

# OCCUPATIONAL IDENTITY OF KOREAN FILMMAKERS - KOREAN CONSTITUTION LAW FOCUSING ON BOURDIEU'S THEORY

KYUHA RYOO <sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lecturer, Department of Entertainment, Joongbu University, Korea,

\* Corresponding author: Kyuha Ryoo

*Abstract: Despite the quantitative and qualitative growth of the Korean film industry, filmmakers experience extreme job insecurity. This study's findings are that the most important factor in overcoming job insecurity is professional identification. Based on Bourdieu's theory of culture, the study found that Korean filmmakers cope with difficult working conditions by means of their "artistic identity". The study also revealed how filmmakers perceive commercial films as belonging to cultural production. In exploring these issues, this study used a qualitative research methodology to provide an in-depth study based on the actual experiences of filmmakers. In-depth interviews were conducted with 15 filmmakers to explore the professional identity of Korean filmmakers. The significance of this study lies in the ability to know filmmakers specifically through a study of professional identity. Thus, this study can be used as a basis for improving the working environment of filmmakers in the future.*

**Keywords:** Korean Filmmakers, Korean Constitution Law, Korean Filmmaking, Occupational Identity, Bourdieu, Field of Cultural Production, Cultural Capital, Habitus

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This study aims to explore how filmmakers in South Korea form their professional identities within the film industry. South Korea's film industry has grown to become one of the top five film markets in the world and has achieved great success at global film festivals. However, previous studies have shown that filmmakers face high levels of precarious working conditions and poor treatment behind the scenes. This study seeks to understand why filmmakers remain filmmakers in the face of extreme job insecurity by examining the professional identity of filmmakers. It examines the professional identity of a "filmmaker as an artist" based on Bourdieu's cultural theory. My focus will be on the quality of the filmmaker's subjective experience. In addition, this paper will address the question of how filmmakers in Korea perceive their working lives.

Through the lens of professional identity, this study uses interviews to examine how filmmakers experience precariousness and why they remain in the film industry despite this precariousness.

This study is significant in that it lays the groundwork for a more objective and specific understanding of filmmakers as part of Korean media producers by exploring the issues of precariousness and professional identity of filmmakers. Furthermore, this study can be used as a basis for concrete and practical discussions on how to improve the working environment and treatment of filmmakers in the future by including the voices of workers in the field.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 BOURDIEU'S FIELD, CULTURAL CAPITAL, AND HABITUS

While focusing on the motivation for the production of cultural products, Bourdieu drew attention to the "field," a space within a social organization that is the space of the actors responsible for cultural production. The common characteristics of the field are, first, that the field of social space and class relations is structured by a series of fields organized in a hierarchical structure, including the fields of culture, politics, economy, and power[1]. Second, the field as locational space is a structured space between a series of objective locations and is composed of different capitals. Bourdieu distinguishes between various forms of capital that cannot be reduced to economic capital, such as economic, cultural, and social capital, and symbolic capital, a form in which all three are authorized by prestige and honor.



In particular, cultural capital plays an important role in the "distinction" of tastes. According to Bourdieu (1984), cultural capital is "the acquisition of a form of knowledge, an internalized code, the ability to decipher cultural relations and cultural products, the sensitivity to decipher them, and the awareness of being a social actor with whom one can share in deciphering them" that gives an individual a higher social status[2]. Unlike economic capital, cultural capital does not directly create social status. Instead, cultural capital operates as a mechanism to "distinguish" cultural tastes and attitudes and to use cultural objects, which in turn produces social status. In the case of cultural capital based on habitus, it is formed naturally over time, regardless of intention, due to the influence of cultural environments such as home and education.

Within the field, actors struggle against each other and employ strategies called habitus as a "system of dispositions. For Bourdieu, habitus is a socially learned, generated, and embodied system of dispositions. However, it is not simply an individual disposition, but a framework of collective experience and cognition that constrains and constitutes it. It is this socially constructed schema, not pure acquired knowledge, that determines individual perception and behavior. This has two functions. First, it creates cultural dispositions. Second, it constitutes a particular code of social behavior[3]. Thus, habitus functions as a sanction for violating social practices and as a formalization that gives universality to social behavior through which hierarchical order is reproduced. These cultural dispositions and social practices are created by the ruling class, which controls the cultural hegemony of society.

Within the field, habitus and distinction are simultaneously at work, as one seeks to be valued for the characteristics one possesses over others. This distinction is the product of family and education. Especially when it comes to the hierarchical relationship between the arts, consumers' perceived social hierarchies are still at play. These art tastes are not based on purity, but on class, which is inseparable from society. Hierarchy is based on the symbolic violence of the dominant class, which seeks to excel through "distinction" and oppress the subordinate class. However, symbolic violence seems socially natural due to the nature of symbolic capital, and it is difficult for modern people to recognize that they are trapped in the logic of social hierarchy.

For Bourdieu, this habitus cultural capital is of paramount importance in the context of a class conflict, because the dominant and the subordinated experience different cultures from the outset, and the two groups have different starting points. Habitus is strongly associated with class characteristics. But it is not necessarily limited to material capital. The dominant class also displays habitus through distinction. When economic capital is abundant and when cultural capital is abundant, the habitus of distinction is expressed in different ways. Assuming that habitus is determined by class, it is crucial to understand the social mechanisms through which it is acquired. Bourdieu emphasized the everyday educational system as a key mechanism for this acquisition. Through the process of socialization, Bourdieu believed that individuals go through a school curriculum, and it is at this point that habitus is formed and reinforced. In *The Issues of the Body*, Bourdieu argues that this logic is reproduced by schools and legitimized by assessments and examinations. This is because the admission criteria, curricula, and learning assessments of schools themselves reflect the values of the ruling class, such as utility and rationality. The representations (schemas) imposed by education reinforce the dominant ideology and conceal unequal class reproduction. The control of individual habits through education, rather than the control of consciousness, is where the political effect of the ideological apparatus begins.

