

Philippine Film Industry and Cultural Policy: A Critical Analysis and Case Study

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Abstract : This paper examines the status of the film industry as an industry in the Philippines—where or how it is classified in the Philippine industrial classification system and how this positioning gives the film industry an identity (or not) and affects (film) policy development and impacts the larger national economy. It is important to look at how the national government recognises Philippine cinema officially, as this will have a direct and indirect impact on the industry in terms of its representation, conduct of business, international relations, and most especially its implications on policy development and implementation. Therefore, it is imperative that the ‘identity’ of Philippine cinema be clearly established and defined in the overall industrial landscape. Having a clear understanding of Philippine cinema’s industry status provides a better view of the bigger picture and helps us determine cinema’s position in the national agenda in terms of priority setting, future direction and how the state perceives and thereby values the film industry as an industry. This will then serve as a frame of reference that will anchor the succeeding discussion. Once the Philippine film industry status is identified, the paper will then clarify how cultural policy is defined, understood, and applied in the Philippines in relation to Philippine cinema by reviewing and analyzing existing policy documents and pending bills in the Philippine Congress and Senate. Lastly, the paper delves into the roles that (national) cultural institutions and industry organisations play as primary drivers or support mechanisms and how they become platforms (or not) for the upliftment of the independent film sector and towards the sustainability of the film industry. The paper concludes by arguing that the role of the government and how government officials perceive and treats culture is far more important than cultural policy itself, as these policies emanate from them.

Keywords : cultural and creative industries, cultural policy, film industry, Philippine cinema

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