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Representation of Residential Spatial Social Segregation (Case Study: Parasite Movie)

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ABSTRACT

Architecture and film are two disciplines that are closely related in discussing and visualizing a form and space. Film cannot stand alone without architecture, architecture plays a role in constructing space in film as semiotics used to shape environmental and social perceptions and realities. This research will be a study of the socio-spatial separation in the movie Parasite and compare it with the physical setting of the area in Seongbuk-dong and Ahyeon-dong, Seoul, South Korea. The research method used is descriptive qualitative analysis with a semiotic approach. The concept of architectural semiotics approach is signifier-signified. The analysis of signifier and signified is applied to find out the meaning of the interpretation of the concept of form and space in the movie. The results show that the movie Parasite is able to very effectively illustrate the semiotics of the contrasting differences between the Seongbuk-Dong area and the Ahyeon-Dong area in terms of geography, land use, settlement quality, and accessibility. Seongbuk-dong, an aristocratic neighborhood, offers high-quality amenities and easy access, while Ahyeon-dong, a slum, has low-quality services and limited accessibility as the signifier in the film and the reflection of environmental problems as the signified. This conclusion confirms that semiotics in architecture and film has an important role in reflecting and critiquing the environmental and social phenomenon of socio-spatial segregation, and emphasizes the importance of more inclusive urban planning in reducing social inequality.

Keyword: Socio-spatial, Architecture, Film, Segregation, Semiotics

ABSTRAK

Arsitektur dan film merupakan dua disiplin ilmu yang saling berkaitan erat dalam membahas dan memvisualisasikan sebuah bentuk dan ruang. Film tidak dapat berdiri sendiri tanpa arsitektur, arsitektur berperan dalam membangun ruang dalam film sebagai semiotika yang digunakan untuk membentuk persepsi dan realitas lingkungan dan sosial. Penelitian ini akan merupakan kajian terhadap pemisahan sosio-spasial dalam film Parasite dan membandingkannya dengan setting fisik kawasan di Seongbuk-dong dan Ahyeon-dong, Seoul, Korea Selatan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah analisis deskriptif kualitatif dengan pendekatan semiotika. Konsep pendekatan semiotika arsitektur adalah signifier-signified. Analisis *signifier* (penanda) dan *signified* (petanda) diterapkan untuk mengetahui makna interpretasi konsep bentuk dan ruang pada film. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa film Parasite mampu sangat efektif menggambarkan semiotika terhadap perbedaan yang kontras antara kawasan Seongbuk-Dong dan kawasan Ahyeon-Dong dari segi geografis, penggunaan lahan, kualitas permukiman, dan aksesibilitas. Seongbuk-dong, sebuah lingkungan aristokrat, menawarkan fasilitas berkualitas tinggi dan akses yang mudah, sementara Ahyeon-dong, sebuah daerah kumuh, memiliki layanan berkualitas rendah dan aksesibilitas yang terbatas sebagai signifier (penanda) pada film dan refeksi permasalahan lingkungan sebagai signified (petanda). Kesimpulan ini menegaskan bahwa semiotika dalam arsitektur dan film



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memiliki peran penting dalam merefleksikan dan mengkritisi fenomena lingkungan dan sosial yaitu segregasi sosio-spasial, dan menekankan pentingnya perencanaan kota yang lebih inklusif dalam mengurangi kesenjangan sosial.

Kata kunci: Sosio Spasial, Arsitektur, Film, Segregasi, Semiotika

1. Introduction

Social segregation is a phenomenon that arises from differences in economic, racial, or social status, leading to the separation of groups within an area. In the context of settlements, this is seen through the physical separation between formal and informal communities based on socio-economic status. Formal communities generally consist of highly educated and socially diverse individuals, living in areas with adequate infrastructure and facilities. In contrast, informal communities are typically less educated and live in areas with limited facilities (Azis et al., 2010). These differences lead to disparities in the quality of buildings, public services and accessibility, which worsen quality of life and reinforce social tensions. In the era of visual media, spatial segregation is not only physically present, but also represented through symbols in popular media such as movies. Segregation in film is a representation of urban and architectural problems, presented using a semiotic approach through the analysis of signifiers in the form of visualization of space and form (such as film photos), and signifiers that reflect environmental problems. Movies have the power to shape the way people view space and social class. Bong Joon-ho's *Parasite* (2019) is an example of how space is used as a narrative tool to construct social meaning. The concepts of verticality, lighting, and layout in the film serve as symbols of class inequality and social ideology. The film also won four Oscars: best picture, best director, best international film, and best original screenplay. The main issue raised is the representation of socio-spatial segregation in the form of architectural semiotics in the film. Therefore, the film was chosen to examine not only segregation based on socio-economic data, but also how segregation is represented visually and symbolically. The semiotic approach (Mudjiono, 2011) is used to analyze how films reshape the understanding of space and inequality through visual language. This analysis enriches the study of architecture and urban space, especially in visual culture.