## 2.2 THE FIELD OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION

The field of cultural production is a space that constitutes a hierarchy and is defined by struggling to monopolize privileged cultural authority. The unique activity of this field is to produce and reproduce the belief that culture is a "separate and sacred world"[2], where the dominant economic logic is suspended. The confrontation between the sub-field of limited production and the sub-field of large-scale production is the basis for the hierarchization of the output of producers in the cultural field. Production is done by professionals and primarily for professionals in the field of limited production. Cultural producers in the field of restricted



production value authority and honor more than financial success; that is, they seek symbolic capital in the form of fame, respect, and recognition. In addition, the evaluation of the output is in accordance with the criteria and categories that are autonomous and specific to the field. In this field, economic logic is relatively neglected in favor of symbolic logic.

On the other hand, in mass production, production is aimed at reaching as many consumers as possible, and output is evaluated on the basis of commercial success. Producers also pursue commercial success and economic gain.

Lee (2020) summarizes these characteristics in a table as follows[1].

Table1. Comparison of the field of restricted production and the field of mass production

	The Field of Restricted Production	The Field of Mass Production
Production Logic	Creativity, intellectual Logic	External demand, conventional production norms
Culture Type	High culture, avant-garde	Commercial culture, popular culture
Capital as a primary focus	Symbolic capital	Economic capital
Scope of cultural production and distribution	Small scale	Large-scale
Main consumer base	Intellectuals, artists, upper bourgeoisie	The general public, lower and middle classes
Social function	Increased autonomy of cultural fields, the constitution of cultural universals	Increased subordination of the cultural field, propagation of dominant ideology

The precise landscape of films in terms of Bourdieu's field of production would be useful for the identification of filmmakers' professional identities. Depending on the type of film they make, even the same filmmakers are likely to have different professional identities. They do not necessarily disregard symbolic capital and pursue only economic capital, even if they are involved in large-scale production.

Even within the sub-fields of large-scale production, if the organization is developed to a significant degree, it could be divided into a more symbolic axis and a more economic axis, "like a field. Fields of production are not simply about the pursuit of financial gain[1]. They are about the nexus of various economic, political, cultural, and symbolic interests.

Finally, the role of intellectuals and artists outside the field of production is also important. Through their participation in production or their criticism, they are responsible for transferring the symbolic capital accumulated by their field of production[1]. Bourdieu sees them as cultural mediators or tastemakers exercising authorized power and influence over cultural circulation, effectively intervening in the field's functioning. These cultural mediators are not limited to critics strictly speaking but include all individuals and organizations that produce meaning and value, such as cultural entrepreneurs, journalistic media, and award systems[2].

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

The following points will be explored in this paper. First, what kind of identities do filmmakers have? In particular, this paper will examine whether their identities are consistent with Bourdieu's



model of artistic habitus. The second question is whether Bourdieu's model of the field of production can explain the film scene.

My approach was a combination of in-depth interviews and literature searches. The literature review focused on Bourdieu's book, which is the basis of the thesis, and various books explaining it, as well as a survey of film workers conducted by the Korean Film Council and actual labor contracts of Korean film workers.

In this study, interviews were used as a tool to explore the self-identity of the filmmakers. The interviews were also used to find out how the filmmakers positioned the film in the field of cultural production. Previous studies have shown that filmmakers in Korea are faced with poor working conditions. This study sought to understand the process by which filmmakers come to terms with their own identities despite this precariousness. I tried to approach them as colleagues rather than outsiders to get truthful answers. For that purpose, I tried approaching them through my own experiences and knowledge of filmmaking in the past. Finally, I wanted to listen to the interviewees' stories, not just ask and answer questions. In this way, my hope was to get them to share their experiences and talk about their professional identities. The following questionnaire was used in the interviews

Table2. Interview questionnaire

Number	Questionnaire
1	Gender, education, filmmaking experience, and family background.
2	What filmmaking training have you received?
3	How does a life in the film industry fit in with your professional, family, and financial goals?
4	How and why did you get involved in the film industry (your career path)?
5	What are your networking efforts within the industry (social capital, connections)?
6	How long do you take to find a new production job and what are the challenges?
7	What is the specific role that you play on the set with your team?
8	How does precariousness change over the course of a career?
9	What is the impact on a film's output of deteriorating working conditions?
10	What is directive and conflicted working relationships like?
11	How do you collaborate with other teams?
12	What is your identity: artist, worker, or professional?
13	Why do you work in film and not in other media production?
14	Why do you work in this industry despite its precariousness?
15	How do you see your future as a filmmaker?
16	If you had a career change, what would it be?
17	How do you see yourself now compared to how you thought you were before you started working in film?
18	When do you feel proud or self-deprecating about what you do?



Selecting interviewees was challenging due to the variety of tasks and roles involved in filmmaking, as well as the fine-grained division of labor. But we tried to include as many positions and titles as possible to represent the industry. The interviewees were sourced through the websites of the Internet filmmaker community [5]. The interviews were one-on-one. They lasted approximately 90 minutes. The positions and job titles of the interviewees were as follows.

Table3.List of study participants

Position	Title	Experience (year)	Gender	Marital Status	Description in the text
Directing	Director	24	Male	Married	Director
Directing	First	7	Female	Single	Assistant Director
Directing	Junior	1	Male	Single	Junior in a production crew
Producing	Head of a production company	19	Male	Married	Head of a production company
Producing	Producer	23	Male	Married	Producer
Producing	Second	5	Female	Single	Second in a production crew
Producing	Junior	1	Male	Single	Junior in a production team
Filming	Director	13	Male	Single	Director of photography
Filming	Third	3	Male	Single	Third of a filming crew
Filming	Junior	3	Female	Single	Junior of a filming crew
Art (Set)	Director	25	Male	Married	Director of a set crew
Art (Set)	Second	3	Male	Single	Second in a set crew
Retiree	First	28	Male	Married	Retiree 1
Retiree	Junior	1	Female	Single	Retiree 2
Retiree	Junior	1	Male	Single	Retiree 3

#### 4. BODY

##### 4.1 BEING AN ARTIST AS A PROFESSION

By definition, art is the act of creating and expressing beauty in a particular way. Art is relative and subjective in that it cannot be evaluated on an objective level and can change depending on many factors, such as the time and place in which it is created. However, art is often understood as a product of the personal and subjective dimensions when analyzing art. Becker (1982), on the other hand, takes an interactive view of art, defining it as a social activity made up of collective activities, and sees it as a product of a network rather than as a unique product[4]. Dewey (2003) went further, arguing that art is a communicative experience[5]. Art can have value beyond personal experience because of its communicative aspect. Through the interactive experience, the recipient of art can have an experience of social and cultural maturity. In other words, art is a set of processes in which the artist creates a personal experience and translates it into a social context, through which the recipient experiences and reproduces a new socialization. Films also possess an array of artistic and aesthetic values[6]. A film can be used to communicate, and the values created by the film can be socialized and reproduced by those receiving the film.

