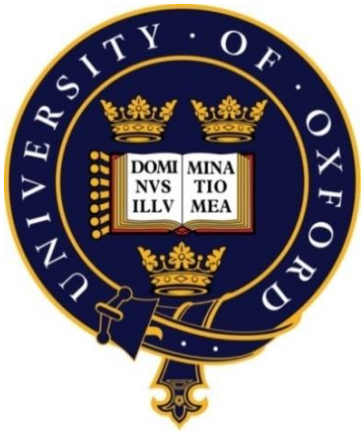
Psycho-Social Dynamics of Shame in Poverty: A South Korean Case Study

Yong Mie Jo



St Cross College

University of Oxford

2019 Michaelmas

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Social Policy in the Social Sciences Division at the University of Oxford.

Word count: 86,550 words

Psycho-Social Dynamics of Shame in Poverty: A South Korean Case Study

Abstract

Poverty studies worldwide have continuously demonstrated that poverty entails not only material hardships but also other non-material hardships, such as shame. Yet, a substantive empirical investigation of why and how shame is experienced in poverty and its relevance for social policy interventions has been significantly lacking in the literature. Accordingly, this thesis documents an in-depth empirical investigation of an increasingly significant, yet under-researched, psycho-social dimension of shame in poverty. Acknowledging the limitations of focusing either on the individual or the social level processes alone in poverty and shame research, it employs a psycho-social approach that takes a comprehensive account of the dual dimensions of shame. Empirical investigations are conducted with three different qualitative research methods (in-depth interviews with people living in poverty, sociological discourse analysis of popular films, and social policy analysis of the social assistance programme in South Korea), together with a historical contextualization of the empirical findings with secondary historical sources. Taking South Korea as a case study, it offers an empirically-based theoretical framework that explains the root causes, working mechanisms and impacts of shame in poverty, and the fundamental nature of the association between poverty and shame. It demonstrates that the current psycho-social dynamics of shame in poverty is a contemporary phenomenon underpinned by the socio-relational conditions that emerged from the major socio-historical shift to modern capitalism. The social level dynamics are shown to equally manifest in the personal level working mechanisms and subsequent impacts of shame in poverty. The findings show that in order for the anti-poverty social assistance in South Korea to continue promoting the improvement of people's lives via their own self-agency, its design and implementation should equally be geared toward improving people's self-agency rather than undermining it as it currently stands.

Yong Mie Jo
St Cross College
Thesis Submitted for D.Phil. Degree
2019 Michaelmas Term (January)

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Professor Robert Lloyd Walker. As my doctoral supervisor, he gave me the freedom and autonomy as a thinker, yet was never short of time or words of encouragement not only for my work but also for me as a person. His special energy, positivity, and a great sense of humour towards life, people, and work always lifted my spirits. My deepest gratitude goes to his constant responsiveness and generous availability as a supervisor, which I was very fortunate to have as a doctoral student.

And I want to thank Tony Hope for his unfailing support through the thick and thin of my time in Oxford as my mentor at St Cross College. I also greatly thank Mary Smith, the senior graduate studies administrator of the Social Sciences Division, for her deepest kindness and a genuine sense of support she always gave me. I express my special thanks to my examiners, Fran Bennett, Eldin Fahmy, Rachel Bray, and Rebecca Surrender, not only for their constructive and helpful comments but for their genuine attentiveness in engaging with my work. I appreciate all their comments and suggestions that have been a valuable input for this research.

I want to thank Mr. KANG June at the Ministry of Health and Welfare who not only provided the critical help in participant recruitment process, but also generously shared his knowledge of the welfare system and poverty situations in South Korea. I am also grateful to Kang-Buk-Gu's welfare official Mr. SHIM Jae-Bum and all of the welfare officers at Dong level, including JANG Yoo-Sung, who were very helpful with the recruitment of the participants.

I especially thank every one of my 31 interview participants for sharing their time and life stories with me. They were the guiding lights of this research.

My sincere thanks go to Deb Lee Lee Chen for her unwavering support during some of the coldest seasons of this journey. I thank Pinxiu Shen for the conversations we shared and for being a great sounding board. I thank Juliette Picagne, my neighbour in 2016, who offered a very generous mind space for processing my grand stewing pot of thoughts, ideas, and fieldwork memories over several hours of focused conversation that became invaluable for making a significant progress in conceptualizing the holistic picture of this work. I am also grateful for the genuine empathy she showed me. I thank the friends who so graciously gave a helping hand with proofreading this work, including Fiona Teo, Maria Lee, Deb Lee Lee Chen, and Carola Hernandez-Cappas. I also thank Mingyue Li for being so helpful with delivering the thesis to the exam school. A special thanks goes to all the new and old friends who were a part of this journey.

Last but not least, I thank my parents who gave their unfailing financial support throughout this journey. I am grateful to them for supporting the heart of this research.

Table of Contents

Abstract i
Acknowledgements ii
Table of Contents iii
List of Tables v
List of Figures vi

About the Research

Chapter 1. Introduction 2

1.1 Research Background 2
1.2 Research Questions 8
1.3 Research Design 10
1.4 Thesis Outline 12

Chapter 2. Literature Review & Conceptual Framework 14

2.1 Introduction 14
2.2 Poverty Research in South Korea 14
2.3 Non-Material Dimension of Poverty 17
2.4 Reasons for Focusing on 'Shame' 20
2.5 Literature Review on the Shame of Poverty 23
2.6 Current Strengths & Omissions in the Literature 30
2.7 Conceptual Framework 33
2.8 Conclusion: Research Approach 43

Chapter 3. Contextual Background of the South Korean Case Study 45

3.1 Introduction 45
3.2 Political, Economic & Social Structural Changes 45
3.3 The Changing Social Environment of Poverty 49
3.4 Social Policy Interventions to Tackle Poverty 53
3.5 Conclusion: Rationale for Choosing South Korea as the Case Study 70

Chapter 4. Methodology 72

4.1 Introduction 72
4.2 Relationship with the International Research Project on Poverty & Shame 73
4.3 Film Analysis 75
4.4 In-Depth Interview 90
4.5 Social Policy Analysis 104

Part I. Psycho-Social Dynamics Underpinning the Shame of Poverty

Chapter 5. Socio-Historical Roots of the Psycho-Social Dynamics of Shame in Poverty 108

5.1 Introduction 108
5.2 Nature of the Current Presence of Shame in Poverty 110
5.3 Pre-Modernity: Predetermined Collectivist Social Identity & Confucianism 118
5.4 Modernity: Uncertain Individualistic Social Identity & Capitalism 126
5.5 Conclusion 138

Chapter 6. Changing Cultural Discourse of Poverty in Popular Films & Emergence of Shame (1975 - 2010) 140
6.1 Introduction 140
6.2 Analytical Framework for Disclosing Poverty-Shame Discourse in Film 141
6.3 Historical Trends in the Filmic Portrayals of Poverty & Its Space for Shame 143
6.4 Emergence of the Poverty-Shame Discourse in Film 155
6.5 Common Features Across Time in the Cultural Discourse of Poverty 159
6.6 Conclusion 160

Part II. Personal Level Manifestations, Working Mechanisms, & Impact of the Psycho-Social Dynamics of Shame in Poverty

Chapter 7. Personal Level Manifestations & Working Mechanisms of the Psycho-Social Dynamics of Shame in Poverty 163
7.1 Introduction 163
7.2 Socio-Economic Relational Identification Between Estranged Selves 164
7.3 Competitively Attained Self-Worth Based on Relative Superiority 171
7.4 Poverty-Specific Shaming Conditions 182
7.5 Conclusion 204

Chapter 8. Personal Level Impact & Responses to Shame in Poverty 208
8.1 Introduction 208
8.2 Concealment of Poverty Through Shame 208
8.3 Social Isolation in Poverty 213
8.4 Deterioration of Personal Agency: The Only Available Means of Escaping Both Poverty & Shame 223
8.5 A Deeper Undertone: Ultimately Indefinable by the Shame of Poverty 227
8.6 Responses to Shame 229
8.7 Conclusion 243

Summary of Findings & Further Implications

Chapter 9. Conclusions & Discussions 246
9.1 Introduction 246
9.2 Summary of Empirical Findings 246
9.3 Synthesis of Theoretical Findings: Psycho-Social Dynamics of Shame in Poverty 254
9.4 Discussions of the Findings 262
9.5 Limitations & Suggestions for Future Research 272

Bibliography 276

Appendix 1. List of the Sampled South Korean Films in Chapter 6 (1975 - 2010) 294
Appendix 2. Topic Guide for In-Depth Interviews 296
Appendix 3. Information Sheet about the Research for the Interview Participants 298
Appendix 4. Interview and Voice Recording Consent Form 299
Appendix 5. Research Ethics Approval (CUREC 2) 300

List of Tables

Chapter 3

Table 3.1 Family obligation support clause: the scope of application 66

Chapter 4

Table 4.1 Sampling framework 97

Table 4.2 Composition of the sub-groups within the sampling framework 97

Chapter 6

Table 6.1 Analytical framework for tracing the poverty-shame discourse embedded within a film 142

Table 6.2 Changing cultural discourse of poverty and shame in South Korean films (1975 - 2010) 157

Chapter 8

Table 8.1 Self-fulfilling prophecy of shame in isolated poverty 224

List of Figures

Chapter 3

Figure 3.1 Map of the Korean peninsula 45

Figure 3.2 GDP Growth and Absolute Poverty Rate Change: 1966 - 1992 50

Chapter 4

Figure 4.1 Map of Seoul (Lesniewski, 2016) with an emphasis (red-colouring) added to the location of the interview fieldwork sites 96

About the Research

Chapter 1. Introduction

Chapter 2. Literature Review & Conceptual Framework

Chapter 3. Contextual Background of the South Korean Case Study

Chapter 4. Methodology

Chapter 1. Introduction

1. 1 Research Background[1]

Poverty in its definition and measurement remains a source of considerable controversy in both policy and academic circles, and continues to be subjected to critical scrutiny. The predominant means of measuring poverty has been monetary accounts and indices that are solely grounded in its material dimensions. An extreme example would be the "$1 (or $1.90) - a day" statistic that has been introduced in recent decades, which has been effective in raising global awareness of the severity of monetary deprivation experienced by a large proportion of the global population.[2] A downside of such income-based measurement, however, is its inability to take into account non-material dimensions of poverty, such as shame, disrespect, or lack of voice, which have been increasingly gaining ground in poverty research of their significance.

Notable in contemporary debates in this respect has been the emergence of alternative poverty indicators which attempt to address the limitations of conventional income-based measures.[3] These include, among others, indices that include non-material dimensions, such

[1] Some parts of the literature review in this section were published in the peer-reviewed academic journal of *Critical Social Policy* in 2013 under the title, 'Psycho-social dimensions of poverty: When poverty becomes shameful'.

[2] The '$1 (or $1.90)-a-day' measurement of poverty has been extended in its application to address poverty situations not only in developing countries, but also in one of the richest and supposedly most developed countries, such as the US (cf. Edin and Shaefer, 2015), shedding light on the stark contrast between people's socio-economic living conditions within the world's richest country.

[3] On the flipside of the poverty discourse, the conventional approach to measuring economic welfare (GDP) has also been criticized with the argument that after earning more than a relatively low level of income, rising income ceases to increase 'happiness' (Frey and Stutzer, 2002). For instance, in 2009, former French President Nicolas Sarkozy proposed to measure the country's economic progress by including 'happiness' indicators with regard to wellbeing and sustainability in its regular growth statistics.

as the Human Development Index, the Human Poverty Index, the Multidimensional Deprivation Index, the Social Capital Index, and the Capability Set. One important commonality that is shared amongst these alternative poverty indices is their recognition that the non-material dimensions of poverty, though difficult to capture, are as important as the traditional emphasis on material deprivation, if not more so.

The emotional hardships that people face in poverty have for long been treated as a personal psychological problem that is in a separate domain from the person's financial problems. This tendency in poverty research may stem from the fact that when discussing shortfalls in income and the consequent financial constraints, it is assumed that we are already addressing the difficult and stressful implications of poverty, while the actual feelings of those experiencing hardship are left unheard and unexplored. However, without explicitly addressing the emotional side of poverty, we cannot fully understand the day-to-day implications of poverty in people's lives. For instance, while the numerical measure of one or two dollars a day has arguably succeeded in raising social and political awareness of the extent of severe monetary deprivation, it cannot say anything of what the reality holds for the person living on that income.

Among the non-material dimensions of poverty, poverty studies worldwide have notably demonstrated that the need to avoid and/or conceal shame emanating from a state of deprivation has been acutely felt by those living in poverty (Narayan et al., 2000), and that it is just as pertinent in relatively affluent countries as it is in poorly-resourced ones (Lister, 2004). Some of the most frequently reported arenas of shame for people in poverty have been public intervention programmes that are aimed at ameliorating the diswelfare of poverty but are ironically aggravating it by inducing shame - generally during the application process, experience with caseworkers, and outside the public assistance office (Room, 1999; Narayan

et al., 2000; Gray, 2005). Accordingly, the Oxford-based Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI, 2010) specifically called for the connection between poverty and shame to be more clearly articulated in relevant policy discourses, due to the detrimental impact it has not only on psychological and socio-relational realms of people's lives in poverty but also on their access to public means of support.

> '[People in poverty] and communities continue to cite direct experiences of indignity, shame and humiliation as painful components of their deprivation. (…) Shame and humiliation can result in isolation – thereby corroding social relations and breaking down social capital. They have negative effects on psychological wellbeing and group identity. Moreover these can lead people to turn away from public services that could benefit them, and may, in extreme cases, lead to conflict' (OPHI, 2010).[4]

However, such a non-material dimension of poverty is still given very little regard in dominant political and policy discourse worldwide. Academically also, while people's experience of shame in poverty and its possible negative impact had been acknowledged in the literature, there had not been a substantial in-depth investigation of this problem at the time of commencing this study (and other non-material dimensions of poverty alike, such as disrespect, lack of voice, powerlessness, etc.). With the prevalence of descriptive level analysis thus far, the current understanding of the issue is very limited on what causes shame in poverty (whether it is personally induced or socially induced), how it is experienced in poverty (i.e. its process or working mechanisms), and the reason for its significance in people's lives in poverty (with regard to its impact). On a conceptual level, it has also been unclear how to understand the association between poverty and shame – for example,

[4] This is an online resource from the official website of OPHI, and there is no page number available for this reference.

whether the association is a socially relative one or an absolute one by nature (which makes shame an irreducible conceptual component of poverty).

Due to such omissions in the literature, several limits are currently placed on treating the problem. First, there is not enough empirical basis or understanding of the problem to discern how the emotional hardships in poverty should be treated (whether as a social problem or as a personal problem). Second, it is as yet unknown to what extent shame should be considered a significant conceptual dimension of poverty in policy discourse, which will clarify the adequate policy response to the non-material dimension of shame in poverty. Third, if shame is to be treated as a social policy problem, there is an apparent lack of understanding about where the core of the problem lies regarding its cause(s) and working mechanisms, which is required in order to formulate policy measures that can properly tackle the problem.

Research Objectives

For these reasons, this research sets out to undertake an in-depth investigation of a significant, yet under-researched, non-material dimension of poverty, i.e. shame. This research seeks to understand the overall phenomenon of the shame faced by people in poverty by investigating some of its key aspects: its cause(s), working mechanisms and impact, and ultimately the nature of the association between poverty and shame. Based on empirical investigations, this research intends to offer valuable policy implications for understanding how to approach or tackle the non-material dimension of shame in poverty.

South Korea as a Case Study

As a case study for exploring the above research areas, South Korea is chosen for three reasons. First, South Korea in recent two decades has seen an outburst of social problems that are pertinent to this research. Since the aftermath of the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997, South

Korea has witnessed a significant shift in the nature of its poverty. From a country that had a low unemployment level and increasing reduction in its poverty rate until the mid-1990s (3.4% according to Park (2001)), with over 76.3% of the population being identifiable as middle class (KDI, 2013: 39), it has seen a rapid increase in the level of absolute poverty (including in-work poverty), inequality, job insecurity, divorce rate, and other related social problems following the Financial Crisis. With the implementation of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF's) neo-liberal structural reform measures, the overall social atmosphere of the country has become much more heightened in its sense of competition down to the individual level. Among the various social problems that have surfaced since then, the level of psychological distress (e.g. depression, anxiety) among people in relation to their financial conditions has become noticeably high. One illustrative symptom has been the rapid increase in the suicide rate, which has doubled in the last two decades and now ranks as the second highest rate among the OCED countries since the early 2000s (Korea Suicide Prevention Centre, 2015; OECD, 2019). It has become frequently observable in news media that people speak of feeling more deprived in comparison to other wealthier people in society, or neglected and excluded from society based on his/her economic conditions. These social symptoms indicate that people's economic conditions have come to carry acutely personal implications, incurring individual level psychological damage, which precisely resonate with the research interest of this study.

Second, the modern history of South Korea, characterised by extremely rapid social changes, provides an effective case study for investigating whether the nature of the social association between poverty and shame has changed over time and, if so, under what social contextual influences. As South Korea transitioned from a pre-modern society based on deep-rooted Confucianistic agricultural feudalism to a highly developed modern capitalistic democracy in

less than two generations, it is possible to trace the changing social contexts of poverty even within a single person's lifetime. Especially in the case of older age groups, they have been exposed to the transition from pre-modernity to modernity within their lifetime. This aspect of the South Korean case study is conducive to exploring some of the key questions of this research regarding the changeability of the poverty-shame association and the influence of social environmental changes.

Third, poverty studies and relevant social policies in South Korea have been equally oblivious, if not more so, to the significance of non-material dimensions of poverty despite its current social symptoms. In this regard, choosing South Korea as a case study can contribute to establishing an understanding of the non-material dimensions of poverty in the South Korean literature also, as it remains a nascent field of research. A more detailed discussion of the contextual background and rationale for choosing South Korea as a case study will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Research Values

This research is anticipated to contribute to the academic literature on several levels. First, the overall approach of this research to the phenomenon as a *psycho-social dimension* of poverty overcomes the previous limitations in the literature that came from focusing solely on the personal or the social level processes without exploring the interrelationship between the two. This psycho-social approach will offer a fuller picture of the phenomenon that can shed light on the unanswered facets of the problem.

Second, it will provide an empirically based understanding of the various aspects of shame experienced in poverty: its root cause(s), working mechanisms, impact, and the overall interrelationship between poverty and shame. This has the potential lead to a more advanced

conceptual understanding of shame in relation to poverty, helping to clarify its significance in poverty research and in policy discourse of poverty.

Third, this research will explore the socio-historical background to the poverty-shame phenomenon, which has not been sufficiently explored in the literature. This will further contribute to historically contextualizing both poverty and shame in their conceptualizations, which have often been overlooked in the literature.

Fourth, this research will also help produce policy implications for poverty that are better reflective of the social conditions in which it is situated. Policy implications for designing and implementing anti-poverty measures that are conducive to preventing shame will contribute to both improving the overall experience of welfare recipients and increasing the effectiveness of public interventions in relation to poverty. Moreover, while this research focuses on the case of South Korea, it can undoubtedly provide a meaningful reference point for other countries that are experiencing similar social problems or undergoing parallel social developmental processes; both as a general social theory of the issue and for its social policy implications.

1. 2 Research Questions

After undertaking a critical review of the literature and identifying the current omissions in the literature and a conceptual framework (discussed in more detail in Chapter 2), the main research questions of this study were developed as below. The rationale for choosing these questions is given below the questions.

1. **Nature of the presence of shame in poverty:**
    - Is shame a significant aspect of living in poverty?
    - On what grounds is such shame justified by people themselves in poverty?

2. **Social contextualization of the shame of poverty:**
    - Has poverty always been a shameful state to live in on a social level? (Is poverty absolutely shameful?)
    - If the poverty-shame association has changed over time, was there any social contextual background to such change?
    - How has the dominant cultural discourse portrayed the social implications of poverty regarding shame? Any change over time?
3. **Personal level working mechanisms & impact of shame in poverty:**
    - What are the personal level working mechanisms of shame in poverty?
    - What is the impact of shame on the lives of people in poverty?
    - What are people's responses to shame? Is it possible to feel less or no shame with regard to living in poverty?
4. **Role of social assistance policy in people's experiences of shame in poverty:**
    - How does social assistance policy interact with people's experience of shame in poverty?

In the case of South Korea, no empirical study has been undertaken to date to verify the significance of shame in poverty. Therefore, the first set of research questions seeks to (1) verify whether shame is a significant aspect of living in poverty in South Korea, and if so, on what grounds such shame is felt by people themselves in poverty. The second set of research questions (2) contextualizes the presence of shame in poverty in a wider socio-historical context and explores whether the poverty-shame association has been historically consistent (as an inherent facet of poverty) or has changed over time. This is both to explore the nature of the association between poverty and shame and to investigate the root cause(s) of such an association. The third set of questions seeks to (3) explore the personal level working mechanisms of shame in poverty and its impact on people's lives, including people's own responses to such shame (and whether it is possible to feel less ashamed, or not ashamed at all, with regard to living in poverty).

As a subsidiary research question, the last question asks (4) whether and, if so, how anti-poverty social policy in South Korea is currently interacting with the shame experienced in

poverty. Social policy as an institution is taken into account for the following two reasons. First, it holds a particular significance in relation to this research topic, not only based on its recognition in the literature as one of the most frequently cited social institutions that directly affects the shame experienced by people in poverty, but also due to its significance as the final social safety net for poverty in the current social environment. Unlike in the past, the informal provision of welfare based on family and community relations has been increasingly eroded in modern capitalistic countries, including South Korea. As private forms of support diminished for individuals who cannot obtain their own sufficient means of living in the labour market for various reasons, public measures of support via the welfare system have become the last resort for many. Hence, institutional level shaming that impairs access to social assistance would entail a loss of the last remaining means of support for people in poverty. Second, unlike the literature on other countries (especially European welfare states), the role of public intervention programmes in inducing shame for welfare recipients in poverty still remains a very under-researched area in the case of South Korea. Therefore, the welfare system has been included in the investigation as a significant social institution to take into account and explore with regard to people's shame in poverty.