This research aims to identify how social and spatial segregation is visually represented in Bong Joon-ho's *Parasite* (2019). Using a semiotic approach (Mudjiono, 2011), this research analyzes architectural elements, spatial layout, and visual symbols in the film as signs of social class differences. The representations are compared with real conditions in Seongbuk-dong and Ahyeon-dong in Seoul, to understand how urban spaces reflect unequal social structures. The goal is to be able to convey the semiotics that occur both architecturally and in the film, so that the segregation phenomenon is understood as part of the problem of urban space. This understanding is expected to enrich the study of architectural cinematography and social criticism (Lamster, 2000).

2. Method

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method through a semiotic approach to analyze the representation of socio-spatial segregation in the film *Parasite* (2019). The semiotic concept as signifier will be manifested in a form, space, surface and volume, while signified can be ideas and ideas of reflection of environmental problems that occur (Novianti et al., 2022). The concept of semiotics as signifiers in the space and form of the film and signified to reveal the replica of contradictory problems in the area. The variable used is the semiotic approach used because it is able to reveal the social meanings hidden behind the visual and architectural elements that appear in the film (Mudjiono, 2011). The semiotic variable is the signifier and signified used in this study (Novianti et al., 2022). The main data used in this research is visual footage from the movie *Parasite* and secondary data from previous studies, scientific articles, topographic maps, spatial documentation, and socio-economic data of Seongbuk-dong and Ahyeon-dong areas, Seoul. The movie was chosen because it explicitly displays differences in the built environment that reflect spatial segregation, and because the movie's locations Seongbuk-dong as an elite area and Ahyeon-dong as a lower-class area are real locations, not just artificial sets.

This research sample is based on semiotics with the signifier in the movie and the signifier in the area, so it was found that both areas actually exist in Seoul and have been part of various studies on social and spatial inequality (OECD, 2019). The use of real locations allows researchers to make comparisons between movie

representations and actual conditions more accurately. This research did not involve respondents or interview activities. The entire analysis process was conducted independently by the researcher through three stages: (1) identification of locations in the film and mapping their suitability with real locations, (2) collection of visual and spatial data from the film and supporting literature, and (3) semiotic analysis of visual signs that represent spatial and social segregation between regions.

3. Discussion

This research has a problem formulation in order to guide the research process and provide clear direction in the development of arguments and analysis. Based on the background that has been presented in the previous discussion, the problem formulation in this research is how to analyze the socio-spatial segregation of the area through a semiotic approach to Film.

3.1 Architecture in Film

Architecture and animation, although originally independent, are now intertwined through the language of space. Architecture is not only limited to the physical design of buildings, but also relates to other disciplines such as animation cinema. Animation cinema transforms real-world visual art into fiction, where space plays an important role in creating setting, atmosphere and message delivery (Mandai, 2013). Architecture as a physical element in animation defines the space that supports the story and reveals the characteristics of space (Hosseini, 2021). In animated films, space is not just a backdrop, but also serves to tell stories and convey symbolic messages, reflecting the director's vision (Walker, 2020).

Parasite which represents spatial and social segregation. Semiotics is the study of signs and meanings contained in an object or visual representation (Hosseini, 2021) and how meaning is shaped through visual representations. This approach is in line with Novianti's findings (Novianti et al., 2022), which identified how architectural elements not only function as physical features, but also contain symbolic values representing social status, authority and power. In the movie, architectural elements such as the location of the house, the shape of the building, lighting, and the spatial relationship between characters become signs that not only have literal meanings, but also connotative meanings that reflect social status and power relations (Hosseini, 2021).