Occupation is an element of identity that shapes life itself. People define themselves through what they do, and in society, working serves to reaffirm[7]. Through occupation, people can expand their horizons and find meaning as a way to grow. In addition to identity, occupation is



also an important medium for socialization. In human life, occupation is a tangible manifestation of an individual's social and cultural life. An individual's life that unfolds through occupation has the potential for the realization of a broader and deeper world through the form of occupation[7].

While occupation plays a key role in the formation of human identity as described above, it also has significant economic implications. Occupation is a fundamental right to live as a human being. The Constitution defines occupation as: "continuous income-generating activity to meet the basic needs of life. It is through work that an individual is rewarded for his or her labor and has security for the maintenance of his or her livelihood.

After all, a profession is both an aspect of identity and an economic one, and they influence each other. Moreover, as a profession, art must satisfy both of these aspects while also fulfilling the elements of creation. Having considered the social implications of art, we can conclude that the work of artists is to create. In short, the most basic identity of an artist is to create art. This is an undeniable premise for an artist. While this creativity is a theme that artists cannot abandon, the economic aspect is less important in defining an artist's professional identity. This is supported by Wassall & Alper (1990), who found that artists do not lose their identity when they are unable to make a living from their artistic activities[8], and Birg & Peterson (1984), who found that an artist's identity lies in the expression (creation) of art, not in the work[9]. It can be concluded that even if being an artist does not meet basic economic needs, it does not diminish one's professional identity as an artist. Artists' pursuit of economic gain through the simultaneous employment of multiple jobs in order to cope with volatile and unstable economic conditions outside of their artistic practice does not diminish their professional identity as artists[10]. Rather, strategically positioning themselves under neoliberalism to make a living is the reality of artists today.

In Bourdieu's analysis of the artist, the artist is formed on the other side of the bourgeois world, in a market that is disconnected from art. However, in the pursuit of a symbolic artistic revolution, the artist paradoxically discovers that the work of art has no commercial value. The artist's rejection of the economic aspect of art, which is fundamentally bourgeois, is ambiguous in its pursuit of social recognition and ultimately succumbs to the dominant taste.

The professional identity of artists shows that their most important and constant value is creation. This is also true for those who work in film production. The main reason why film crews can endure the instability of film production is that they can be creators, which is the first and foremost value of their identity as artists. Moreover, even if they are pursuing pure artistry, their identity as artists is the reason why they can survive in the film industry, which pursues extreme commercialism. Between who they are as artists and what they must do, filmmakers experience role conflict at every turn, a process called the reality-ideal gap. It is possible to work in the film industry without role conflict if the joy of creation and the pride of artistry outweigh the instability. If a filmmaker's ultimate goal is to make an artistic independent film, but he or she feels the role conflict of making a commercial film, then the filmmaker can stay in the market if the joy of creation is greater. At some point, however, the artist will lose his or her professional identity as an artist and be forced to leave the film industry when the artist's professional identity as a creator can no longer prevail in a role conflict with other values.

It is difficult to make a clear distinction between 'worker consciousness' and 'artist consciousness'. In the case of Jeffri and Greenblatt (1989), artists are divided into three categories: First, artists in the sense of the market; second, artists in the sense of education and whether they belong to a group of artists; and finally, artists in the sense of their perceived public image[11]. The third concept refers to "artist consciousness" if the market concept emphasizes the "worker" aspect of making money from one's work. This means that being recognized as an artist, having the time to create, wanting to create, and having artistic talent all matter. When we look at the film crew in the Korean industry through these concepts, we see a complex picture.

#### **4.2 ARTISTRY AND SOCIAL CONFLICT - THE DISCONNECT AND CONTRADICTIONS OF ARTISTS**

Bourdieu's *Rules of Art*, first published in 1992, is the definitive edition of his field theory, which is a systematic organization and reorganization of his theories on the field of cultural



production[12]. By including not only the material production of artworks but also the symbolic production of their value, Bourdieu defines the identity of the artist. Artists claim independence. Because art was created in opposition to the bourgeois. The fusion with power in the artistic sphere is denounced and condemned as such. Free from bourgeois domination, the artist refuses to be bound by anything other than his art.

Artists dedicate themselves to building an "art for art's sake" space where autonomy is maximized. In this context, autonomy is not only a term that describes the development and the state of the field but also a kind of desirable goal that the field is supposed to achieve. As such, the field of art has a particular order and exclusivity that distinguishes it from other fields. This is not surprising, given that Bourdieu (1992) defines the field itself as a separate social world with its laws, independent of the political and economic worlds[12]. It is not that the line is drawn and divided from the outset. Rather, it is formed independently of the political and economic worlds through a process of autonomy.

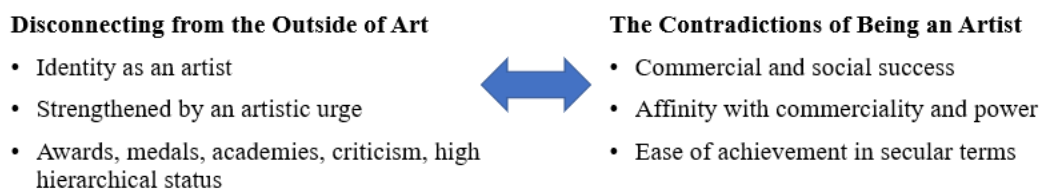
That's why artists in the field of art try to distance themselves from political, economic, and moral demands. They refuse to accept any evaluation criteria other than the specific norms of art. They have a professional disposition to focus solely on their work, as the only acceptable standard for them is the recognition of other artists[13].

