



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Parasite and its Relevance in International Relations

Conley, Renée

Citation

Conley, R. (2022). *Parasite and its Relevance in International Relations*.

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [License to inclusion and publication of a Bachelor or Master thesis in the Leiden University Student Repository](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3447116>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).



Universiteit Leiden

***Parasite* and its Relevance in International Relations**

By:

Renée Conley

S3221628

r.e.conley@umail.leidenuniv.nl

Master Thesis

International Relations: Culture and Politics

Leiden University

Humanities Faculty

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. R.E. Breuker

Second Reader: Dr. I. B Smits

Maximum Word Count: 15,000

Word Count: 13,818

Introduction

This thesis will examine how South Korean Film contributes to the field of International Relations. Analyzing an internationally and domestically famous Korean film and the domestically recognized issues that mirror a growing international problem of socioeconomic inequality. Socioeconomic Inequality has shown global trends of domestic wealth inequality rising regardless of the government's economic prosperity in recent years. Film that depicts globally resonant issues such as socio-economic divisions has not been adequately researched from an International Relations perspective. International Relations adds perspective to how and why nations engage with the rest of the world. The Korean Association of International Studies is one of the largest professional social science fields in South Korea (Moon & Kim 2002, 46). Therefore, studying a global issue from a South Korean International Relations perspective can further elaborate why and how socioeconomic divisions are growing and important to analyze from a constructivist angle. English language Western films have for the most part dominated public discourse, while those made in The Republic of Korea are not. Exploring a Korean film that has gained popularity worldwide contributes to International Relations scholarship surrounding soft power. The 2019 South Korean film *Parasite* will be used as a case study in film to demonstrate how the film may inform the field of International Relations and influence domestic Korean policy, and how this is relevant on the global stage. South Korea is geopolitically important for promoting United States' interests in Northeast Asia; South Korea in turn maintains its alliance with the US for the financial prosperity it has brought. South Korea has the highest proportion of inherited wealth in the world (Kim 2017, 845). South Korea is regionally important on the international stage to Japan, China, and North Korea as well. Since the film is Korean, it is more important domestically than internationally, the perspective of this paper will be largely from Seoul's political perspective. Hollywood films are often seen in popular culture rather than South Korean films. Using a recent film gives modern context to the contemporary economic landscape.

Christina Klein has explored Bong's transnational film inspirations and common themes in his works, arguing for the necessity to discuss transnational film in America to better grasp international perspectives (Klein 2008). The inspirations behind Bong's work contribute to the meaning behind *Parasite*. Therefore, by understanding the previous intent of Bong's films, the underlying intent is more thoroughly conveyed in common themes explored in his works. The benefit of not having much research on the topic of socioeconomic inequality representation in

Korean film, and *Parasite* in particular, is that this research seems necessary. Exploring the International socioeconomic landscape in the following section expands upon the relevance of this research, and the comprehension of the film's overall meaning. *Parasite* recognizes how a growing issue can actively change public discourse in a potentially positive way, educating the masses through a new lens. Constructivist theory considers inter-subjective relations between agents and material factors, such as the way film is influenced by state policy (Moon et. Al. 2002, 63). The film has a dynamic perspective for both the upper and lower socio-economic classes portrayed; As such, constructivism caters to the ideational aspect that is how socially constructed classes, over material wealth, construct identity and social divides. This is exemplified by how the Park's express their opinions of the Kim's and vice versa based on socioeconomic indicators such as level of formal education and smell; Both immaterial indicators are a result of an individual's socioeconomic status. The relevance of this topic is observed internationally, however, the scope of the study is limited to film in International Relations and how *Parasite* can contribute to the field. Systematic study using constructivist theory and content analysis to investigate and conclude whether hypothesis is correct. My literature review will examine different International Relations perspectives in film in order to demonstrate this thesis's relevancy.

Following the literature review section, chapter 1 will define my theory and methodology, exploring how this research is important, can be used, and its limitations. Context of socioeconomic divisions within the Republic of Korea and more generally from the international perspective. Defining wealth inequality versus income inequality and how that is explored in *Parasite*; Using a constructivist perspective throughout this study will focus on socially constructed ideational factors that represent the separate classes. Chapter 2 will clarify the methodological framework and codebook for content analysis, or recognized themes and motifs in the film, to analyze how they are used to convey underlying message of growing hostility between the lower and upper classes. After defining the scope and intent of content analysis, the overall story can be summarized and then systematically revisited per scene/element as it relates to the codebook/content analysis in the following chapters.

Chapter 3 will demonstrate the socioeconomic representation in *Parasite* from content analysis and coding. Categorical analysis of themes will elaborate on the film's socioeconomic intent, that will be historically elaborated on further in the following chapter. Chapter 4 will explore how Director, Bong Joon Ho has covered similar themes in several of his movies,

including *The Host* and *Okja*, that apply social division represented by families. Christina Klein elaborates the artistic inspiration for the film from the director's background, as well as Korean economic history within the last few decades. The film and the topic of SES is politically and culturally resonant to Koreans. International audiences empathize with the global issue of shrinking middle classes. This chapter will focus on the domestic relevance, leaving Chapter 5 to expand on how *Parasite* has domestically and internationally affected audience members and the political community. Finally, in my concluding chapter I will reexamine how *Parasite* has demonstrated its domestic and international relevance and summarize my findings throughout my paper.

Literature Review

How can South Korean film used as an education medium for International Relations? Film is a soft-power that can be used as a medium to increase national identity and patriotism, educate nuanced social issues, and boost export economy. However, demonstrating the relevance of film as an educational tool for International Relations (IR) scholarship can be accomplished by examining certain relevant aspects of film relevant to global relations, or through IR. The social construction of class divides is a socioeconomic form of differentiation that is pervasive cultural representation such as film. Contextualizing film and the thematic narrative of socioeconomic divides fills the gap in existing literature that is restricted to the cultural aspect of film as a part of cultural economic industry. Using a recent Korean film as a case study expands our current understanding of the importance of film from an international perspective. This review will show how South Korean cinema can be used as an educational device for IR.

Examining the literature will identify film as a medium for explaining IR theory, and the benefits and disadvantageous that comes with using it. Bong Joon Ho's 2019 film *Parasite* as a case study of South Korean film to demonstrate how social commentary can utilize film to appeal to international audiences. Studies examining *Parasite*'s use of nation branding and identity do not state IR perspective in favor of thematic focus (Lee 2020; Octavia 2021). This review will cover the gap in the literature that has not examined how the specific global issues benefit IR. Cultural and historical context of the film are explored, while the director, South Korea, and IR

deconstructs relevance of the South Korean film. The literature will focus on IR's use of film as an educational medium, with the case study of South Korean film as the focus.

Film as a Non-Traditional Educational Method:

Engert claims the clear educational benefit in the field of IR as human memory retains information better in oral and visual forms. Many scholars acknowledge the importance of film as an educational resource to highlight real world problems and the cognitive benefits of visual learning. Combining oral and visual forms in film aids people's access and capacity to learn and remember information. However, they acknowledge technical and logistical disadvantages of using film as an educational instrument. Yet, time spent covering irrelevant topic to the educational discussion can be avoided by an instructor's preselection of certain clips. Gregg argues that film is not made expressly for teaching IR theory. (Engert et Al. 2009, 85-87; Gregg 1999). Valeriano illustrates how non-traditional educational mediums, like film, when explicitly tied to course themes and objectives and avoiding cliché's, can reach a student's critical engagement (Valeriano et Al. 2013, 407).

Political Influence:

Engert uses several cinematic examples and IR theory to demonstrate the different methods that film contributes to political agenda and perspective. For example, Post-modern theory in the Hollywood film *Pulp-Fiction* is used to demonstrate criticisms of post-modernism in IR. The directors reading of violence, dialogue, and the role of language deconstructs criticisms of post-modern theory in IR and the 'reflexivity problem' (Engert et Al. 2009, 96-98). The 'reflexivity problem' of post-modernism acknowledges that nothing can be ruled out as unscientific (cf. Diez 2006). Klein presents the issue that many filmmakers influenced by Hollywood were educated in the West, presenting Western bias. However, Bong received a South Korean education from Yonsei University and had consumed western media from the US military's TV channel, Armed Forces Korea Network (Klein 2008, 876-877). Bong's use of metaphor in *Parasite* is an attempt to examine underlying political themes (Farahbakhsh et Al. 2021, 6).

Economic Success with Film:

Moon et al. examines how IR is underdeveloped in South Korea. However, they also note how the field within South Korea has benefited from the military standoff with North Korea and globalization (Moon et Al. 2002, 64). Historical context of Korean film and its influences are

necessary for scholarly dialogue. The 1997 economic crisis propelled South Korean globalization, instigating dialogue on neo-liberal reform, structural adjustment, and underlying political and social costs (Moon et Al. 2002, 59). Hong and Klein support this, claiming the financial crisis as a catalyst for the transformation of the Korean film industry (Klein 2008, 876; Hong 2014, 74). After the IMF bailout, cultural policy needed to address the economic necessity to expand cultural export (Hong 2014, 74). The South Korean boom in global culture, colloquially known as the Korean Wave that has flourished since the dissolution of dictatorial governments in South Korea, contributed to *Parasite*'s success (Lee 2020; Son 2020). This crisis that produced this Korean Wave of cultural export was from globalization and consumer demands that influenced the commercial success and evolution of the Korean film industry. Consequentially, domestic financial crisis' that a non-Korean audience member would not be aware of contribute to historic and thematic dialogue of a film.