This analysis also relates to Burgess' (1925) concentric zoning theory, which states that cities develop in circular layers from the center to the periphery, where lower-income social groups tend to occupy the denser and more degraded transition zones. The representation in *Parasite* reinforces this theory, with the Kim family living in a dense and low-lying area that represents marginalization, while the Park family is in an elite area in an exclusive highland. Therefore, the analysis in this study focuses on how visual spatial elements such as topography, land use and accessibility are presented as signs that construct the meaning of socio-spatial segregation (Khairullah, 2022) in the film narrative.

3.2 Settlements

Settlement is a collection of human dwelling units that include facilities such as houses, roads, and supporting services. According to Yunus (dalam Rindarjono, 2017), settlements include artificial and natural forms used by humans, both individuals and groups, for temporary or permanent residence. Settlement growth factors include population increase and urbanization (Nugroho et al., 2022). Urbanization attracts migration from rural to urban areas, resulting in the development of settlements around the city centre.

Settlement is an important component in the urban structure that affects the quality of life of its residents through the physical condition of houses, infrastructure, accessibility, and basic services (Purnama & Sugiarto, 2021). A decent settlement is characterized by good infrastructure, adequate public services, and a healthy environment. In contrast, slums have poor infrastructure and an unhealthy environment (Wihadanto et al., 2017). In South Korea, rapid urbanization poses challenges to the provision of adequate housing. Settlements are divided into two types: decent and slum. Decent settlements have good building quality and access to public facilities, while slums have poor infrastructure and limited access (NaNa & SeungWan, 2021). Understanding these characteristics is important for improving quality of life and creating more inclusive and sustainable cities.

3.3 Segregation

Segregation is defined as the separation or distinction between groups within the same area based on

economic, racial, or social status factors (Sihotang & Risdayati, 2017). Residential segregation reflects the separation of ethnic groups and is driven by individual preferences to live in homogeneous neighborhoods, thus reinforcing social inequality (Hall & Thorn, 2011). In the urban context, segregation is characterized by a duality between heterogeneous formal neighbourhoods, which have access to adequate infrastructure, and informal neighbourhoods that are run-down and lack facilities (Harrison 2011). This phenomenon reflects social injustice and perpetuates inequality, with residents in poorer areas having limited access to better opportunities.

3.4 Representation of Socio-Spatial Segregation in Settlements

Cities with significant population growth often have several main functions, such as centers of trade, industry, mining, finance, education and other services. These functions attract people to migrate to the area. However, rapid population growth creates conflicts in housing provision, with governments often struggling to provide equitable services. Factors such as job availability, travel time to work, income level and social relations influence the clustering of people into certain zones in urban areas (R. E. Park et al., 1925). Hoyt (1964) through his sectoral theory added that the development of urban space is influenced by transportation routes that connect the city center with the periphery, as well as the existence of a CBD (Central Business District). According to Khairullah (2022), there are six main factors that cause socio-spatial segregation in settlements, namely land characteristics, facility characteristics, environmental quality, and accessibility.

1. Land Characteristics, the physical, topographical and environmental characteristics of a location influence land use and development. this includes topography as well as land use.
 - a. Topography Stable settlements are usually located on high ground with gentle contours, making it easier to build infrastructure. In contrast, steep or low-lying areas are often inhabited by low-income communities as they are more prone to flooding and landslides. Formal settlements tend to be in locations where the land is stable, while informal settlements are often located in disaster-prone areas due to limited options.
 - b. In terms of Land Use, formal settlements have planned land divisions with public facilities such as schools, parks and green spaces. Slums tend to have irregular land distribution and minimal facilities. Formal settlements have adequate spacing between buildings, providing natural lighting and ventilation, while slums are often very dense, with irregular buildings.
2. Environmental Quality, this factor covers the physical, social and psychological aspects of the environment.
 - a. Housing Quality: High incomes allow access to comfortable and quality housing, while low incomes limit choices to small or poorly constructed houses.
 - b. Surrounding Environment: Formal settlements have good waste management systems, whereas slums often face piles of unmanaged waste. Formal communities have social interactions that support comfort and security, whereas slum communities tend to lack this.
3. Amenities Characteristics, availability and quality of amenities affect comfort and segregation within an area. Facilities such as security, green open spaces, drainage and utility services are better in formal settlements. In contrast, slums often lack basic amenities.
4. Accessibility, an important factor in settlement quality, includes easy access to roads and drainage systems. Road accessibility refers to the quality of the road network that supports convenient and efficient mobility. Settlements with wide, well-maintained roads and adequate shoulders facilitate movement. In contrast, slums often have narrow, damaged or unpaved roads, which hinders mobility and increases the risk of accidents.