Sometimes there are attitudes, practices, etc., that are not valued outside the artistic world, but become valued within it. In everyday life, activities such as drinking and contemplation may be considered very unnecessary. In the literary world, however, they are accepted as a form of creative suffering. At times, activities visible only to artists and indulged in by artists may serve as a line or exclusivity separating artists from the general public, or as a differentiation through which artists recognize themselves as artists [14].

The goal of artists is the accumulation of as much symbolic capital as possible within their field. Each field of cultural production has its symbolic capital, and artists compete with each other for that symbolic capital. The possession of more symbolic capital in a field of cultural production is directly related to the attainment of greater artistic excellence than others, and artists compete for this symbolic capital. However, an artist's economic or social capital can only help him or her acquire symbolic capital to a limited extent[1]. The basis of symbolic capital in the field of cultural production will be artistry if autonomy is sufficiently guaranteed.

At the same time, these spaces are contradictory. On the one hand, "art spaces" seem to be spaces of pure activity that transcend the "interests" of the producers. On the other hand, they correspond to the artists' quest for autonomy, which is a desirable goal. In fact, it is often for the sake of material and economic capital, and sometimes for the sake of symbolic capital, that artists engage in cultural production. Artists find that their work has no commercial value and is not widely popular if they seek only a symbolic revolution. They also possess an ambiguity that refuses to accept bourgeois life but seeks to be socially recognized. It is an indication of the difficulty of the separation that artists have traditionally sought in terms of the pursuit of awards, high positions, management, etc. Artists are contradictory in that they succumb to aspects of "bohemian life" that are driven by a sense of desolation, such as material and moral difficulties, as well as dominant tastes, such as novels and films. The artists feel an inherent contradiction in their position as independent beings in the field of art, but at the same time as being contradictorily dominated in the field of power. This can be a summary of the following.

Figure 1. The Disconnect and Contradictions of Artists





As a result, the field of cultural and artistic production is divided into the "sub-field of mass production" and the "sub-field of restricted production"[15]. Producers in the mass production subfield are in pursuit of commercial success and financial gain, i.e., their primary goal in cultural production is financial reward. On the other hand, producers in the restricted subfield place a higher value on symbolic authority and honor than on financial success. Recognition, fame, and legitimacy are part of their symbolic capital. This structure is similar to that of film production. The restricted production subfield would include art films and independent films if commercial films fall into the mass production subfield, where one of the primary goals is a box-office hit. In the restricted field, artistry, fame, and recognition among professionals are more important goals than selling more tickets. The production space is structured along opposite axes by the presence of two subfields of such different natures.

However, these conflicting axes are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Symbolic capital, such as artistry, must be considered by filmmakers who seek economic gain. By the same token, filmmakers who make independent and artistic films have no reason to avoid financial gains such as a hit at the box office. On the contrary, their reputation and recognition will be further enhanced if a film made with extreme artistry is a box office success and reaps financial rewards. In fact, director Yang Ik-joon's film "Breathless" was the winner of 38 awards all over the world and still had a profit with 120,000 moviegoers nationwide, a rare feat for an independent film. It is a rare example of an independent film being recognized for both its artistry and its box office. It is considered to have changed the status of independent films.

It would be a narrow point of view to interpret the above-mentioned phenomena in the production of art as a logic of competition between mutually exclusive positions within the field of art. Outputs, including art, based on a variety of reciprocal relationships between producers and consumers and within fields of authority, are adapted and provided to meet the expectations of different positions without any intentional or conscious pursuit of them[2]. According to Bourdieu's 1966 article "Intellectual Field and Creative Project," works are the product of an artist's creative planning. However, the relationship an artist forms with his or her work is influenced by the "unique position of the creator within the structure of the field of knowledge" through a "system of social relations.

In many cases, I have observed that the identity of "filmmaker" actually works as a motivator for self-imposed instability and extreme self-sacrifice. They are self-vulnerable, compliant, and complicit in the poor conditions of filmmaking by defining themselves as "filmmakers" and "artists.

#### 4.3 HIERARCHY BY ARTISTIC GENRE

Bourdieu focused his theory primarily on productions such as literature and theater. David Hesmondhalgh criticizes Bourdieu's restrictive tendencies. He argues that field theory does not apply to popular culture production. In his study of comics, Boltanski (1975) developed a logical procedure that could be applied to studying other media and producing popular culture[16]. The study concluded that literature and the humanities belong to the subfield of limited production, which has greater autonomy than popular culture, and it is easy to secure independence from economic and political fields. In contrast, popular cultures, like comics and television, belong to the subfield of mass production, which has relatively little autonomy and has difficulty securing independence from other economic and political spheres. But being a subfield of mass production does not mean that independence is impossible. The subfields of mass production could also be compensated by the symbolic benefits of "violating the cultural hierarchy" in various ways, such as collaborating with artists who were already restricted in producing[15].

Poets and scholars, who were the most highly regarded intellectuals in the 17th century, received the largest pensions and benefits, according to Bourdieu's analysis of the cases in *The Rules of Art*. Put another way, the two aspects of prestige and commerciality were almost conflated during this period. The hierarchies of fame and commerciality should also be interpreted as aspects of the field, and these hierarchies are created by the standards of social evaluation, either internal to the field or external to it. Artists, even when doing essentially the same thing,





create their hierarchies. Historically, fiction has had a hierarchical position of inferiority compared to philosophy and theoretical writing. Artists, when they start a genre, want to choose a genre that is as high up in the hierarchy as possible, but they rationalize it through the contradictions I mentioned earlier and create a genre that is lower down.

The hierarchy that filmmakers establish in any art form is unique. In a structured field, filmmakers determine their position and attitude according to the structure of power distribution. Each position will serve the goal without conscious thought, depending on the disposition of the actors and the system accordingly[17]. In the case of filmmakers, they are likely to establish their own value hierarchy according to their own values, such as the commerciality of mass production, the artistic value of limited production, or others. In this case, the criteria for such evaluation will be different for film producers and cultural producers in other fields. For, as Bourdieu noted, the hierarchy of the fields of each art has its independence. In a 1994 interview, Bourdieu illustrated the socially structured nature of the field with a mobile. The central axis moves only by relying on the thin wire at the center, but each of the additional pieces has its own properties that are independent of each other. Thus, fields are networks of connections between objective relations, and the particularities within fields are determined by a special logic that defies reduction[17]. According to Bourdieu, the differentiated chapters are a series of relatively autonomous spaces, as modern society is composed of multiple spaces that cannot be explained by a single social logic[18].