1. 3 Research Design

While the methodology for investigating the above research questions will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, the overall design of the research can be summarised as follows. First, an initial conceptual framework was established based on a comprehensive review of the literature that was relevant for exploring the shame of poverty (discussed in Chapter 2). According to the conceptual framework, shame was found to be a socio-relational emotion in its occurrence that required both the self-consciousness of the person and the objective act of shaming. It was also socio-relational in its subsequent impact, directly influencing the

affected person's social relations with others. This indicated that in understanding a person's experience of shame, the scope of the investigation should not be limited to personal emotional well-being, but should be expanded to also include the socio-relational realms that are crucial to both the inception and outcome of the emotional process. Thus, this research employed a rare approach in the relevant literature that looks simultaneously into both personal and social level processes of shame in poverty, defined here as a *psycho-social dimension* of poverty.

In order to explore the root cause(s) and the nature of the association between poverty and shame, the analytical focus is further expanded from the immediate socio-relational interactions to the broader socio-historical context. This is to investigate whether there are deeper social contextual underpinnings of such socio-relational practices that shape or influence the social level association between poverty and shame. Personal level working mechanisms and the impact of shame in poverty are also explored alongside such social level analyses. As for the research methods, in-depth interviewing is used to collect sufficiently rich qualitative data on people's experience of shame in poverty, together with a historical contextualization of people's experience via documentary analysis of secondary historical sources.

Among the relevant social institutions that play a role in shaping the poverty discourse in society, popular cultural discourse and the state welfare system in relation to poverty have been identified as the main objects of study. Cultural discourse is identified as a significant social institution through which socially dominant value systems for evaluating a person's shame-worthiness, as well as their possible changes over the years could be explored. Popular film is chosen as a cultural text of significant social influence for analysing the dominant trends in the cultural discourse of poverty. The cultural discourse of poverty in films is

analysed with a sociological discourse analysis method. Social assistance policy is chosen for exploring the role of a social welfare institution, due to the central role it plays in South Korea's welfare system in shaping the governmental discourse regarding poverty as well as people's experience of seeking public forms of support in poverty.

1. 4 Thesis Outline

This thesis is composed of four introductory chapters that provide a research background, a summary of the research questions, research design, and an outline of the thesis (Chapter 1); a critical review of the previous literature, based on which current omissions in the literature are identified and a conceptual framework is established for studying poverty-related shame (Chapter 2); the contextual background of the chosen country case study (Chapter 3); and the design of the research methods that are devised to answer the research questions (Chapter 4).

In answering the research questions, the empirical findings of this research are discussed across four chapters (Chapter 5, 6, 7, and 8), which are grouped into two parts according to their levels of analysis. Chapter 5 and 6 constitute *Part One*, which is a social level analysis of why poverty became shameful in the current social context of poverty, and how the psycho-social dynamics between poverty and shame have changed over time. The first half of Chapter 5 empirically verifies the significant presence of shame in poverty in South Korea and identifies a deeper psycho-social construct underpinning the shame of poverty. The second half of Chapter 5 contextualizes such findings within the broader socio-historical context of South Korea and traces how the social level dynamics working between poverty and shame have changed over time. Chapter 6 also analyses these changes over time in the dominant cultural discourse of poverty identified within popular films, and discusses when

poverty-shame discourse fully emerged in the changing social trends of the cultural level association between poverty and shame.

Part Two is a personal level analysis of how the social level psycho-social dynamics manifested and functioned in people's lives in poverty, elaborating on its working mechanisms (Chapter 7) and impact and people's responses to it (Chapter 8). Chapter 7 also includes, under the section regarding the shaming conditions specific to poverty, an investigation of the role of social assistance policy in people's experiences of shame in poverty, analysing its policy discourse, design, and delivery system in relation to people's personal accounts of the system. It draws on both documentary analysis of relevant policy documents and secondary sources, and people's personal experiences of the social assistance system based on the qualitative interview data. These chapters in Part Two also tie in with the earlier chapters in Part One, as they display how the psycho-social construct of shame and its social underpinnings manifest themselves on the personal level of people's lives.

Finally, the concluding part of the thesis (Chapter 9) summarizes the main findings of this research, discusses how the findings relate to the existing literature and inform the existing anti-poverty policies with their policy implications, and addresses the limitations of this research with suggestions for future research. In summarizing the findings of this research, a newly developed theoretical framework for explaining the *psycho-social dynamics of shame in poverty* is proposed based on synthesizing the findings of this research.

Chapter 2. Literature Review & Conceptual Framework

2. 1 Introduction

This chapter gives a critical review of the literature, identifying its current strengths and omissions, and establishes an initial conceptual framework for undertaking this research. The first section begins by reviewing the overall trends in the poverty research of South Korea, noting where it currently stands with regard to the non-material dimensions of poverty. The second section proceeds to discuss the wider literature on the non-material dimensions of poverty, and decides on the broader approach for this study. The third section addresses the rationale for focusing on 'shame' in particular among other relevant non-material aspects of poverty. The fourth section follows up by giving a more in-depth review of the previous findings on and approaches to the shame of poverty, identifying the key research gaps and the subsequent research aims of this study. The last section establishes the basic conceptual framework adopted here for studying shame in the context of poverty. This chapter concludes by summarizing the overall approach of this research.

2. 2 Poverty Research in South Korea

To understand the current trends in the poverty research of South Korea, it is first necessary to take into account the country's modern developmental history. South Korea's current social system of democratic capitalism only began to take form after an independent democratic government was established in 1948. Since the ceasefire of the Korean War (1950-1953), South Korea has undergone extremely rapid socio-political changes and economic growth. With the success of rapid industrialization throughout the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, widespread absolute poverty was reduced from being 60-70% in 1953 (PSPD/UNDP, 2000) to 3.4% by

the mid-1990s (Park, 2001). Along with the major reduction of absolute poverty and overall improvement of people's general standard of living, 76.3% of the urban population had become identifiable as middle class by 1992 (KDI, 2013: 39).

Consequently, economic development came to be perceived, for the most part, as the ultimate antidote to poverty, which had produced near full employment for people to support themselves and their direct family members via work. Poverty was generally considered to be a personal matter (Noh, 2003: 194), which depended on the individual's capability to work. Public measures in relation to poverty also remained limited to minimalistic charitable provisions for those who had difficulty in participating in the labour market (e.g. people with physical disabilities, children, the elderly, and women), while the law obliged family relationships to bear the primary responsibility for taking care of an individual's economic livelihood.

The academic trends in the poverty research of South Korea have also echo these socio-economic trends, with very limited research being published on poverty throughout the 1960s and 1970s, until the late 1980s (Lee et al., 2006: 43). However, this trend noticeably changed after the country undergoes the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997, after which poverty was no longer limited to those who were unable to support themselves via work. The economic crisis, together with the neo-liberal structural reform measures that were enforced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), resulted in a great increase in unemployment, absolute poverty, non-standard employment, and inequality, which altogether led to an overall change in both the demography and the nature of poverty in South Korea, which has been named the 'New Poverty' (Noh, 2003). The crisis also led to the enactment of the first comprehensively applicable anti-poverty social assistance policy in 2000. In response to such national level socio-economic turmoil and subsequent introduction of the first comprehensive social

assistance policy in the country, the volume of research that was published on poverty and the implementation of the new policy began to noticeably increase from the year 1998 (Kim, 2006, as cited in Lee et al., 2006: 43-44).

More specifically, according to extensive research conducted by Lee et al. (2006) on the overall trends of poverty research in South Korea, the top two foci since the post-1997 economic crisis were the design of anti-poverty social welfare policies and the demographic composition of poverty that focused on the most vulnerable groups in society (e.g., the elderly, women, children). The most under-researched fields included conceptualizations of poverty, poverty dynamics, and poverty studies undertaken on a national scale that compared regional differences or included rural poverty (Lee et al., 2006: 47). The focus on these topics is said to reflect the general social trends of urban immigration driven by industrialization, the relative newness of perceiving poverty as a social policy issue, and the practical need for identifying the potential recipient group and their composition for implementing the social assistance programme (Noh, 2003; Lee et al., 2006). A noticeable growth in new fields of research after 1997 is research on relative poverty and social exclusion (Lee et al., 2006: 50), which seemingly reflects the advent of 'New Poverty' in the country, characterized by low-income working poor, insecure non-standard employment, relative deprivation, and growing inequality in the society (Noh, 2003).

Methodologically, a quantitative approach has been the predominant research method [84.3%, when counting from the 1960s until 2006 (Lee et al., 2006: 51)], with an increase in the use of qualitative approaches in recent years (Kim, 2011), as scholars have acknowledged the need for undertaking more qualitative research to better understand the conditions of poverty (Lee et al., 2009; Kim, 2011). Such methodological trends also seem to reflect the concentration on the material dimension of poverty, with 80% of the South Korean literature

on poverty focusing on its material dimension, among which 90% has been solely on income (Kim, 2011: 5). Among a general scarcity of research on the non-material dimensions of poverty, studies that have investigated the psychological aspects of poverty are even scarcer. Hence, the topic of shame has not been explored much at all in the South Korean literature, with the exception of some psychology literature that partially focused on the psychological impacts of poverty-related shame as one of the factors that could negatively affect an individual's sense of self-esteem or self-efficacy (Lee, M.-S., 2009) or young people's development of self-identity (Jung et al., 2012).

Nevertheless, studies that reviewed the psychological dimensions of poverty included a recent stream of research on low-income groups' experience of hopelessness and depression, and how those psychological conditions affected people's self-efficacy (Uhm, 2006; Uhm, 2008), or social assistance recipient status (Lee, 2010). Lee et al. (2009) employed a rare psycho-social approach to poverty, exploring the relationship between particular psychological conditions in poverty and their impact on a person's motivation to work, providing policy suggestions for improving the effectiveness of the country's workfare policy. The 'psycho-social' approach of the study was, however, focused on the individual level of psychological experiences and their impacts on individual level access to work, rather than the social processes that shape or interact with such psychological experiences. The psycho-social approach of this study, however, is interested in how such psychological experiences in poverty are also underpinned by the broader socio-historical context of the current times.

2. 3 Non-Material Dimension of Poverty

Recognition of the non-material dimension of poverty and its importance vis-à-vis the material dimension has been continuously gaining ground in certain policy and poverty

discourses over the past two decades (Jones and Novak, 1999; Langmore, 2000; Lister, 2004; Tomlinson et al., 2008). Lister, for example, addressed the non-material dimension of poverty by defining poverty not only as material disadvantage and economic insecurity but also as a 'shameful and corrosive social relation' (2004: 7). Within the 'relational and symbolic aspects of poverty', Lister included 'lack of voice, disrespect, humiliation, assault on dignity and self-esteem; shame and stigma; powerlessness; denial of rights and diminish[ed] citizenship', as well as 'Othering' (Lister, 2004: 7-8). Previously, others had also reported on how poverty was often experienced by people in poverty as a 'lack of voice, respect and self-esteem, isolation and humiliation' (UKCAP, 1997; Galloway, 2002) and that poverty has been expressed as a source of 'shame, deficiency, and lack of confidence' (by Charlesworth, 2000; Hill, 2001, as cited in Mathur, 2014: 379). Equivalent findings have also been reported from outside the United Kingdom (UK) around the same time period from widely varying countries around the world[5] (Howard and Millard, 1997; Narayan et al., 2000; Gray, 2005).

Emotionally Experienced

One shared characteristic of such non-material aspects of poverty is that, while immaterial and invisible in their occurrence, they are emotionally experienced as deeply felt realities by the people who are subjected to them. Narayan et al.'s study for the World Bank, *Voices of the Poor* (2000), for instance, referred to the non-material dimensions of poverty as 'emotional pain'. That is, 'Poverty is pain. Poor people suffer physical pain that comes with too little food and long hours of work; emotional pain stemming from the daily humiliations of

[5] In *Voices of the Poor (Can Anyone Hear Us?)* (Narayan et al., 2000) and *Voices of the Poor (Crying Out for Change)* (Narayan et al., 2000), which was an international research produced by the World Bank, 47 countries were investigated, and it reported on the significance of shame in poverty as a general finding, specifically mentioning the findings from countries such as Egypt, Brazil, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Bulgaria, Malawi, Kyrgyz Republic, Latvia, Uganda, Macedonia, Armenia, Georgia, and possibly more.

dependency and lack of power; and the moral pain from being forced to make choices' (2000: 3). Similarly, Alain de Botton, in his book *Status Anxiety* (2005), described poverty in modern times as having dual dimensions of punishment, material and emotional, with the latter manifesting as being neglected and disregarded (2005: 38).

Socio-Relationally Induced

While the non-material dimensions of poverty are multifarious, they all share the nature of being socio-relationally induced deprivations of basic social needs. That is, they were, in essence, various forms of socio-relational recognition not being paid to an individual, which constituted the fulfillment of basic social (e.g. shame, self-esteem), political (e.g. powerlessness, lack of voice), and legal (e.g. denial of rights, undermined citizenship) needs that are required to live in a modern society. As an illustration, 'disrespect' is a relational value measured by the level of respect (not) being paid to an individual by another person (or people) in a socio-relational setting. In effect, it hinders the formation of human relations and social participation by the individual, both of which are arguably basic social needs for anyone living in the current social setting.

The fact that the non-material dimensions of poverty are inherently socio-relational in both their occurrence and their impact indicate that the conceptual lens of poverty has to be broadened not only from material to non-material but also from individual to socio-relational. However, the emotional hardships faced in poverty still tend to be treated on a narrow individual level, or as a separate domain from the person's financial problems or the broader socio-economic and political context. This tendency in poverty research may also be due to the nature of the emotional hardships that are experienced as private emotions on the individual level, drawing the attention away from their socio-relational origins.

Nonetheless, without explicitly exploring the emotional and non-material aspects of poverty, their subsequent impact and what it means to live in poverty for the people themselves remain unaddressed and unheard. Moreover, without the proper contextualization of both poverty and the emotional experience of it on a social level, the socio-relational processes that fundamentally shape the experience and consequential emotions will inevitably be ignored. Accordingly, this study's approach to the non-material dimension of poverty is defined as an investigation of the *psycho-social dimension of poverty*, i.e. the shared psychological experiences of people in poverty that are social (and socio-relational) in nature in both occurrence and impact.

2. 4 Reasons for Focusing on 'Shame'

While many of the non-material deprivations are closely interrelated[6] and share a similar psycho-social nature, they nevertheless each possess different aspects, manifestations, and impacts in relation to the non-material dimension of poverty. In this research, there are three main reasons for choosing to focus on 'shame'. First, this research seeks to gain a better understanding of poverty as a human experience, focusing on the personal accounts and feelings of people themselves regarding their lived experience of poverty. Second, the chosen research topic had to enable an investigation of not only the personal realm of the experience but also its social and relational realms that lay at the heart of the non-material dimension of poverty. Third, the topic had to be relevant to the role of anti-poverty social policy with regard to the non-material dimension of poverty. As will be discussed in Section 2.7 on the conceptual framework of shame, shame is an emotion that satisfies all three of the above

[6] Concepts such as 'disrespect', 'humiliation', 'shame', and 'stigma' shared similar effects and could all lead to other non-material aspects addressed by Lister, such as 'assault on dignity and self-esteem', which could further result in a 'lack of voice' and 'powerlessness'.

research interests of this study. It is both acutely personal (involving feeling ashamed of oneself), yet inherently socio-relational (involving the shaming of 'others'). Moreover, it is significantly pertinent to people's experiences of anti-poverty social policies.

Other relevant concepts that were taken into consideration included 'stigma' and 'humiliation'. In poverty research worldwide, both have been frequently discussed, along with shame, as closely related or similar concepts, sometimes with little conceptual distinction made between them (e.g. Narayan et al., 2000; Gray, 2005). What is distinctive about the discussion of both stigma and humiliation is their conceptual focus on external forces that affect the internal psychological realm of a person. Yet, the external forces of stigmatization and humiliating treatment do not necessarily entail internal feelings of degradation for the afflicted person.

The central issue of stigma[7], for instance, has been seen as the 'concealability' of stigma, preventing it from coming into effect for stigmatized people (Goffman, 1963; Smart and Wegner, 1999; Pachankis, 2007). Major and O'Brien (2005, as cited in Baumberg, 2016: 183) found that 'stigma may not lead to shame where people identify strongly with the identity in question and contest others' devaluation'. In a similar vein, Reutter et al. (2009) differentiated stigma as a 'virtual' version of a social group's social identity as opposed to the 'actual' personal identity that better represented how people perceived themselves. In short, stigma as a concept focuses primarily on the external discursive process surrounding poverty on a social level, which is a realm that is distinguishable from the internal reality of people.

[7] Stigma was defined as 'some characteristic individuals possess (or are believed to possess) that conveys a social identity that is devalued in a particular social context' (Crocker et al., as cited in Smart and Wegner, 1999: 474).

While ‘humiliation’ also shares some common traits with shame (see Hartling and Luchetta, 1999: 262), it too has been defined in the literature as an emotion that has some dissonance between the external treatment of a person and the internal self-awareness of the person facing such treatment. Klein (1991: 117) distinguished humiliation from shame by saying that: ‘People believe they deserve their shame; they do not believe they deserve their humiliation’. As noted, the main aim of this research is to place the central focus on people’s personal accounts of poverty and their actual feelings, and to investigate how the socio-relational realm interacts with the personal realm of people’s lives in poverty. To this end, shame was a more suitable subject for the purpose of this research, as it allowed for studying both the personal feelings of the people (feeling ashamed) and the social context of that emotional experience (with its intrinsic socio-relational component of ‘shaming’, which could also include the component of institutional shaming by anti-poverty social policies).

Additional reasons for focusing on shame were its emotional significance and its all-encompassing nature. The literature was largely consistent in claiming that shame, as a self-conscious emotion, was one of the most powerful human emotions that affected the whole being of a person as the ‘master emotion’ (Scheff, 2000). Shame was ‘linked to one’s core identity’ (Nathanson, 1992, as cited in Dolezal and Lyons, 2017: 258) and had a damaging impact on the social bonds that linked the person to the world (Dolezal and Lyons, 2017: 258). Moreover, shame was said to be an ‘umbrella’ notion (Dolezal and Lyons, 2017) that encompassed other negative emotions:

> ‘Shame experiences are varied and multiple in their expression. As a result, “shame” is often used as an umbrella term to indicate a whole “family of emotions” ranging from “the mildest twinge of embarrassment to the searing pain of mortification” (Nathanson, 1992). Hence, shame variants include a wide array of negative self-conscious experiences such as embarrassment, humiliation, chagrin, mortification, feelings of defectiveness or low self-worth (Dolezal, 2015; Gibson, 2016)’ (Dolezal and Lyons, 2017: 258).

Sutton et al. (2014: 145) also argued that the other emotions captured by shame could be understood as a 'continuum' of shame, 'whereby feelings vary in both intensity and duration, from transient weaker forms, such as embarrassment, to durable stronger forms, such as humiliation and disgrace'. Therefore, studying the phenomenon of shame would enable the investigation of its detrimental impact upon the person's social bond with society, as well as an examination of various emotional expressions of shame-related or shame-variant experiences within poverty.

2. 5 Literature Review on the Shame of Poverty

This section reviews the more specific literature on the shame of poverty and discusses the dominant themes that are raised in the literature and their main findings and arguments. The main themes include discussions of the root cause(s) of shame in poverty, whether shame is an issue of poverty or inequality, and the nature of the association between poverty and shame and its wider social implications.

2. 5. 1 Root Cause(s)

The most frequently raised cause of poverty-related shame, particularly within the context of the UK, was the public and policy discourses about poverty. Scholars pointed to the social discourse that attributed poverty to people's personal failures or inadequacies as the key to the 'prejudice' and pejorative 'social labelling' of poverty (Lister, 2004; Dorling, 2010; Lister, 2015). Those shaming discourses were seen often as being deliberately promoted to uphold socio-economic inequality and the interests of the people who enjoyed relative wealth, power, and status (Lister, 2004; Dorling, 2010; Lister, 2015).[8] Lister (2004) further argued that the

[8] Lister also pointed out that the historical roots of the contemporary poverty discourses in the UK dated back to

identities of those in poverty were more often conceptualized and manufactured by others who were not in poverty themselves. That is, low-income people 'evaluate[d] their own situations through an aetiological lens of personal failure constructed by dominant political and social discourses' (Sutton et al., 2014: 145).

In short, the root cause of the shame of poverty was seen as a rather intentional social construct of the powerful socio-economic class as a means of maintaining the status quo and subsequent class privileges by denouncing people in poverty. In such a view, shame was most frequently identified as a consequence of internalizing socially constructed stigma (Panchankis, 2007; Reutter et al., 2009; Walker et al., 2013; Sutton et al., 2014). What was notable about this view was that the treatment of the internal psychology of people in poverty was heavily determined by external social forces. As will be discussed below in the conceptual framework of the approach in this research, social discourse was indeed found to be a notably powerful social mechanism involved in people's perceptions of poverty and possibly was a direct cause of shame. Nonetheless, attributing shame solely to external forces of constructed social discourses seemed to require some caution so as not to draw hasty conclusions for an under-researched case study such as South Korea, as this could disregard other relevant causes or downplay the internal psychological processes and active responses of people in poverty themselves.

---

the 16th century when the 'classification of the poor into the necessarily and voluntarily indigent became the central purpose of poverty relief,' and 'the lines of demarcation were drawn with a moral divider' (Himmelfarb, 1984, as cited in Lister, 2004: 104).

Another kind of social constructionist view, but with a broader historical perspective, argued that the lower social class living in poverty attracted an inescapably shameful aura under modern capitalism.[9] Sennett (1980) claimed:

> 'shame and social class became linked in modernity as it was in industrial societies that people were seen as personally responsible for their place in their world, in contrast to traditional societies when one inherited one's position. In modernity then, to be weak and powerless was considered as shameful' (Sennett, 1980, as cited in Madianou, 2011: 11).