3.5 Representation of Residential Socio-Spatial Segregation in Parasite Film

The film *Parasite* uses architecture to depict spatial and social segregation in settlements. This architectural representation highlights the differences between Seongbuk-Dong and Ahyeon-Dong settlements through land characteristics, facilities, environmental quality, and accessibility, specifically in Seoul, South Korea. The Park family is depicted living in a house located in Seongbuk-dong, while the Kim family lives in a semi-basement apartment in Ahyeon-dong. However, the visual presentation in the movie does not fully represent the actual conditions on the ground. The movie simplifies the spatial narrative to reinforce social messages. For example, Ahyeon-dong is in reality a mixed-use zone with a variety of buildings, but in the film it is symbolized in the extreme as a *banjiha* space full of limitations (NaNa & SeungWan, 2021).

Based on official data from the Seoul Metropolitan Government, Seongbuk-dong is an elite area that has exclusive residential characteristics, is inhabited by important figures, and is protected as a cultural and environmental conservation zone (Seo, 2020). In contrast, Ahyeon-dong in the Mapo-gu area is listed as one of the districts with the highest density, high renter ratio, and many semi-basement buildings (banjiha) inhabited by low-income people (I. K. Park et al., 2020). The film presents Seongbuk-dong as clean, orderly, spacious, and full of green spaces to emphasize the Park family's high status. This representation provides a strong visual contrast between the two social classes featured in the movie. This representation of film and real conditions is important because it shows how space in film is used not just as a setting, but as a visual rhetorical tool to communicate social inequality more dramatically. In other words, *Parasite* does not simply document space, but reconstructs the meaning of space through visual symbols and metaphors. Therefore, although there are differences with real conditions, the movie remains valid as an object of study because it recreates social reality through a strong visual language in accordance with the semiotic approach used in this research. The following is an analysis of how the representation of socio-spatial segregation of settlements in *Parasite* Film.

1. Land Characteristic

a. Topography

The topography of a settlement's elevation can differentiate social classes. Decent settlements are usually located in high areas such as hills, providing beautiful views, clean air, and protected from disasters, while lower-class settlements are located in lowlands with limited access to facilities. Properties in high-rise areas have higher values and better facilities, widening the social gap. For example, settlements in Seongbuk Dong are located in the highlands near Bukhansan National Park (Dax, 2015), while settlements in Ahyeon Dong are located in the lowlands near the river.



Figure 1. (a) Seoul Map; (b) Seoul topography section.

Source: Writers (2024)

The topographical illustration depicts a settlement in Seongbuk Dong (Figure 2.a) located on a hill, away from the crowds, near Bukhansan National Park. This settlement is only inhabited by mansions and is on a plateau, with the Seongbuk Dong settlement topographically higher than the semi-basement (banjiha) settlement in Ahyeon Dong. Banjiha, the semi-basement houses inhabited by the poor in the movie, are located half underground in a valley with sloping land. These houses are often flooded due to the low topography of the land, especially in the settlement of Ahyeon Dong (Figure 2.b) which is close to the Hangang river.

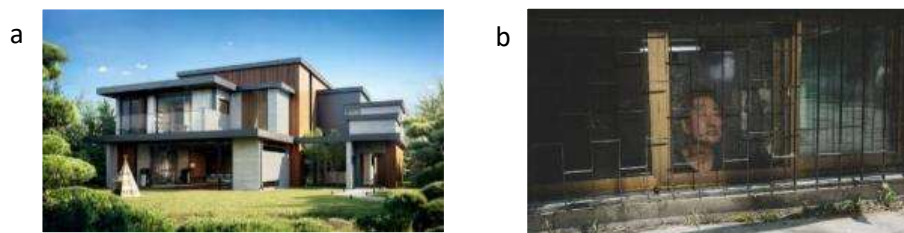


Figure 2. (a) House in Seongbuk Dong on a Hill; (b) Semi-Basement House in Ahyeon Dong.

