

Publication state: Japan  
ISSN: 2423-8279

Publisher: J-INSTITUTE  
Website: <http://www.j-institute.jp>

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.22471/police.2017.2.1.14>

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## Consideration of Correlation between Periodic Patterns of Economic Crisis and Success of Korean Film with CRIME Subjects: Putting the KOREAN Films in 1998-2016 to the Center

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### Abstract

*This research has been devised to observe an correlation between the degrees of successes of Korean films and social crime trends that occurred in between 1998 and 2016, the era of economic crisis. For the reason, having that the increasing crime rates since the IMF economic crisis and 2008 sub-prime mortgage intensified the structural instability of Korean society in consideration, the patterns dealing with crimes in successful typical Korean movies have been analyzed and the correlation between the trends of crime films which were accepted by the public and the patterns of crimes in realities has been concerned. Two films, <Memories of Murder> and <Another Public Enemy> of the Top 20 successful films between 1998 and 2007, describes the 'psychopath' as an 'invisible enemy' rather than violent crimes such as rape, murder and robbery those days, thus, confirmed the intensive interests of the public to 'psychopath'. Furthermore, the two films are positioned at the lower range of the Top 20 successful films, hence, it is identifiable that crime films faces comparatively stronger difficulties in drawing the continuous interests of the public.*

*Crime films among the Top 20 successful films between 2008 and 2016 were <Veteran> and <A Violent Prosecutor>. Both reenacted an 'authoritative' corruption that is not closely relevant to the increasing 'property crimes' those days, in association with 'psychopathic' criminals. Therefore, it was deducible that there is little correlation between the social crime trends and the successes of Korean films at the era of economic crisis.*

**[Keywords]** Policing, Social Crime, Korean Film, The Public, Psychopath, Economic Crisis

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to analyze Starting from the 1998 IMF Economic Crisis, the 2008 Global Sub-prime Mortgage aggravated the structural instability of Korean society and intensified the level of social crimes compared to the past. "In 1998 when the economic crisis has been officially intensified, the crime rate was higher than other years(1.7% in 1995, 6.8% in 1996, 6.3% in 1997 and 11.2% in 1998)"[1], "Property crime occurrence frequency, which has been continuously, but gradually, increasing till 2007, presented a dramatic increase in 2008 and 2009(7.16% in 2008 and 11.65% in 2009) at

the days of Sub-prime Mortgage, compared to other years"[1]. However, as social crimes increases and be intensified, claims such as - "It is impossible to assume the increase in crimes is not related to the development of mass media as well as to changes such industrialization and urbanization"[2]. - arise. It is insisted that, 'The increasing condition of crimes' should be synthetically comprehended and analyzed from the both views of social phenomenons including 'economic crisis' and 'mass media', delivering such issues, Especially, the subject which this research is interested in is the patterns of crimes dealt with in 'films', one of the most representative

media, and its impact on the public. Considering the IMF currency crisis that intensified the structural instability in Korean society and the Global Sub-prime Mortgage that increased crime ratio in societies, this research is trying to discuss a correlation between methods dealing with crimes in real world and patterns of crime movies that are accepted by the public by analyzing the patterns of crimes managed in typical box-office Korean films. Hereby, inference of patterns and directions of public acceptance upon social crimes which increased during the economic crisis periods.

## 2. Related Study

There is no precedent study upon correlation between an increase in crime rate and its patterns driving from an economic crisis and box-office Korean movies that involved crimes. Various patterns and meanings accommodated in 'crime movies' are generally managed in the film industry, rather focusing on cinematic significances than the phenomena of 'crimes' itself. Meanwhile, an approach dealing with the patterns of crimes depicted in Korean films as follows. Jae-hoon Jung analyzes how crimes, depicted in two Korean films published after 2010, are dealing with the function of Civilian Protection in the modern state systems[3]. Meanwhile, Im Ho Bae and Min Hyung Dong respectively selected films and analyzed how the 'media', that is, 'mass media' impacts on the public. Im Ho Bae and Min Hyung Dong focused their analysis respectively on the case which a crime from the mass media is reflected on the movie[2], and the case which describes the

influences on copycat crimes given by media. As shown in the above studies, the relationship between 'crimes' and 'films' is limited to the relationship between crimes as social phenomena and cinematic reenactment. However, the public recognition of 'crimes' is closely related to the preference of 'crime films.' Based on such circumstances, this study would observe the public preferences of films that reflects 'crimes' in consideration of 'success of films', and accordingly, would estimate the public recognitions and directions upon patterns of 'crimes'.