Sennett also believed that 'meritocratic societies make no room for failure in [their] schemes of respect' (Sennett, 2003: 183). That is, poverty cannot possess a positive connotation in a social environment within which ownership of material possessions is how every individual is evaluated in terms of their social achievement. It is the individual that becomes responsible for their own poverty, and in such a case, for the most part, '[p]overty denotes failure' (Lister, 2004: 121). According to this view, the shame of poverty was an unavoidable consequence of modern capitalism, wherein people's socio-economic living conditions are seen as self-attained, and thus poverty is perceived as a shameful outcome of personal inadequacies.

2. 5. 2 Shame of Poverty or Inequality

In line with this social constructionist view, Wilkinson and Pickett (2010) also saw the root causes of the shame of poverty as the growing importance of self-esteem, capitalistic consumerism, meritocracy, and the anonymity of mass society, which were married together

[9] I was introduced to this literature on political theorists' approach to the shame of poverty during the last revision period of the thesis. It was, to my surprise, closely in line with my own line of argument regarding the wider socio-historical underpinnings of the root cause of the shame people experienced in poverty. I have discussed the gist of the literature in this chapter and in the concluding chapter, where it was relevant for the discussion of the findings. However, a more thorough discussion of this specific literature was beyond the confines of this thesis. I hope to discuss them in a separate occasion in the near future when there is more intellectual space for a fuller discussion.

with a high level of inequality that opened up the space for meritocratic comparison. What was distinctive in their argument, however, was that they perceived income inequality to be the ultimate source of shame in poverty, rather than poverty itself as a particular source of shame on its own. They claimed that shame occurred based on socio-economic differences of inequality as a widespread 'modern psychological condition' (2010: 43), which was not confined to those in poverty. According to Wilkinson and Pickett, poverty was simply a social status position that was more likely to face shame than pride, as 'the further up the social ladder you are, the easier it becomes to feel a sense of pride, dignity and self-confidence' (2010: 40).

Lister, in contrast, emphasized that shame was particular to poverty as it was demarcated from the non-poor as an 'other' within social discourse. That is, the economic dependency of the people in poverty in the social welfare system was often contrasted with the 'self-provision of subsistence' achieved by 'the independent labourer' (Dean, 1992, as cited in Lister, 2004: 105). As such, there was a noticeable divergence in the literature on whether shame was a particular feature of poverty or of inequality.

What was questionable in Wilkinson's and Pickett's argument, however, was their suggested solution for shame: that greater economic equality would ultimately resolve the influence of consumerism and status comparisons that produced shame. The argument that the root of shame could be tackled with economic equality alone requires further exploration, as their work drew such a conclusion without an actual investigation into the working mechanism of shame itself.

2. 5. 3 Universality of Poverty-Related Shame

The social constructionist explanations above nevertheless share a common inherent denial of an intrinsic association between shame and poverty. That is, if such shame were purely a social construct of the powerful social class, or that of the modern capitalistic social order, this implies that poverty is not intrinsically (humanly) shameful.[10] On the absolutist side, however, Amartya Sen conceptualized the 'ability to stay out of shame' as one of the basic social capabilities, which 'should figure in the "absolutist core" of notions of absolute poverty' (Alkire, 2002: 185).[11] Citing the epitome of absolute poverty as 'being ashamed to appear in public' (Alkire, 2002: 185), Sen also incorporated the significance of shame into his absolute notion of the poverty line:

> 'the poverty line may be defined to represent the level at which a person can not only meet nutritional requirements, etc., but also achieve adequate participation in communal activities and be free from public shame from failure to satisfy conventions' (Sen, 1983: 342).

Such a conceptualization of shame within the idea of absolute poverty suggested a universalistic association between poverty and shame. That is, shame would be experienced anywhere in the world as an intrinsic aspect of absolute poverty, and that social contextual differences would only change the specific material contents that constituted the threshold for both poverty and the shame of it. Sen himself, however, had not given any further empirical

[10] Moreover, there has been some meaningful historical evidence on the likelihood of shame being a particularly modern phenomenon, rather than intrinsic to poverty or inequality itself. De Botton (2005), in *Status Anxiety*, based on his research as a writer, meaningfully displayed how the social level meaning of 'status' had changed significantly for people in modern times, altering the implications of poverty and adding to it an 'emotional punishment', such as shame. Some of the findings from Walker (2014) also indicated that the cultural conception of poverty has changed over time according to socio-economic and cultural changes, as in the cases of China, India, and South Korea (which will be discussed in Chapter 6).

[11] Alkire (2002: 185) also argued that 'Sen clarified that absolute deprivation, while including hunger, also includes "being ashamed to appear in public"'.

or elaborate logical basis to verify his philosophical conceptualization of shame as an absolute facet of poverty.

As a response, an ESRC-DFID funded international research project on poverty and shame set out to empirically test such absolutist notions of Sen (i.e. whether shame was indeed a universally shared experience of poverty). While it was published after this research was conducted, its empirical findings demonstrated that shame was equally experienced by people in poverty in widely varying social contexts in both the global South and North (Walker, 2014). Yet the findings also included several country cases that displayed a noticeable change in the socio-cultural perception of poverty from the past, when societies operated under a different socio-economic and cultural values system.[12] It should also be noted that, while widely varying in other aspects, all seven country case studies that were compared were operating, by and large, under a capitalistic social system. While the work also acknowledged that 'the shame attaching to poverty may have increased with the ascendency of the global market and consumerism' (Walker, 2014: 87), its central conclusion was that the empirical evidence pointed to the potential universality of shame as an absolute facet of poverty.

2. 5. 4 Wider Social Implications

Others addressed broader social implications of the root cause and the impact of shame in poverty. As Stevenson et al. wrote: 'The interplay between the individual's psychological "needs" for recognition and wider social and political processes have been addressed by numerous political theorists (Taylor, 1994; Honneth, 1995)' (2015: 196). Those political

[12] In the case of the cultural conception of poverty in China in its Maoist era, poverty was 'celebrated … as a sacrifice made for the benefit of the nation' (Walker, 2014: 74); also in the Chinese literature on pre-communist China, 'the historical influence of Buddhism and Daoism is apparent in emphasizing acceptance of the inevitability of life' and 'suggestive of poverty with only limited shaming' (Walker, 2014: 92).

theorists, largely with a structuralist class-based approach, found shame (and other non-material dimensions of poverty) to function as a symbolic form of exclusion and violence against the people in poverty in their various social relations (Sennett and Cobb, 1972; Bourdieu, 1991). The scholars argued that such socio-relational degradation should be approached as a matter of 'social injustice' (Dorling, 2010); namely, as a 'symbolic injustice' (Fraser, 1997). In the same vein, Madianou (2011: 11) saw Sennett as addressing shame as a matter of power by 'discussing shame as "tool of discipline" that underpins authority (1980: 91) … that shame has taken the place of violence as a routine form of punishment in Western societies (Sennett, 1980: 95)'.

The subsequent impact of such symbolic and relational exclusion was said to be an undermined sense of citizenship for people in poverty.[13] Dwyer (1998) and Humpage (2008) were also said to have reported that 'in spite of shared legal status and rights, individuals experiencing material or symbolic marginality have been known to feel like "second class citizens"' (as cited in Edmiston, 2017: 315). More recently, Edmiston reported from a qualitative study he conducted that there has been a binary division of citizenship emerging under the implementation of neo-liberal welfare measures that placed shame and blame upon people in poverty, bifurcating the rich as normal full social citizens and people in poverty as 'second class citizen[s]' (2017: 323).

Studies have shown therefore that social degradation of people leads to denial of an equal sense of citizenship, which has been critiqued as a violation of the basic human rights underpinning modern democracy, as well as damaging the social cohesion of society.

[13] For people not in poverty, 'the material and symbolic significance of inequality' was said to function as an 'authentication [that] affirmed their belonging and identity as "active, productive and contributing" social citizens' (Edmiston, 2017: 322).

Moreover, welfare institutions were found to play a particularly significant role in upholding or undermining the equality of people's social citizenship (Room, 1999; Larsen, 2006, as cited in Baumberg, 2016: 183; Baumberg, 2016). Room (1999: 170), for instance, underlined how the quality of people's relationships with welfare bureaucracies was 'extremely important in the modern world, in enhancing people's lives as citizens or in making them feel powerless and disabled'.

These wider societal level discussions demonstrated that the acutely personal feelings of people in poverty, such as shame, were significant not only for their impact on personal emotional well-being, but also for the damage done to the social bonds in a modern society. Moreover, they addressed the significant role that welfare institutions could play in shaping not only people's lives, in terms of securing their basic well-being, but also the socio-relational bonds of a society.

2. 6 Current Strengths & Omissions in the Literature

The review of previous research on the shame of poverty offered several important points to take away, as well as research gaps that display areas of uncertainty and unanswered questions. In terms of the lessons learned, previous approaches illustrated the limitations of considering only one aspect of the psycho-social construct of shame, i.e. either the external social process of influence or the internal psychological process alone. This was taken into consideration in designing this study to account for the inherently interconnected dual dimensions of shame in equal measure. Second, the political theory literature had its strength in effectively alluding to the significance of the wider socio-historical context in exploring the social roots of the experience of poverty, which has been mostly disregarded in the individualistic psychological approach to poverty as well as in social policy research of

poverty. Last, the most well-founded pointer to take away from the social policy literature was its recognition of social welfare institutions as a significant social agent that could shape people's experiences of shame in poverty as well as the social bonds between people in modern capitalism.

The importance of the presence or absence of shame in maintaining the psychological well-being of the self and in shaping social relationships has a relatively high profile in existing literature. To date, however, there has been a very limited analytical approach towards the relationship between poverty and shame. As a fairly new field of research, with most references dating back only so far as the late 1990s (except for the political theory literature), there have also been various uncertain or substantially missing areas in the literature to date. Nevertheless, there was still a notable divergence of opinion on the nature of the association between poverty and shame (whether shame was a universally absolute facet of poverty or was socially constructed) and what the root cause of the association was (whether shame was instigated by a symbolic exclusion of people in poverty in particular, or by economic inequality as the source of comparative evaluation). The literature clearly acknowledges the presence and the significantly negative impact of shame in poverty and its wider social implications. Yet the analysis on the personal level of the working mechanisms of shame in poverty was still at a nascent stage. As a whole, there was a general lack of in-depth investigation undertaken on the topic, including discussions on the conceptual construct of poverty-related shame, its root cause(s), personal level working mechanisms, and impact.

The literature was also largely coming from the Anglo-American countries (although this might be due to the researcher's limited access to materials published in language other than English). Yet the top academic journals in this field of research are still largely published in English, and it is also the case that this research topic is still a newly emerging field in

poverty studies worldwide, in line with the continuing efforts to better understand and conceptualize poverty. It is also not surprising that a country such as the UK has produced the largest volume of academic research on this topic, given that it has the longest history as a nation of modern democratic capitalism, in which the social implications of poverty have come to entail more than just material deprivations. South Korea is a rapidly developing country that is also maturing in its modern capitalistic social system. Although there have also been social symptoms in South Korea signalling the increased importance of the non-material dimensions of poverty, it has been at an even earlier stage in considering these issues in academic research or in policy discourse. In these respects, the above literature provides significant insights regarding the social importance of this issue, and a knowledge base to draw on for determining how to approach the question both conceptually and methodologically.

Research Aims

After identifying the research gaps in the literature, the specific aims of this research were established below. These aims provided the basis together with the conceptual framework below of an approach for developing the specific research questions (discussed in Chapter 1).

1. The *nature* of the association between poverty and shame – its interrelationship and universality
2. *Why* poverty is associated with shame – its root causes
3. *How* people experience shame in poverty – its personal level working mechanisms, impacts on the lives of people in poverty, and people's responses to shame
4. *Current role of anti-poverty social policy* in the experience of shame in poverty – its framing discourse(s), policy design, and delivery system

2. 7 Conceptual Framework[14]

After identifying the research aims, a conceptual framework was required to understand how to design the research to study the shame of poverty, and what the specific research questions should be. This section examines the key conceptual characteristics of shame and the nature of its psycho-social association with poverty that have been identified based on an expansive review of the literature across multiple disciplines (from both social sciences and medical sciences, depending solely on its relevance for understanding the conceptual nature of shame or the shame related to poverty).

2. 7. 1 Psycho-Social Nature of Shame

While the literature on human psychology has engaged extensively with shame as a social emotion (Tangney and Fischer, 1995; Gilbert, 1998; Scheff, 2000; Miller, 2006; Tracy et al., 2007), shame had been insufficiently explored within the social sciences (Scheff, 2000). Along with embarrassment, pride, and guilt, shame is defined as a 'self-conscious' rather than basic emotion.

Self-Conscious Emotion: Feeling Ashamed of 'the Self'

Shame, as a self-conscious emotion, characteristically requires self-awareness, facilitating the attainment of complicated social goals, and is seen as cognitively complex (Cooley, 1922; Tracy et al., 2007). Cooley (1922) states that shame arises from self-monitoring, or what he calls 'self-sentiments'. That is, shame is closely associated with the self and the self-image of one's identity (Lynd, 1958). Shame is also an especially powerful emotion compared to other

[14] While it has been edited to suit the purpose of this thesis, the bulk of this section on the conceptual framework was published as an independent conceptual piece in the peer-reviewed academic journal *Critical Social Policy* in 2013 under the title, 'Psycho-social dimensions of poverty: When poverty becomes shameful'.

self-conscious emotions in its potentially detrimental impact, not only on psychological but also on physical health, being seen as the ‘master emotion’ (Scheff, 2000).

Its impact can be all-encompassing, imposing feelings of denial or degradation of the entire self, and instilling a sense of failure or inferiority (Piers and Singer, 1953; Alexander, 1954; Lynd, 1958; Tangney, 1995; Reyles, 2007). In more vivid terms, Tomkins (1963: 118) depicted the essence of shame as ‘inner torment, a sickness of the soul… [and that] the humiliated one feels naked, defeated, alienated and lacking in dignity and worth’. In its extreme form, shame associated with poverty has been implicated in the emergence of pathological mental illness, such as chronic depression (Gilbert, 1998, 2000; Gray, 2005; Perese, 2007).

Moreover, shame has been found to be pivotal to social relations as it functions within what Scheff (2000) defined as a deference-emotion system. Here, conformity to exterior norms is rewarded by esteem and feelings of pride, and nonconformity is punished by a lack of admiration and an induced sense of shame, resulting in both self-alienation and social exclusion (Goffman, 1967; Watson, 2005). Simmel (1904), in his study of shame and fashion, indicated that avoiding shame in relation to fashion was equal to avoiding being isolated, for fashion implied membership and conformity in thought and behaviour among the fashionable groups in society.

According to Sen, shame and social exclusion share an intrinsic association, as the capability to avoid shame is equal to the capability to ‘mix with others in that society’ and ‘to participate in the activities of the community’ (Sen, 1983: 162), or share in the ceremonies and traditions that bring people together (Narayan et al., 2000). Where shame impedes such participation, it works as a mechanism for social exclusion (Sen, 2000). Hence, shame could become one of a number of systemic social barriers (Barry, 2002) that impede participation

and lead to social marginalization. In short, while shame is an acutely personal emotion, it is very much relational in its consequential impact.

Social Emotion: 'Shaming' of the Self

Another key characteristic of shame as a self-conscious emotion, which was often not explicitly addressed in the literature, is that it is inherently *social* (or relational), not only in its impact but also in its occurrence. That is, shame included 'the subjective feeling of the person and the objective nature of the act' (Tangney and Fischer, 1995). While still quite abstract, a helpful conceptual definition nonetheless was made by Benedict (1946) and Freud (1950), who defined the locus of shame as the point of separation between the self and others, the latter being the audience of the self. According to Lewis (1971), the 'others', the protagonists of such shaming, could be either real or imaginary. The imaginary 'others' were the 'the inner, critical voice that judges whatever we do as wrong, inferior, or worthless' (Miller, 2006: 2), existing within one's mind, often echoing previous assertions directed at us by the 'others'. That is, when a person feels ashamed, an assessment is being made of their compliance with social values, morals, cultural laws, or other wider social constructs, which, in turn, determine whether or not a person should be ashamed, both in the eyes of others and of him/herself. This implies that self-worth or self-esteem, which is lost or lowered when ashamed, is intrinsically dependent on whether or not one carries the traits and attributes valued by others (Santor and Walker, 1999). The close relationship between self-esteem and shame, therefore, stems from this inextricable link between the 'self' and the 'others' that confers value and recognition upon the self (Rawls, 1973; Taylor, 1994; Chandhoke, 2009, as cited in Guru, 2009).

A notable implication of this social nature of shame is that shame cannot be fully attributed to the individual feeling ashamed, since it is the 'others' (which could be as broad as the

dominant socio-cultural norms or values shared within the society) who observe, judge, and condemn the 'self' and trigger the sense of shame (Lynd, 1958; Gilbert, 2000). It has also been suggested that the source and level of shame are also socially determined.

Poverty, likewise, cannot be fully interpreted outside the specific social context in which it occurs. Øyen states that 'poverty is at the same time culture-bound and universal' (1996: 4), arguing that it is the socio-economic structural and cultural contexts that shape specific experiences and understandings of poverty, a view shared by others (Gore and Figueiredo (eds.), 1997; Lister, 2004). However, due to the prevalence of the individualized treatment of human emotions, the specific time and space of the context within which shame occurs have often been neglected.[15] Scheff (2000) explicitly criticises this individualized treatment of shame in some of the psychology and psychoanalysis literature, which reveals its limitations in taking full account of the emotional experience (see also Cooley, 1922; Mead, 1934; Santor and Walker, 1999; Scheff, 2000).

Given that it is a social environment that determines the source and level of shame and that the experience of poverty is also heavily shaped by its social context, an adequate contextualization of poverty and shame would be vital to understanding the association between them. That is, finding out how poverty became a source of shame in a society requires a social lens beyond a purely individualistic one. Thus, this research has also included the social dimension of shame to its analytical framework, which defines the evaluative standard of values against which a person's shame-worthiness is determined. This

[15] Psychoanalysts and psychologists such as Hartmann, Adler, Horney, Fromm, and Erikson particularly underlined the significance of taking into account social context in studying emotions and placing the understanding of human behaviour and development of individual personality within the knowledge of the specific social milieu that has shaped it. Schachtel, Arnheim, and Mead also stressed the significance of the outside world in explaining the inner emotions of an individual.

conceptual proposition for poverty research on shame to explore the relationship on a social level also challenges the frequently found notion in the literature that people's individualistic traits are mainly responsible for experiencing shame regarding poverty, shedding light on the explicit role of the social foundations of shame. Furthermore, if the socio-contextual underpinnings of the poverty-shame association could be better understood, it may also help us to find ways to counteract the shame more effectively in poverty.

2. 7. 2 Social Underpinnings of the Poverty-Shame Association

In the literature, the concept of 'others' (Lewis, 1971) or the 'objective nature' (Tangney and Fischer, 1995) that is inherent to the conceptual construct of shame is difficult to boil down to a specific social entity. As it currently stands, with different scholars varying in their definitions or approaches, it may be as narrowly defined as the physical beings of other people or as broadly as the social values and norms of the society. It has been, in essence, however, understood as the enforcement of a standard of values upon the self. In this sense, Lewis's (1971) conceptualization of the 'others' as protagonists who are either real or imaginary and can be better understood as the value assessment of a person made either within the person's internal realm of their mind or externally by actual others. That is to say, the key to understanding the reason for the shame of poverty is in the clarification of the social evaluative standard by which those 'others', residing both inside and out, judge a person's sense of worth. This line of approach would also bring to light the social foundations of such a standard of evaluation, and whether the standard has been universally consistent over time under the changing social environment. Hence, in investigating one of the main research objectives regarding *why* poverty is socially perceived to be a shameful state of living (by both people in and not in poverty), this research will explore how the evaluative standard has been determined for shaming a person in poverty.

2. 7. 2 - 1 Socio-Historical Contextualization

Shame, while often portrayed as an inevitable attribute of poverty within the literature, is, as discussed thus far, in fact socially defined and conditioned. The word 'poor', for instance, can be shaming itself, as it often carries with it a 'definitional implication for identity', rather than being understood as a set of circumstances that are experienced (Lister, 2004: 113). Thus poverty and shame, although not necessarily intrinsically associated, are likely to become coupled through a series of multi-level processes that cause poverty to *become shameful*. As discussed above, to explore the root causes of the association between poverty and shame and the nature of the association (whether it is socially constructed or is more the universally intrinsic nature of poverty itself), the investigation required an adequate historical contextualization of the interrelationship. Thus, the empirical investigation required, first and foremost, a broader socio-historical contextualization of empirical findings in the present and/or a comparison of people's experiences of poverty in different socio-contextual time frames that could test the potential changes in the social association over time.

2. 7. 2 - 2 Social Institutions & Dominant Discourses

An important social level mechanism shaping the poverty-shame association and its social meaning that was identified in the literature was 'social discourse'; the ways in which words, phrases, concepts, and ideas are used in relation to a specific phenomenon. Discourses are shaped by political, social, cultural, economic, and other influences surrounding those who instigate or participate in such discourses, ultimately resulting in the discourses becoming prevailing truths (Foucault, 1975, 2001; Bernstein, 1990; Butler, 1990). Dominant discourse in relation to poverty is said to be a result of an ongoing process, often animated by the people who themselves are not facing poverty (Lister, 2004: 101), which takes place in a variety of social forums. The generated discourse then becomes a source of shame for people

in poverty within ‘everyday social relations through interaction with welfare officials and professionals to research, the media, the legal system and policy-making’ (Schram, 1995, as cited in Lister, 2004: 101).

According to this view, shame could be seen as being socially triggered and sustained at an institutional level, accounting for cultural marginalization and loss of social recognition of those in poverty (Chandhoke, 2009, as cited in Guru, 2009). In this regard, the close association between poverty and shame could be argued as having emerged not from the individuals in poverty, or the state of poverty itself - owing to a proneness to shame as a shared quality of those who are impoverished, a sort of moral deficit -, but rather from the dominant discourses reflecting the society which shames those who are subjected to it. Munt went as far as to claim that ‘shame is only brought into being because of the cultural, because of what dominant ideas dictate, through the idealization of norms’ (2007: 2). In other words, depending on which idea becomes the dominant discourse, the source and the extent of the association between shame and poverty could also change.