Source: *Parasite* Movie (2019)

b. Land Uses

In 2013, Seongbuk Dong District was designated as a Cultural and Historical District by the local government, transforming it into an area with historical monuments, scenic views, and cultural institutions that enhance the attractiveness and cultural value of the area (Seo, 2020). This designation had an impact on the property value of land and buildings, thereby strengthening the socioeconomic status of decent residents in the area. Seongbuk Dong is a special residential area surrounded by Bukhansan mountains and away from commercial and industrial areas, creating an exclusive feel. As visualized in the film *Parasite*, the decent community living in the Seongbuk Dong

area is not densely populated, close to green spaces, and far from livelihoods.

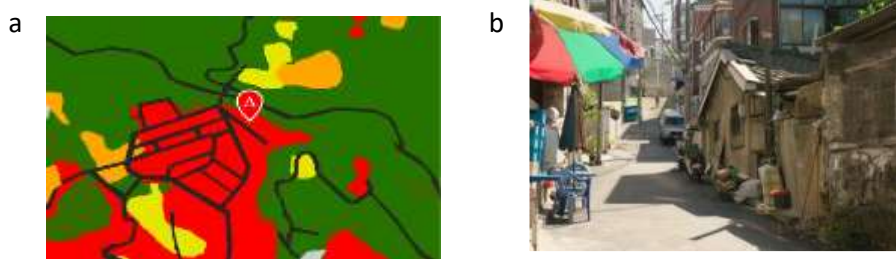


Figure 3. (a) Land Use in Seongbuk Dong; (b) Seongbuk Dong Residential Area in the movie Parasite.
Source: Writers (2024)

Ahyeon-dong has a dense mixed land use, with most of its area used for industry and commerce, reflecting its busy and dense life (OECD, 2019). About 60% of the land is used for commercial activities, 25% for residential, and 15% for public facilities and small businesses. In Parasite, the lower class people live in the slum area of Ahyeon-dong, which is close to industrial and commercial areas, and far from green spaces. They choose to live in semi-basement spaces or other cheap dwellings because of the affordable rents, reflecting a life with limited facilities and low environmental quality (Fres, 2022).

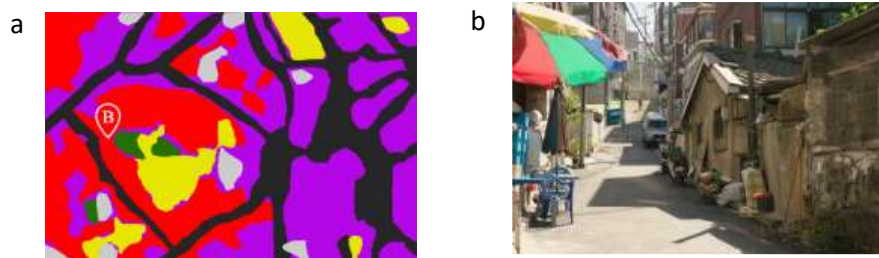


Figure 4. (a) Land Use in Ahyeon-Dong; (b) Ahyeon-Dong Residential Area in the movie Parasite.
Source: Writers (2024)

2. Environmental Quality

a. Housing Quality

Settlement quality refers to the living conditions influenced by the environment and its inhabitants (K. Lee, 2021). Biophysical factors such as topography, vegetation, soil, and water also play a role in determining settlement quality. Modern mansion houses in Seongbuk Dong, with spacious courtyards, beautiful architecture, and luxurious features, reflect high income levels. In contrast, lower-class people living in semi-basement houses in Ahyeon Dong, show significant differences in settlement quality.

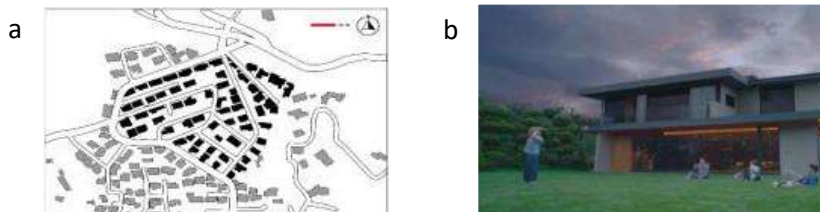


Figure 5. (a) Map of Residential Area in Seongbuk-Dong District; (b) Residential Area in Seongbuk-Dong District in the movie Parasite.
Source: Writers (2024)

Unlike the people of Seongbuk Dong, the people of Ahyeon Dong in Parasite live in squalid, semi-basement apartments with small windows facing a dirty street. Their cramped and poor living quarters reflect their low incomes, so they cannot afford to rent a more decent house. After the flood, they were forced to evacuate to emergency shelters, indicating a lack of savings and emergency resources, which is characteristic of low-income communities (S. K. Ha, 2001)



Figure 6. (a) Map of Residential Area in Ahyeon-Dong District; (b) Residential Area in Ahyeon-Dong District in the movie Parasite.