## 3. Research Method and Analysis of Current Conditions

To proceed this study, above all, the database provided from Korean Film Council has been utilized. In addition, for differentiation of economic crisis periods, division into two periods of the IMF currency crisis of 10 years between 1998 to 2016 and the Global sub-prime mortgage crisis from 2008 to 2016. Teeming with films which had been developed based on crimes and screened, however, to discover the interests and directions of the public upon crimes, only 20 hit films were selected, with their number of audiences considered, and they were compared to the top 20 crime films in terms of contents and the number of audiences. The explored contents and data from such procedures were compared to the patterns of other crimes at the same period as well as to the top 20 crime films since 1998 till 2007, all possible correlations between success of films and patterns of crimes had been analyzed.

**Table. 1.** 1998~2007, top 20 successful film list[4].

Ranking	Movie	Number of spectator	Genre	Year
1	The Host	13,019,740	SF	2006
2	King and The Clown	12,302,831	Drama	2005
3	TheGukGu: Brotherhood of War	11,746,135	War, drama	2004
4	Silmido	11,081,000	War	2003
5	The War	8,426,973	Action, fantasy	2007

6	Welcome to Domakgol	8,008,622	War, drama	2005
7	May 18	7,307,993	Drama	2007
8	Tazza-The Hidden Card	6,847,777	Drama	2006
9	200 Pounds Beauty	6,619,498	Melodrama	2006
10	My Boss, My Hero	6,105,431	Comedy	2006
11	Swisi	5,820,000	Action, drama	1999
12	Marrying The Mafia II: GamunuiWigi	5,635,266	Comedy	2005
13	Memories of Murder	5,255,376	Crime, thriller	2003
14	Malaton	5,148,022	Drama	2005
15	My Tutor Friend	4,937,573	Comedy	2003
16	Typhoon	4,094,395	Drama, action	2005
17	Sex Is Zero	4,082,797	Comedy	2002
18	Another Public Enemy	3,911,356	Drama	2005
19	Hanbando	3,880,308	Drama, action	2006
20	Sympathy For Lady Vengeance	3,650,000	Thriller	2005

Films which dealt with ‘crimes’ from above table are <Memories Of Murder>[5] and <Another Public Enemy>[6]. Both describe a psychopathic ‘serial killer’ and police force chasing the killer. Considering a critic claiming that “prejudiced media or press upon psychopath, which is treated as an extreme danger even among a set of criminals, has a high probability of making the public not only intensively but excessively anxious and afraid of crimes”[7], it is assumable that the anxiety and the fear of the public toward ‘psychopath’ had worked as the driving force to lead the ‘public interest’ to the films to a ‘successful hit’, through the success of the two films.

Despite of that mass unemployment and wealth disparity brought by the IMF Economic crisis induced increases in robbery,

murder and rape[8], the films which the public were interested in presented a tendency to reenact specific crimes such as ‘psychopath’ or ‘serial killer’. Thus, it was likely to be estimated that the characteristics and distinctiveness of the specific crimes, rather than the patterns of actual crimes in real societies, attracted the public interest. In addition, crime films consist of the 10% of the top 20 film list, and such circumstance signifies that crimes have continuously been failing to draw the constant public opinions toward crimes. The two films are dealing with the topic, punishing the invisible ‘social evil’ and realizing ‘justice’, hence, are used as the means to psychologically console the anxiety and the fear of the public upon their societies, which originated from the economic crisis.