The value of an artistic field may be absolute within that field, but it may be irrelevant to an outsider looking in from outside the field. In other words, to a filmmaking team, the value of a movie is likely to override that of a drama or other video genre. This is because the qualities of actors or groups that are defined by relationships come to mean and be valued only in or through the relationships they possess[15]. Crucial to this study is the hierarchy of cinema that filmmakers establish for themselves. As we have seen: Making a living as a filmmaker comes with a number of social disadvantages, including instability. Therefore, the answer to the question of why one works in the film industry may be a fundamental self-identity answer to the question of the hierarchy of film.

#### 4.4 FILMMAKERS AS EXPERTS

According to sociology, experts are groups of people who, on the basis of their autonomy, accumulate knowledge, skills, and experience and systematically organize them in a discipline. In addition to their unique organization, professional groups also form an ethic and a culture that validate their qualifications and define the quality of their field[19].

Experts were originally confined to areas that required sacrifice, such as the priesthood, and were equated with the performance of the universal social good. Society thus granted experts an authority and monopoly on knowledge. This also justified their power over the general population.

Professional organizations are characterized by a high degree of specialization, peer group control, relatively horizontal hierarchy, and authority, a low degree of bureaucratic rules and regulations, and an incentive system that supports autonomous professional[20].

It is possible to interpret the art world as a group of professionals, given the degree of specialization and autonomy that professionals have. The reason for this is that the art scene also has a network of social relations among the artistic actors and a systematic system of knowledge, such as an organized aesthetic. This knowledge system ensures that works of art are the result of the creative autonomy of the artist. They also have an authority based on their artistic quality, similar to the exclusive authority of expert groups.

A system of publicly recognized certification for artists is necessary to **characterize** the art community as a group of professionals. In the view of artists as professionals, this aspect of certification can be seen as a weakness. However, the artistic ability of a particular artist can be a manifestation even in the absence of an examination, and it can be an expression through the exercise of special qualifications that have been validated. In fact, we can say that the artistic community also possesses the characteristics of experts, if we consider that the aesthetic



standards of the artistic community, similar to those of experts, exert an exclusive power over the general public.

Artists are characterized by their autonomy on the basis of creativity, while professionals can be distinguished from artists by their power of exclusion. In the case of filmmaking, the unique way of working, based on a collaborative relationship, is the main characteristic that distinguishes professionals from artists. In Howard Becker's (1982) view, all works of art, like all forms of human activity, are the product of a combination of human activities[4]. The combination is a collaborative one. Becker says that collaborative work requires, of course, a social approach to the arts.

Collaboration is by its nature complex. In the case of filmmaking in particular, rather than being unilaterally directed by the director or producer, the work is completed through collaboration with others at every moment. The direction of the film is modified and completed through conflict and resolution with others at every stage of filmmaking. The process of making is the result of crews interacting within limited constraints and situations.

The production of cultural industries is shaped by their relationship to the cultural context in which they are at work[21]. This is what Negus calls "culture produces industry"[22]. As the most influential factor in the production of cultural industries, Negus focuses on actors. He argues that cultural products are not determined by industrial structure or efficiency alone. Instead, they are shaped by the creativity of actors and the conflict between industrial organizations and workers. Specifically, Negus argued that cultural industry workers resolve conflicts with each other in their actual work, while simultaneously conflicting and compromising with more macroscopic external structures because of their values and professional identities, and producing cultural products by imagining an audience that expects cultural products[21]. This aspect of filmmaking is different from the autonomy of the artist. It is based on extreme creativity and refuses to compromise on anything other than artistry. At the same time, it differs from professionalism in that it is the exercise of exclusive power.

Film professionalism is likely to be characterized as both, having attributes of both professionals and artists. They have the attributes of professionals in terms of education, exclusivity, and unique skills, and the attributes of artists in their pursuit of creativity. Hesmondhalgh and Baker also note the dual nature of the identity of the creative worker. They argue that creative workers have both aesthetic and artistic autonomy as well as professional autonomy. The former relates to the traditional image and role of the artist, while the latter encompasses activities distinct from artistic production, such as creating and circulating knowledge through interpretation[10].

This multifaceted nature of film professionalism needs to be re-observed and re-defined through interviews and field observations.

#### 4.5 SELF-JUSTIFICATION THEORY OF THE ARTISTIC SUBJECT

The hybridity of working and playing is evident in the dual perceptions of creative workers [23]. Media workers perceive themselves as both suffering from and enjoying precarious working conditions. Responding to this phenomenon, Ross argues that artists ironically engage in voluntary self-discipline under the extreme work intensity of the creative industries.

According to Von Osten (2007), for such ironic formation of artistic subjects, artists have historically been exceptional actors from a labor economics perspective, outside the mainstream[24]. However, through the discourse of the creative industries, they have been incorporated as core members of the creative labor force. Rather, artists create productivity through self-motivated creativity, and this aspect of autonomous creativity has been celebrated as a model for the general population[25].

Indeed, workers in these creative industries are required to be "creative," to be free of compensation to adopt an artistic style of management, and to see themselves as autonomously motivated agents of their own labor. Osten's theory of the "self-precarization" of creative workers explains this phenomenon.



Marx, of course, had a similar concept, arguing that artists should certainly earn money to create, but that they should not live to make money under any circumstances. Art should be an end in itself, not a means to an end. The difference between Marx's argument and Osten's is that Marx argues that the artist must dematerialize through self-reflection, whereas Osten argues that society's perception and structure of the artist forces them to be vulnerable to monetary considerations. In other words, although the image of the artist is stereotypically impoverished, artists are motivated to overcome real difficulties. The creative industries capitalize on this idea and even workers unconsciously project this process of self-precarization onto themselves[24].

Adorno(1970) went even further, suggesting that a utility must be sacrificed to achieve artistic autonomy, stating that "the only social function of a work of art is its non-functionality. For Adorno, the artist is a victim whose happiness must be abandoned to be saved[26].