Source: Writers (2024)

b. Neighborhood

Neighborhoods have a significant impact on living standards. Seongbuk Dong settlement in Parasite offers access to superior services and amenities, with high social status neighbors and private spaces separated by high fences. In contrast, Ahyeon Dong settlement depicts a slum environment with low-income neighbors, limited access, and cramped and narrow spaces between houses.

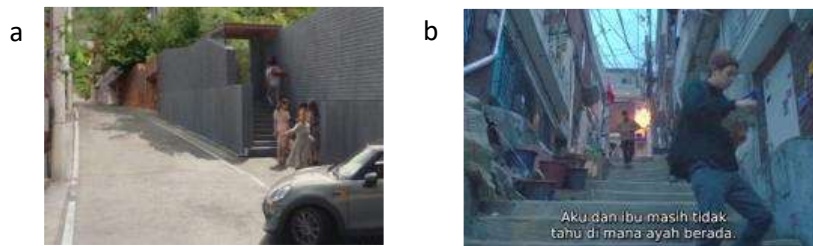


Figure 7. (a) Neighborhoods in Seongbuk-Dong District; (b) Neighborhoods in Ahyeon-Dong District.

Source: Parasite Movie (2019)

3. Facility Characteristics

a. Security Facilities

The security system in Seongbuk Dong is highly sophisticated, using CCTV cameras, fingerprint sensors, sound sensors, and RFID or pins. In contrast, the security system in Ahyeon Dong is minimal, with easily accessible houses without adequate protection features. People with high socioeconomic status tend to live in neighborhoods with high security, such as automatic gates, security guards, and regular patrols, creating a sense of security and comfort. In contrast, low-income groups live in low-security areas, which are often perceived as risky and less attractive to the upper class (Atika, 2020).

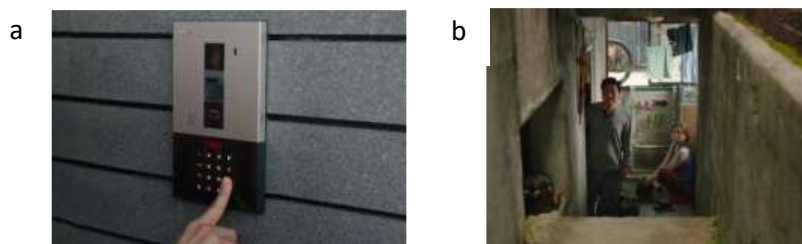


Figure 8. (a) Security System in Seongbuk-Dong; (b) Security System in Ahyeon-Dong.

Source: Parasite Movie (2019)

b. Green Open Space Facilities

Seongbuk Dong settlement is surrounded by vast green open spaces in the highlands of the Bukhansan mountains, creating a cozy and beautiful atmosphere. In contrast, Ahyeon Dong settlement is located in a densely populated area with minimal greenery, especially green open space. This difference reflects the disparity in access, quality of life, and infrastructure investment between socioeconomic groups, where green space is an important indicator of residential segregation (Ayu, 2019). In Parasite, this contrast is depicted through the manicured green spaces in Seongbuk Dong and the lack of greenery in Ahyeon Dong, reflecting the correlation between socioeconomic status and environmental quality.



Figure 9. (a) Green space facilities in Seongbuk-Dong; (b) Green space facilities in Ahyeon-Dong
Source: *Parasite Movie* (2019)

c. Industrial and Commercial Facilities

Commercial facilities in the settlements of Seongbuk Dong and Ahyeon Dong show stark differences, particularly in retail access. In *Parasite*, the people of Seongbuk Dong are depicted shopping at large shopping centers with full facilities and electric parking systems. In contrast, the people of Ahyeon Dong only shop for their daily needs at simple grocery stores. Retail facilities reflect socioeconomic status, lifestyle, and access to services, and are an important indicator of residential segregation (Muhammad Alwi et al., 2023). The film emphasizes this contrast through the different access of the rich to luxury shopping malls versus the poor to traditional markets, reflecting their respective quality of life and financial resources.