The Role of Cultural Institutions

In a similar vein, within what we might call the cultural institution of popular social beliefs, there may be several ways through which representations of people living in poverty become skewed and distorted to feed media and publicly held stereotypes. One example is through language, creating a social distance between ‘them’ and ‘us’ by attaching stigmatizing social labels to people in poverty, which subsequently serves to differentiate them from the general public. Dean and Melrose argued that this process of ‘othering’ shaped the image of poverty to represent a ‘spectre – a socially constituted object of wholesome horror’ (1999: 48). This verbal act of taking social distance was illustrated, as Lister (2004) observed, in the fact that the word ‘poverty’ itself was rarely used by those facing economic hardship but was rather

applied as a tag by those unfamiliar with such hardship. Moreover, such labelling was seen as fundamentally framing how those living in relative wealth responded to those who were more disadvantaged, at an interpersonal and institutional level (Lister, 2004).

Moreover, popular explanations of poverty have also been found to contribute to shaping the social image of poverty, which varies widely between countries and can also change over time (Van Oorschot and Halman, 2000; Lepianka, Van Oorschot and Gelissen, 2009; Lepianka, Gelissen and Van Oorschot, 2010), influencing the treatment of people in poverty in varying ways and resulting in different levels of shame attached to poverty (Gallie and Paugam, 2002; Walker, 2008). In this respect, such socially constructed images could equally determine the level of social exclusion experienced by people facing poverty. Miller's (1998) typology of poverty, for example, showed how different social cultures varied in their interpretations of poverty and social exclusion, and demonstrated different degrees of social inclusion of people on or eligible for welfare benefits depending on the hegemonic value judgments surrounding poverty. As in Britain, this dynamic may be captured and exploited in political discourse to justify cuts in welfare provision through reference to a need to tackle the existence of a 'something for nothing society', 'spongers', and 'scroungers'. The state has also been a key player in framing such a debate. This shows that dominant poverty discourses held within cultural institutions in distinct jurisdictions are critical not only in shaping relevant policies but also in affecting outcomes for those experiencing poverty.

The Role of Social Policy Institutions

In many cases, social policy and its administration were also found to have become discursive and symbolic practices, constructing the nature of the problem of poverty in various ways (Schram, 1995; Saraceno, 2002). The idealization of certain norms (Munt, 2007) went beyond the public domain and was taken up and perpetuated by politicians and

policymakers, becoming embedded in social policy forged on the basis of these assumptions. Enacted at both national and local levels, such policy may ultimately dictate access to resources and entitlements for which those in poverty are or are not eligible. Hence, over time, the pervasive discourse can become a political tool used to shame people in poverty in their daily interactions with a myriad of welfare, social, legal, and political institutions (Schram, 1995).

These dominant political ideologies have also been found to dictate the extent to which shame was experienced by those in hardship. For instance, in a case study of the United States, many Americans were found to attribute one's status of wealth or poverty to individual responsibility. Hence, relative wealth was associated with living and realising the 'American Dream' through self-help and determination, and poverty with failing to make the most of opportunities open to all (Smith and Stone, 1989; Lister, 2004). Thus, asking for social assistance became emotionally difficult, as the receipt of welfare was equated with a shameful admittance of failure according to Western notions of independence and individualism (Rank, 1994). In such a context, the popular image of people in poverty conjures up ideas of them either being responsible for their fate or as passive objects of concern, lacking in agency and becoming targets of sympathy. A degree of polarization in this response is also likely to be derived from popularized notions of the deserving and the undeserving (Morris, 2009). Essentially, those in poverty are considered to have lost their entitlement to equal social status and instead variably evoke contempt, punishment, hostility, indifference, and pity (Katz, 1989).

In particular, stigma and shame have widely been attached to the receipt of means-tested welfare, and the degrading and humiliating ways in which it has been administered have been continuously reported (Golding and Middleton, 1982; Handler and Hasenfeld, 1997; Jones

and Novak, 1999; Gilliom, 2001). These tend to reaffirm notions of inadequacy associated with those living in poverty (Handler and Hollingsworth, 1971; Wright, 2003; Herd, Mitchell and Lightman, 2005; Wright and Haux, 2011), rather than offering reprieve from the struggle to make ends meet. Arguably, means testing further constitutes a violation of the fundamental right to privacy, the applicant's life becoming an 'open book from which a caseworker can read to determine their eligibility to welfare' (Gray, 2005: 340).

There is also evidence that people in poverty receiving welfare experienced shame through caseworkers who were unsympathetic or disbelieving of their circumstances (Hendrickson and Axelson, 1985; Drew et al., 2010; Irvine et al., 2010) or considered it their role to determine the veracity of their client's claims to welfare eligibility (Gerdes and Brown-Standridge, 1997). Welfare beneficiaries have revealed experiences of having their credibility and honesty questioned, being subjected to invasive scrutiny, being punished rather than supported for attempting to find alternatives to welfare benefits, and being publicly humiliated and shamed through certain measures, such as the allocation of food stamps rather than cash for use in grocery stores (Gray, 2005). Many spoke of how they responded by hiding the fact that they were recipients of benefits, concealment being a common reaction to handling shame.

Poorly-constructed social policies aimed at alleviating poverty which in fact accentuated shame have therefore been shown to significantly aggravate poverty and hinder both people's access to welfare benefits and their move to more sustainable livelihoods (Van Oorschot, 2002; Griggs and Bennett, 2009; Evans and Griggs, 2010). Conversely, according to studies on the relationship between social workers and social welfare recipients in some countries, including many European countries and the US, there is evidence to suggest that welfare provisions which strived to nurture more sustained and respectful relationships between

providers of social welfare and clients could help people escape poverty and exit welfare (Gerdes and Brown-Standridge, 1997; Cheek and Piercy, 2001).

These substantial findings in the literature pointed strongly to the significance of social institutional practices in a society. Particularly notable were cultural and social policy institutions and the social discourses that they produce, as they were often perceived in the literature as a potential working mechanism or cause of shame in poverty. Accordingly, in exploring the social level mechanisms and cause(s) of shame in poverty, both cultural discourse and anti-poverty social policy institutions were included in the scope of investigation to find out if they indeed functioned as the root cause of shame and, if not, how they interacted with the shame of poverty.

2. 8 Conclusion: Research Approach

As much as poverty is a material condition, it is primarily a human condition. Yet gaining an understanding of the human reality of poverty has been immensely difficult based on the available body of knowledge. The lack of general social interest and discussions in policy and public discourse regarding people's actual experiences of poverty is echoed also by academic literature which has been dominated by a conventional focus on the material dimension. Thus, this research sets out to better understand the non-material dimension of poverty that has been generally under-researched, and particularly so in the context of South Korea where this research is undertaken.

Based on a critical review of the literature, a psycho-social approach is devised to study the emotion of shame which has been reported to be a common experiential aspect of poverty. The chosen research subject of shame, as well as the psycho-social approach, was found to be conducive to exploring the inherently personal yet socio-relational nature of the non-material

dimensions of poverty. By identifying the research gaps in the literature, followed by establishing a conceptual framework, a more in-depth investigation into both personal and social level processes was required to better understand and clarify why and how shame was experienced in relation to poverty. The overall design and conceptual framework of this research, based on clearly acknowledging the psycho-social nature of the non-material dimensions of poverty, put to test a theoretical proposition that the root cause(s) of poverty-shame may be deeply underpinned by a wider socio-historical context as well as the institutional practices of the time. This conceptual framework addresses and overcomes the previous limitations in poverty-shame research (i.e. a solely individualistic or social structuralist approach) by providing a conceptually holistic account of the psycho-social complexities of the experience of shame in poverty.

Chapter 3. Contextual Background of the South Korean Case Study

3. 1 Introduction

This chapter provides the contextual background of this research and discusses how the particular aspects of the South Korean social context provide a valuable case study for achieving the purpose of this research. First, this chapter begins by drawing attention to the major social contextual changes that have taken place in South Korea that are relevant to the research topic, tracing its economic, political, and socio-cultural transformations. Second, a general overview will be given of the poverty situation in South Korea that has seen a dramatic change over the course of the country's modernization process, including its recent trends. Third, the final section will discuss the development and current structure of the anti-poverty social welfare system in South Korea, with a particular focus on the NBLSS (National Basic Living Security Scheme) social assistance policy.

3. 2 Political, Economic & Social Structural Changes

The geographical location of South Korea is in the Far East, situated between China and Japan as a peninsula, as shown below in Figure 3.1.



Figure 3. 1 Map of the Korean peninsula (Terrade, 2011)

The modern history of South Korea has been one of great turbulence and rapid change. Prior to officially becoming a modern democratic nation adopting capitalism in the mid-1940s, Korea (both North and South as one nation) was under the rule of its last major dynasty, the Jo-Seon Dynasty (1392–1897), for over 500 years, which was a strictly Confucianist feudal society with dominantly agriculture-based living. As the Jo-Seon Dynasty and its aristocratic ruling class called Yang-Ban[16] adopted Confucianism as its ruling philosophy throughout its 500 years' history, Confucianist social orders and values became deeply engrained in people's mentality and their socio-relational customs, the influence of which still remains to this day. The Jo-Seon Dynasty fell after the country became colonized by Japan in 1910, which lasted for thirty-five years (1910-1945). With the end of the Second World War, Korea restored its independence from Japan, but was then separated into the North (under the influence of the Soviet Union) and the South (under the influence of the USA). After experiencing the militaristic rule of the United States for another three years (1945-1948), South Korea established its independent democratic government in 1948. Yet the Korean War (1950-1953) broke out soon afterwards, leaving the country stripped and devastated from the war.

Since the end of the war, however, South Korea experienced a dramatic transformation in virtually every aspect of its social, political, and economic life in less than two generations. From a war-torn country in the mid-1950s characterized by widespread abject poverty and socio-political turmoil, South Korea grew into the world's twelfth largest economy with 50 million people, becoming a long-term member of the OECD (Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development) in 1996. The nation's economic success is demonstrated in the lives of three generations, each generation being much better off financially than the

[16] 'Yang-Ban' was the aristocratic government of officials and generals, with scholarly elites (Moon-Ban) forming the higher rank and the militaristic elites (Moo-Ban) being the second rank of the ruling class.

previous one in general. Many have succeeded economically in an environment that has been uniquely conducive to economic success and have celebrated their success through ostentatious consumption, while handing down affluent material provision for their children that they had not experienced themselves.

The country had long been politically unstable until the recent past. The government, with no experience of democracy or economic capitalism, largely adopted the American practice. A semi-presidential representative democratic republic was established with the President as the head of state supported by a multi-party political system. However, the first president, Lee Seung-Man, elected in 1948, abused his power and ruled with a dictatorship through corruption and the manipulation of elections for twelve years until being ousted by a major popular uprising, the 'April 19 Revolution' in 1960 (Seo, 2007: 44). Park Jung-Hee, who assumed power in 1961 with a military coup, headed a military dictatorship himself for eighteen years (1962–1979), and was followed by two more militaristic leaders, Jun Doo-Hwan (1980–1987) and Noh Tae-Woo (1987–1992). Democracy was instigated in a formative sense with the 1987 election (Kim et al., 2007: 64), although it was established in practice only towards the late 1990s, following a long period of civil unrest and at times brutal oppression.

Together with rapid economic development that was driven by major industrialization of the country, the level of urbanization (i.e. population living in urban areas) was 28.3% in 1960, 43.1% in 1970 (Kang, 2006: 43), and has currently reached 91.8 % (measured based on use districts[17]) in 2017 (KOSIS, 2018a). The great mass of the population moved out of rural

[17] 'Use district (용도지역)' is an official terminology used in the cited statistics, which refers to the land zones that are officially designated by the Korean government as residential, commercial, industrial, and green areas.

communities, migrating to major industrializing cities in pursuit of emerging economic opportunities. Between 1966 and 1970, 81% of the population growth in Seoul was purely due to urban immigration from rural regions (Kang, 2006: 44), and currently almost 20% of the entire population resides in Seoul alone (KOSIS, 2018b). An overall social trend of nuclearization of family households is now reflected in the immense increase in the number of single-person households, which was only 4.2% in 1975 but increased to 27.9% by 2016 (Statistics Korea, 2017b).[18]

Such urbanization, together with the economic and political changes, also led to substantial socio-cultural changes in people's cultural values, behaviours, and lifestyles. The traditional cultural values of Confucianism continued to diminish in its importance, and the industrialization and urbanization of the country drove the spread of nuclearization of family structures and Western individualism. If not obliterating traditional values, individualistic perspectives on life, influenced by Western and American culture, are now often found alongside the diminishing, yet lingering, Confucian values. All of these societal level changes have led to the loss of traditional forms of social ties that had provided an informal social safety net in the past.

Moreover, particularly with regard to the issue of personal shame, the advent of modernity in South Korea brought about an overall change to the society's social recognition mechanism of people. Whereas traditionally in the pre-modern Korea under Confucianist feudalism, the people's social identities were represented and determined by the family's social status and according to one's positional status within the family structure, such pre-modern social status

[18] The figure was a national average, yet with fairly minimal difference across the nation in general.

system has been formally demolished.[19] As an illustration, losing the Confucianist pre-modern sense of social honour and respect within its socio-relational system was referred to as 'losing face (*Che-Myun* 체면)' which implied a relational failure to fulfil one's role associated with one's given position within the society (ICKS, 1998: 174). Shame in the modern context would be equivalent to *Ja-Gue-Gam* [자괴감] or *Bu-Ggu-Reo-Um* [부끄러움] in Korean language, which is precisely referring to a degradation of an independent sense of self in society. This further implies that the emotion of 'shame' that focuses on the individualistic social face is connected to the more modern socio-relational environment of South Korea, which further raises the significance of undertaking a socio-historical contextualization of people's experience of shame in relation to poverty.

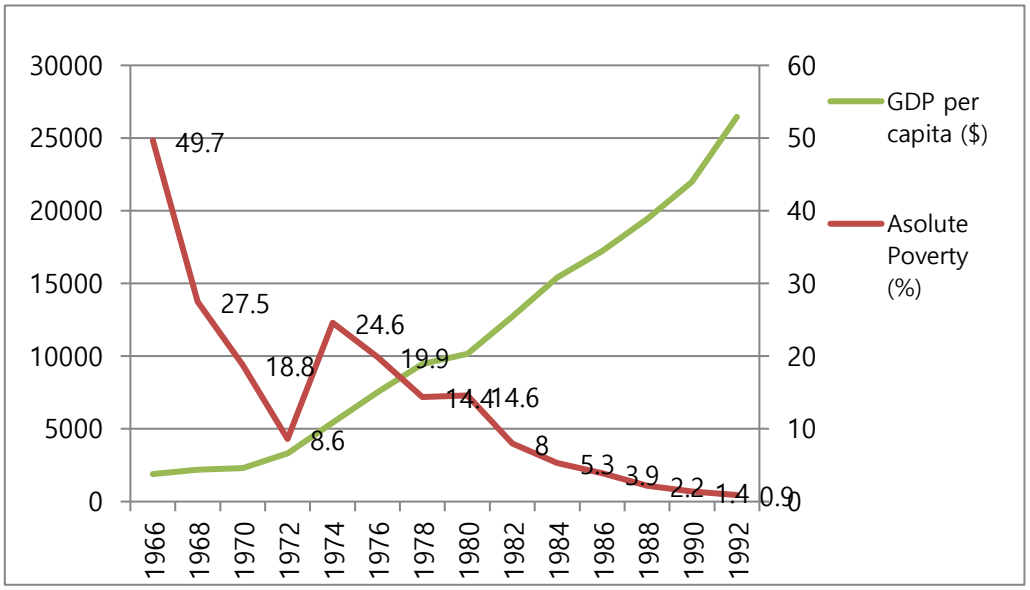
3. 3 The Changing Social Environment of Poverty

In 1953, right after the Korean War ended, South Korea was ranked as one of the poorest countries in the world, with an absolute poverty rate exceeding 60-70% according to some figures (PSPD/UNDP, 2000), comparable at the time to many of the African countries. Its economy and social infrastructure had been mostly destroyed during the war, creating mass unemployment, large numbers of displaced war orphans, and widespread hunger. The situation was aggravated by refugees from the war returning home in large numbers, but with no means of livelihood (Ku, 2006: 10; Kim et al., 2007: 44).

[19] Familial relations also carried a socio-relational hierarchy within themselves, arranged mainly according to age and gender; e.g. each holding a different hierarchical position within a family as a father, mother, child (first son bearing the most authority among the children within their relational rank, and daughters after the sons), with specific relationships defined also for in-laws and relatives.

South Korea's economic transformation coincided with militaristic political rule and by the late 1960s, during the period referred to as 'the Miracle of the Han River',[20] the country experienced annual growth rates exceeding 10% in consecutive years (Kim et al., 2007: 52). The government pursued a policy of state-led export-oriented industrialization which, with high growth, resulted in low levels of unemployment. A high percentage of the rural to urban immigrant population was drawn to the capital city of Seoul in particular, where the state-led economic development plans were concentrated. Somewhat unusually, growth was not accompanied by greatly increased income inequality, a feature that has been attributed to its land reform (Ku, 2006: 9). The Land Reform Act in 1949 led to the dismantling of the pre-modern pattern of land ownership, undermining the power and wealth of the land-owning ruling class.

Figure 3. 2 GDP Growth and Absolute Poverty Rate Change: 1966 - 1992



GDP per capita ($) (Statistics Korea), Absolute poverty rate (%) (Kim et al., 2007: 251)

[20] The Han River is a river that flows through the centre of the capital city of Seoul.

In this context of high and comparatively egalitarian growth, poverty and deprivation fell rapidly with the absolute poverty rate falling to 8.6% by 1972 (see Figure 3.2) and continuing to decrease until the mid-1990s to 3.4% (Park, 2001) or even lower, depending on the source of the statistics. During this period of industrialization and high level of employment, poverty came to be conceived as a residual phenomenon, and as affecting only those who could not or for whatever reason did not participate in the job market. Education was a particularly notable means of social mobility for many people, while access to education was still limited for most women in the beginning and was gradually improved. Those who were able-bodied and capable of work or were able and willing to put in their effort into education, therefore were assumed to be able to work their way out of poverty, had they only sufficient willpower and diligence. The only people countenanced to be in poverty were pregnant women, children, elderly people and those who were sick or physically disabled, all with an acceptable or pardonable reason for not working (Kim et al., 2007). Poverty during this period was to be seen as a consequence of personal failing or due to the lottery of ill-health.

Despite unparalleled economic success, poverty was not eradicated in South Korea, and since the major Asian financial crisis hit the country in 1997, poverty has returned in different guises and on a new scale. In the aftermath of the financial crisis, a set of neo-liberalist structural reform measures were enforced upon the country by the IMF (International Monetary Fund), and since the late 1990s South Korea has seen the emergence of a multiplicity of new forms of poverty affecting wider and more diverse groups of the population. The 'New Poverty', as it has been named by the scholars in South Korea, has been a product of a confluence of causes including increased inequality, in-work poverty,[21]

[21] That fails to lift incomes above the minimum cost of living threshold.

growth in non-standard employment,[22] a high level of unemployment among both young people in their 20s and others, a rapidly ageing population, and increasing numbers of single parents and single-headed households without any form of familial support (Kim et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2009).

However, having experienced abject poverty in the post-War period and its rapid decrease throughout the industrialization period, poverty is still viewed as an individual problem, and the political mantra of economic success built on collective effort leaves little sympathy for individuals who are not financially successful. Furthermore, the neo-liberalistic capitalism that has shaped the economy since the Asian financial crisis in 1997 has created an era of 'limitless competition' between individual people with full-blown consumerism in which displays of wealth, consumption and economic status higher than others have become the main measures of social status.

These changes have all contributed to the development of a social environment in which the sense of shame that is attached to poverty is greatly heightened. To make matters worse, the family ties that once functioned as the main provider of basic welfare and the most important communal entity via which economic resources, social capital, cultural capital, and psychological support were shared (Bang et al., 2004: 21-26), have withered as a result of individualization, the increasing predominance of nuclear family forms, and divorce (Yeo, 2004; Lee and Ku, 2010). With the demise of the traditional social safety net provided by the extended family and community, individuals are now left to negotiate the highly risky labour market on their own. A noticeable symptom of the psychological influence of such social changes has been the rapid increase in the suicide rate of the country, which now ranks the

[22] Non-standard employment has been characterised by employment insecurity and perpetual low wages.

second highest among the OECD countries (Korea Suicide Prevention Centre, 2015; OECD, 2019). While suicide was ranked as the seventh highest reason for death in 2002, it rose to being the top reason for death among the 10s~30s age group in the population and the second highest reason for the 40s and 50s age group (KOSTAT, 2017).