Socioeconomic Inequality:

By defining the influence of film, we illustrate the following ways in which the media are able to frame what the audience finds important through film in regard to socioeconomic inequality. Mass media is often unsuccessful in convincing people of a particular persuasion yet is stunningly capable of telling their audience what to think about (Iyengar et Al. 1982, 848; Lippmann 1922). Film has the potential to impact collective consciousness on a wide range of social issues, such as socioeconomic class divide. Socioeconomic parallels between the two families portrayed in *Parasite* and its popularity in international culture highlight the growing relevance of dialogue about growing class inequality. In *Parasite*, the stairs, sunlight, and body odor act as signifiers of class hierarchy. This literature focusing specifically on its use as an educational medium is accentuated. Decades of increased economic wage gaps between the upper and lower classes of developed societies can be elaborated on through IR (Lee 2020; Son 2020).

Social Issues:

Film can inform wider audiences of complex social issues through a palatable visual format, and as an economic and nation branding powerhouse. Domestically, Koreans resonated with political and social parallels that the film portrayed of the elite not being held to the same accountability or struggles that lower class people do. An example of this, there is a scene in *Parasite* in which the lower-class family fake a diploma to get a job. The Justice Minister Cho Kuk resigned in December of 2019, just a month after *Parasite*'s theatrical release, from scandal

and prosecution for falsifying documents for college admissions (Shin 2020). The division of upper-class officials and working-class people, represented by the impoverished Kims and the wealthy Parks in *Parasite*, display real world examples. One can observe what makes the life of both families “parasitic” by Bong’s masterful account between the lower class and the upper class in a capitalistic society (Farahbakhsh et Al. 2021, 4)

International Relations Theoretical Concepts Explored

The issue of the socioeconomic inequality is not just a domestic Korean issue. The globalization of modern economy is visible in the multicultural representation in film through genre, theme, and composition. In *Parasite* differentiating types of wealth disparity between social groups is easily understood through the audio-visual format of film. Bong’s *Parasite* encapsulates the social conflict between the poor and the rich that resonated with people regardless of nationality. Octavia states how the international acclaim of the film demonstrates the growing international empathy for socioeconomic inequality produced in a non-English speaking film. Its’ popularity has resulted in sociological, psychological, and business-related studies utilizing its themes of class dynamics as a case study (Octavia 2021, 25-26). Lee highlights how the international acclaim of the film furthered successful cultural diplomacy, disseminating national cuisine and creating landmarks into popular culture (Lee 2020). Both publications emphasize *Parasite*’s relevance in global and Korean culture. The later influences global discourse by offering the uniquely Korean perspective, which contributes to Korean cultural diplomacy.

Constructivist Theory

IR theories can be taught through film as *Parasite* demonstrated. Moon et al cites constructivist perspective as an appealing method to approach East Asian regional dynamics. Wendt supports Moon’s argument that constructivist theory considers inter-subjective relations between agents and material factors, such as the way film is influenced by state policy. Failure to address the multifarious nature of state bias formed by identity, history, and behavior can result in inauthentic regional cooperation (Moon et. Al. 2002, 62-63; Wendt 1995). The nations’ representation of socioeconomic disparity boosted its economy. Lee supports constructivism in the film, arguing the nations’ cultural export that resulted in Oscar wins and nation branding as a global cultural zeitgeist (Lee 2020). Lee and Moon et Al. both support that, aside from economic

benefits, academia could stand to profit from its contribution of social commentary; Constructivist theory is one example.

Film Creates Diplomatic Relations:

Klein's focuses on US-Korean diplomatic relations and the importance of Bong Joon Ho's relationship with the US film industry. They use it to address how non-Hollywood films have used the US industry to pursue their agendas. Andrew Higson suggested that consumption, rather than production, of film should be prioritized in scholarship. He argued that national cinemas should be defined by the sum of film in circulation, irrespective of being foreign or domestic (Klein 2008, 871; Higson 2002). US-Korean relations are relevant to address cultural and artistic influence and political criticisms seen in Bong's films. Asian national cinemas often ignore Hollywood as irrelevant; Higson argues that the acknowledgement of only one national cinematic industry, such as Hollywood within the US, is to represent the discussion bias of western cinema as an economy. Filmmakers, such as Bong Joon Ho, have been influenced by US film into producing Korean transnational film that reworks Hollywood aesthetic and genre conventions (Klein 2008, 873).

Western Film Influence on Trade:

Hollywood's stylistic influence on Bong's works demonstrates how his film can both be Korean national cinematic representation and transnational cinema. US-Korean relations have shifted in the decades spanning from present day back to World War II. The US military presence and economic funding of authoritarian military regimes on the Korean peninsula between 1960's through the 1990's, created the 2007 free trade agreement and subsequent reduction of foreign military presence. This created restrictive film policies and the Hollywood cinematic domination over Korean cinema in the market and contributed to ambivalent public relations. These political changes resulted in the embracing of anti-Hollywood aesthetic in directors from 1980 through 1990 (Klein 2008, 876). Klein examines Bong's subversion of Hollywood conventions contributes that contributes to the appeal of his film (Klein 2008, 873). Hong argues that despite the western influence in Bong's films, they serve as Korean national branding, palatable to both Korean and non-Korean audiences. Consequently, film contributes to 6% of national revenue from the total 17% of cultural industry (Hong 2014, 81).

Klein highlights the importance of Korean cinema, through the lens of Bong's film, as its cultural representation can embody relationships among texts, industries, and markets. (Klein 2008, 895). Focusing on the significance of one film, *Parasite* is studied for the socioeconomic

class division elements in South Korean society, cultural diplomacy, and the nation branding it represents to Korea. Educational benefits, political and economic consequences, and diplomatic relations are all influenced by cinematic representation. Currently, IR scholarship discussing the importance of film revolves around its importance in theory, using mostly western films as examples. Cinematic and cultural representation of financial crisis's highlight this relevance of creating dialogue in IR. However, understanding what we are choosing to view has a direct influence on what we deem to be of importance. We, like the main characters in the films we view, can be defined by ones' wealth in society. Though viewers looking at identical content can come to idiosyncratic, often opposing judgments, the content itself is what holds the importance of influence in film (D'Alessio 2003). *Parasite* is an example of how there is growing importance of popular culture in IR and how art in film can, therefore act as a catalyst for civil political dialogue, thus becoming an educational tool utilized in international relations. Using the medium of film, it is not hard to picture a filmmaker's work, *"like a searchlight beam moving restlessly about, bringing one episode and then another out of the darkness and into vision"* (Iyengar et Al. 1982, 848; Lippmann 1922). This vision being the ultimate form of education.

Chapter 1: Introduction to Theory and Case

This thesis will be examining examples of socioeconomic inequality as it is presented in the 2019 film *Parasite* by Bong Joon Ho. It should be acknowledged that socioeconomic inequality (SEI) is a complex social issue that is difficult to quantify, and quantitative measurements such as the Gini coefficient do not always fully represent the true class divisions within a given country, as it is a cumulative measurement. SEI is not measured by level of income, separating poor from rich. It is measured by the distance between relative social position in various segments in society and proven typically by four other indicators: education level, occupation (rank-ordered according to prestige), income level, and wealth level (Cattani 2007, 3; Conley 2020). Wealth is defined by financial assets in addition to real assets (Shorrocks 2021, 15). Therefore, wealth inequality and income inequality are two separate socioeconomic indicators. The Gini coefficient is a broad numerical measure of wealth inequality that illustrates changes in wealth distribution. The Gini coefficient is measured by the Lorenz curve, which measures population and their cumulative wealth against cumulative proportion of the population; The Gini coefficient measures 0 to 100, 0

being perfect equality and 100 perfect inequality (Directorate 2022; Moskowitz 2008). Wealth inequality is high in all countries, and critically high in several (Shorrocks 2021, 23). The rich that may have acquired their wealth illegitimately and that have no desire for federal fiscal taxation lead to inaccurate recordings of those with substantial wealth. This means that extreme wealth is more difficult and realistically further away from extreme poverty (Cattani 2007, 4). There is also the difficulty in measuring wealth per household as wealth distribution is difficult to evaluate due to statistic bias from those surveyed. For example, on a wider scale, aggregate global wealth rose by USD 28.7 trillion to USD 418.3 trillion during 2020. So, without accounting for inflation, average wealth is 2.5 times its value since 2000, when it was USD 31,378. These averages do not account for outliers within the statistics, and at first glance may make it seem like globally everyone is financially progressing from where they were twenty years ago (Shorrocks 2021, 7). Another statistical variable that skews results is how wealth is reported. Some wealth reports only cover investable assets, not accounting for owner-occupied homes (Shorrocks 2021, 21). Observing sample households and their real estate, financial assets, and debt can make identifying household characteristics simpler; However, wealth tends to be underreported so statistical analysis is not easily represented (Kim 2017, 27). In South Korea the Gini coefficient was at 67.6 in 2020; This is a numerical indication of its current socioeconomic inequality standing being more unequal than equal (Shorrocks 2021, 47). This is much lower than the United States Gini coefficient of 85 in the same year (Shorrocks 2021, 24).

Examining household characteristics is mostly what *Parasite* does throughout the film to illustrate socioeconomic differences between households. *Parasite* represents SEI through the contrast of two families; Each family represents the upper and lower classes of the Republic of Korea respectively. Contributing attributes of class such as occupation, education, housing, and food are what separate the two families. The film does well to display the differences between the two classes, or rather families, without needing to describe the nuance of how each family got there or the complex reasonings to why there is the divide. The implication of class division is understood by domestic and international audiences by alluding to socioeconomic attributing factors.