**Table. 2.** 2008~2016, top 20 successful film list[5].

Ranking	Movie	Number of spectator	Genre	Year
1	ROARING CURRENTS	17,613,682	Historical drama	2014

2	Ode to My Father	14,245,998	Drama	2014
3	Veteran	13,395,400	Action, crime	2015
4	The Thieves	12,983,330	Action	2012
5	Miracle in Cell No.7	12,811,206	Comedy	2013
6	Assassination	12,705,700	Action, drama	2015
7	Masquerade	12,319,542	Historical drama	2012
8	TRAIN TO BUSAN	11,565,078	Action, thriller	2016
9	Haeundae	11,453,338	Action, drama	2009
10	The Attorney	11,372,451	Drama	2013
11	A Violent Prosecutor	9,699,092	Crime, comedy	2016
12	The Face Reader	9,134,586	Historical drama	2013
13	Snowpiercer	8,914,845	SF	2013
14	Miss Granny	8,656,397	Drama	2014
15	The Pirates	8,646,758	Adventure	2014
16	Run-Off	8,487,894	Action, drama	2009
17	Speed Scandal	8,245,523	Comedy	2008
18	The Himalayas	7,759,473	Drama	2015
19	The Age of Shadows	7,487,545	Action	2016
20	War of the Arrows	7,466,976	Historical drama	2011

Observing the Top 20 Successful film list between 2008 and 2016, <Veteran>[9] and <A Violent Prosecutor>[10], which reflected a crime, were at the third and the eleventh. Considering the trends of the two successful films that are above the level of the trends of crime films among Korean successful films between 1998 and 2016, distinct and distinguishing figures of 'crime' films can be re-confirmed. The two films have their commonality in 'Authoritative corruption'. <Veteran> presents an authoritative crime by a son of president of a chaebol, while <A Violent Prosecutor> illustrates the corruptions by politicians, but former prosecutors, illuminating the police and the prosecution resolving the crime. Considering the crime rate of all types of crimes had gradually increased, except during 2005 and 2006, and since 2008, the Global sub-prime mortgage, have dramatically increased in societies[11], <Veteran>

would be a film that is correspondingly depicting social phenomena to some extent. However, as the success of <A Violent Prosecutor> informs, it is impossible to conclude that patterns of 'economic crimes' are the only directions of public interest. Rather, the features of the characters in the two films – especially, the pattern of crimes, 'psychopath' - are the more effective tool to drag the public responses. Pointing out that "behaviors of companies targeting the pursuit of profits at their most preference are similar to the behavioral pattern of the psychopaths"[12], <Veteran> deals with a crime by a 'psychopathic' entrepreneur, rather than simply an 'economic crime'.

Therefore, it is difficult to assume the patterns of crimes, in societies, during economic recessions leading from the IMF economic crisis to the 2007 Global sub-prime mortgage,

will result in the public interest as well as successes of films. Based on the characteristics of crime films and their trends, it is inferable that the public has been consistently showing interests in 'psychopathic' crimes. Indeed, if the 'psychopath', as an 'invisible enemy' reenacted in successful films published after the 1998 Economic crisis presented a feature to amplify the anxiety and the fear of the public, contrastingly, the 'psychopath' reenacted in films published after the 2008 sub-prime mortgage offers a symbolic feature of vested interests. Hence, the tendency of constant interests of the public to 'psychopathic' criminals and 'psychopathic' trends being associated with various 'crime trends' is deducible.

#### 4. Conclusion and Specification

An objective of this research is to observe a correlation between successful Korean film ranks and the patterns of social crimes during the era of economic crisis between 1998 and 2016. Facing the era of economic crisis which has still been influential since 1998, societies are facing increases in the five violent crimes and property-related crimes. Although such social crimes have been reflected on public films, it is difficult to conclude that the public has interests in it or is influenced by them. This is because a cinematic reenactment of crimes and its impact to the public vary depending on the level of public interests. Analyzing the top 20 successful films during the era of economic crisis, the public had put their consistent interests, especially, in psychopathic crimes. Then, based on such public interests, a research on closer correlation between cinematic reenactment with its ripple effect and a social approach to 'psychopath' becomes necessary. Such research from various angles will provide a deeper understanding of correlation between occurrence patterns of social crimes, copycat crimes and their public acceptance.

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