3. 4 Social Policy Interventions to Tackle Poverty

3. 4. 1 Dominant Political Discourse

The Era of Industrialization: 'Growth First, Redistribution Later'

Progress in the decade following the Korean War was insufficient to significantly reduce the poverty rate which, measured in absolute terms, still stood at 49% at the time of the military coup that brought Park Jung-Hee to power in 1961. Park, in his presidential inauguration speech in 1963, clearly articulated the economic developmental approach to welfare that South Korea adopted under his leadership and was to frame subsequent policy debates:

> What this generation of Korea in the 1960s must experience as an unavoidable historical fate is the **modernization** of the country in every aspect: that of politics, economy, society, and culture. … The people as individuals should strengthen the notion of improving their lot through building an independent and autonomous **self-supporting mentality**. In order to establish **democracy**, **prosperity**, and a **welfare society** in this land, the people of our nation must carry a **nationalistic identity**, the mentality of **spontaneous participation** and a strong **hard-working mind-set**. (English translation and emphases added)

Four years later, in the 1967 inauguration speech marking his second term as president, Park Jung-Hee further elaborated similar themes:

> In order to achieve our goal of building a **welfare society without poverty** and corruption, with trustworthy, hard-working, simple, and diligent citizens, I desire for us all to be more faithful to our **jobs** and the execution of **work** … I am convinced that such a welfare society of justice can be achieved through our current path

> towards national **industrialization**. … **Without building the economy, there is no poverty elimination**, without building the economy there is no way to abolish the unemployment that breeds **corruption**, and without it we cannot accomplish a beautiful vision in comparison to that of **communism**, nor reunify the country and liberate our brothers through the power of freedom flowing into the North.
> (English translation and emphases added)

Taken together, these inaugural speeches capture the thrust of policy thinking in South Korea over thirty years. The language is important, though not transparent. In the first speech, democracy precedes prosperity and the creation of a welfare society as a policy goal, and yet was not to be achieved for over a quarter of a century, long after considerable strides towards prosperity had been accomplished. The reality was that Park Jung-Hee's regime pursued economic growth above all else, while sustaining a highly centralized and oppressive political dictatorship (Kim et al., 2007: 50; Seo, 2007). In the second speech, a welfare society is more or less defined as a society without poverty which, he reiterated, could only be achieved through economic growth based on the then current path towards industrialization: 'without building the economy there is no poverty elimination'. The political framing of poverty provided the justification for his government to concentrate on economic development policies without reference to any specific poverty alleviation programme, with the rationale that everyone would eventually benefit and the 'trickle-down' effect of economic growth would subsequently relieve the mass poverty that existed.

Further reading of the excerpts from the presidential speeches during this period demonstrates that economic growth was not just perceived as the panacea to domestic problems but was also geopolitical in its motivation. North Korea was presented as a threat to national security, and the economic success of South Korea was viewed as an essential demonstration of the ideological superiority of democratic capitalism over North Korean communism. Leaving to one side the fact that South Korea was neither democratic nor free at the time – the education

system was infused with anti-communist ideology, while the National Security Law was used as a mechanism of political repression (Seo, 2007: 96) – nationalism was promoted as a spur to concentrate on economic growth. Given the legacy of recent occupation by Japan and the US, it was not lost on the population that economic success would also allow South Korea to win back the North: 'to liberate our brothers through the power of freedom'. Instilling the work ethic was not just about personal gain; it was about national security, identity, and pride. Work and personal economic success were, in effect, civic duties that were used politically to justify the exploitative working hours and conditions that were widespread during this period (Kim et al., 2007).

Also evident from Park Jung-Hee's speeches is the focus on individualism: 'hard-working individuals' with an 'independent self-supporting mentality' were deemed necessary for economic success and for the broader populace to escape poverty. Such individualism was a marked departure from the Confucian thinking that had for centuries shaped Korean culture. This thinking had prioritised the interests of the family above individual success and promoted parental piety and support within extended families (Yeo, 2004: 8). Ironically, in the absence of state social protection, individualism and economic self-sufficiency were sustained by an informal safety net based on the moral obligation and collective reciprocity within families and neighbourhoods. Nonetheless, the government's emphasis on independent self-sufficiency continued, reinforced by the growing influence of Western cultural ideas and the rules of the capitalistic market economy. Whether or not they were the result of government rhetoric or a consequence of industrialization, urbanisation, or modernity itself, the individualistic values of self-sufficiency took hold. This was reflected in the sustained growth of the nuclear family in tandem with the weakening of broader family ties and socio-cultural norms around familial obligations of mutual support (Yeo, 2004; Lee and Ku, 2010).

The result was that individuals were exposed to greater economic risk as government rhetoric underlined personal responsibility over one's own fate. Yet as economic growth was strong, the loss of the collective insurance (although limited in its scope of coverage) that had once been provided by strong familial networks only became fully apparent in the aftermath of the 1997 financial crisis.

The First Anti-Poverty Policy: the Livelihood Protection Law

The first anti-poverty policy, *the Livelihood Protection Law,* was introduced in 1961 (Kim et al., 2007: 54). It was first and foremost a political gesture designed to legitimate dictatorial rule and was largely residual with very strict and non-universal eligibility criteria (Nam, 2004: 43). The aid was restricted to only the most vulnerable, on grounds of age, physical health or disability (Nam, 2004: 43). Indeed, it reflected the charitable provisions that had previously been available as a result of foreign aid, first under American military rule and subsequently under President Lee Seung-Man (Kim et al., 2007: 45). Economic growth, low unemployment and the dominance of Confucian family values, especially in the early period, meant that the residual welfare system appeared viable, and indeed, accorded a degree of political legitimacy to successive authoritarian governments until 1997.

The policy trajectory initiated by Park Jung-Hee has proved resilient (no doubt in part due to the economic success enjoyed by South Korea) and the attachment to an economic growth-oriented and minimal welfare model remains strong in policy discourse to this day. What has changed, however, is the arrival of truly democratic politics. Along with this has come public pressure to realize the aspiration inherent in the development idea that growth first is subsequently to be followed by redistribution. Newly politicised industrial workers who had been sustaining the export-oriented economy, along with intellectuals and college students, led the civil movement in opposition to the dictatorships in the 1980s (Kim et al., 2007; Seo,

2007). This opposition precipitated several welfare policy reforms during the 1980s, including the enactment of the National Pension Law and the expansion of medical insurance, both in 1986 under the Jun Doo-Hwan military government and more fundamentally under the last military ruler, Noh Tae-Woo. In his 1988 inaugural speech, Noh Tae-Woo acknowledged the need for 'redistributing justly and honestly the fruits of rapid growth that has been achieved so far', and that 'the unfair sacrifice of the individual's share that has been undistributed for the sake of focusing on national development should no longer be'. Notable reforms of the Livelihood Protection Law were undertaken in 1982 and the policy became more inclusive in terms of eligibility. The term of Noh Tae-Woo also saw the implementation of a National Pension Scheme and universal health insurance. Corporation-based welfare was also introduced as an alternative to state welfare policies.

While the welfare structures implemented in Korea during the 1980s and early 1990s sound reminiscent of a corporatist welfare state such as Germany, overall spending remained low as a proportion of GDP, and benefits were minimal by international standards, while familial support necessarily remained high. Despite the easing of eligibility standards, social assistance provision via the Livelihood Protection Law remained largely unchanged and provided only for recipients who were demonstrably poor, unable to work, or who had no responsible family members to support them. Limiting social assistance provision to the 'worthy' poor reinforced the notion that anyone falling outside the narrow scope for eligibility was morally deficient. Thus coverage remained low, never more than half of the poverty population due to the strictness of the eligibility criteria and the stigma associated with claiming (OECD, 2000; Lee, H.-K., 2009). While larger numbers were incorporated into the social insurance system, the distinction increased between this mainstream group in society with access to insurance protection and those dependent on social assistance.

The expansion of social insurance within a 'Growth first and redistribution later' approach to welfare continued well into the democratic period. During Kim Young-Sam's presidency (1993-1997), the idea of a 'Korean welfare model' was first promulgated, based on the pursuit of harmony between growth and welfare. This entailed provision by multiple providers, yet at minimal level so as not to hinder economic growth. This approach has subsequently been categorised as 'Neo-liberalistic Welfare Pluralism' (Huh, 2002: 52; Kim et al., 2007: 71). It prioritised economic growth over welfare provision and redistribution, portrayed welfare spending as a great potential burden on the economy and delimited the notion of welfare to that of minimal charitable provision reserved for the poorest minority.

The abject poverty that was endemic at the time of the formation of South Korea and triggered the drive for economic growth was thereafter dropped from the political lexicon (until it returned with the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997). The focus instead has been placed on the development and economic growth that were to achieve welfare or a welfare society (Kim et al., 2007: 53) which in essence implied a productivist welfare state. The presumption was that poverty would automatically be eliminated through the trickle-down effect of growth and that its eradication therefore did not need to be accorded the status of an objective in its own right (Kim et al., 2007). Poverty became invisible in policy discourse as, for the most part, did those people who continued to be poor (Ku, 2006: 16). Correspondingly, while enhancing welfare has been a central tenet of every national South Korean government in the modern era, it has not been until recent elections that welfare policy has been directly promoted as a means of achieving a welfare society.

Furthermore, in traditional Korean society, a culture shaped by Confucian values relied on the network of family relatives to support those in need. For much of the post war period until 1997, the family continued to be the main social safety net for people of working age and,

indeed, for elderly persons. It was also an assumption that was strongly built into state policy that drove the economic recovery in the aftermath of the Korean War, a war that had destroyed so much of the country's infrastructure and resulted in mass poverty. Government resources were directed almost entirely toward supporting economic growth, leaving the family to cope with the inevitable casualties of structural change. This proved generally feasible while the economy continued to expand and growth in inequality was constrained to a certain extent, although those families missing out on the benefits of growth were often placed under considerable strain. The imposition of the IMF's structural adjustment programme brought with it prolonged unemployment at the end of the 1990s and an increasing reliance on casual employment. As a result, families - radically reshaped by rapidly falling birth rates in conjunction with a significant increase in the divorce rate - have been much less equipped to support their financially struggling members.

3. 4. 2 Advent of the First Anti-Poverty Social Assistance Scheme

The Asian financial crisis of 1997 proved to be a critical juncture for South Korean welfare policy. The crisis was followed by the election of a democratic government under Kim Dae-Joong (1998–2003) that was necessarily more sensitive than ever before to political pressure from below, as well as to the importance of civil and social rights. The crisis and the subsequent economic structural reform resulted in the bankruptcy of numerous businesses of various sizes and the substantial lay-offs of workers from the country's large industrial conglomerates ('*Chaebol'*), all within just one or two years. The unemployment rate soared from 2.6% to 8.4% between 1997 and 1999 (Park, 2002: 272), and the absolute poverty rate rose from 3.8% in 1996 to 7.9% in 2000 (Ku, 2004: 68) – and up to 21% in urban areas (Lee, 1999). With no real social safety net in place, and with the reduced capacity of the extended family to provide support, the victims of the financial crisis and the structural reform plans

were exposed to immense suffering without anywhere to turn. As a result, a great number of people fell into poverty overnight and were burdened with debt, yet had no access to public means of support (Park, 2002). The popular news media were replete with stories of both laid-off workers and the former owners of now bankrupt businesses committing suicide, leaving dependants with nothing but insurmountable debt (Lødemel and Dahl, 2000; Park, 2002; Huh, 2009). Subsequently, the impact of the crisis became a major social problem and the government came under pressure from pan-national joint civil society movements that lobbied for a comprehensive social assistance programme that would, for the first time, embrace people capable of work (Lee, 1999: 12; Park, 2002: 276; Nam, 2004: 44). The national response was the enactment of the National Basic Living Security Law (for NBLSS) as the first comprehensive social assistance programme available to everyone on the basis of need.

Nevertheless, the emergence of new forms of poverty has yet to be adequately addressed in current policy design, not least because the conception of poverty forged during the era of industrialization remains dominant in political and policy discourse despite the legacy of the Asian Financial Crisis. People are still deemed to be poor for reasons of their own making. With policies designed according to this premise, low-income people are trapped in systems of provision that exacerbate the shame that they are often already experiencing due to being unable to acquire social status through conspicuous consumption. On a related note, South Korea is also the country with the highest suicide rate among the OECD countries, in which it has been reported that a large proportion of the reasons for suicide have been economic and the absence of an adequate social safety net. The social assistance system reportedly covers less than half of the population living in poverty and provides only a bare minimal level of support (Moon, 1999a; Yeo, 2004; Lee, H.-K., 2009). Such reports also point to the

significance of addressing the relationship between the social environment of poverty and people's experience of poverty, which includes their emotional welfare, that can have vital implications for some in sustaining their lives.

In short, consecutive governments since the very beginning of South Korea's modern history have prioritized economic development above all else, frequently promoting the concept of 'growth first and redistribute later'. In the aftermath of near total devastation, poverty reduction was a dominant objective. Yet poverty, individual welfare, and social policies were subsequently framed as secondary to a more prominent growth discourse. Poverty was constructed as an individual and household issue, to be resolved through participation in the newly strong economy or through support by the extended family with minimal state intervention. Rapid economic growth, combined with low inequality, helped to create a future-oriented optimism concerning improvements in general welfare, which diverted attention away from the hardships taking place. Indeed, as the term 'welfare' was equated with aggregate national prosperity, there was little political space in which to consider social welfare policy as a viable means to improve the welfare of individuals. Furthermore, minimal social assistance provisions were justified by locating the blame for poverty with those individuals who did not take up employment opportunities, or with families who did not provide an appropriate level of support. Despite the fact that the 1997 financial crisis illuminated the structural causes of poverty, this propensity to blame the victim is still inherent in the structure of NBLSS, the current social assistance scheme.

3. 4. 3 Design and Structure of the NBLSS & Its Role in the Overall Welfare System

The design and structure of the NBLSS reflected the inherent confrontations in its policy discourse that subsequently shaped its format, embodying the lasting legacy of an economic developmental welfare model that had served South Korea well until the major financial

crisis in 1997. Conceptually the NBLSS was a notable advance, with its progressive aspiration to reform the minimalistic social welfare provision under the previous *Livelihood Protection Law*, which was the country's first anti-poverty social policy and the only substantial means of public provision for poverty until 2000, which specifically provided for the physically disabled, children, elderly, and women who were incapable of work. The introduction of the NBLSS enhanced the legal status of people who successfully claimed assistance based on a framework of rights: 'beneficiaries' became 'qualified recipients', with a legally enforceable right to an adequate livelihood secured through the national government (Lee, 1999: 13). This change represented a paradigm shift in the policy framework regarding poverty. Rather than individuals being solely responsible for providing for their own welfare, the national government was to ensure that everyone enjoyed at least the national official minimum standard of living (Nam, 2004; Huh, 2009). For the first time a scheme was put in place that was to be available to everyone in material deprivation, irrespective of age, health status and ability to work, the criteria that had limited the effectiveness of the Livelihood Protection Law at the time of the 1997 financial crisis (Lee, 1999; Huh, 2005).

3. 4. 3 - 1 Dominant Policy Discourse

However, while the NBLSS marked a radical change in the social welfare system of South Korea, shifting from the realm of political gestures and government charity to proactive and worthwhile policy, the structure of the scheme still reflected an overriding concern about the possibility of moral hazard, abuse and the creation of 'welfare dependency'. As a consequence, the NBLSS adheres to an incongruous hybrid of ideals. It is on the one hand based on a progressive notion of social rights. On the other, it represents path dependency, as it maintains an economic developmental welfare model prioritising self-support through work (Park, 2002: 279). This tension reflects the fact that the aspiration for comprehensive

coverage was met with strong resistance from certain economists and government officials, most notably the Ministry of Planning and Budgets (Huh, 2002; Huh, 2009). The primary objections were that the establishment of comprehensive social assistance would increase costs, generate abuse and waste finance. Most predominant was the argument that comprehensive assistance would generate moral hazard and a decline in work motivation (Huh, 2002; Ku, 2006: 94), resulting in 'welfare disease' (Moon, 1999a: 112; Park, 2002). Thus, while the resultant policy aimed to alleviate the poverty induced by mass unemployment amongst the work-capable population, it nevertheless still discriminated against them. Not only did the work-capable receive a lower benefit, but they also were required to enrol in workfare-like projects.

This created a two-tier system in which even individual recipients evaluate one another as more or less deserving based on their presumed work-capability. A division based on work-capability was, however, inappropriate in a post-1997 scenario, as 'New poverty' was mostly caused by widespread unemployment and, moreover, to growing levels of casual and non-standard employment. While the labour market was no longer capable of providing sufficient work for work-capable people, the policy discourse effectively held individuals responsible for their failure to find adequate work.

Work Orientation and Self-Sufficiency

While people capable of work were not debarred from the NBLSS, as they had been under the *Livelihood Protection Law*, the structure of the benefit replicates the earlier distinction based on work capability and thus created several sites of potential shaming. The work-capability clause imposed the condition that recipients capable of work must participate in public 'Self-Support (*Ja-Hwal* 자활)' work programmes in order to receive the living expenses benefit as a form of workfare. The requirement reinforced the notion of deserving

and undeserving in its implication that those capable of work should, in fact, support themselves (Kim, 2010; Lee, 2010). The imposition of this condition was subject to some debate before the reform was enacted, yet in the end it was retained because of the developmental legacy and the expectation that people would support themselves through employment (Park, 2002). Due to its inclusion, the work-capable who were receiving benefit were open to suspicion and claims of abuse, potentially adding to the shame of financial failure and inability to self-support associated with benefit receipt. Furthermore, evidence suggested that the 'Self-Support' work programmes did not, in fact, help people to move out of NBLSS receipt or improve their future job prospects. Rather, those engaged in the programme tended to become trapped in an intermediate labour market which was publicly not recognized as 'proper' employment and which offered few long-term career prospects (Ku, 2006: 96).

The main difference between the In-poverty (*Soo-Geup* 수급) and Near-poverty (*Cha-Sang-Wee* 차상위) status within the system, also reflects such implicit two-tier system. The official categories are based on where the recipient's overall sum of expected income stands in relation to the minimum cost of living line (if below it was defined as being in poverty, and if below 120% of the official minimum cost of living line, then being near the poverty status). While there are further advantages placed on the In-poverty group regarding the entitlement to various other benefits (e.g. medical cost, housing, etc.), the main difference between the two different statuses' content of provision is in the living expenses benefit that only the In-poverty group received. Yet, even among the In-poverty status, if the person is assessed to be physically capable of work, their living expenses benefit can be discounted accordingly. Moreover, in discerning the expected final income, people's physical capability to work is also taken into account in the equation. Thus, it is often perceived that in order to become an

In-poverty status, one has to be physically unable to work (and visibly so), which also potentially added shame upon those who were physically capable of work (or seemingly so) yet received the In-poverty status benefits.

Family Obligations

The NBLSS kept its strong legal obligation related to the informal provision of welfare via family relations as the primary provider of financial support. Although social assistance has been put in place to help mitigate the impact of rapid social change and increasingly irregular employment, it is still premised on strong extended families willing or responsible to be the first defence against poverty. Social assistance programmes in South Korea have always obliged applicants to make efforts to secure support from their extended family prior to the receipt of state support. The discourse of 'self-earned welfare via work' could be sustained with minimalistic public welfare provision in the past, as it was backed up not only by a mass reduction of poverty via near-full employment but also by the informal familial support being in place with less individualization of people's livelihoods.

However, even after the Asian Financial Crisis hit the country in 1997 and both unemployment and the rate of abject poverty rose considerably, the discourse continued to dominate the socio-political debate in South Korea regarding the issue of welfare. Together with the informal provision of welfare significantly tapering off, such unstable and retrenched labour market opportunities had created a new space of need to be filled by public provision of welfare (cf. Titmuss in Abrahamson, 1999). Nevertheless, as was consistently found in all three main realms of this study – in personal (interviews), and in socio-cultural (film) and institutional (social policy) discourse – the dominant social discourse had not caught up with such substantial changes in the socio-economic reality to replace the strong legacy of belief in welfare-via-work-and-family.

Prior to partial reform of the NBLSS in 2004, the obligation to support included grandparents and grandchildren and their spouses, even if they were not living with the person claiming NBLSS. Table 3.1 shows the current situation. Although it was not mentioned in the original source of Table 3.1, cohabiting partners who were in a de facto marriage relationship were also included in the framework of obligations.

Table 3. 1 Family obligation support clause: the scope of application

	Post-2004 Reform
Scope of Application	1) Regardless of living in the same household – Applicant's spouse, direct family kin (parents, children) and their spouses 2) In case of living in the same household – Applicant's siblings, grandparents, and grandchildren
e.g.	• Wife, husband • Parent, grown-up children, etc. • Son/daughter in-law, etc. --- • If living in the same household, it further included: siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, grandson-/daughter-in-law, etc.

[English translation of the source from Yeo (2004)]

A further source of shaming is imposed by the fact that the employment criterion operated at the household level (Huh, 2009: 281). People incapable of work are denied access to the NBLSS if they are living in households that included persons capable of working. For example, elderly parents living with or having near-poor adult children are highly likely to be ineligible for the programme. Moreover, the family obligation clause requires applicants to personally solicit the agreement of all relevant family members to means-testing, even if the quality of the actual relationship is such that the applicant would otherwise consider it inappropriate to ask for financial help.

The clause is a legacy of the times when extended family forms were the dominant social

structure, before urbanization and individualization changed the fabric of South Korean society (Yeo, 2004). The mismatch between the administrative logic of the NBLSS and the social reality helps to explain the notoriously low take-up of the scheme (Jung, 2011). In 2004, before the clause was modified, nearly half of those refused benefit (a number exceeding the total active caseload) had been rejected for failing to fulfil the family obligation clause. Of these cases, many of the relatives of refused applicants had been proven unable or unwilling to provide support (Yeo, 2004; Nam, 2004; Park, 2008; Lee and Ku, 2010). Even today, a major impediment to claiming assistance is the presence of family members who are too poor to contribute support or too distant for it to be reasonable to approach them (Lee and Ku, 2010). Not surprisingly, research findings indicate that the family obligation clause has been a crucial barrier to the take-up of NBLSS (Huh, 2002: 60; Nam, 2004: 46; Huh, 2005: 24).

Sustaining Low Status for Recipients

Furthermore, the supplementary nature of the benefit system operated according to a monthly means test, such that monthly income is not permitted to exceed the eligibility threshold, the minimum cost of living line. This provides no financial reward or incentive to find a job that would pay less than the benefit itself. There is also no incentive to find a job that would take recipients just above the threshold for entitlement to additional NBLSS-related support packages, including health care, education, and housing benefits (Park, 2002: 10). However, when people are, for whatever reason, unable to participate in work programmes, their livelihood benefit can be denied altogether, thus throwing them into abject poverty (Huh, 2009). This all-or-nothing scenario presents recipients with a moral and emotional dilemma: to risk their only source of support for the sake of finding a better-paying job. Therefore, in effect, the policy structure intended to encourage self-sufficiency through work (Lee, 1999:

16) is criticized as serving instead to exclude benefit recipients from proper employment.