Examining the topic of SEI in South Korea, rather than attempting to accurately quantify it, informs how it is relevant to domestic and foreign audiences. *Parasite* is cited by Octavia and Gabilondo as a form of cultural diplomacy by the Republic of Korea (Octavia 2021). Lee's remarks

on how the decades long cultural movement known as the Korean Wave, or Hallyu in Korean, culminated in the success of the 2019 film. Korean cultural export is received well transnationally among conservative audiences, Lee argues, because of desexualized content (Lee 2020). Television series depict non-physical love rather than overt sexuality, and similarly in songs by K-pop artists. People from where the Korean Wave has grown, such as the United States, Hong Kong, and Peru cited the absence of explicit sex as the appeal to the entertainment (Lee 2020; Ravina 2009, 7). Korean exports rose 22.4% in 2020 from 2019 according to the Hallyu Impact Research Report (Lee 2020).

The film begins with the primary narrative focus on the Kim family of four who live in their impoverished basement apartment in Seoul, South Korea. The son, Ki-Woo's, friend Min Hyuk offers him a job to tutor a girl of a wealthy family, the Parks. Ki-Woo has his sister forge a university diploma from the prestigious Seoul University in order to secure the position. Starting his position as the new tutor, we are introduced to the Parks: the father Dong-Ik, the mother Yeon-Kyo, the teenage daughter Da-Hye, and the son, Da-Song. Ki-Woo subsequently suggests the family a therapist for their son, securing a position for his sister. Soon after the father gets a position as the family diver, and the mother as the housemaid. The audience first sees how the Kims' lived before, what they had to do to achieve living and working for the Parks, and the direct parallels between the two families. The building tension surrounding the Kim's insecurities of being seen as less than the Park's, culminates in the film's climax after they discover the hidden basement in which the previous housemaid and her husband are secretly living. The breaking point of the film results in chaos between the two families.

The theoretical perspective of constructivism will be the basis of this research of *Parasite's* thematic and visual representation of SEI. Moon & Kim suggest the use of Liberal-constructivist theory in *Parasite*, and its representation of SEI, contributes to a better political and cultural perspective on whether and how film affects or does not affect domestic and international audiences. Liberal-constructivism could be a compromise between liberal and constructivist fundamentals. Constructivism was originally introduced as a compromise for liberalism; the international relations theory that implies market structures and political institutions are inherently a product of human action and people have given them their meaning (Leheny 2014, 1). It can positively affect International Relations perspectives within East Asian regions. If liberalism focuses on the individual rights and equality of citizens, and constructivism focuses on ideational

factors over material factors, then liberal-constructivism does both. The supporting idea behind constructivism in the East Asian region, is that the area is reminiscent of a shared and fractured past. Leheny and Chaesung support constructivist theory by defining one of its identifying characteristics as socially focused; identity molds national interests and the purpose of national policies. Transnational matters are often those that surround social issues (Leheny 2014, 14; Chaesung 2021). Therefore, when discussing domestic concerns, such as Korean SEI, faults that arise in constructivist theory will weigh ideational factors over individual citizen's equality. Looking at SEI in South Korea from the constructivist perspective, that it is the identity and history over the material aspects that have defined class divides, will elaborate socioeconomic themes in this thesis.

SEI is at the individual level and separate from national wealth inequality. However, a Nation's economic and political interests define the domestic economic landscape that create SEI. Wendt's definition of the constructivist argument is the belief that institutions are nothing but a reflection of interest and identity in their social totality (Wendt 1995; Moon & Kim 2002, 62). Therefore, if inter-subjective conception of identity, such as historic and environmental factors that forge a shared value system and community, are not addressed then regional cooperation will lack authenticity (Moon & Kim 2002, 62). Moon & Kim argue that acknowledging universally understood issues that are not limited to an East-Asian context, such as war and peace, wealth and poverty, and fear and mistrust, can be summarized by sharing constructivist and realist concepts to be defined as "liberal constructivism (63). Leheny supports Moon's argument by contributing that Western IR theory such as constructivism do not translate easily to Asian principles in its foundational concept of material interest over ideology and identity (Leheny 2014, 5). This is especially effective in the argument within this paper that acknowledges *Parasite's* themes of SEI as a universally comprehensible topic. Addressing SEI from a constructivist perspective will represent the immaterial aspects that have popularized *Parasite* domestically and internationally. Socioeconomic indicators such as education and occupation, both that are addressed in the content analysis, will be analyzed through a constructivist perspective.

Chapter 2: Content Analysis and Methodology

Content Analysis of *Parasite*'s English script will be used to analyze the representation of SEI. Although the content framework of this form of analysis will limit the visual format of film to its text-based script, it will allow for a more methodological approach to SES markers referenced in the film. Visual cues from camera work can be referenced to elaborate but is nonetheless much more limited. Content Analysis focuses on SEI and will emphasize the similar and divergent attributes; maintaining what Granaheim refers to as a hermeneutic perspective, revealing meanings in the data with various degrees of interpretation. This form of analysis will allow for subsequent researchers to recreate and allow this study to form detailed examples of how SEI is represented and what that means for all audiences. This research will allow for insight on how Korean audience members, international civilians, and international and domestic policy makers received the film. Content analysis allows for objective perspective and analysis of an otherwise artistic creation that typically allows open interpretation. The immaterial examples that constructivism provides to this study is demonstrated through this content analysis. However, Granaheim explores how different interpretations of Qualitative Content Analysis may vary and how that represents challenges in the analysis. There are several different approaches: inductive, deductive, and abductive which can result in different research outcomes. Using Abductive Content Analysis, as Granaheim et al defines it, is characterized by a search for patterns of similarities and differences during the analysis and complimenting that with more abstract concepts to form an argument; it is described as having both inductive and deductive complimentary qualities (Granaheim et al 2017, 29-31). Using inductive content analysis for *Parasite* to interpret patterns of SEI may present the risk of being limited to empirical interpretation without new insight. Therefore, this study will attempt to avoid this limitation through the subsequent qualitative analysis of surrounding perspectives of the film, such as domestic and international policy that has resulted from Bong Joon Ho, as it relates to the film, or *Parasite* specifically.

Among the data extraction method of Content Analysis there is also the degree of interpretation and abstraction. I will be using ATLAS.ti content analysis software to conduct this analysis, which enables me to efficiently tag my codes to sections of the script and with locating them for reference during the writing process of this study. Whether or not the study will have high abstraction and low correlating interpretations of concepts will affect the categories and

themes within the study. Categories often include opinions, attitudes, perceptions, and experiences where the interpretations will need to be clearly defined so as to have clear results found from the content analysis (Graneheim et al. 2017, 32). For example, SEI is a theme that is less abstract than the concept of 'love' whose definition can be fluid. SEI is definable, although complicated. Using codes that depict immaterial examples of wealth indicators, such as level of education and occupation, will require some level of interpretation. However, as the immaterial codes are not abstract or theoretical, perspective bias is limited. Codes being applied throughout the script are: smell, setting, food, lower-class signifier, upper-class signifier, and education. As occupation falls within either lower or upper-class signifier codes, it will not have its own code, but will be addressed accordingly. Education is a sub-code that refers primarily to the viewing stone motif throughout the film, or other tangible relics signifying education such as diplomas.

Parasite's basic plot structure begins with the impoverished Kim's struggling in their Semi-basement apartment, barely making ends meet between the two parents, and the two adult children. Throughout the film it starts with the son Ki-Woo getting a tutoring position with the upper-class Park family, until all of them have been gradually hired by the Parks. The Inciting Incident is Ki-Woo's friend, Min-Hyuk, visiting the family and offering Ki-Woo the tutoring position that he ends up accepting. Ki-Woo impresses the Park mother, Yeon-Gyo, and suggests hiring an art therapist for her son, hiring Ki-Woo's sister without realizing the truth. Then, Ki-Woo and Ki-Jung have the Park's driver fired, and successfully get their father, Ki-Taek, the position. Finally, they get the housekeeper fired and get their mother, Chung-sook, hired, successfully getting their entire family hired through deception. The Midpoint of the plot is when the Parks go away on a camping trip, leaving the Kims alone in their home. This is when the old housekeeper returns to reveal her husband, Geun-sae, has been secretly living in the hidden Park basement for years without the Parks knowledge. The Kims attempt to maintain their gambit by hiding both the housekeeper and husband in the basement, unintentionally killing the housekeeper in the process. The next day, the Parks have returned to have a birthday party for their son that Geun-sae interrupts, murdering Ki-jung. Ki-taek reacts by murdering the Park father, Dong-ik. The film concludes with Ki-taek stuck in the Park basement, Ki-Woo dreaming of rescuing him, still stuck in their semi-basement apartment that they started with in the beginning (Bedard 2021). The occupational differences and living conditions that each family has is an apparent visual

contrast within the film. The plot, and actions within the film subtly reference real life issues that will be addressed during the content analysis.

