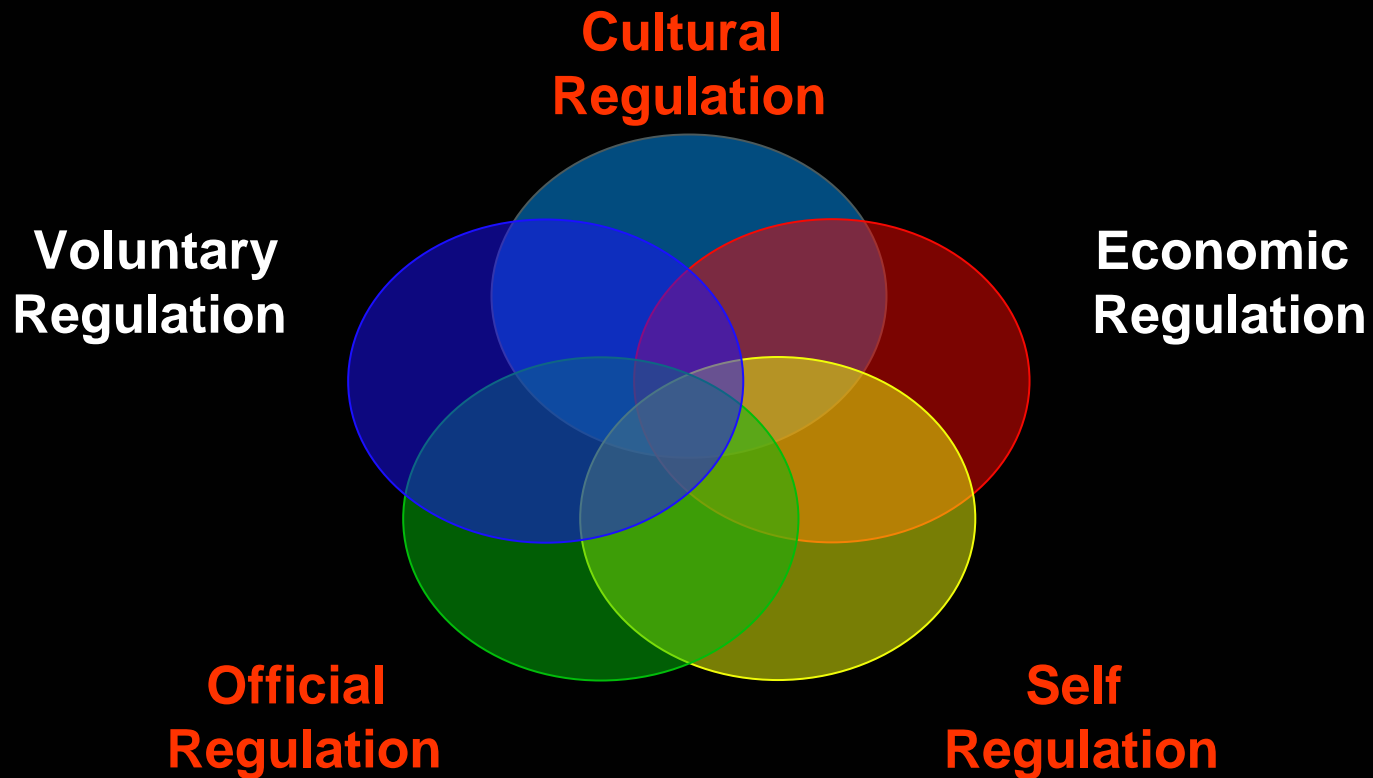
Structure: British Genre Fandom

- Individual Activity
- Genre Underground
- Genre Scene

Henry (Genre Fan)

“...at the end of the day anybody who wants to watch anything from *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* through to *Faces of Death* can get hold of a copy just like that, you know, it's not a problem getting hold of a film you just go to a film fair, you know, a car boot sale, whatever. Or look in the back of one of the genre magazines, whatever you'll find them it's not difficult” (Interview)

Regulatory Model



Travis (Genre Fan)

"...a number of analyses of censorship haven't been as intricate and complex as they could have been because they project everything against this so called terrible body (*the BBFC*)."

(Interview)

Fans observations: Cultural Regulation

- Cultural concerns underlie other regulatory forms
- Concerns about film violence stem from misinformation
- Role of press & politicians in promoting misinformation
- Challenges exits but cultural regulation enduring impact

Jim (Genre Fan)

"I think the real problem deep down here has to do with...dislike of popular culture and dislike of...what the young are enjoying and getting up to...Lurking deep down here is the idea that if the pleasures of these people aren't somehow measured and regulated and controlled then something awful will happen..and that's not fanciful...if you look at the amendment that was made to the Video Recordings Act in 1994...it really does talk about you know the harm that people might do to society, not just to themselves by being exposed to certain types of images" (Interview)

Tony (Genre Fan)

I've had occasions where friends of friends have come to the house who sort of said 'Oh don't you think Tony is a bit strange?' you know, they were really disturbed by, it was clearly extremely threatening to them and it was like obviously, 'why would any one wish to expose themselves to this sort of material?', Well you know I think that's an absurd question but it is clearly not absurd for them, they were really really made uneasy by it" (Interview)

Fans observations: Self-censorship

- Boundaries & thresholds related to viewing
- Toning down opinions outside of genre
- Refusing to euphemise their views outside the genre

Francis (Genre Magazine Editor)

"I have no objection to any depiction of any act under any circumstances as long as it's a work of fiction. When you are crossing over into factual representations the things that I personally find offensive in genre movies is very simply gratuitous actual exploitation of animals because that isn't fiction...personally...I don't give shelf space to anything which gratuitously and realistically actually exploits the suffering of others..That's my limit and it's my only limit". (Interview)

Danny (Genre Fan)

"...I recognise that, you know, it's not everybody's cup of tea. You know I'm not sort of going to go around to my grandparents and sort of start telling them I watched *Driller Killer* the other night, because I realise that it does shock some people. So I think you just have to judge who you are talking to basically and how they are likely to respond to it." (Interview)

Fans observations: Official Regulation

- Cyclical nature of British film regulation
- Balancing individual rights & social responsibilities
- Critique 'effects' debates but need to protect children
- Pleasure & anxieties generated by regulation

Humphrey (Genre Fan)

"...I like actually sort of you know searching around for films...and obviously the harder the film is to get, the longer it takes, the more you appreciate it when you've got it. So that's part of the fun of actually collecting them. So uhm yeah I do enjoy searching you know I've been all over the country basically looking for films and it's really good when you finally find a copy of something that you have been after for a few years. So yeah so obviously it wouldn't be the same if you could just go out and get it anywhere. So yeah that does add to the appreciation of the film really". (Interview)

William (Genre Fan) & Ian (Genre Fan)

"I hate censorship with a vengeance, but I do believe in classification as long as the subject matter stays within the law then why cut it?" (E-mail)

"Whilst some of my views may seem critical of the practice of censorship, I believe that it is a difficult act of balancing between freedom of choice and a (albeit somewhat misplaced) sense of social responsibility" (E-mail)

Conclusion

- British genre fandom = shaped by regulatory context
- British genre fandom = resistance to film regulation
- Film regulation = complex set of productive processes
- Fans views = valuable source of information