Figure 10. (a) Industrial and Commercial Facilities in Seongbuk Dong District; (b) Industrial and Commercial Facilities in Ahyeon Dong District.
Source: *Parasite Movie* (2019)

d. Drainage

The drainage facilities in Seongbuk Dong and Ahyeon Dong are of very different quality, as depicted in the heavy rain scene in the movie *Parasite*. Seongbuk Dong stays dry due to its high topography and good drainage, while Ahyeon Dong experiences heavy flooding due to its low topography, semi-basement, and poor drainage system. Drainage facilities reflect disparities in infrastructure, health, comfort, and management between socioeconomic groups, thus becoming an important indicator of residential segregation (Indrajaya et al., 2022). The film highlights this gap by depicting the flood-prone and unhealthy neighborhood of Ahyeon Dong, compared to the tidy and drainage problem-free Seongbuk Dong. Poor drainage reflects limited access to basic infrastructure, whereas good drainage indicates higher economic resources and attention to people's quality of life.



Figure 11. (a) Drainage system in Seongbuk-Dong District; (b) Drainage system in Ahyeon-Dong District.

Source: *Parasite Movie* (2019)

4. Accessibility

The contrast in accessibility between the settlements of Seongbuk Dong and Ahyeon Dong is clearly illustrated in the movie *Parasite*. Seongbuk Dong has good accessibility with wide roads, while Ahyeon Dong has narrow access that is mostly walkable via stairs. Settlements with high accessibility allow residents to save time and travel costs, while low access is financially burdensome and reduces mobility (Luvitaliani, Muh. Yamin Jinca, 2021). These differences reflect disparities in economic opportunities,

mobility and quality of life, making accessibility an important indicator of residential segregation. The film illustrates the impact by comparing easy movement in Seongbuk Dong with limitations in Ahyeon Dong, where low access exacerbates socio-economic disparities, while good access reflects stronger economic capabilities and wider opportunities.



Figure 12. (a) Road Accessibility in Seongbuk-Dong; (b) Road Accessibility in Ahyeon Dong.
Source: *Parasite Movie* (2019)

The film *Parasite* uses architecture to illustrate the segregation shown in the film is representative of urban problems and architecture is presented using a semiotic approach, by analyzing the signifier (marker) in the film; presenting which space and shape (film photos) and signified (signifier) explaining the replica of environmental problems. Some semiotic representations of signifier-signified architecture in *Parasite* Film are as follows:

Table1. Semiotic analysis of signifier-signified architecture in *Parasite* Movie

Sample	Variable		Parameter	Signifier	Signified
Seongbuk-Dong Settlement	Land Characteristics	Topography	Elevation and ground contours	Mountain	High social status; physical elevation as a symbol of power and exclusivity (Xiao et al., 2018)
			Stability and geography risk	No geological risk	
		Land Uses	Type and distribution of land use	Residential special area	
			Population density	Not dense	
	Facility Characteristics		Security Facilities	High security, with advanced technology and infrequent crime.	Access to premium facilities; a symbol of socio-economic capital and elite privacy (Grundström et al., 2024)
			Green Open Space Facilities	Spacious and beautiful green open space facilities, with green lawns on the grounds.	
			Industrial and Commercial Facilities	Large and clean shopping facilities with complete daily needs.	
			Drainage Facilities	Drainage conditions are good, so the settlement is not flooded when it rains.	
	Environmental Quality	Settlement Quality	Physical Condition of Buildings	The quality and physical form of buildings are maintained..	Representation of high quality of life; large spaces as an expression of social well-being and respectability (Setiawan, 2005)
			Building Type	Elite with mansion type houses	
		Environmental Quality	Environmental Cleanliness	Environmental Cleanliness with an organized garbage disposal system	
			Social Interaction		
Accessibility	Accessibility Quality	Width and surface	Road accessibility is very good, 7-10 meters wide.	Direct accessibility that reflects the	