The parameters of content analysis for the script of *Parasite*, as it is 144 pages in length, will mostly focus on key themes and code words: food, smell, setting, lower-class signifier, and upper-class signifier; education is a subset of code within lower and upper-class signifier codes. As these are not subjective codes and straightforward in coding, they will eliminate room for variable interpretations and allow for a constructive analysis. Motif's that are lower-class or upper-class signifiers or intended for the audience to recognize as such by Bong Joon Ho, will be acknowledged and analyzed as such. For example, the Viewing Stone that is gifted at the very start of the film, page 9 of the script, but is seen and referenced throughout the rest of the film, is representative of the Kim's lower-class standing. The stone is gifted by Min Hyuk to Ki-Woo and his family. Min Hyuk claims that it is one of many that his grandfather has collected over the years, as if to reference the abundance and loss of value for Min Hyuk and his grandfather who told him to give it to the Kim's (Bong 2019, 9). Also known as "scholars rocks", or 'suseok' in Korean, in reference to the practice of collecting attractively shaped stones, popular during the Joseun dynasty from 1392 to 1897; They were often displayed on the tables of Confucian scholars (Brzeski 2020). This explicit image represents a tangible education gap between the two families. This is emphasized by the rock's reappearance throughout the film. Bong's regular collaborator and actor for Mr. Kim, Song Kang-ho, describes the rock's representation of Ki-Woo's desire to find a better life for his family. The film's climax results in the rock's use as a murder weapon for Ki-jung, and the rock that Ki-Woo saw as a symbol for the Kim's potential, now a Sisyphean metaphor (Brzeski 2020). The better off, Min-Hyuk, having an abundance and thinking little of it, while the Kim's receive their first and happen to have little formal education. The other codes for the content analysis will be thematically analyzed of the socioeconomic implications throughout the film.

In my content analysis codebook, I have identified key words and associated themes that build on economic standing for the character's involved. Rather than focusing on more abstract concepts, concrete depictions of socioeconomic differences in the film such as physical setting or smell that is referenced in the script, will have little room for interpretation and allow for objective analysis. I have coded for existence of these concepts, while taking note of frequency, without making frequency the primary focus. When food, smell, or location is mentioned the entire sentence or relevant sentences, if a continuous conversation, will be highlighted according to the

code word. Lower class signifier and upper-class signifier are two more abstract code words that will work in junction with the other three to clarify the intent of other codes. For example, when the subway is mentioned in comparison to the Park's car, "subway" will be coded as lower-class signifier, and "car" will be coded as upper-class signifier.

Upper-class signifier's are typically coded in junction with other codes such as food. On page 28 of the script, the storage basement contents in the Park house is listed in its quantity and quality (Bong 2019, 28). This section is coded as both as the food listed is clearly food, but also represented in the higher average standard of living that the Park's appreciate because of their higher income and class standing. This contrasts with the lower-class signifier code, such as that found on page 2 of the script, when Chung-sook references their phones being suspended, and being kicked out of their home by their neighbors, detailing their current plight as a lower-class family (Bong 2019, 2). Applying constructivist perspective when analyzing the food example of an upper-class signifier prioritizes the social aspect over the material (Bong 2019, 28). Therefore, when coding food that is abundant as an upper-class signifier, one must first recognize how that impacts the Park families social time spent together when compared to the Kims rather than analyzing the specific differences of food type. A realist perspective would differ in its argument that anarchical regional order is inevitable but manageable though the logic of deterrence and alliance politics (Moon & Kim 2002, 61). This perspective may rationalize *Parasite's* socioeconomic structure as inevitable but manageable, which is not Bong's intent. The Park family has food security, more than the Kim's have ever had. This is one reason the Kim's covet their wealth and status, as it provides a security they have never had but would like to experience.

When coding 'setting' I noted where the change in overall setting location was set, such as property location rather than changes between rooms. The change in location between neighborhoods makes a larger noticeable contrast between setting than a shift between rooms. Bong makes relatively few cuts within the film- 960 compared to the average 1,500 cuts in a Korean action film- as he prefers panning shots and editing within the camera (Brzeski 2019). This stylistic choice that Bong makes, makes it more fluid for me not to need to reference setting changes as much as well. The script refers to setting changes with the main location first, then the subsetting listed second, and time third, such as MANSION – ENTRANCE - NIGHT. I will code 'setting' when the first referenced setting change in the script is listed as different from the previous scenes. In the Park's house, much of the film occurs in the kitchen and open floor plan that does

not have walls to act as visual separators between the rooms. Although these shifts are noted in the script, I chose not to code for the relatively subtle movement in relation to the larger context of setting changes.

Coding for ‘food’ will be more straightforward than when coding for ‘setting’ as I will code it whenever it is referenced, whether specific food or not. This is because a subtle reference of food is still useful insight into analyzing how food is served by the help to the Park family, or the Kim’s posing as financially better off than the reality, such as that on page 56 of the script when Ki-Jung tells Chung-Sook to leave peaches outside of Da-Song’s room. This food related detail does not act as a major plot device but is still worth selecting for the over-all analysis. When the Kim’s decide to make ramen with flank steak, two contradictorily cheap and expensive food products, on page 89 of the script, it is more instrumental in portraying the narrative conflict in the film that the Kim’s are in (Bong 2019, 56-89). The explicit detail of type of foods is more instrumental, despite the context being completely different, with the Park’s away from home leaving the house alone for their lower-class employees.

Coding for ‘smell’ is straightforward as whenever it is referenced it is even more explicit than food. As film is a visual and not an olfactory experience, so when smell is referenced, it is an intentional narrative device. Therefore, when a character references smell, it is used to make an underlying statement about the state of the person speaking or is speaking to. For example, on page 53 on the script when Mr. Park and Ki-Tek are discussing the housekeeper that had just quit, and how Mr. Park’s shirts will start to smell from having no housekeeper or a homemaking wife to keep them clean. This scene specifically includes smell and food codes that foreshadow future events in the film, and subtly reference the negative qualities related to the impoverished workers and how the Park’s strived to maintain their positive-clean and well-fed attributes (Bong 2019, 53). This reference to smell is more of a commentary on the whole dirt-spoon class, and Kim family. Another instance of smell in the film when the Park father recoils from Mr. Kim may refer to a more specific political commentary. Impeached president Park Geun-hye refused to shake hands with a supporter, and the incident went viral; The issues raised in the film may resonate with South Koreans more than international audiences because of the many domestic references within the film (Chen 2019; Lee 2020). Smell is the least frequently used code throughout the script out of the primary three: food, setting, and smell. Outside of this content analysis, context of the culture

and politics has affected both the creation and performance of *Parasite* in Korean and international audiences.

Chapter 3: Bong Joon Ho and cinematic context

Korea has a politically and culturally dynamic connection to the United States that has affected bilateral trade relations and cultural output for decades. Bong Joon Ho's cinematic influence is similarly connected to the West. He was born in 1969 in Seoul, growing up as a consumer of Hollywood films. Shelley Fishkin suggests that we regard non-American people as active agents who engage US culture on their own terms and use it to pursue personal agendas. Others, such as Chris Berry and Mary Farquhar, suggest film acts as a spatial metaphor of a "larger arena connecting differences," allowing filmmakers creative freedom to give and take from all cinematic output (Klein 2008, 873-876). Bong is an internationally respected filmmaker influenced by American film, left to reinterpret, and form an artistic individual style that is distinct from other filmmakers. Korean-US relations history therefore has played a large part in Bong's artistic influence. Environment largely influences art, and the US has contributed to the Korean environment throughout the years.

United States-Korean diplomatic relations began with Korea's first 1882 Treaty with a Western nation. The royal family sought US aid for preserving Korean independence from both China and Japan, as both nations maintained strong influence over Korea. The first US diplomatic envoy arrived in Korea the following year in 1883. Horace Allen, a medical missionary, was given a government position in gratitude of saving Prince Min Yong-ik's life after a failed assassination attempt in 1884; This paved the way for Protestant Christianity in Korea (Kang 2018, 403-406). Japan's annexation and occupation of the Korean peninsula ended with the conclusion of World War II (Seo & Cho 202, 621). Following the war, the US military occupied the South between 1945-1948 and facilitated the return of Syngman Rhee as the first president of the Republic of Korea in 1948. After the end of the World Wars, the US divided Korea between a communist North and capitalist South at the end of the Korean War. The US then stationed soldiers throughout the country during the Korean War and has since maintained a military presence to the present. Klein claims that South Korea became a linchpin for cold war containment policy for the USA (Klein 2008, 875).

Prior to World War II, Americans in Korea were mostly missionaries from 1880's and onward. The positive perception with the arrival of American missionaries shifted with the American military personnel and their different behavior after years of war. In 1945 General Hodge wrote about his concern of soldiers' behavior and lack of integrity. He mentioned 'licentiousness', 'hold-ups and robberies', and bribes being accepted by Koreans seeking goods in Japanese warehouses. Hodge expressed his belief that such behaviors could potentially result in a failed occupation (Stuek & Yi 2010, 190-191). During the 1960's South Korean perspective of the US was positive for saving Korea from Japanese occupation after World War II, fighting with them during the Korean War, and providing economic aid when it was needed. This positive outlook shifted more negatively by the 2000's with the US involvement in dividing the Korean Peninsula, the advent of military dictatorship, and the 1980's Kwangju massacre (Kim et al 2006, 428). From a constructivist perspective, one can recognize the US geopolitical interest in the Korean peninsula's future hegemonic identity.

Berger argues that many regional tensions such as historical memory, colonial legacy, and varying civilization claims culminate in identity and ideological concerns (Berger 2003; Leheny 2014, 2). Constructivism recognizes the way regional international relations can challenge the dominant presupposition's about how the world works, that realism or liberalism cannot (Leheny 2014, 14). South Korean bilateral policy has differed dependent on historical memory, such as China and South Korean's fear of Japan's Imperialism. Recent deteriorating Japanese-South Korean relations were demonstrated in September 2015 by President Park Geun Hye's participation in the Beijing military parade (Chaesung 2021). The realist argument that bilateral negotiations are necessary evils for society to function is paradoxical when comparing inter-Korean relations. There is currently an internally driven dynamic between North and South Korea, driven by the South. External forces such as the nuclear confrontation between North Korea and South Korea's ally the US (Armstrong 2005, 2). Constructivism supports that the shared Korean identity is a factor that cannot be disregarded when discussing inter-Korean relations. The North Korean nuclear problem arguably requires China's diplomatic assistance. This conflict in identity but necessity for peace highlights how realism's explanation for bilateral policy evolution does not effectively cover national interests that are driven by identity. China and South Korea have similar experiences with Japanese Imperialism that constructivists may argue explains South Korea's bilateral preference towards China instead of Japan (Chaesung 2021). Constructivists can argue

from Park's example that South Korean identity has resulted in bilateral differences. The historically complex regional identities should not be reduced to analyze bilateral relations in this cultural context that constructivism allows for.