In a similar vein, Bourdieu's analysis was of how the exploitation of labor is perpetuated by the workers themselves. Bourdieu did not see work as a mere bodily and physical activity, nor did he see it as a practice driven by being coerced or rewarded. Rather, Bourdieu saw labor as a comprehensive activity involving psychological investment. There is an objective truth to the fact that labor is exploitation, but there are also misconceptions about it and the psychological investments made in it. Therefore, the subjective aspect of labor needs to be understood at the same time.

In other words, the worker discovers and pursues an intrinsic benefit that cannot be translated into economic income. Paradoxically, however, these intrinsic benefits also serve as the actual conditions under which the labor relationship is completed as exploitation. By immersing themselves in the intrinsic meaning of work, workers misunderstand the nature of exploitation and perpetuate social relations in which exploitation takes place. According to Bourdieu, the greater the workers' autonomy, the more likely they are to voluntarily immerse themselves in work by giving it subjective meaning. This is most likely to be the case in the creative industries.

Baudelaire describes art as "a fleeting and transitory beauty that is present in the present life" in *The Painter of Modern Life*, published in *Le Figaro* in 1863. In other words, there is both a negative and a positive role for the artist, who must live in the present but pursue art. Artists are no longer as glorified and authoritative as they used to be. They are likely to have perceptions of being out of touch, behind the times, or economically incompetent. However, this perception is positively associated with pride and a sense of absolute autonomy in art.

In contrast to Adorno, Baudelaire recognized that the modern artist has a dual status as both an autonomous being and a producer of commodities. Ultimately, he argued, artists deal with these conflicting roles by adopting two sharply contrasting attitudes. First, there is the attitude of "commercialism." In this attitude, the artistic quality of production is abandoned in favor of commodity value. People who fall into this category are ostensibly using art as a medium, but in the end, they view their creations as a commodity and strive to create wealth through the maximization of monetary profit. Second, there is the "purely artistic" attitude, which rejects the recognition of the product as a commodity and pursues artistry alone. The autonomous pursuit of their artistic vision, independent of the market, is the highest value for artists in this category. Usefulness in the marketplace is not what they seek. Rather, they believe that it is through the pursuit of such usefulness that artists gain autonomy. When this aspect of "pure artistic quality" is dramatized, it is a return to the theory of "self-precarization" discussed earlier, where the artist believes that the pursuit of money undermines his or her autonomy[14].

The identity of filmmakers is a key area of research. According to Baudelaire's categorization, they may be more commercial or artistic. It is also possible, as Osten has argued, that filmmakers are subsumed within a socially constructed image of the artist, that filmmakers are a hybrid of these two categories, or that filmmakers have a third, larger identity that goes beyond mere artistic and commercial concerns.

There may be a self-identity that encompasses and pervades filmmakers, but it probably differs from individual to individual. However, it is unlikely that this can be explained by commercialism alone, as most filmmakers endure harsh working conditions.



## 5. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

### 5.1 PERCEPTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AMONG FILMMAKERS

The field of cultural production is not intended to be an economic practice. However, creating cultural products and engaging in economic practices is the purpose of the field. Bourdieu saw the autonomy of the field of cultural production as the independence of the symbolic logic of art from economic practice, paying attention to the relationship between art and the market economy[27]. The film industry cannot be completely free of economic logic. The main purpose of filmmaking is to make a movie with an invested budget and make a profit from it (economic practice). However, the pursuit of cultural significance becomes the primary goal of filmmaking once the investment is made. If we take a closer look at the cultural production of filmmaking, we can see that its basic purpose is far from being an economic practice. In the cultural production of cinematography, the concern of everyone is to make a good film that will be highly appreciated (the pursuit of cultural significance).

**“The set is not a commercial space.** The budget is already given, and within that budget, we only care about **making the best movie possible**. It doesn't make us rich if a lot of people see it. It's more important to us that we were part of a movie that was seen by a lot of people and was successful.” (youngest crew member)

Some of the constraints they have to adhere to in the filmmaking scene include: Staying within the budget and schedule promised to investors.

The pursuit of cultural symbolism by filmmakers seems to be about “filmmakers as artists” and “the expression of extreme creativity through cinema and the giving of value to their work”. This is statistically supported by past research, which has shown that many filmmakers identify themselves as artists.

“I don't think that anyone is in the movie business just for the money. If you listen to my seniors, many didn't go home for a year and didn't manage to earn 1 million won combined. I think I'm an **artistic worker**. I'm a worker because it's 3D, but my attitude is more like a seeker...an **artist**”. (Assistant director)

Through the artist's “structure of separation and contradiction,” Bourdieu examined the artist's identity in terms of hierarchy, separation from the outside of art, and the contradictions of being an artist. Hierarchy, disconnection from the outside of art, and the contradictions of being an artist are also evident in the professional identity of filmmakers.

Rowlands (2012) studied film workers in New Zealand and found that these workers develop an addiction to an artistic identity. The cyclical nature of employment and unemployment that is characteristic of project work leads to the pursuit of an identity as an artist[28]. Mølbak (2010) found that addicted people become closely connected to the objects and activities to which they are addicted[29]. They become increasingly disconnected from other relationships and activities. As a result, addiction ends up being an important factor in reinforcing identity.

In fact, many filmmakers spend most of their time working on their films, and most of their interactions are with colleagues in the film industry. On the other hand, their social networks outside the film industry are weakened, as they seem to be disconnected from family and friends. In fact, most of the filmmakers were single and said that they rarely saw those they knew while working on their films.

Also contributing to this disconnection is the desire to see movies as the most desirable and meaningful of the various digital media. Most respondents were in agreement that movies are a more artistic genre than other forms of media, such as drama.

“A movie is an art form where more than 100 people work on a single shot to achieve quality. It's a different kind of work than a drama, where you just have to get something shot in a hurry. I know the difference because I've worked in drama.” (Assistant director)

The following chapters on film production address these issues of the structure of film as perceived by filmmakers.



## 5.2 THE FIELD OF FILM PRODUCTION

Commercial films are typically located in the field of large-scale production, according to Bourdieu's structure of the field of cultural production. Large capital, intensive technology, and the creation of reproducible cultural products characterize this field. However, commercial films have more cultural capital than dramas, even though they are located in the same field. Sang-gil Lee (2020) explains that this is because films, unlike other video materials, have the form of a completed narrative[1]. They are recognized for their artistic quality through the form of transferring the capital of works with high symbolic capital, such as existing literature. Although they are part of the same field of cultural production, the identity of filmmakers is somewhere in the middle between fine artists and drama producers.