NBLSS benefit regulations mean that the shaming processes described above have to be repeated regularly through the period of receipt. Once or twice a year, depending on the type of benefit, recipients are required to submit documentary proof (health certificates, if applicable) that substantiated their continuing inability to independently support themselves, along with the unwillingness or inability of kin to assist them. This was arguably, to some extent, purposive, in that the architects of the post-2000 reforms were deeply concerned about the possibility of moral hazard, people choosing to live on benefits rather than working, and therefore prioritized systems designed to deter abuse (Park, 2002).

In short, the original rights-based approach towards poverty and welfare provision envisioned by civil society activists is being severely compromised within the policy's design. Family-based means testing and work requirements are restricting the social rights of the claimants, exposing claimants and recipients alike to shaming, not to mention extreme poverty (Park, 2008). Whether by accident or design, the conditions imposed reflect the earlier assumption that individuals and families are primarily responsible for their own welfare, and that they alone are to be blamed and personally shamed for falling into poverty.

3. 4. 3 - 2 Delivery System of the NBLSS

Under the authority of the central state's Ministry of Health and Welfare, the NBLSS is run and delivered by local government through the mechanism of community administrative offices (Dong offices) in cities and counties. The workfare component – comprising maintenance work, internships, and socially useful work (e.g. street cleaning, or being an administrative helper at local Dong offices) – is delivered directly by local government or by 'Local Self-Support Centres'.

The significant lack of infrastructure, especially the limited number of welfare officers positioned in the local Dong offices, imposes serious constraints on the quality of service provision (Kang, 2003). Although the number of staff has been increased significantly since the enactment of the NBLSS in 2000, staffing levels are still largely inadequate, with officers on average being responsible for caseloads ranging from over a hundred to two hundred households (Kang, 2003). Even lower staffing ratios have been reported in parts of Seoul with, in one case, 57 officers being responsible for 100,000 recipients and many more applicants. Such understaffing applies equally to the workfare self-sufficiency programme (Lee-Gong, 2011). The block grants made to NGOs implementing such schemes have not kept up with demand, and the four or five staff members attached to each local programme must typically engage in a broad set of disparate tasks, including programme development, marketing, accounting, and general administration, as well as management of an average of 22 workfare participants (Kim, 2005; SEDA, 2011).

The legacy of the initial framing of South Korea's development model was clear. Economic growth was then the anti-poverty programme. Other policies were secondary and politically viable only insofar as they were thought not to inhibit growth. Social assistance was to be residual, available only to those incapable of work and lacking the resource of family support. The design of the principal social assistance scheme, the NBLSS, retains those strong legacy elements of the policy discourse rooted in the developmental era that reinforce the 'socially dependent' status of applicants. These include, for example, obliging applicants personally to plead with kin for financial support and, for those capable of work, compelling work in exchange for benefit.

3. 5 Conclusion: Rationale for Choosing South Korea as the Case Study

South Korea provides an intriguing and an effective case study in many ways, but mainly due to its developmental trajectory of a rapid transition to modern democratic capitalism. This developmental history facilitates an effective exploration of the changing relationship between poverty and shame in relation to the rapidly shifting social context within a relatively short span of time; within the lifetime of several generations. Moreover, contextualizing the topic of poverty and shame in the context of South Korea revealed that it is a very timely subject for the country's current social climate that is characterized by an emphasis on individualization in relation to poverty and social pressure to demonstrate success in mainly economic terms. The advent of 'New Poverty' in the country demonstrates that poverty has become a social problem that any demographic groups of the population can experience, under the highly competitive and insecure socio-economic environment with an insufficient social safety net in place. The general social atmosphere of the country has also been displaying a noticeable interest in the issue of recognition of the individualized sense of self. As an illustration, psychology books targeted at a general readership on how to build up or restore one's self-esteem have been gaining much attention as bestsellers.[23]

Based on these contextual observations, the case study of South Korea enables investigations into the extent to which shame is a key experience in relation to poverty, why it occurs and how it affects the lives of people in poverty; what kinds of changes have occurred over time in the social dynamics of poverty and shame; and what the role of the minimalistic social assistance has been for people's lives in poverty in relation to shame. This case study can not

[23] In 2017, books such as *Self-Esteem Lesson* (by Hong-Kyoon, Yoo) and *The Courage To Be Disliked* (by Ichiro Kishimi) were listed among the top bestselling books of the year.

only expand the understanding of poverty and set out implications for social policy improvement but in addition offer further insights for other fast-developing countries that are equally in transition to a democratic capitalist society with weakening traditional values and community life.

Chapter 4. Methodology

4. 1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss how the research methods were designed to explore and answer the research questions; the rationale behind the choice of each method, and the methodological design of each method. Also a report will be included on how the fieldwork was carried out in terms of its initial approach and the actual research process that took place. Notable strengths and challenges faced in operating the research methods will also be discussed.

There were three main research objects chosen for empirical investigations:

- First, the internal and personal dimension of shame that people in poverty experienced themselves, while also tracing changes over time in people's experience of poverty
- Second, the dominant cultural discourses produced by popular films in South Korea, and tracing their changes over time
- Third, social policy analysis of NBLSS in terms of its role in shaping poverty-related shame

This chapter will go through each of the three respectively chosen research methods to investigate the above three areas of research, in the order of film analysis, in-depth interview, and finally social policy analysis. Before going into these specific areas of the methodology, this chapter first explains the relationship that this research shared with the ESRC-DFID funded international project on poverty and shame that was undertaken at the same time with this research and formed a partnership in disseminating the research findings.

4. 2 Relationship with the International Research Project on Poverty & Shame

This research began at the same time with the international research funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) together with the UK government's Department for International Development (DFID), entitled 'Shame, Social Exclusion and the Effectiveness of Anti-Poverty Programmes: A Study in Five Countries', which was led by Professor Robert Walker. The coincidental timing of the launch of the international project and the beginning of my doctoral research under the supervision of Professor Walker came together with my personal research interests on the topic (from my Masters' thesis that investigated into the shaming-effect found in social assistance policies in South Korea and Japan), which solidified the personal opportunity to undertake this research. Subsequently, this research began side-by-side with the international project on five countries. I was given the intellectual freedom to undertake this research as an independent doctoral research on the South Korean case study by myself from beginning to end, from the literature review to the research design, building a conceptual framework, data collection, data analysis, and finally writing the thesis.

Through regular supervisions, I reported and discussed the findings with Professor Walker, who was also drawing international comparisons himself as the project manager of the international project. I was a regular attender at the on-line project meetings in which I got to witness the logistical progression of the international research project. I attended the off-line project meetings three times that occurred roughly every six months, in which I was given the opportunity to present my findings, receive feedback, and draw comparisons with the findings from other country case studies.

The international project and this doctoral research shared several common grounds, such as the main research subject being people's emotional experiences of shame when living in poverty and the social dimensions that influenced such experiences, including social policy

institutions. The international project was composed of four working packages, which included the study of people's personal experiences of shame in poverty, public perceptions of poverty, cultural conceptions of poverty-related shame, and social policy analysis in relation to poverty-related shame. While this doctoral research included three of those four working packages, it did not include the public perceptions of poverty (of those who were not in poverty) within its scope of investigation,[24] which is one noticeable difference between the two. A more substantial difference is that the international project was an international comparative study that mainly set out to test the universality of shame in poverty across wide-ranging country contexts from around the world. This doctoral research, on the other hand, focused on a South Korean case study; while probing into the social contextual roots of shame in relation to poverty, it tested the possibility of change in the poverty-shame association based on societal changes over time.

Some of the empirical findings of this research were included in the collective output of the international project as another country case study within the comparative framework in the form of three independent book chapters on the case of South Korea (on film analysis, social policy analysis, and some of the earlier findings from interview analysis which are not included in the current thesis). The conceptual framework of this research (discussed in Chapter 2), which was established in the initial stages of this doctoral research as a basic frame for the approach, also contributed to building the conceptual frame for the approach of the international project. Yet, the overall synthesis of the international findings was compiled in a separate book as a comparative study, as an independent work by Professor Walker as a

[24] While it could have been beneficial and interesting to include the study of public perceptions of poverty (of those not living in poverty) in this research, I decided to keep the scope of this research appropriate for doctorate research. It was also found sufficient to not include the element based on both the focus of this research and the initial conceptual framework that was established for studying shame.

single author. Likewise, the overall work of this thesis is also an independent work of my own. Together with a further revised version of the two empirical chapters (on film and social policy analysis) that were published as book chapters in the collective volume, the current thesis includes three new empirical chapters on interview data analysis that were recently completed, which have been combined with the first four introductory chapters and the conclusion chapter of this thesis as an independent body of work.

4. 3 Film Analysis

Employing film analysis method in poverty research within social policy studies is unusual. Therefore, this section will first discuss what the rationale is for choosing this method, and the chosen design for employing the method. In doing so, first, the underlying rationale for studying cultural texts in exploring poverty-shame discourse will be discussed, and further reasons for choosing film over other cultural texts. Second, the theoretical grounds and approach toward film analysis in the thesis will be discussed, with an explanation about the methodological approach. Third, the specific design of the research method will be set out, including the method of data collection, sampling strategies, and the method of analysis.

4. 3. 1 Rationale for the Choice of Method

Underlying Reasons for Studying Cultural Texts

What drove the process of choosing the objects of study and respective research methods was the conceptual foundations of this research. The emotion of shame, as understood in the thesis, intrinsically has a dual dimension that requires ‘shaming’ in order for one to ‘feel ashamed’. Identifying the object of study with regards to the internal dimension of shame was quite straightforward, as it meant investigating the individuals feeling ashamed in relation to

their state of poverty, which is discussed in the following section in 3.2. However, the process of discerning the object of study for addressing the external dimension of shame required a more meticulous process of clarifying various issues involved.

Before moving onto why film was chosen among other possible cultural media, it would be important to explain the definition of the concept of 'discourse' being used here. Within the tradition of discourse analysis, there are several different ways of understanding the concept of discourse. The approach in the thesis is in line with Wood and Kroger's definition, that 'Talk is both about reality and is reality as an action' (2000: 3), and that there is no meaning to reality itself; it is the discourse around and about reality that people believe in as 'real'. This is to treat discourse as being made up of realities of the relevant social context, but also as creating the social world by shaping the way people view reality in an on-going process and action (Wood and Kroger, 2000: 3). In this respect, social phenomena are products of social discourse that paint what is 'real' in people's minds. Hence, applying this understanding of discourse in the case of how the general public understand poverty, it is arguably the social discourse around poverty that plays an important role in shaping the socially constructed norms surrounding poverty and judgments about people in poverty.

Rationale for Choosing 'Film' for Analysis

In order to investigate the social-cultural construction of the shaming discourse of poverty, various cultural institutions and media were considered for analysis. Those cultural texts included literature, news media sources, commercial advertisements, TV drama, films, and so forth. In assessing the most appropriate medium as the object of study, three selection criteria were applied: the medium of choice had to have a wide-ranging coverage of the general public in terms of access to the cultural medium (exposure to mass public), being sufficiently in touch with the popular social worldviews shared in the society, and richness of the content

for analysis for studying poverty-related shame. The reasons for turning down other media, such as news media for example, was that, while news media was a notably significant social medium that produced and shaped the important political or economic discourses in relation to poverty, news content was not entirely suitable for attaining relevant content materials that dealt with various aspects of poverty, and that were rich in their breadth and depth to explore the various non-material implications of poverty. It was also too large in the potential volume to sample from, as this study required to cover at least 40 years of timespan. Literature, on the other hand, did not meet the criteria of influential exposure to the public who access the medium, which could be particular to the context of South Korea where the size of the readership has decreased substantially over the years and off-line bookstores have considerably decreased in number.

The wide range of viewers in terms of both age and numbers of Korean films in South Korea and their cultural power and influence as a social medium, as will be discussed below, have arguably far exceeded that of literary works (Weekly Gonggam, 2006). Also, another benefit of analysing films over novels was that film-making involves a critical mechanism of raising the financial budget, which potentially leads to story-telling that 'satisfies a much larger community' (Sutherland and Fetley, 2010: 8), whereas novels are allowed more autonomy to be controversial and unique as a cultural text. This implies that the contents of films are not only cultural texts that influence the public but also hold universality that better accords with general public sentiments and popular beliefs, which was an important factor in this study. Lastly, the most equivalent option to films was TV dramas in South Korea, as they satisfied all three of the selection criteria and were indeed a powerful medium with high access and richness in content. Yet the volume was unrealistically excessive to adequately sample, as each sample drama consisted of twenty or more episodes (up to more than a hundred

sometimes), whereas films were two to three hours long maximum for each sample, which also allowed for a chronological sampling of choosing films from different years over an extended period of time, as desired in this research.

Considering the value and implications of the social medium of 'film' itself, film has already been recognized as one of the most socially significant innovations of the twentieth century (Tudor, 1974: 13), and its social impact as having a wide reach not only in terms of the cultural aspects of society but also in the political arena. In 1922, Lenin made his famous statement that 'the cinema is the most important of all the arts', addressing the 'medium's potential for creating change' (Tudor, 1974: 13). Turning to more current assessments of the importance of film, Sutherland and Fetley state that 'movies are social experiences' and that films 'speak' to us and films need to be taken as a 'text,' just as literary works were the text that people relied on for 'not only telling a story, but providing moral instruction, social observation, social context, and political judgment' (2010: 7). Films not only reflect the culture, but also constitute it, as we 'see our society through film and we see film through the prism of our social norms, values, and institutions' (Sutherland and Fetley, 2010: 8).

Specifically, in the case of South Korea, the advent of films as a popular cultural medium and its considerable social presence date back to a century ago, in 1909. Since then, the history of film making in Korea has aged together with its national history. The Korean film industry especially saw a significant growth at the beginning of the twenty-first century, which was fuelled by the expansion of the economy that subsequently led to expansion in the size of the film industry. By the year 2004, Korean films such as *Sil-Mi-Do* and *Brotherhood* pulled in over ten million people in terms of the viewership, which amounts to over one quarter of the entire population at the time. In comparison to Hollywood movies, the proportion of Korean films in the Korean film industry was reported to have reached 74.1% in 2006 (Weekly

Gonggam, 2006). Watching a Korean film has undoubtedly become one of the most important cultural practices in South Korea that is widely shared by the general public of all age groups. In other words, popular films have become one of the most influential socio-cultural institutions in Korea, which was a critical condition to meet for the purpose of this study that aims to reveal the dominant social discourse shaped by influential cultural institutions of South Korea.

4. 3. 2 Theoretical Approach to Film Analysis

While the film analysis method has a novelty within social policy and poverty research, the analysis of cultural texts is not a new method in other fields of study. Also, different disciplines have had different perspectives and approaches towards film (Sutherland and Fetley, 2010: 4). In anthropology, for instance, film is often viewed as a window onto culture at particular points in time, whereas in the history department, film would be understood as an artefact of historical significance, being questioned in terms of its accuracy, authenticity and interpretation. In the case of a film studies class, the main focus of study would be issues such as film production, cinematography, mise-en-scène, film genres, film history and film theory (2010: 4).

The chosen approach for this research is closest to the sociology of film approach that focuses on 'the manner in which films both reflect and create culture' (Sutherland and Fetley, 2010: 4). This approach is two-fold, in that it understands stories told through film as a portrayal of the socio-cultural reality, and also sees film as an active mass medium shaping dominant social beliefs, in Sutherland and Fetley's term a 'social disseminator of cultural ideas' (2010: 4). This perspective is very much in line with how the concept of discourse is applied in the conceptual framework of this thesis. That is, while the dominant socio-cultural discourse is made up of realities of the relevant social context, it is also the shaper of the

social world and the way people view reality (Wood and Kroger, 2000: 3). This conceptual understanding further implies that applying a sociological approach to film enables one to include an 'awareness of the economic, political, and social forces at the point in history when a particular film or set of films is produced' (Sutherland and Fetley, 2010: 6), providing us with 'access to multiple socio-historical contexts' (2010: 7). This is a significant benefit for the purpose of this study, for the study aims to look into poverty discourse that is in a constant social process of being produced and is changing over time, which requires a contextualized analysis of social discourse. The sociological approach to film precisely facilitates that by enabling the location of the main themes and storyline of the film within a specific spatial and historical point in time.

Another possible choice of method was content analysis. Yet, rather than questioning the underlying value framework, ideologies, or intentions of the text, the method had its main benefit in understanding the main message of the object of analysis as it is intended to be communicated, focusing on the content and context of the analysed documents (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003: 200). On the other hand, discourse analysis was 'concerned with the way knowledge is produced within a particular discourse … through the adoption of implicit theories in order to make sense of social action (for example, poverty, power, gender relations)' (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003: 200). Discourse analysis also had the benefit of being able to further question the intentions behind the produced discourses, and 'what is going on in an interaction in terms of performances, linguistic styles, rhetorical devices and ways in which talk and text set out to convince and compete with alternative accounts' (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003: 201).

The overarching theoretical concern of the sociological approach to film is the social construction of reality, framing questions around 'How does the language of film produce

different meanings? How is a group presented to us and does this change over time – through repetition of images in our culture?' (Sutherland and Fetley, 2010: 9). The underlying assumption here is the 'socializing effects of film' (Sutherland and Fetley, 2010: 9) that film as a cultural institution contributes to forming social discourse about reality, and about 'poverty' in particular in the case of this thesis. With this in mind, the research focused on how the imageries and narratives of the films have been producing certain meaning-makings of poverty and the social group of people living in poverty.

There are different theoretical perspectives available within the sociological approach towards film, based upon the types of research questions posed (Sutherland and Fetley, 2010: 11). Some of the main theoretical branches include *symbolic interactionism,* the *constructionist tradition* and the *conflict perspective*. As the conflict perspective was more concerned with power relations, such as political power, patriarchy, or racial dominance, it was less relevant to the interest of this research. The symbolic interactionism and constructionist traditions were closer to the broad theoretical framework of the thesis. They view reality as being determined by 'the context in which they are practised' (O'Brien, 2006: 9), and that it is the 'values, norms, and ideologies of a culture that inform what is "real"' (Sutherland and Fetley, 2010: 11), and that help people to interpret and make social meanings out of the reality. Whether or not what is told through a film is true does not matter in this kind of approach, as the 'mediated images and information become part of the material that supports or contradicts our notions of what is "real" in the social world' (Sutherland and Fetley, 2010: 11). In other words, film was seen here as reflecting a recurrent process of some sort in the society, indicating and shaping the public perceptions of the issue of poverty, rather than being the ultimate root origin of shame associated with poverty.

4. 3. 3 Data Collection & Analysis

Once the methodological approach was decided upon, the next step was to establish the logistics of undertaking the data collection and the analysis.

4. 3. 3 - 1 Method of Data Collection

Sampling Strategies

The first step in the data collection was determining a sampling framework to choose adequate films to sample for analysis. The sampling strategy included two main selection criteria: first, the film had to be portraying or dealing with the issue of poverty and carry rich enough material for a quality analysis, and secondly, the sample had to have had a good exposure to the general public, having had a significant number of viewers to qualify as a cultural discourse of influence that year. When applying the former criterion regarding the adequacy of the film's thematic relevance, the synopses of potential films were reviewed in terms of their storyline, characters, and so on, making sure poverty was a significant enough factor in the film. The latter criterion in terms of the film's exposure was evaluated by the annual ranking of the film regarding the number of viewers, which is officially published by the Korean Film Archive for the films released each year. The majority of the sampled films were ranked within the top ten most watched films of the year, and poverty was a significant theme in the films in various ways depending on the time periods in which they were made and on the individuality of each film.

Timeframe of Sampling

With regard to the timeframe of the film samples, the chosen period of study was between the 1970s and the 2010s. The rationale behind choosing an extended time period which also covered the past was to see whether and if so how the nature of the poverty and shame

discourse varied over time and in the changing social environment. Sampling films for analysis up to the most recent year was certainly necessary; hence it was mainly a matter of deciding how far back to go to analyse the film discourse. As South Korea experienced the Korean War in the early 1950s (1950-1953), society was very unsettled, with widespread abject poverty until socio-economic development really began to accelerate in the 1960s. In the late 1960s came the age of extremely rapid social and economic development until the late 1990s, the period called 'the Miracle of the Han River'. This particular timeframe for study was also relevant for the purpose of this research due to the rapid developmental change that the society underwent during this period. Furthermore, the official record of the annual ranking of film viewers dates back only as far as the mid-1970s. For these reasons, the timeframe was chosen to cover the developmental era from the mid-1970s until the most recent year at the point of fieldwork, which was undertaken in the Spring of 2011, hence the period covered for sampling was up to 2010.

Undertaking Sampling

The first step in undertaking sampling was to pull out the annual top forty films that had been released and gained popularity from the mid-1970s to the year 2010. This was to find the films that met the selection criteria (that targeted films with a good exposure rate and popularity in the year they were released). The availability of the official annual film ranking based on popularity in the cinema dated from the year 1975, so the total timespan of sampling had to be undertaken from 1975 to 2010 for systematic consistency in sampling. This first round of sampling added up to around 1600 synopses altogether to consider. Next, in reviewing the synopses and undertaking the second round of sampling, I was looking mainly at the relevance of the content of the film to my topical interest (i.e. in relation to the other selection criterion).

Additionally, the annual trends in the themes and genres featured in the films were also noted as part of the discourse analysis on how the issue of poverty had been dealt with, which will be discussed when reporting on the actual findings in later chapters. There were some exceptional years when there was no relevant film to sample, during the mid-1980s and some years in the mid-90s. The reason was that most of the cinematic themes of the popular films during those years were about the rise of the middle class, rather than poverty per se, reflecting closely the social climate and context of the time. Yet in most years, between one and three films appeared to meet the sampling criteria, adding up to around 145 films.

After going through a final round of sampling, looking more closely at each of the films to choose those that were not only popular films but also had sufficient depiction of poverty as a source of shaping its poverty discourse, the final number of the films sampled for analysis was 30 films altogether (with one year representing two films, the year 2002, for both films were of equal value for analysis and would potentially give additional variation or more breadth in the year). The list of the final sample films is provided in Appendix 1. As most years had one or two films that were relevant for poverty discourse analysis, it could be said that the majority of relevant films during the period 1975-2010 were included in the analysis of this study.