Bilateral trade restrictions or sanctions imposed on Korea is another variable to have formed South Korean historical memory and identity. Film quotas within the country effected film output, restricting foreign and domestic artistic influence, that has shaped cultural memory. The Park Chung-hee military regime-imposed quotas, and an import and distribution ban of foreign films in 1966; The ban on direct distribution of Hollywood films was lifted in 1987, maintaining (Klein 2008, 876; Park 2015, 80). Despite having achieved his power through a military coup and inputting repressive control of the media, his regime fostered rapid industrialization, production and consumption of publications and television programing critical of his era. Park Chung-hee is known either as an antinational fascist dictator to a national savior; His legacy has been controversial because of the economic and political reforms that came from his administration prior to his assassination (Moon 2009, 2). Park's controversial legacy would eventually be passed down to his -more or less democratically elected- daughter and future leader of South Korea, Park Geun-he (Kim 2017, 839-840). The financial control on foreign currency that remained in effect until 1986 that acted as another practical barrier for distribution. By removing price ceilings and the import limits of one foreign film per year per distributor, American films were able to flourish on the market again. Thomas Guback argues that the cost of film production is primarily in the first copy, and duplicates and distribution throughout domestic and global markets are where the cost is made up (Young-a 2015, 79-80). Having distribution quotas of foreign and domestic films limits what an audience is most likely to see and therefore be influenced by.

Film is a means of hegemonic identity and the populations consumption of both foreign and domestic films rather than just production. Andrew Higson argued that Hollywood films are integral to national culture or popular imagination in countries where film is an established popular media (Klein 2008, 871). This is especially true for South Korea since the 1987 lift on foreign media. Bong Joon Ho grew up in Seoul in the 1970's and 80's consuming Hollywood films, citing directors such as William Friedkin, Steven Spielberg, Sam Peckinpah, and Francis Ford Coppola as artistic influences. Bong appreciated the modernist aesthetics of Taiwanese directors Edward Yang and Hou Hsiao-Hsien, Japanese social satires by Shohei Imamura, and psychological films by Korean director Kim Ki-young (Klein 2008, 877). Bong has demonstrated his personal interest

in foreign policy, outside of film, with his staging of public protests against the 2007 Free Trade Agreement, that reduced the screen quota from 146 to 73 local film showings a year. (Klein 2008, 887). American Golden Age cinema influence is visible in Bong's works. An example of Golden Age film with common themes of Bong's work is *The Housemaid* by Kim Ki-young, that maintains a cautionary tale of Americanization (Klein 2008, 893-894). Christina Klein suggests that forty-three years after Kim's film, Bong's epilogue in *Memories of Murder* would foreground Western-style home décor would pay homage to his prior influences (Klein 2008, 893-894). Bong's blends American and Korean identity within his films that often refer to social struggles, giving complex meaning for audiences to interpret.

Klein describes Bong's cinematic style as unique in using Hollywood genre conventions as a framework for exploring and critiquing South Korean social and political issues (Klein 2008 873). *Memories of Murder* has been argued to represent a critique on capitalism, just as *Parasite* has. However, Bong's intentions of the weight of the film's monster and its symbolism have been primarily the lack of aid that people provide in the film (Klein 2008, 888). *Parasite* makes social commentary on the unfair advantages and disadvantages that come with wealth disparities and class differences. Ironically, the film that made this commentary was sponsored by the Samsung heiress Miky Lee (Sol 2020). However, film production costs are high and essential to the process. Both Bong and Miky Lee were allegedly forced to leave their home country because of state censorship during the 2010s; It was during this time that Bong started writing and researching for *Parasite*, that Miky Lee would then help produce. Lee's brother spent time in jail during the Park administration under embezzlement and tax evasion charges (Park & Lee 2020).

Parasite is loosely based on Bong's experience as a math tutor in his early 20's for the son of a wealthy family in Seoul. Bong, living less than lavish at the time, was introduced to the family by his girlfriend and future wife, who was already tutoring the boy in English. Bong began writing *Parasite* after finishing his 2013 film *Snowpiercer*, and had his production assistant, Han Jin Won research for *Parasite* while Bong finished making *Okja* (Brzeski 2019). *Snowpiercer* and *Parasite* both address the common theme in Korean cinema, income inequality. Despite SEI being an issue in many other countries such as the United States, 10% of South Koreans have 66% of the nation's wealth as of 2015 (Chen 2019). Korea has 2% of the world's millionaires as of 2019 (Shorrocks 2021, 19). The inequalities have spawned new lingo to refer to the growing class gaps, such as referring to those of certain classes to the type of spoon they have, derived from the English idiom,

‘to be born with a silver spoon’ that refers to people’s inherited privileges (Kim 2017, 840). Bong’s personal experience, that culminated decades later in the *Parasite* screenplay, depicts another artistic interpretation of Korea’s class system with a plot that depicts this and concludes with neither the upper or lower class being the indisputable ‘winners’ of the story.

Chapter 4: Socioeconomic representation in *Parasite*

Social class is not always used as a measure for socioeconomic inequality, depending on the approach. According to functionalist theory of SEI, social mobility assures that hard work is rewarded with upward mobility. Marxist theory does not rule out that mobility may occur but allows for social causation factors to be accounted for as well as bias towards a social selection. Wohlfarth identifies four social classes: managers, supervisors, decision-makers, and workers; after identifying the difference in classes, income inequality can be studied. These classes can then be divided and defined even further into hierarchy as: bourgeoisie, small employers, petty bourgeoisie, managers, decision-makers, supervisors, semiautonomous employees, and workers. Self-employment is defined by the top three classes: bourgeoisie, small employers, and petty bourgeoisie. Decision making and authority can locate managers, decision-makers, and supervisors. For semiautonomous employees, they fall outside the managerial structure and have autonomy that is operational as not being supervised. The workers fall at the bottom outside of all other outlines; they do not have authority, cannot make decisions, and do not have autonomy in their job. Education, for example, results in more positive returns for the manager class than the worker class. Measuring the individual or the family unit can result in different research results. For example, married women being classified with their husbands’ level of income may skew results. However, restricting employment for women, and accounting for social norms that expect women to fully maintain the household can be argued as a representation of the class system (Wohlfarth 1997, 400-402).

Since *Parasite* observes two family units, it is simple to observe the two families as one whole unit and representations of two classes. However, it is also within the film’s capability to note instances represented to each individual and how that may result for one. Yet, each factor that contributes to the Kim’s class struggles is almost wholly experienced by all the family members. All the Kim’s family members are noted by the Park’s to be socially separate according to their

smell. Throughout the film it is an anxiety that all take note of to varying degrees, the father being the one to be most notably affected. Education and sex can stratify socioeconomic status (SES). Education and occupational prestige are to a considerable extent interchangeable, despite being two factors of SES (Wohlfarth 1997, 405). Body odor, food, and setting are tools that director Bong uses to depict the class gap between the two families. Body odor is attributed as distinctly different between the two classes because of the different public and private spaces they find themselves socially separated from by their economic advantages. Poor people taking the subway versus rich people taking their expensive cars (Park 2019). Merriam Webster leaves two definitions for the word parasite, the first: “an organism living in, on, or with another organism in order to obtain nutrients, grow, or multiply often in a state that directly or indirectly harms the host.” The second definition: “someone or something that resembles a biological parasite in living off of, being dependent on, or exploiting another while giving little or nothing in return” (Merriam-Webster 2022). The Kim’s parasitic behaviors are exemplified by their drastic reaction, murdering the previous housekeeper, once they realize their occupation may be threatened. However, the Parks are arguably exploiting the Kim’s socioeconomic position, or rather the capitalist structure that has established the class system the Parks benefit from and the Kim’s endure (Turner 2021, 8). In the film, both families can be seen to exhibit parasitic behavior. The factors that support each families SES are dependent on each other, and therefore one cannot exist without the other.

The Kim’s lack of affluence contrasts the Parks and is one immaterial example of social class disparity. Constructivists, regardless of differing scholarly opinions, agree that international politics is social and cultural, developed by the meanings people ascribe to things (Leheny 2014, 2). Social capital is another aspect of SES that is not related to material wealth, but rather the social aspects. Rather than a physical structure that society ascribes meaning, it is an immaterial social network. Social capital entered academic and policy debates in the late 1980s, as it explained major social elements of relationships such as social networks, civic engagement, norms of reciprocity, and generalized trust. As it is largely contextual and not fully researched, it is ineffective in concluding more quantitative questions. However, when considering SES in a fictional story that can use social capital to contextualize relationships between two families, it is useful. Some criticize the use of social capital as it is more representative of property of a community or region rather than an individual. Social capital

denotes ties among people who are very close, as it requires bonding; There will often be the use of key personal networks such as: race, ethnicity, education, age, religion, gender, and political affiliation (Bhandari & Yasunobu 1, 19; Uphoff et al. 2013). Eating scenes are frequently used in *Parasite* so show the gap between the rich and the poor. The film begins with the family having two slices of toast, and after they are all hired by the Park's their meals are upgraded to a diver's cafeteria buffet. Their connection to the wealthy Parks have granted them upward social mobility. (Liu 2020, 78). This is an example of the film depicting social capital, since family meals are a familial bonding experience.