In addition, the interviewees spoke about a different artistic identity for filmmaking than for fine arts. They defined it as reality art.

"Filmmakers have a strong identity as artists, but at the same time, they have a sense of being workers or reality artists. I think filmmakers make **realistic art**, whereas fine artists are immersed in their own world of art, regardless of reality. I think filmmaking is where reality and art intersect, and I feel like we know reality better than anyone else, and we make art by compromising." (Cinematographer)

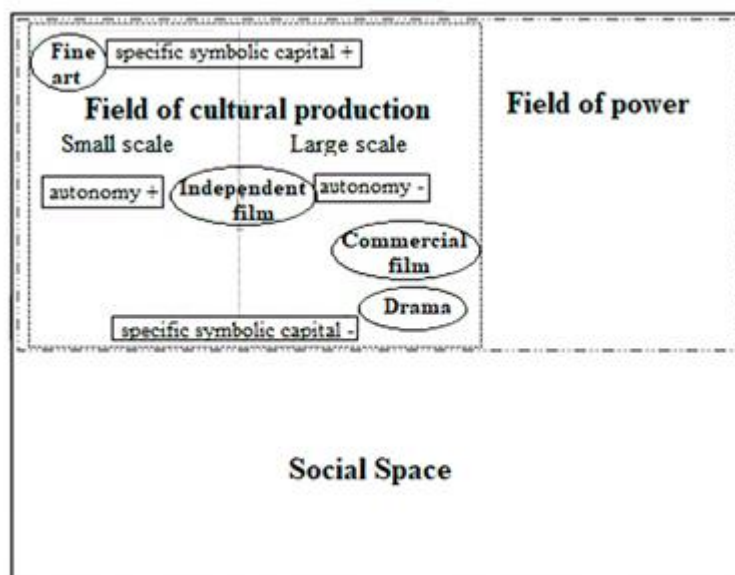
Artistic identity can change over time. When you first enter the film industry, your sense of self is aligned with the enthusiasm that most creative people have at the beginning of their careers. However, as they begin to experience the actual working environment of their careers, their identity changes. It is therefore consistent with creative work. Not only does this mean that the work of filmmakers follows the same trajectory as that of creative labor, but it is also another example of how workers in creative labor are subjected to a highly precarious work environment.

"I think that's what most of the juniors are going through, is coming into the field expecting to be artistically creative, and being disappointed when the work is more like menial labor. If you hang in there, you're still in the movie business. You go from one set to the next thinking that someday you're going to make your own work." (A junior member of the production crew)

"At first I was really excited and looking forward to just getting involved. I promised myself that I was going to **give it my all**, but as I got older, I started to think about it in a different way. **The future was too unclear** to give it my all, and I had a lot of **anxiety**. Once one movie was over, there was no guarantee for the next one. Finally, a senior told me that filmmakers should work like professionals - stick to what they're given and be professional, instead of using up everything in their passion. (The second member of the production team)

"Films are part of my DNA and that doesn't change as my career goes on, but when my enthusiasm fades, I treat them with a sense of inertia. At the end of the day, there has to be a balance between the ideal and the reality." (Cinematographer)

Through the above interview, I interpreted Bourdieu's theory of "the field of cultural production in the field of power and social space" through a reflection on the film production scene. The field of filmmaking is located in a social space. Bourdieu emphasizes that the field of film production does not exist separately from external entities such as the social space and the field of power. Instead, it has a dual nature that is both affected by and resists external entities. To explain the mechanisms of reception and resistance, Bourdieu refers to this concept as "refraction and transformation of the field". The tastes of the mainstream rulers, which are formed in the social space and the field of power, constantly penetrate the field of film, and this, in combination with the unique culture of the filmmakers, affects the filmmakers in the form of Habitus. Sometimes, commercial films are endowed with symbolic and cultural capital through means such as critics or scholars with symbolic capital and film festival awards, even though the cultural capital is relatively low compared to the fine arts.



**Figure 1. The Field of Movie Production**  
(Adapted from Bourdieu[2] and modified for Movie field)

“I think the Oscar for 'Parasite' has raised the status of Korean cinema, and I can now proudly say that I work in the film industry. I also feel that the way people look at me has changed. I feel like I've become a part of mainstream culture.” (Assistant director)

The field of film production can be divided into two subfields: large-scale production and small-scale production. Large-scale production pursues economic profit according to the logic of capital. The aim is to invest a large amount of money to create a cultural product and to obtain an economic benefit from it. It is characterized by the large number of people involved, the high level of skill required, and the use of large-scale equipment. In contrast, artistic value and creativity are at the forefront of the goals of small-scale production. The pursuit of artistic and creative expression in small-scale production is consistent with the pursuit of fine arts. It is therefore characterized by a strong autonomy of artistic expression. It distances itself from the public taste for commercial success. Bourdieu (1983) suggests that the more autonomous a field, the more pronounced the distinction between the large and small production subfields[2]. This is because the greater the autonomy, the more favorable it is for the artists in the subfield of small-scale production to build up their symbolic power, free from the influence of the outside world.

On the other hand, between large-scale production and small-scale production are independent films. It is clear that the nature of film production and exhibition is close to the nature of the subfield of large-scale production. However, even a medium that belongs to the subfield of large-scale production can be divided into a more symbolic axis and a more economic axis, like a field, depending on its nature[1]. Independent films are by nature high-end content produced for a small number of people, so even if they are distributed and shown to everyone, it is difficult to conclude that they belong to the subfield of large-scale production. Independent filmmakers have more room for autonomy and creativity than commercial filmmakers because they are relatively free from the pressures of massive demand and economic profit.

The field of film production is a space of independence, but it is located within a field of power. This in turn is located within a social space. This is also true of independent films. All films have an inherent contradiction of being located within and influenced by fields of power and social space. Independent cinema is relatively free from commercialization, but it is also to some extent subordinated to the dominant tastes of commercial cinema. Commercial films are usually financed by commercial investment companies, and one of the main goals of commercial films is to make a profit, so this segment has many economic assets, but relatively few symbolic assets such as autonomy, art, and social recognition as mainstream culture.