Once the sampling was completed, the next step was to locate the actual films to watch for analysis. Some of the films were found available online to purchase for download, but the bulk of the older films were found only at the Film Library of the official organization of the Korean Film Archive, mostly in VHS formats. The VHS videos were only available to be watched within the library's individual multimedia desk spots, so about half of the analysis covering the period between the mid-70s and the early 90s was undertaken at the Archive.

Before reporting on the steps undertaken in data collection, it may be helpful to mention the difficulty of drawing a clear distinction between the collected data and the analysis itself. In one sense this is characteristic of a qualitative method as it involves a constant and continuous analytical process; yet this was particularly so for the film analysis method in that there were multiple rounds and layers of data extraction process from the visual text of the cultural medium of films rather than a clearly separable stage of collecting verbal data from its analysis. When a film was being watched for the first time in the initial data collection phase, the first round of analysis was already taking place in terms of the overall understanding of the film in its characters, plots, mise-en-scène, what to record and so on. Hence, the procedures of data collection is discussed in conjunction with the method of analysis in the following section.

4. 3. 3 - 2 Method of Analysis

Analytical Procedure

After undertaking a literature review on different ways of undertaking sociological film analysis, Denzin's five-step procedure for analyzing films (1989) was taken on board as an initial point of reference which was customized to accommodate to the research purpose of this study. Denzin's film analysis method was a five-step procedure for a film analysis, the gist of which was as follows:

① Select a film and view it multiple times
② Outline the narrative themes of the film
③ Conduct a realist reading of the hegemonic interpretations of the text and dominant ideological meanings
④ Develop a more critical reading of the text to question the hegemony underneath
⑤ Compare it with the previous realist reading of the text

What was taken from Denzin's model was its basic analytical framework which was largely two-fold. The primary step was a content analysis of film using a realist approach, paying attention to what is presented in the film simply as it is. Then, a more critical analysis followed to uncover and question what kinds of discourses and various social connotations were embedded in the film's portrayal of reality, rather than taking them for granted as in the previous realist reading.

Applying the above formula to my study, the first step of the analysis was to watch the film multiple times. Once embarking on the actual practice of the analysis, I quickly learned that the first round of watching for analysis had to be done as an ordinary audience in attitude. This was because the critical distancing attitude as a researcher, giving attention to various elements of the film, worked as a hindrance to following the general narrative flow and to picking up on the various nuances that the film was projecting. Thus the first round of watching always had to be done much more naturally, and once the general storyline and the main features of the film were grasped, more intentional analytical watching could follow. By the second or third round of watching, the first level of analysis was undertaken complying with the second step of Denzin's method: a realist reading of the general content of the film. It was in the third or fourth round of watching when the process began for tracing and recording directly how poverty was represented via various cinematic elements in the film. This was the analytical level when the most interesting findings began to surface. In undertaking this stage of the analysis, a list of analytical themes and items was compiled that gave a guideline to maintain a common basis for a subsequent comparative synthesis across the thirty different films. The list of analytical items included five different categories:

A. Portrayal of poverty
B. Portrayal of wealth

C. Portrayal of the relationship between poverty and wealth
   (or between people in poverty and those who were not)
D. Manifestations of poverty-related shame
E. Prominent social norms, values, ideologies, themes in the film

Each of the categories carried several sub-elements specified for analysis. Under the first category of 'Portrayal of poverty', the analytical themes included: general mise-en-scène and signifiers of poverty; reasons for poverty; attributes and impact of living in poverty; characteristic features of the people in poverty (age, gender, family background, neighbourhood, occupations, characters and behaviours, hopes, pursuits and desires, self-evaluative descriptions, and what it meant to live in poverty); means of escaping poverty; and coping with poverty (including both social support and individual means). Any other relevant features were also noted during the analytical process, which had variations across the films. The second category on the portrayal of wealth also included the above items in parallel, only in relation to wealth rather than poverty, such as the reason for wealth, traits of the people with wealth, their main pursuits and so on. The reason behind including the filmic portrayals of wealth in the analysis was that the cultural connotations of money and material possessions were also indicative of and a relevant component for drawing out a comprehensive picture of poverty discourse.

In the third thematic category, which was about the relational nature that was portrayed between people in poverty and those with wealth, the interactions and relationships between the two groups were analysed, including how each group was being treated by other people around them and for what reasons. All the categories were interrelated in weaving together the poverty-shame nexus. The third theme on the relational nature between poverty and wealth was also very relevant in analysing the next (fourth) theme on the manifestations of

shame, illustrating the relational nature of shame in particular, which will be discussed in more depth in the actual report of the analysis.

The fourth category, on the manifestations of poverty-related shame, dealt with more straightforward moments of shame surfacing with regard to poverty, recording what the main sources of shame were (not just regarding poverty-related shame, but what other sources of shame were featured and on what grounds); direct and indirect acts of shaming poverty and the rationale behind them; how people coped with or reacted to the shame associated with poverty (defence mechanisms or counter-active discourse in place); and finally whether there were instances when there were no or less shame associated with poverty and, if so, why.

In probing poverty discourse and the nature and level of shame associated with it, the final analytical category reviewing the worldview featured in the films was also very important to take into consideration. This was noting what kinds of social norms, values, and themes were prominent and presented as taken for granted within the narrative world, such as the moral judgements being passed, and various impressions and evaluative descriptions being made in the film regarding the meaning of happiness, money, and success in people's lives.

Furthermore, what was taken into consideration was the historical contextualization of the film contents being analysed. This process is described as gaining a 'thick description' in the literature that sees the simplest act as being able to mean different things depending on the social and cultural contexts, reading the text of the film at 'multiple levels attending to implied as well as explicit content' (Sutherland and Fetley, 2010: 12-13). As film was understood in this study as a social institution that belongs to a specific social context, as well as the poverty discourse itself, social and historical contextualization was a significant part of the analysis. Shiel (2001) also stresses the fact that the sociological viewing, analysis, and

interpretation of film require an understanding of the interrelatedness between historical context, social structure, and individual experience.

The nature of the historical contextualization undertaken in this research is a sociological investigation that differs from that of the history discipline. That is, while history 'seeks to reproduce and interpret concrete events as they actually occurred in time and space', sociology 'seeks to arrive at natural laws and generalizations in regard to human nature and society, irrespective of time and place… [and] seeks to explain, on the basis of other instances, the nature of the *process* involved' [present writer's emphasis] (Park and Burgess, 1921, as cited in Tuchman, 1994).

In this regard, the film analysis data were analysed also with reference to the historical framework gained from the supplementary documentary analysis of the modern history of Korea based on secondary historical sources. For example, often the characters themselves were reflections of the stereotypical norms of the social structures and processes of the time – such as female and male protagonists in the 1970s and 1980s films featured as factory workers migrating from the countryside that closely reflected the industrialization and urbanization that took place at the time. Furthermore, the main sources of shame also differed across time, as well as the level of shame attached to poverty. Additionally, critical thought was given as to what was comparatively present, absent, or seemingly excluded in the narrative and the scenes of the films in different historical periods.

Language Issues

The language of all the sampled films was Korean. The analysis was mostly conducted in Korean except when important concepts emerged, which were noted in both Korean and English to support the later process of the analysis. The use of two languages during the

analytical process, which was composed mainly of note-taking, did not pose a substantial enough an issue or a major challenge both due to the equivalent concepts that were usually identifiable in both languages, and also for the fact the researcher was accustomed to both languages. Yet some of the more specific cultural customs or emotional expressions in the Korean language required more caution in the analysis and the final translation process, which was supported by giving further explanations in the chapter with footnotes to clarify the cultural and linguistic nuances as necessary. This issue applied to analysing the interview data as well, discussed next, for which both languages were used in the analytical process as best suited to the main purpose of keeping the original nuances of the findings and ideas. The translation of the film dialogues took place in the final phase of drafting the findings. In drafting the analysis chapter, the analysis was written up in English, with minor translations required when using the analysis notes, which the researcher undertook herself.

4. 4 In-Depth Interview

Before discussing the rationale and the thought process that went into choosing in-depth interview as a research method in this research, I want to remind the reader of the specific research topics that were to be explored using this method. The topics included the presence of shame related to poverty (its manifestations and sources, and the arenas of shame), the impact of shame on people and their lives, dominant emotional responses and coping mechanisms (also, whether there were cases of less or no shame associated with poverty, and if so, why), and whether there were any differences across different gender, age groups, and recipient and non-recipient groups of the social assistance programme for poverty (the NBLSS). Also, this study aspired to explore the causal factors and/or mechanisms behind the

poverty and shame dynamics, i.e. why and how people were experiencing shame with regard to living in poverty.

4. 4. 1 Rationale for Choosing this Method

The main purpose behind conducting in-depth interviews for studying the shame of poverty was to generate substantially rich and comprehensive data that would enable investigations on both a descriptive and an analytical level, as this topic was at an early stage of research in the literature. There had been very little previous empirical research published on shame in relation to poverty, leaving aside studies of the emotional aspects of poverty, or the psychology of shame itself. As such, there were neither existing theories to test or work with to improve, nor reliable standardized tools from the psychology discipline to employ in capturing or measuring the emotion of shame. In this regard, the method had to enable the investigator to conduct a good descriptive first-hand investigation to study how and why shame was being experienced by people in poverty, and capture the various manifestations related to shame. As Lee, Ahn and Park claimed (2009: 31), quantitative methods were not suitable for studying social-psychological aspects of poverty, for they were restricted in their realm of research to testing presupposed causal hypotheses and found it difficult to take into account various other factors that also came into play. Hence, qualitative rather than quantitative methods were deemed appropriate, as open-ended inquiry was a well-known strength of the qualitative approach that facilitated the gathering of rich descriptive and analytical data of a social phenomenon and its processes.

Another reason for employing the in-depth interview method was that the method carried with it a sense of flexibility and control over the process of the data collection for the investigator to delve in deeper and to extend the scope of research as necessary. This was an asset that could enable not only an extensive descriptive investigation, but also a deep

investigation that was necessary for looking into why shame was being experienced in poverty. According to Johnson (2002: 104), ‘Typically, researchers who conduct in-depth interviews are looking for patterns that emerge from the “thick descriptions” of social life recounted by their participants. In this sense, qualitative interviews are designed to get at “deep” information or knowledge’ (as cited in Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011: 95). Moreover, this flexibility and extra room to undertake deeper investigation were essential in dealing with the introverted nature of shame. By its nature, shame does not easily reveal itself to others as a self-expressive emotion, and sometimes it does not even surface on the conscious level of the person bearing the emotion. As Miller pointed out, ‘Shame is avoided in the "real" world as well. In fact, most of us feel shame about feeling shame’ (2006: 1). As an illustration, in Gray’s (2005) analysis of the behaviours of female respondents in receipt of social welfare for low-income families, it was found that people tried to keep it a secret to even close people around that they were welfare recipients, implying ‘the level of shame these women felt was fairly high’ (2005: 431). Thus, while the research aim was to find out how people experienced and felt about shame in relation to poverty, the introverted nature of shame posed serious challenges in actually getting at shame during the data collection in undertaking the fieldwork.

The challenges were not only that the participants may avoid sharing their genuine experience of shame regarding poverty, but also that there were potential ethical issues involved in possible aggravation of their emotions in getting them to acknowledge their own shame by bringing up stories and memories of shameful experiences. (The ethical side of undertaking the interviews will be discussed in the data collection method section below.) In order to bring the hidden emotion to the surface and take into account all relevant emotional disclosure of shame, collecting ‘thick descriptions’ of social life recounted by the respondents

(Johnson, 2002: 104) with an open-ended approach was very important. ‘In a free-form or open-ended interview, the respondent is able to tell us what happened in her life at the time... In this way, we see her lived reality as if we are there with her as she is going through this life experience’ (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011: 94). In this regard, interviews were to be semi-structured to maintain the open-endedness in the scope of interview topics, with an overarching awareness of the main research interests.

Furthermore, in terms of the more specific format of the interviews, the selected approach to in-depth interviews was a minimally structured open-ended inquiry, inviting people to describe their own account of their lives in poverty. Then I observed whether shame was part of their experience of living in poverty, and when it emerged of their volition, I probed with follow-up questions to draw out data that were as detailed as possible with regard to shame, taking care to protect the participants from any kind of potential emotional aggression or discomfort. The indirect and open-ended nature of the interview was also accommodating for the ethical requirements of this research, which were to never deliberately mention or ask about shame, to protect the participants from the potential shaming effect of those lines of inquiry. Moreover, it reflected the original intent of the research to approach poverty as a human experience and understand its implications for people’s actual experience of poverty, which the conventional numerical and material accounts of poverty were inadequate to address in real terms – and with their predominantly individualistic accounts of poverty, they would find it very difficult to collect data in relation to the social factors shaping people’s shame.

For the above reasons, a qualitative method was deemed appropriate quite early on in choosing the research method. Yet quantitative methods were considered nevertheless, looking to their capacity to materialize aspects of the human emotions in more tangible

quantifiable terms and to see whether there were useful means available in the literature specifically for studying shame, as it was known to be particularly difficult to capture among the human emotions. Yet, as shame research was also a relatively new field within psychology, the means devised to date to measure shame were also not very extensive or seemingly effective. Reyles commented on this lack of means to capture shame in the literature: 'The question of how to quantitatively measure shame … has posed a challenge to psychologists and psychiatrists for many years. Mainly through the use of psychometric tests, several researchers have proposed measures that attempt to capture aspects of shame through the use of related adjectives, statements and situations that would normally trigger the emotion' (2007: 7). Tangney and Dearing (2002) stated that the most developed and widely used measures of shame used in psychology tend to focus on assessing dispositions (e.g. shame proneness) rather than emotional states (shame in a particular moment).[25] The existing measures were mostly the kinds that were narrow in view of the scope of potential sources of shame, and again very much based on individualistic assumptions in the approach to shame. There had been attempts to understand shame via indirect but possibly related factors, such as in Reyles's (2007) proposal of an indicator to measure shame[26] by assessing values that affect interactions among individuals (Reyles, 2007: 11). While these kinds of quantitative measures may be informative with regard to the narrow focus and testing of a clear set of pre-determined hypotheses, they would not be likely to disclose the various manifestations and potential sources of shame, even leaving aside what sorts of working mechanisms might underlie the experience of shame in relation to a particular factor such as poverty. What was

[25] For example, the Internalized Shame Scheme (ISS) that was designed by Cooke, Personal Feelings Questionnaire-2 (PFQ2), the Test of Self-Conscious Affect-2 (TOSCA-2), the Experience of Shame Scale (ESS), Adapted Shame and Guilt Scale (ASGS), as quoted in Reyles (2007: 9).

[26] In the case of the concerned paper, it was to measure shame associated with people living with HIV/AIDS.

missing was that there was not enough qualitative work undertaken that provides a good base literature for quantitative research to come up with possible variables to measure shame with an objective test (with multiple choices, for instance).

4. 4. 2 Data Collection & Analysis

4. 4. 2 - 1 Method of Data Collection

Sampling Framework

All the respondents were sampled from the capital city of Seoul, which was both the central hub of the country's dynamic development history and also where roughly one fifth of the national population resided. Within Seoul, several boroughs were taken into consideration, such as No-Won, Kang-Seo, Gang-Buk, or Gang-Nam, for their higher concentration of poverty and welfare recipients. The initial choice was the No-Won area with its highest level of concentrated poverty and recipients of NBLSS residing in the area. However, during the recruitment process, the welfare officials who provided support with recruiting the respondents suggested Gang-Buk as the area in which they could best cooperate with the recruitment. Gang-Buk was also a suitable region of choice as it was the second poorest neighbourhood within the capital city of Seoul, situated right next to No-Won. The initially planned sampling size was between 30 and 35 respondents.

The sampling criteria carried mainly three components: age, gender, and the official In-poverty group in receipt of the social assistance and non take-up in-poverty group. As a whole, there were also two main age groups included for comparison including those in their 40s and in their 60s, with 15 respondents in each group. The reason for choosing this age group was to compare the different generational experience of poverty; those who experienced poverty in the 1970s and 1980s (who were currently in their 60s at the time of

conducting the fieldwork), compared against those who experienced it more recently in the 2000s and 2010s (who were currently in their 40s at the time of the fieldwork). Equally, half of each age group comprised of those receiving *National Basic Living Security Scheme* with an In-poverty (Soo-Geup) status and the other half who did not but received some residual benefits as the Near-poverty (Cha-Sang-Wee) status[27], and each sub-group was planned to have both genders equally represented. This was to make sure that the gender representation would not be lop-sided and bias the result. Consequently, 31 respondents were recruited with the help of several local welfare officials administering the NBLSS in the Gang-Buk region.

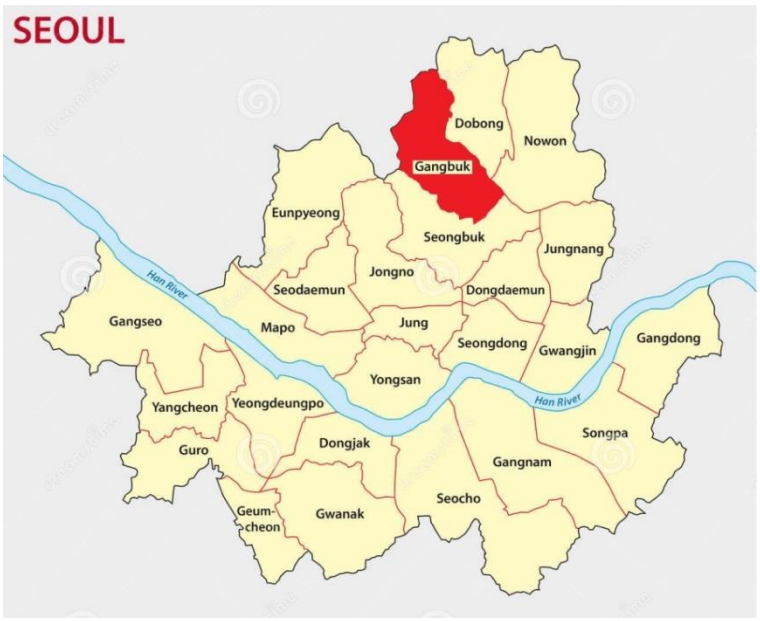


Figure 4. 1 Map of Seoul (Lesniewski, 2016) with an emphasis (red-colouring) added to the location of the interview fieldwork sites

In summary, this strategy produced 4 sub-groups in each of the two age groups, creating 8 subgroups in total. Below is the table summarizing the sampling criteria and the composition of the sub-groups.

[27] The Near-poverty group was suggested for this criterion by the welfare official, who supported with recruitment, as most of them were the non-take up in-poverty group in reality (in relation to the living expenses benefit which was the core benefit and the reason for applying for the NBLSS social assistance).

Table 4. 1 Sampling Framework

Total Number of Interviewees: **31 people**		
Sampling Criteria • All respondents' financial state should be either living below (in-poverty) or adjacent to (near-poverty) the official national poverty line set by the South Korean government • All respondents should reside in the Gang-Buk Gu region in the capital city of Seoul • Equal representation of **age, gender,** and **social assistance recipient status** of either Soo-Geup (In-poverty) or Cha-Sang-Wee (Near-poverty) benefits		
Age: 2 groups (40s & 60s)	**Gender**: 2 groups (Female & Male)	**Recipient Status**: 2 groups (Soo-Geup & Cha-Sang-Wee)

Table 4. 2 Composition of the sub-groups within the sampling framework

In-Poverty Groups
Group A : Soo-Geup Status, 40s, Female
Group B : Soo-Geup Status, 40s, Male
Group C : Soo-Geup Status, 60s, Female
Group D : Soo-Geup Status, 60s, Male
Near-Poor Groups
Group E : Cha-Sang-Wee Status, 40s, Female
Group F : Cha-Sang-Wee Status, 40s, Male
Group G : Cha-Sang-Wee Status, 60s, Female
Group H : Cha-Sang-Wee Status, 60s, Male

Participant Recruitment Process

There were a number of options I considered as the possible routes by which to undertake recruitment of interview participants, such as local NGOs, welfare organizations, and local welfare offices that were working in the front line of the delivery system of welfare provisions and services regarding poverty. It was found challenging at first to find access to the desired sampling group, due to the formal prohibitions in place for protecting personal

information from being shared without consent. With the advantage of having a personal contact with an ex-official who used to work in the South Korean government's Ministry of Health and Welfare, I was able to be get in touch with a current civil servant at the Ministry, who then supported me in arranging the local level contacts with the welfare officials working in the local Dong offices (where the welfare service is provided on the ground). The local level officials explicitly requested that the interview provides a financial gift of some sort in order to aid their recruitment of people, who they said were generally at work (and thus needing a compensation for taking part in the interview) or would find the incentive helpful and inviting to take part in what may come across as an unusual occasion. It was made sure that the financial incentive would not be too much to prevent it from functioning as a means of forced participation, or too little so as to carry no meaning for both the recruiting official and the potential participants. A gift voucher was prepared, as a result, that could be used in supermarkets and various retail shops, the amount of which was equivalent to 30 pounds sterling in the UK.

The main challenge in the recruitment process of sampling was attaining an equal gender proportion. It was male participants who were most difficult to recruit, and the reasons given by the welfare officials who tried multiple times with little success to recruit more men were that males tended to be more sensitive to exposing their living situation in poverty and found it more difficult to open up and make conversation with strangers about their private life. This challenge in itself held implications for the gendered nature of shame in relation to poverty. Investigating in-depth into the possible gender differences in experiencing poverty-related shame in this study was limited to a certain extent, as the main focus of the inquiry was not delving into the gendered aspect of the issue, although there was an aim of collecting unbiased data in terms of gender via an equal gender representation. In the event, the

recruited participants were relatively female heavy due to the difficulty in recruiting male participants, with 8 males against 23 females.