According to Miky Lee, *Parasite*'s producer, and Bong's longtime coworker, she has used her social capital from years of entertainment experience and being in the U.S, promoting *Parasite* by word-of-mouth among opinion leaders (Pyne 2020; Park 2015). Prior to *Parasite*, Miky Lee has helped produce Bong's 2013 film *Snowpiercer* and *The Host* in 2006 ('Miky Lee' 2022). Miky Lee has been a major supporter and influence in Korean pop culture, leading many K-pop stars throughout their careers through the companies she chairs. Lee is currently vice-chair of CJ Group, whose subsidiary Cj E&M owns Mnet, the South Korean music channel. Mnet has a music school, M Academy that trains the next generation of K-pop idols. Mnet Asian Music Awards (MAMA) has platformed K-pop idols since 1999. Lee's influence has extended passed multiple Korean conglomerates into the American animation studio DreamWorks as one of the founding investors alongside Steven Spielberg (Pyne 2020). Lee has been globally recognized for her contribution to the entertainment industry. Among her many accolades, the World Economic Forum selected her as the Global Leader for Tomorrow Community member in 1997. She was the first Asian woman awarded the World Business Award at the 2006 Women's World Awards. The following year in 2007 the Management Association gave her the CEO of the Year Award for her management of one of the largest companies in Korea (Miky Lee [Mie Kyung Lee] 2022). In *Parasite* we see the use of social capital with the start of the film, a classmate- someone who has bonded through education- of Ki-Woo gives his friend a lead on a job that he otherwise would not have had the opportunity for.

Inequality of educational resources is a socioeconomic class marker that is representative in Korean life in real life and in *Parasite*. Ki-Woo has retaken the university entrance exam four times but failed to enter. His friend Min Hyuk, who offers him his position

with the Parks, is a college student. Ki-Woo's sister, Ki-Jung, never graduated high school. Ki-Jung and Ki-Woo explain that neither can further their education because of poverty. The economic gap between the rich and poor is represented by education in addition to the immediately obvious financial standing (Liu 2020 80). Ex-president Park's confidante Choe Sun Sil's daughter Chong Yu-ra was revealed to have bought her unearned high school diploma. Chong Yu-ra earned her place at university for being a talented equestrian instead of through normal procedure. Further investigation found that Chong had examination answers and writing assignments done for her by several professors and assistants, and that Chong had only attended seventeen days of her final high school year (Kim 2017, 840). This scandal parallels Kim Ki-Jung and Ki-Woo, contrasting the idea of maintaining or obtaining a high socioeconomic status through falsifying educational records (Bong 2019, 12). *Parasite* is both a literal and artistic example of SES and political propaganda that can be used both against and in favor of South Korean officials. Officials maintain income stability and generational wealth that enables them to opportunities lower social classes cannot consider.

Employment competition plays a large role in generational wealth and occupation statuses. The rise in SES in the Republic of Korea is the result of complex economic political, and social initiatives. The 2018 Korea's record high unemployment rate of 10% exemplifies and the overall improvement to education levels has resulted in the need to make qualifications unique through GPA, career counseling, and internships (Liu 2020, 80). Other evidence has been found that one in three young people fail to find work (Kim 2017, 845). This unemployment demographic has contributed to restlessness and belief that upward social mobility is impossible. There has been rising income inequality in Korea for decades now. Neoliberal economic reforms made after the 1997 financial crisis under the guidance of the IMF, and the 2008 global housing crisis highlighted the inadequate social welfare and inequality that had been rising in Korea. South Korea is still frequently cited as an example of a state with rapid economic growth with relatively low levels of SES (Shin & Kong 2014, 32).

The Kim and Park families in *Parasite* both exhibit socio-economic markers that the audience is left to interpret. Understanding of socio-economic marker's such as occupation and education are given little room for interpretation for the audience, as Bong uses these class markers as plot devices. For example, Mr. Park is referenced as a 'high-flying CEO' in Bong's script with his office space depicted several minutes later in screen time on page 41 of the script

(Bong 2019, 32, 41). The high-level occupation of CEO juxtaposes Mr. Kim's occupation as the Park family driver, that he would eventually be upgraded to after Ki-Woo and Ki-Jung's plotting to get him hired. Mrs. Park references how Min-Hyuk's reference for Ki-Woo was more important than his fake diploma (Bong 2019, 13). Despite education being fiscally out of reach for the Kim family, it is Ki-Woo's recommendation from the higher socioeconomic status Min-hyuk, and his intriguing interview that lands him the position as Park Da-Hae's English tutor (Bong 2019, 19).

The other codes food and smell are symptoms of the person's level of education and occupation, and therefore also represent a person's socioeconomic standing. The Kim's infiltration of the Park household may blend the two classes together in setting, but they will maintain their characteristic differences for the audience, as they gradually contribute to the climax of the film. Generational wealth and poverty inform future economic demographics. Nepotism and social networks maintained by generational and class-based connections have evolved into the modern day South Korean society, *Parasite* illustrates this through a dramatic and comedic lens. Political officials' relations and policies that have resulted from the film's popularity can further contextualize this thesis' relevance past the content analysis.

Chapter 5: Domestic and International Influence

Parasite is a groundbreaking international film that won four Oscars and over 50 awards from global film festivals, making its cultural influence relevant transnationally (Dongwoo 2020). The artistic representation of class struggles and socioeconomic disparities between the upper and lower classes is socially relevant regardless of nationality. However, the film has affected the world outside of film dialogue in its socioeconomic perspective of Korean families. Global wealth distribution for 2020 has indicated that 50% of adults account for less than 1% of total global wealth. The richest, top 10% of adults, owned 82% of global wealth, and the top percentile owned 45% of all household assets. Therefore, wealth inequality is high with most people compromising a mid to lower SES (Shorrocks 2021, 25). *Parasite* has demonstrated its narrative prowess in its international success. Korean and international audiences resonated with its social commentary because of how relevant SEI is to everyone today.

Domestically in South Korea Bong has received praise, much like he has internationally, for *Parasite*. *Parasite* won many awards domestically in Korea including the ‘grand prize’ in the film category from one of the most prestigious entertainment award shows in South Korea at the 2020 Baeksang Awards, and Best Picture at the 39th Youngpyeong Awards along (Dongwoo 2020; Kim 2019). Among *Parasite*’s many accolades is the first foreign-language film to win best picture at the Oscars, four awards at the 92nd Academy Awards, the Palme d’Or at the 2019 Cannes Film Festival, Golden Globe Awards, the Screen Actors Guild Award, and the British Academy Film Awards (Rottenberg 2020; Sol 2020). With his recent success after the film, Korean politicians moved to enshrine Bong in a museum or have his childhood home preserved in respect; Bong has denied any commemoration until after his death. The public figures making these grand gestures appears to be mostly an attempt to garner support for future National assembly elections being held in April of 2020. Bong has been blacklisted and put under domestic surveillance by previous administrations (Sol 2020). The Lee Myung-bak administration blacklisted Bong, along with 81 other influential figures considered liberal; the subsequent Park Geun-hye government expanded this list to include 9,000 names. Three of Bong’s films - *The Host*, *Memories of Murder*, and *Snowpiercer*- were mentioned in the list for, “highlighting the incompetence of the government... depicting government officials and police as corrupt,” and “denying the order of market economy and provoking social resistance” (Jung 2020). Park Geun-he was voted to be impeached by the South Korea’s National Assembly in December 2016 over abuse of power and other charges, that’s subsequent investigation would eventually expose other powerful figures criminal activity (Kim 2017, 839-840). Compelled, Bong spent much of his time in Hollywood among American directors such as Martin Scorsese and Quentin Tarantino (Sol 2020). Being on the government blacklist meant little to no support and included big supporters and sponsors of Bong’s work such as Song Kang-ho and CJ Group Vice Chairwoman Miky Lee (Jung 2020). Song went on to co-star as Mr. Kim in *Parasite*, the fourth film that he has made with Bong following *Memories of Murder* and *The Host* (Brzeski 2019). Song Kang-ho and Miky Lee were both blacklisted alongside Bong as political repercussions for their contributions towards social commentary the films made.

Despite Bong’s complex relationship with his home country’s government, cultural export of the film is good cultural diplomacy for South Korea. Domestically politicians have tried to benefit with local elections, the international perspective and economic result of *Parasite* has been overwhelmingly positive. The cultural phenomenon of the Korean Wave that started in the 90’s

has only expanded and allowed for more Korean cultural export such as food, film, video games, webtoons, Korean pop music and Korean dramas (Lee 2020; Ravina 2009). Bong was able to fund the film during his exile from South Korea with the financial aid of *Parasite*'s executive producer, Lee Mi-Kyung- also known as Miky Lee. Miky Lee is not only the vice chairwoman of Korean retail-entertainment conglomerate CJ Group but also an heiress to Samsung empire founder Lee Byung-chul. This connection demonstrates *Parasite*'s private-sector appeal (Park & Kim 2020; Lee 2020). Bong's Korean and American connections resulted in the successful production of *Parasite*, as well as the successful nation branding of South Korea around the world.