In conclusion, the autonomy of filmmakers in commercial cinema is limited compared to the fine arts. Even in terms of the structure of the industry, the relationship with investors and production companies has limited autonomy for reasons of profitability. This is true even at the screenwriting stage, which should be the most free and creative. Screenwriters must complete a first draft and then adjust the first, second, and third versions until investors and production companies are satisfied, due to many factors such as budget, profitability, and production feasibility. Autonomy in production is also limited. They must submit a shooting schedule, report on progress, and respond to criticism.

## 5.2 IDENTITY AS AN ARTIST AND REWARDS

So why be an artist? Why do filmmakers choose to be artists as their professional identity? What are the rewards of having chosen to identify as an Artist?

Bourdieu believed that an individual's actions are realized through a subjective will. However, this will is influenced by social practices accumulated from the past[3]. Due to class bias and the logic of power, these social practices are unequal and coercive. They also create invisible domination. The most important basis for understanding Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital is the understanding of individual behavior and social practices. Bourdieu saw tastes (or cultural activities), which are shaped by intensely personal choices, as a mechanism for the recognition of one's social class identity and the maintenance of social class. While it is easy to think of movie watching as personal and tasteful, the interpretation of art or cultural works is tamed and imposed by their class[3]. Therefore, in addition to differentiating oneself from others by factors such as background and education, preferences for art are closely linked to social worldviews and political judgments.

Bourdieu saw this inequality as the power of expert groups in cultural and knowledge markets, which he called cultural capital. Bourdieu believed that cultural capital is the invisible differentiation of people through their different cultural inclinations, attitudes, and abilities to use culture, which reproduces social status and relations of domination and power. If cultural capital comes from the taste and ability to enjoy culture, then the filmmakers' pursuit of an artist identity can be understood as cultural capital. This is how we look at the second question in this study.

This identity is materialized in the field of the filmmaker, a set of objective positions that are occupied by the individual filmmaker. The consciousness of the filmmaker is determined by the accumulated habitus of the individual within the filmmaker's field. This can be called a learned habitus.

Most of the filmmakers said that their work is related to self-realization. They said that they had loved movies since childhood. Therefore, making movies was very enjoyable, even though it was hard work. This tendency was stronger at the lower levels of each job category: those who had just started working in the film industry and those with a shorter career were more likely to say that they enjoyed their work a great deal. However, having more experience was not necessarily associated with enjoying filmmaking less. This is consistent with the fact that most filmmakers say they have chosen their profession because they like it and are looking for self-fulfillment. This coincides with the fact that many filmmakers reported being extremely frustrated if the film they are working on does not meet their expectations, or if they are unable to work on the film at all.

**“The biggest reward of the job is that it's fun. You get to work with the actors and make a movie. It's a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy that makes all the hard work bearable”.** (The youngest member of the production team)

The symbolic power of this field, like that of any other field of cultural production, creates representations from within, but it is also strongly influenced by other symbolic powers from outside the site of cultural production. In other words, a filmmaker's identity is influenced as much by external authoritative eyes as it is by internal factors.



The successful presentation of Korean films and the gaze of others is a symbolic power that exists outside of the field of cultural production. Film festival awards and critical acclaim give films symbolic power in the field of cultural production. In particular, film festival awards means recognition from the field other than film as well as the film world. Film festival awards represent the symbolic power of mainstream power because they are a synthesis of economic, artistic, and political interests. Especially for filmmakers who are often cut off from the outside world, festival awards are almost the only outlet for recognition of the symbolic power of mainstream power. Therefore, the symbolic power of winning an award at a major international film festival is enormous. It is a means of increasing the cultural power of filmmakers as well as international recognition of the Korean film industry, a relative latecomer.

“When a film I've worked on **wins an award** at a film festival, I feel like the **hard work is rewarded**, even if it's not necessarily given to me. I hope to be able to work in Hollywood one day. If a Korean film is well received in the global market, I will be really proud of myself.” (The second in the production team)

“<Parasite> is a new chapter in Korean cinema. I started on this path as a child, dreaming of going to Hollywood. But the fact that Parasite won at the Academy is a hope and a dream that each of us can make it. I think every filmmaker was crying tears of joy on that day.” (Producer)

As a result, it is an important part of a filmmaker's identity to have worked on famous works or films by famous directors.

“People used to be worried when I told them I was working in film, but when I tell them some of the successful films I've worked on, they stop worrying. The more successful the Korean movies are, the better it is to work in the movie business. It's easier for me to convince my family. These days, I'd rather tell them: I'm making a movie.” (The third member of the film crew)

There is a big difference between the Korean movies of the past and the present. As the quality of production has increased, so has the number of viewers. Now, even though they compete with Hollywood films, they have a certain advantage in the domestic market. In particular, successful reviews and box office success at overseas film festivals, starting with Oldboy (Park Chan-wook, 2003), serve as a great reward for filmmakers.

Thus, filmmakers see winning awards at film festivals not only as the development of Korean cinema but also as the promotion of their own cultural values. Even if the award is not given to them directly, it still has the same effect, even with the fact that they have been a part of it.

## 6. CONCLUSION

What keeps filmmakers working, despite the insecurity of working, is their professional identity. Filmmakers have a professional identity, and the completion of a film is the noblest value that completes their inner goal. In many cases, they work according to their artistic values, and they seem to be trapped in their “filmmaker” identity. Being an artist gives them a professional identity and creates their own hierarchy, even though they are essentially doing the same job. As a result, they place a high hierarchy on films and do not prefer cultural productions such as commercials and dramas to films. As long as they are given the status of artists, they want to choose films with high creativity and artistic quality as much as possible, even if there's a financial loss. This is in order to gain social respect and self-satisfaction. At the same time, however, they show the characteristics of Bourdieu's “structure of separation and contradiction” and feel contradicted as artists, and gradually pursue secular and commercial success in film. Eventually, they will leave the field of film production if they feel a role conflict in their identity as artists and pursue values other than cinema to the extreme.

Finally, the popularity of OTT is blurring the lines between film and other media genres. This is changing the identity of filmmakers, and while some may find this precarious, others may see it as a new opportunity. This is an area that needs to be explored further.





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