Sample	Variable		Parameter	Signifier	Signified
Ahyeon-Dong Settlement			Accessibility barriers	Clear and without any barriers, such as parked cars, trash, etc.	dominance of space and ease of social mobility of the upper class (Liao et al., 2025)
	Land Characteristics	Topography	Elevation and ground contours	Lowlands	Marginalization of space; social marginalization and ecological insecurity (Y. Lee & Han, 2024)
			Stability and geography risk	Flood-prone	
		Land uses	Type and distribution of land use	Mixed area between retail and office centers.	
			Population density	Densely populated	
	Facility Characteristics		Security Facilities	Low security, making it prone to crime.	Lack of basic facilities marks the unequal distribution of resources within the city (Han, 2022)
			Green Open Space Facilities	Lack of green open space, with concrete covering the area.	
			Industrial and Commercial Facilities	FShop facilities are small and not clean and daily necessities are incomplete.	
			Drainage Facilities	Drainage is poor, so the settlement is subject to flooding when it rains.	
	Kualitas Lingkungan	Kualitas Pemukiman	Physical Condition of Buildings	The quality and physical form of the building is poor and rundown	Representation of the marginalization of life; degradation of spatial quality that impacts health and social well-being (S.-K. Ha, 2004)
			Building Type	Semi-basement or banjiha house types.	
		Kualitas Lingkungan	Environmental Cleanliness	Waste system that is not very organized	
			Social Interaction	Open with no partition between buildings.	
Aksesibilitas	Kualitas Aksesibilitas	Width and surface	Accessibility is very poor, quite narrow with a road width of 3-7 meters.	Physical barriers to social mobility; access spaces that reinforce the city's social hierarchy (Han, 2022)	
		Accessibility barriers	Lack of cleanliness, and roadblocks such as parked vehicles and garbage		

Source: Authors (2024)

Parasite effectively depicts socio-spatial segregation in urban society, highlighting the stark social class differences through the separation of Seongbuk Dong and Ahyeon Dong neighborhoods. Despite the strong representation, there are some differences with the real world, especially in terms of topography, land use, and quality of amenities. The visual depiction in the movie is deliberately made more dramatic to give an emotional impact to the audience.

Based on the analysis above, the film Parasite shows that class differences are not just the words rich and poor that can be displayed in dialog, but can be shown through signs that can be socially interpreted by the audience themselves, which we can basically find in Parasite's daily social life. In addition, the dominance of the upper class who look positive is very much displayed in this movie. Therefore, the representation of

social class in *Parasite* is perfectly illustrated, both from the way each scene is selected, as well as the existence of architecture that supports the background and characteristics of extraordinary characters.

5. Conclusion

Parasite represents spatial segregation symbolically through a strong visual language. The semiotic approach used in this research shows that space in the film functions as a sign system, where visual elements (signifiers) form social meanings (signified) related to space and class inequality (Mudjiono, 2011). First, in terms of land characteristics, the Park family's house located in the highlands symbolizes socio-economic dominance (Xiao et al., 2018), while the Kim family's house in the lowland semi-basement signifies social marginalization and vulnerability (Y. Lee & Han, 2024). Second, in terms of environmental quality, Park's clean and spacious home represents comfort and high quality of life (Grundström et al., 2024), while Kim's damp and cramped home represents quality of life degradation and social marginalization (Han, 2022). Third, in terms of amenity characteristics, the presence of private gardens, security systems, and natural lighting in Park's homes indicate exclusive access to urban resources (Setiawan, 2005), while Kim's neighborhoods with minimal infrastructure indicate spatial injustice (Lee & Kim, 2023). Fourth, in terms of accessibility, the wide roads and private cars in Park's house indicate ease of social mobility (Liao et al., 2025), while the narrow passageways and steep stairs leading to Kim's house become a tangible metaphor of social mobility barriers and urban inequality structures (Han, 2022). Using a semiotic approach, this research is able to convey that socio-spatial segregation in *Parasite* does not only arise from socio-economic conditions, but is constructed visually through both architectural elements and film narratives. The phenomenon of segregation is represented as an integral part of the problem of urban space, where architecture and film together form the meaning of spatial injustice in urban society. Thus, this research answers the formulation of the problem by analyzing socio-spatial segregation through a semiotic approach in film media, while confirming that the representation of space in film can be a tool to understand and criticize urban reality more deeply.

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