Nation branding is the process of a nation's images reevaluated to enhance the country's reputation among an international audience. Every country has its own either intentional or unintentional nation branding. Public diplomacy is related as it is government communication directed at foreign audiences to gain positive public perception. Cultural diplomacy, a form of public diplomacy, uses cultural resources and achievements that are internationally recognized to promote national interests (Lee 2020). This can be to combat stereotypes, develop mutual understanding, or advance national reputation and transnational relations. International film awards, such as those won by *Parasite*, are an example of this. Nation branding is not limited to strictly cultural or public diplomacy. It is inclusive of both political, economic, and cultural dimensions that make up a country's image. An example of the Republic of Korea using popular culture beyond entertainment, and instead as a political tool, is when South Korean actor Jeon Kwang-ryul, the lead in K-drama *Huh Jun* that was popular in Iraq, visited the country's First Lady, Hero Ibrahim Ahmed; She was then invited to the Korean Embassy and Foreign Affairs and Trade office to issue a special passport permit for South Koreans. In 2009 South Korea became the first country with a presidential council for improving its national image and brand (Lee 2020).

In response to the film's success, the South Korean government and local governments have pledged to fund infrastructure projects related to those portrayed in *Parasite* and has attempted to market tourism for the film. The South Korean government partnered with the Seoul Metropolitan Government and the Korea Energy Foundation to improve living conditions in semi-basement apartments, offering 3.2 million won (USD2639) per household to upgrade heating systems, replace floors, install air conditioners, dehumidifiers, ventilators, windows, and fire alarms. Film locations from *Parasite* are featured on Seoul's tourism website, offering a *Parasite* themed guided city tour. The local government in Goyang City has invested USD 150 million in

the development of Goyang Film Culture Complex, pledging to restore the film's shooting studio set (Lee 2020).

With rising wealth inequality, comes heightened anxieties among Korean youth. "Spoon theory" or sujō-ron is a recent concept conceived by those struggling to comprehend a reality where social advancement is unrealistic, and an inherited privilege for those with the gold or diamond spoons (Kim 2017, 840). As of 2018 Korea's unemployment rate is 10%, the highest it has been since records started in 1999 (Liu 2020, 80). Youth unemployment remaining relatively static for decades has highlighted its relevance as a serious social issue that has been affected by the unequal education availability based on income. South Korea is the second highest among The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, so despite many prospective university students passing their entrance exam they cannot afford the expensive tuition fees. The outcome of education limitations and deregulation of the labor market has been the rise in employment of non-regular workers; Labor is flexible, employers save on wages and welfare costs, and the part-time or contract workers are no longer protected by social security systems (Shin & Kong 2014, 35-36). Constructivism provides an explanation for Korean youth's anxieties, the social structure that they provide meaning to that has resulted in uncertainty over the current market structure (Witt 2014, 10). Their identity as an employee, an active member in society, is dependent on their participation despite their lack of choice.

Spoon theory calls *Parasite* into question, with the upper-class Park's represented the top 1% upper class, the gold spoon; The Kim's represent the dirt spoon class that makes up the middle and lower classes, everyone that isn't within the top 7.5% earning categories (Kim 2017, 845). The Kim's are representative of the part-time working class that have gradually increased since the 90's, folding pizza boxes for money at the start of the film and only transitioning to a regular living when they are hired by the Parks (Liu 2020, 78). The idea that social mobility is predestined and increasingly more difficult is first challenged by the Kim family in *Parasite*, eventually supporting spoon theory by the film's conclusion. Despite the fact the Kims are caught in their class status of dirt spoon, restricted by the inequality in educational resources and how that has resulted in none of them with an authentic formal degree, they are all smart. Yet, they still have to use their social capital -limited to Min-Hyuk- or forge degrees, in order to appeal to the Park family's expectations of the 'acceptable' level of formal education for them to hire them. According to a study conducted by the Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs, generational poverty has increased nearly

15% from the 36.4% who answered in the previous generation, with 50.7% of the youngest generation maintaining the same lower-class status. This statistic is pervasive in Korean society, where spoon theory has become a common idiom to reconcile stagnant class movement (Liu 2020, 81). This may be one explanation for why *Parasite* was so well received among Koreans, who would perceive the satire and social commentary of Korean class division in the film.

International Relations focuses on the foreign policy one state has with one or more states. In the context of this paper, Korean policies directed towards United States and/or North Korea are International Relations of the Republic of Korea. So far there is no direct correlation with international relations and *Parasite*'s release in 2019. Therefore, further studies could cover the evolution of international relations within the region with foreign policy or further statistical analysis of socioeconomics within the region. Despite being an artistic format, *Parasite* has demonstrated its relevance across many professional fields such as international politics, and economics.

Conclusion

Film represents both domestic culture and popular culture's influence on modern nations. *Parasite* has recently demonstrated how socioeconomic topics in media can resonate with domestic and international audiences. International Relation's constructivist theory examines something that can be both immaterial and material, cultural output; Film is inherently connected to culture, and can be both a physical material and immaterial idea. Social class division are socioeconomically defined and supported by constructivism that maintains historical precedence effects modern Korean identity. Viewing immaterial social constructs through a constructivist lens, one can perceive *Parasite*'s socioeconomic commentary as idealistic and recognizing why the changes need to be made. The film does not make any overt examples of how change can or should be made in Korean or non-Korean societies. However, *Parasite* highlights the tensions that come from socioeconomic divisions driven by capitalism. The use of *Parasite* as a nation branding tool exhibits the interests of Korean political actors, just as it illustrates the general identity of Korean society. Constructivism throughout my content analysis has provided a thematically focused perspective of Korean identity in the socioeconomic disparities between the upper and lower Korean classes.

Historical context of South Korea's formation to its modern state have affected its cultural output in media; Finance and logistics are primary factors behind the funding and distribution of domestic Korean films. Foreign media and bilateral trade deals have affected filmmaker's artistic influences; SES that is affected by Korean political policy also results in individual's influences through life, much like how Bong was inspired to write *Parasite*. Foreign films and culture have been intrusive to Korean art as a result of domestic film quotas input by the state. Censorship and law enforcement has resulted in many artists, and Bong Joon Ho, moving from South Korea to continue to pursue social commentary they want to through art. Socioeconomic disparities and the widening class gap is an increasing social and economic issue that lawmakers and civilians everywhere find personally relevant. *Parasite* illustrates heightened tensions between two social classes that is representative of the realistic heightened tensions between the shrinking upper class and expanding lower classes. This is to say that if art is representative of the culture it comes from, culture is informed by domestic politics, and consequently politics may be affected by popular culture's wake. International relations constructivist perspective has shaped the framework of this study, demonstrating through the case study of *Parasite* how institutions are driven by self-interest and identity. South Korea's proportion of inherited wealth and socioeconomic disparities, its geopolitical importance in the region, and *Parasite*'s constructivist analysis supports the relevance of this thesis in International Relations.

The Republic of Korea acted on the economic incentive to use *Parasite*'s commercial value as a nation branding instrument, despite the irony of the political corruption the film was inspired by. Bong Joon Ho's exile from Korea and inspiration for *Parasite* were a result of domestic political corruption and an economic system focused on maintaining class gaps. Future research should cover more of the economic statistical analysis, as this thesis's scope was limited to the film's thematic analysis in International Relations. This thesis covered how international relations can benefit from film in a regional cultural context. In conclusion, *Parasite*'s production history and bilateral relations give context to how Korean soft power has influenced its domestic policy. Immaterial socioeconomic illustration pushes internationally recognized social issues and is heuristically connected to bilateral trade relations through soft power. I believe analyzing the globally resonant issue of Socioeconomic divisions, as represented by *Parasite*, from a constructivist angle highlights ROK incentives and explanations behind domestic and bilateral policies.

Bibliography

- Armstrong, C. K. (2005). Inter-Korean Relations in Historical Perspective. *International Journal of Korean Unification Studies*. (Vol. 14, No. 2, 2005, pp. 1-20).
- Bedard, M. (2021) "Parasite Screenplay PDF Download: Plot, Characters and Ending." *StudioBinder*, <https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/parasite-screenplay-script-pdf-download/>.
- Bhandari, H., & Yasunobu, K. (2009). What is Social Capital? A Comprehensive Review of the Concept. In *Asian Journal of Social Science* (Vol. 37, Issue 3, pp. 480-510). Elsevier BV. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685309x436847>
- Brzeski, P. (2020) "Bong Joon Ho Reveals the Significance of 'Parasite's' Scholar Stone." *The Hollywood Reporter*, The Hollywood Reporter, <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/general-news/bong-joon-ho-reveals-significance-parasites-scholar-stone-1265811/>.
- Brzeski, P. (2019). "Making of 'Parasite': How Bong Joon Ho's Real Life Inspired a Plot-Twisty Tale of Rich vs. Poor." *The Hollywood Reporter*, The Hollywood Reporter, 24 Aug. 2021, <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-features/making-parasite-how-bong-joon-hos-real-life-inspired-a-plot-twisty-tale-rich-poor-1252015/>.
- Cattani, A. D. (2007) "Socioeconomic Inequalities: Concepts and Research Problems - Scielo." *Universidade Federal Do Rio Grande Do Sul, Sociologias Vol.3 No.se Porto Alegre 2007*, July 2007, http://socialsciences.scielo.org/pdf/s_soc/v3nse/scs_a01.pdf.
- Chaesung, C. (2021 July 20). "A Theoretical Explanation of the Evolving Northeast Asian Architecture: The 'Incompleteness' of Sovereignty." *The Asan Forum*, Department of International Relations: Seoul National University, <https://theasanforum.org/a-theoretical-explanation-of-the-evolving-northeast-asian-architecture-the-incompleteness-of-sovereignty/>.
- Chen, B. X. (2019). "'Parasite' and South Korea's Income Gap: Call It Dirt Spoon Cinema." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/18/movies/parasite-movie-south-korea.html#:~:text=%E2%80%9CPeople%20who%20are%20born%20with,will%20always%20be%20a%20struggle.%E2%80%9D&text=The%20lack%20of%20social%20mobility,directed%20by%20Bong%20Joon%20Ho.>
- Conley, D. (2020) "How Does Socioeconomic Inequality Affect Social Class, Especially for People of Color?" *Boston University, BU Today*, <https://www.bu.edu/articles/2020/how-does-socioeconomic-inequality-affect-social-class-for-people-of-color/>.

- D'Alessio, Dave. (2003). "An Experimental Examination of Readers' Perceptions of Media Bias." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 80, (2): 282–94. Doi: 10.1177/107769900308000204.
- Diez, T. (2006) 'Postmoderne Ansätze', in S. Schieder and M. Spindler (eds) *Theorien der Internationalen Beziehungen*, pp. 471-503. Opladen: Verlag Barbara B
- Directorate, OECD Statistics. (2022) "Glossary of Statistical Terms." *OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms - Gini Index Definition*, <https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=4842>.
- Dongwoo, J. (2020). "'Parasite' Director Bong Joon-Ho Wins Grand Prize at Baeksang Awards." *Yonhap News Agency*, 장동우, 5 June 2020, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20200605009400315>.
- Engert, S., & Spencer, A. (2009). International Relations at the Movies: Teaching and Learning about International Politics through Film. *Perspectives*, 17(1), 83–103. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23616105>
- Farahbakhsh, A. & Ramtin, E. (2021). "The Social Implications of Metaphor in Bong Joon-ho's Parasite." *Cinej Cinema Journal*, Volume 9.1; ISSN 2158-8724 (online); DOI 10.5195/cinej.2021.291; <http://cincj.pitt.edu>
- Gregg, R. W. (1999) 'The Ten Best Films about International Relations', *World Policy Journal* No. 16: 129-134.
- Higson, A. (2002) "The Concept of National Cinema," in *Film and Nationalism*, ed. Alan Williams (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press), 56.
- Bong, J.H. (2019). *Parasite*. Neon.
- Hong K. (2014) Nation Branding of Korea. In: Lee HK., Lim L. (eds) *Cultural Policies in East Asia*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137327772_5
- Iyengar, S., Peters, M. D., and Kinder, D. R. (1982). "Experimental Demonstrations of the "Not-So-Minimal" Consequences of Television News Programs." *The American Political Science Review* 76, 848-58. Doi: 10.2307/1962976.
- Jung, M.H. (2020 Feb. 13). "Why Some Right-Wing Politicians Aren't Thrilled about Success of 'Parasite'." *Koreatimes*, The Korea Times, https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/art/2022/03/689_283366.html.

- Kang, W. J. (2018, August 28). *The first Protestant missionary to Korea and early U.S.-Korean relations*. Missions Box. Retrieved June 2, 2022, from <https://missionsbox.org/missionary-bio/the-first-protestant-missionary-to-korea-robert-jermain-thomas/>
- Klein, C. (2008). Why American Studies Needs to Think about Korean Cinema, or, Transnational Genres in the Films of Bong Joon-ho. *American Quarterly*, 60(4), 871–898. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40068554>
- Kim, H. (2017). “Spoon Theory” and the Fall of a Populist Princess in Seoul. In *The Journal of Asian Studies* (Vol. 76, Issue 4, pp. 839-849). Cambridge University Press (CUP). <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0021911817000778>
- Kim, J. W. (2019). “'Parasite' Won 3 Awards at the 39th Youngpyeong Awards, Including Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Cinematography .” *서울경제*, 서울경제, <https://www.sedaily.com/NewsView/1VPLXITDCQ>.
- Lee, S. T. (2020). “Film as Cultural Diplomacy: South Korea’s Nation Branding through Parasite (2019).” *Springer Link*, Springer Nature Limited, 29 Oct. 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41254-020-00192-1>.
- Leheny, D. (2014). Constructivism and International Relations in Asia. In *The Oxford Handbook of the International Relations of Asia*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199916245.013.0004>
- Liu, C. (2020, December). Analysis of Social Class Inequality Based on the Movie Parasite. In *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Literature, Art and Human Development (ICLAHD 2020)* (Vol. 497, pp. 78-82).
- Moon, C., & Kim, T. (2002). INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS STUDIES IN SOUTH KOREA. *Journal of East Asian Studies*, 2(1), 45–68. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23417710>
- Moon, S. (2009). The cultural politics of remembering Park Chung Hee. *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 19(5), 1-33.
- Moskowitz, C. S., et al. (2008). “Estimating the Empirical Lorenz Curve and Gini Coefficient in the Presence of Error with Nested Data.” *Statistics in Medicine*, U.S. National Library of Medicine, 20 July 2008, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3465674/>.
- Miky Lee (Mie Kyung Lee). (2022). Berklee College. (n.d.). Retrieved June 3, 2022, from <https://www.berklee.edu/people/miky-lee-mie-kyung-lee#:~:text=Lee%20has%20been%20widely%20recognized,win%20the%20World%20Business%20Award>.

“Miky Lee.” *The Movie Database*, TMDb, <https://www.themoviedb.org/person/41288-miky-lee>.

Octavia, L. (2021) “Living in a Hamster Wheel: Identity Construction through Hopes and Terrors in Bong Joon-Ho’s *Parasite*.” *Research Gate*, Universitas Negeri Semarang, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/352218835_Living_in_a_hamster_wheel_Identity_construction_through_hopes_and_terrors_in_Bong_Joon-Ho%27s_%27Parasite%27.

Park, C.Y., and Kim, H.J. (2020). “Korean Conglomerate CJ Shares Credit for *Parasite*’s Oscar Victory - Pulse by Maeil Business News Korea.” *Https://Pulsenews.co.kr/*, Pulse by Maeil Business News Korea, <https://pulsenews.co.kr/view.php?year=2020&no=140750>.

Park, Y. (2015). *Unexpected Alliances Independent Filmmakers, the State, and the Film Industry in Postauthoritarian South Korea*. Stanford University Press.

Pyne, I. (2020 17 Feb.) “Who Is Miky Lee, Executive Producer of Bong Joon-Ho's *Parasite*?” *South China Morning Post*, <https://www.scmp.com/magazines/style/celebrity/article/3050953/who-miky-lee-driving-force-behind-bong-joon-hos-oscar>.

Ravina, M. (2009). ["Introduction: Conceptualizing the Korean Wave"](#) (PDF). *Southeast Review of Asian Studies*. **31**: 3–9.

Rottenberg, J. (2020 Feb. 10) “‘Parasite’ Pulls off Oscar Upset, Winning Four Academy Awards.” *Los Angeles Times*, Los Angeles Times, <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/movies/story/2020-02-09/oscars-2020-winners>.

Seo, J., & Cho, Y. C. (2021). The emergence and evolution of International Relations studies in postcolonial South Korea. In *Review of International Studies* (Vol. 47, Issue 5, pp. 619-636). Cambridge University Press (CUP). <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0260210521000504>

Shin, H. (2020) “‘Parasite’ Reflects Deepening Social Divide in South Korea.” *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 10 Feb. 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-awards-oscars-southkorea-inequality-idUSKBN20414L>.

Shin, K.Y., & Kong, J. (2014). “Why Does Inequality in South Korea Continue to Rise?” *Korean Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 48, No. 6. pp. 31-48.

Shorrocks, A., et al. (2021 June). “Global Wealth Report 2021.” *Credit Suisse*, <https://www.credit-suisse.com/about-us/en/reports-research/global-wealth-report.html>. Accessed 6 Nov. 2021.

Sol, I. (2020 Mar. 10). “‘Parasite’ and Viewing a Film in One’s Imagination to Overcome Cultural Barriers.” *Ffwpu Mission Support*, Blog of Unification Theological Seminary,

<http://familyfedihq.org/2020/03/parasite-and-viewing-a-film-in-ones-imagination-to-overcome-cultural-barriers/>.

Son, I. (2020, March 10). 'Parasite' and viewing a film in one's imagination to overcome cultural barriers. FFWPU International. [http:// www.familyfedihq.org/2020/03/parasite-and-viewing-a-film-inones-imagination-to-overcome-cultural-barriers/](http://www.familyfedihq.org/2020/03/parasite-and-viewing-a-film-inones-imagination-to-overcome-cultural-barriers/)

Stueck W., & Yi, B.. (2010). 'An Alliance Forged in Blood': The American Occupation of Korea, the Korean War, and the US-South Korean Alliance, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 33:2, 177-209, DOI: [10.1080/01402391003590200](https://doi.org/10.1080/01402391003590200)

Turner, E. (2021). The Parasite of Society: Food and Class Studies in Bong Joon-ho's Film *Parasite*. *Digital Literature Review*, 8(1), 7–13. <https://doi.org/10.33043/DLR.8.1.7-13>

Valeriano, B., & Lobasz, J. K. (2013) *Teaching Introduction to International Politics with Film*, *Journal of Political Science Education*. 52-72. Doi.

Witt, M. A. (2014). "South Korea: Plutocratic State-Led Capitalism Reconfiguring." In Michael A. Witt and Gordon Redding (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Asian Business Systems*, 216-237. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Wohlfarth, T. (15 June 1997). "Socioeconomic Inequality and Psychopathology: Are Socioeconomic Status and Social Class Interchangeable?" *Social Science & Medicine*, Pergamon, <https://reader.elsevier.com/reader/sd/pii/S0277953696003553?token=4B43FE0F518B003FC14A79DC4CCC79FA15EB6D585390C288C69B9EE7BD64CE129992264F757F73997C4E97A4EFDF5009&originRegion=eu-west-1&originCreation=20220314110720>.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Parasite. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved June 5, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/parasite>