The Interview Process at the Fieldwork Site

While all the respondents were living on low incomes, they could be divided into two major official categories according to their welfare recipient status. Members of the first group, the 'Soo-Geup' group, were those in the official in-poverty group, who were in full receipt of the benefits that came with the in-poverty social assistance recipient status of the National Basic Living Security Scheme (NBLSS). The second group, 'Cha-Sang-Wee', were the near-poverty group in official terms, who lived on an income that was below 120% of the official minimum cost of living line. However, as one of the welfare officials who helped me with the recruitment process explained to me, they were unofficially a category for a mixture of different benefit recipient groups of those who were not eligible for NBLSS for various reasons but had been given access to some of the means-tested benefits to support either disability, old age, or childcare for single-parent households. The Near-poverty (Cha-Sang-Wee) group was mainly comprised of various supplementary welfare recipient groups, rather than selected solely based on economic means-testing; including beneficiaries from single-parent households, more elderly people, and those who received disability benefits.

The interviews with 31 individuals (all from different households) were conducted in October 2011, together with 2 unplanned expert interviews of the welfare officials: one on the government ministry level (before the fieldwork, in May 2011) and the other on the local borough office level (after the fieldwork, in October 2011). Due to the logistical issue of finishing the film analysis first (between May and July 2011, at the film archive library) before ethical approval arrived for the interviews (at the end of July 2011) and then moving on to begin recruitment for the interviews, the interviews were undertaken over a relatively

compressed period of time. Including a couple of days' break after each period of several days of interviewing, all of the interviews were undertaken during two weeks in total. A sufficient amount of time was spent developing a rapport, discussing their current everyday lives, as well as their life histories (and slightly longer in case of the older age group with no particular difference in the overall approach, with an extra set of questions regarding the past times around the 1970s and 1980s). This was intended to get a fuller picture and understanding of their emotional experience and the relevant history behind it. The interviews were quite lengthy as a result, with each one lasting between two and three hours on average, with some shorter ones that lasted an hour and a half. This was not necessarily intended; however, it naturally unfolded that way not only in order to cover all the topic guide material but also in an effort to build sufficient rapport and trust for the interviewees to feel comfortable and confident enough to begin sharing their personal stories. It was found beneficial to undertake longer interviews as the level of depth and richness of the content was further enhanced for longer interviews compared to shorter ones.

Due to the nature of the research subject – investigating people's emotional experiences – the qualitative data included not only verbal accounts that were collected with a voice recorder but also non-verbal cues, subtle but meaningful nuances, body language, and the conversational atmosphere (including pauses and silences) that were observable by the interviewer. Quick notes were made after conducting each interview in the form of a 'fieldwork journal', in which these non-verbal observational data were recorded, as well as other notable information on both the specific interviewee and what had been learned during the interviews in relation to the research questions.[28] Such note-taking was a regular habit

[28] The use of a journal began from the very inception of the fieldwork period, including the fieldwork for conducting the film analysis. Documentations of the logistical side of the fieldwork process were also valuable

whenever relevant points or ideas emerged during and after the fieldwork, and the analytical process of sorting out the rich qualitative findings and discovering significant themes, patterns, or interrelationships between data began from the fieldwork period. The fieldwork journal, together with multiple volumes of notebooks that recorded relevant ideas, were used as supplementary materials to the verbal data (transcripts) during the data analysis process and in writing up the empirical chapters.

Ethical Considerations

Due to the sensitive nature of the topic of shame, cautious planning was involved in preparing for the fieldwork which included: how to sensitively frame the title of the research at the fieldwork sites, as well as the interview questions; the nature of the incentives; and how to prepare for and ensure the interviewees' protection from harm during the interviews (Fontana and Frey, 1994: 372). All the interviews began with gaining 'informed consent' (Fontana and Frey, 1994: 372), with an explanation of the research (without explicitly mentioning the focus on shame for ethical purposes), followed by obtaining the consent for participation (officially through signing a consent form). After the interview was finished, the respondents were thanked for their participation with gift vouchers, which was also an element requested by the welfare officials in recruiting the participants, as mentioned above.

Whenever the issue of shame surfaced, the investigator exercised great care in terms of the wording used and formulation of follow-up questions, giving attention to whether the respondent was feeling safe and comfortable at all times from the beginning to the end of the

---

in writing up the final reports, e.g. information on the specific dates and sequence of when the initial contacts were attained for interview recruitment, the date of arrival of ethical approval for conducting interviews, preparation procedures for the interviews, fieldwork schedules, what was added in terms of practice during the fieldwork, etc.

interview. Quite often, the respondents broke down in tears while speaking about certain parts of their past experience and present financial circumstances, at which point the interview was halted and the interviewer focused on taking care of the interviewee. The word 'shame' was never brought up by the interviewer and neither was the topic of shame a direct question during the interview. This was a conscious decision for ethical reasons to ensure the protection of the interviewees' emotional well-being during the interview as declared and promised in the official CUREC-2 form prior to undertaking the fieldwork. Instead, the interviews were undertaken in such a way that the interviewees led the conversation once the rapport was established, and typically spontaneously introduced shame or shame-related concepts themselves as they reflected on their life experiences in poverty both past and present.

The quality of the lengthy interviews turned out to be rich and sufficient for answering all the research questions. It was, however, both physically and mentally demanding at times for the interviewer to undertake two or three interviews (which were lengthy in-depth interviews covering emotionally difficult stories) everyday back to back for several days in a row. In hindsight, I would have liked to be able to take more breaks in between the interviews, which would have been beneficial for my well-being as well as for keeping up an even better level of concentration throughout. Nevertheless, the steep learning curve and the power of encountering real-life accounts kept me going and enabled the completion of the fieldwork with rich data to analyse.

All the data produced, including the recorded electronic materials, transcripts, and the list of the participants' contact information, were kept in strict confidentiality to protect the participants' 'right to privacy' (Fontana and Frey, 1994: 372) and the contact details will be discarded in due course, soon after the degree is completed. None of the transcripts contains

real-life names (apart from the name of the researcher, when it was mentioned during the interviews).

4. 4. 2 - 2 Method of Analysis

The longer interview times resulted in much longer hours of the recorded mp3 files, adding up to roughly seventy hours in total. Hence, transcribing also became a lot more challenging in terms of conducting everything alone. I conducted the transcribing of twenty interviews myself, and the remaining ten were done by three students who were hired and trained with regard to the confidentiality of the content and transcribing of the interviews.

The process of qualitative data analysis involved multiple layers and levels of analysis until the final findings and arguments could be drawn out and compiled. Before undertaking the first round of coding, each of the transcripts was read and re-read to capture the broad themes (both major and minor) that were emerging, while simultaneously making notes to increase the understanding of the data to hand. Once the first few rounds of coding, which were done on the transcripts and notes, were completed, the main synthesizing coding system employed was the mapping method (Walker, 1985). The method takes big sheets of paper onto which the investigator places the main sensitizing conceptual ‘seeds’ in various special realms, to represent the relationships between the different conceptual seeds. Then each of the conceptual spaces grows into a mind-map like tree of ideas, with lines and arrows drawn to show the conceptual relationships that are found within the data. Some of the most interesting themes and findings surfaced in the process of reviewing and reflecting on the synthesis notes of the map analysis. Critically brainstorming the conceptual findings in a dialogue with peers or a third person was also one of the valuable means of undertaking the analysis.

In developing an overarching conceptual understanding of the interrelationship between poverty and shame based on the qualitative empirical data, there was a steady '"dialogue" (Ragin, 1987) [made] between ideas and evidence' (Huberman and Miles, 1994: 433) throughout the entire process of analysing the collected data. The resulting conceptual framework with a theoretical nature to it was a product of 'many levels of interpretation' (Van Maanen, 1988, as cited in Huberman and Miles, 1994: 434). It was further informed by the findings from the other two empirical investigations, as the overarching framework was developed after having completed all three parts of the empirical data analysis, and thus with a deeper understanding about the social level processes underpinning the psychological experience of shame in poverty. The main methodological strategies I had in mind while theorizing the conceptual construct and the relationship between poverty and shame were to look out for internal consistency across the disparate sets of data, whether the conceptual framework delivered a theoretically sound narrative that correctly reflected the overall findings of the research, and whether it adequately served the purpose of the research and answered the research questions.

4. 5 Social Policy Analysis

4. 5. 1 Rationale & Analytical Approach

The purpose of undertaking policy analysis was to investigate how the social assistance policy of South Korea currently played a role in the shame people experienced in poverty. Thus the focus of the investigation, among various other aspects of the policy, was on the implementation of the system with regard to 'what was actually happening in the process of implementation' (Spicker, 2006: 147). The specific areas of research included underlying policy discourses, design and structure, and its delivery system, all of which had the most

immediate impact on people who sought to apply for or were currently receiving the benefits. Moreover, a 'user perspective' approach (Spicker, 2006: 175-177) was incorporated to bring the central focus of this investigation to people's personal experience of poverty-related shame in the social assistance system. The historical changes in the policy over time through reforms, and the main political discourse that was instrumental to formulating the policy, were also included in the scope of the research. The approach was in essence a policy evaluation with a specific focus on its systemic characteristics with regard to the influencing, mitigating, or causing the shame of poverty for the potential or current social assistance recipients. Thus the more specific objects of investigation included its application criteria, formal steps and documentations required in the application assessment process, and the design of its delivery system.

In order to achieve this, the first analytical process was to undertake historical analysis of how policy framing in relation to poverty developed over the years, taking into account socio-political changes in society. Secondly, based on the key areas of problem identified within the interview data of people in poverty with regard to their experience of the NBLSS system, the structure of the NBLSS was reviewed regarding what was causing such shaming effect in its policy design. Then finally, the analysis focused on the ground level delivery system in relation to people's experiences of institutional shaming in its system.

4. 5. 2 Data Collection & Analysis

The materials for analysis included both primary and secondary materials regarding social assistance policy published up to 2011. The materials included the official legal documents outlining the policy aims, scope of eligibility, content of provision and other relevant regulations regarding the NBLSS (i.e. the National Basic Living Security Act); and other policy documents that outlined what the specific benefits entail, required application

materials, and more generic information about the social security system of South Korea. These materials were all available online in the official governmental websites (e.g. Ministry of Health and Welfare, The National Law Information Centre).

Second, officially published booklets and conference materials of the governmental Ministry of Health and Welfare were collected, which reported on the past and current state of the assistance system regarding its take-up rate and the demographic composition of the welfare recipients, including age, sex, employment status, household composition, type of housing, current income and assets, and duration of their receipt of social assistance.

Third, reviewed materials also included official local leaflets that were handed out to social assistance applicants, which specified the content of the benefits, and application sheets that included personal information columns (family relations, household conditions, monetary and non-monetary assets) and how to apply for the benefits. Secondary sources included previously reported academic policy analysis papers regarding the social assistance programme (its framework, design, delivery system, social workers' perceptions of welfare recipients, etc.) and the overall welfare system of South Korea. In addition, secondary scholarly sources (articles and books) were further reviewed to achieve a historical contextualization of the policy and the relevant socio-political background of the time.

The method of analysis was both documentary analysis of the collected materials, as well as social policy analysis of the social assistance system. Some minor discourse analysis was also undertaken in order to identify the main political discourse reflecting the policy framework of the time, underpinning the anti-poverty social policy and overall welfare system of South Korea.

Part I.

Psycho-Social Dynamics Underpinning the Shame of Poverty

Chapter 5. Socio-Historical Roots of the Psycho-Social Dynamics of Shame in Poverty

Chapter 6. Changing Cultural Discourse of Poverty in Popular Films & Emergence of Shame (1975 - 2010)

Chapter 5. Socio-Historical Roots of the Psycho-Social Dynamics of Shame in Poverty

5. 1 Introduction

In the case of South Korea, shame is yet to be empirically verified as a significant non-material dimension of poverty. Therefore, this chapter begins by verifying the significance of shame and the nature of its presence in the lives of people in poverty. This answers the first set of research questions (out of the four sets of questions set out in Chapter 1.2) on the 'Nature of the presence of shame in poverty': (i) whether shame is a significant aspect of living in poverty in South Korea, and (ii) on what grounds such shame is justified by people themselves living in poverty. After the basic nature of the presence of shame in poverty is identified, the second half of this chapter probes the second set of research questions regarding 'Social contextualization of the shame of poverty'[29]: (i) whether poverty has always been a shameful state to live in on a social level, and if poverty-shame association has changed over time (ii) whether there has been any social contextual background to such change. This second set of questions investigates into the reason(s) or the root cause(s) of the social level association between poverty and shame; and whether or not shame is an inherently absolute aspect of living in poverty.

The analyses in the first half of this chapter are based on the empirical findings from qualitative interview data analysis. In the second half of this chapter, for the purpose of discussing the key social level changes that underpinned the current shame of poverty,

[29] There was one more sub-question in the second set of research questions, regarding the historical trends of the dominant cultural discourse of poverty, which will be answered in Chapter 6.

empirical findings from the qualitative interview data are historically contextualized with regard to South Korea's major socio-historical shift from pre-modernity to modernity. The qualitative interview data analysis focuses on the generational difference in the lived experience of poverty between the older generation (who were in their 60s at the time of interview and had experienced the 1970s and 1980s in their early adulthood, when pre-modern Confucianistic norms still persisted in effect) and the younger generation (who were in their 40s and was mostly affected by the social changes that occurred in the late 1990s after the Asian financial crisis). The historical contextualization of the qualitative interview data is conducted by incorporating secondary historical sources in the analysis.

To note, with regard to the pre-modern time period, the Jo-Seon Dynasty period (which was the last pre-modern dynasty prior to the Japanese colonization period from 1910 to 1945) was included in the contextual framework to identify the distinctive characteristics of pre-modernity in South Korea. As for the modern time period, while historically it could be said to begin from around 1948 (when South Korea's democratic government was first established), socio-cultural influences of the pre-modern period were found to persist into the 1970s, albeit with a gradual decline. Thus, the older age group's experiences and accounts of the earlier social landscapes around the time of the 1970s are largely discussed under the section that discusses the characteristics of pre-modernity, and the younger generation's experience of the 1990s onwards is discussed under the modernity section.[30]

[30] The older age group (in their 60s at the time of the interview) was the generation that experienced the transitional period, when Korean society was moving out of the pre-modern Confucianist mind-set and on to modern democratic capitalism. Those times were characterized by rapid economic development (that took place from the 1970s until 1997), progressing side by side with traditional Confucianist values of family and community orientation from the pre-modern times still remaining influential in the socio-cultural context. On the other hand, the younger age group (in their 40s) was the subsequent generation that experienced the social climate of widespread individualism, a highly competitive social atmosphere, urban living environment, and capitalistic values, especially influenced by the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis.

5. 2 Nature of the Current Presence of Shame in Poverty

From the early stages of the empirical investigation conducted at the fieldwork sites, the findings were consistent in confirming that poverty-related shame was a generally shared experience among the interviewees across all the sampling sub-groups (both male and female, both age groups, and both the In- and Near-poverty groups). Shame was acutely felt by all the respondents in one way or another, albeit with some variations between the sub-groups which will be discussed in the following chapters.

However, the reason or the cause behind people's shame of poverty was not as straightforward as its apparent prevalence. While the reason for people's shame of poverty in previous literature has predominantly been attributed to the internalization of dominant poverty-shaming discourses, what was found instead was a noticeable dissonance between the widespread public discourse of poverty (and its basis for the shame of poverty) and the respondents' self-perceptions of their own lives in poverty. That is to say, the dominant explanation put forth in the literature for what may have caused people's shame in poverty was not applicable to the empirical findings of the South Korean case study. This section reports on such findings, beginning with a discussion on the basic nature of the presence of shame in poverty.

5. 2. 1 Muted Salience of Shame in Poverty

What was characteristic, first of all, of the presence of shame in poverty was that while it was the emotion that was least verbally expressed among all the negative emotions expressed in relation to poverty (e.g. anger, sadness, frustration), it seemed to cause the most emotional disturbance for the interviewees. While other emotional hardships regarding poverty were not treated as taboo to acknowledge and talk about, a particular kind of discomfort instantly

surfaced when people began to discuss their experiences of shame. The interviewees found it much more difficult to freely express and verbalize their feelings related to shame, as well as to simply acknowledge that they had felt ashamed. In other words, they were feeling ashamed about the shame itself, which corresponded with what has previously been documented on the nature of shame (Lewis, 1971; Scheff, 2000). Nonetheless, even when people's feelings of shame were not clearly verbalized, the unspoken shame was being displayed through various non-verbal yet physically visible cues (i.e. people's bodily gestures, facial expressions, or low-spirited tones of voice). It was observable that shame by its nature lay generally hidden and muted not only from other people but also from the people experiencing it themselves.

This hidden nature of shame seemed to be attributable to the disturbing nature of the emotion, which was demonstrated in various ways by the interviewees: in an atmosphere of struggle and hesitation, having abrupt moments of silence when talking about the emotion, distancing themselves from the topic, or sometimes even an active dismissal of the subject. For some, using the very word 'shame' seemed to cause discomfort even when they brought it up themselves. It was evident that shame was a deeply sensitive emotion for people, especially when it was their own. For most respondents, it was not until they had established sufficient rapport with the interviewer that they began to verbalize their experiences of shame with comparative ease. Nevertheless, the experience of shame was a recurrent topic that was commonly shared and brought up as a significant emotional hardship they faced in poverty. Many also spoke of their own observation of shame in others that they met in public work programmes, and indicated that shame was a prevalent sentiment amongst the people who were in receipt of the In-poverty benefits.

5. 2. 2 Internal Dissonance with the Poverty-Shaming Social Discourses

No-one had committed poverty[31]

While it was evident that the respondents generally felt ashamed of living in poverty, the reason or the basis for people's shame was not as straightforward. In order for one to feel personally ashamed of something, one ought to carry a significant sense of personal accountability for the object of shame, seeing it as representative of the self in one way or another; e.g. as a result of personal inadequacy, moral wrongdoing, or failure. However, none of the respondents believed or felt that they had brought about their current living conditions in poverty themselves. When tracing back to the time that each respondent first fell into a recognizable material state of impoverishment, a commonly cited catalyst was mass unemployment or bankruptcy of businesses (which was prevalent in South Korea after the structural reforms were implemented following the Asian financial crisis in 1997). Other more personal reasons included loss of the main income-earner of the household due to health problems, death, or divorce (which was often also said to have been sparked by the society's deteriorating economic conditions at that time). Otherwise, impoverished childhood backgrounds were quite a common cause for having had limited access to education that was seen as essential for getting into better-paying jobs.

Contrary to the popular social discourse of poverty that dictated that individuals themselves were responsible for their poverty, none of the interviewees' personal reasons for poverty was attributable to themselves. Rather, people's personal experiences suggested that their current

[31] This idea of 'not having committed poverty' arose out of my discussions with Juliette Picagne, my neighbour in 2016, while I was in the process of analysing the interview data. I acknowledge Juliette for coming up with the expression that I believe eloquently captured the dominant tone of the emotional language of the interviewees.

poverty was owing to wider economic conditions or individual level conditions that were beyond the realm of personal control or choice. There was also a clear sense of self-awareness among the respondents that they did not bring about their poverty themselves, and that they could not be entirely, if at all, responsible for their current state of poverty. Many of the respondents stated that 'I didn't want or choose this life' (60s Male, In-poverty, Single-person household). The respondents all wanted to improve their living conditions, reduce the level of hardships they were in, and improve the future prospects of their children if they could. It was evident that if people had had a choice, none of them would have chosen their current living conditions of hardship in poverty. What was puzzling was that they nonetheless felt personally responsible for and ashamed of their living conditions in poverty.

'I'm not a lazy person.'

Another widespread shaming discourse regarding poverty that was also shared among the respondents was attributing poverty to individual laziness or lack of work ethic – i.e. the idea that one should be able to escape poverty as long as one was diligent and hard-working enough. This discourse was applied by the respondents themselves to the unspecified 'others' also living in poverty. They stated that there must be people who lived in poverty due to their own laziness. What was noticeable was that none of the respondents who strongly subscribed to such discourse actually knew anyone who was a living example of the 'lazy-poor', nor did they find their own situations to be examples of this. When further asked about the source of their beliefs, they predominantly pointed to the media's depiction of people who were illegitimately receiving social assistance benefits while being physically capable of work, i.e. through lying about their actual living conditions. This particular discourse of poverty was closely related to the 'self-support via work' discourse that was found to have been a dominant cultural discourse in the popular films and in the political discourse underpinning

anti-poverty social assistance policy since the developmental period in the 1970s, which will be discussed in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

Yet again, such 'lazy-poor' discourse was perceived to be inapplicable to the respondents themselves, as they neither preferred their current state of unemployment nor found living as a social assistance recipient an easier life. It was unanimously expressed by all respondents (including the 60s age group) that they were not lacking the motivation or desire to work. It was commonly agreed that having stable work itself entailed positive values that were necessary in life such as a sense of self-value, belonging to society, and a healthier sense of mental balance in their lives compared to being unemployed. Their personal reasons behind their joblessness, or their work providing insufficient means to live on were composed of a web of other factors, unlike the uniform and rather simplistic reasoning given by the dominant social discourse.[32] Furthermore, finding work or a better-paying job was a desperate matter for both the In- and Near-poverty group, as the salary for their current job or the social benefit for living expenses they received (in the case of the In-poverty group) was insufficient to make ends meet.

[32] While the NBLSS and Cha-Sang-Wee benefit system mainly tested people's physical capacity to work as the main condition required to sustain a livelihood via work, having physical health was insufficient for people to have a stable working life. There were other necessary conditions that had to be met, such as affordable childcare options, availability of job opportunities that suited people's skill sets and educational qualifications, practicable travel to work arrangements, and so forth. As people were mostly left with labour-intensive jobs to take on, many were also concerned about the sustainability of those jobs, as well as about aggravating their already weak health conditions by going into full-time labour-intensive work (especially the case for the older participants). Deteriorating health meant not only losing their only means of living, but also expensive healthcare costs that would both be unaffordable and increase one's debt. The In-poverty benefit recipients also spoke of the dilemma they generally faced due to the systemic disincentive to work inherent to the NBLSS policy design – i.e. that they had to risk losing their entitlement to the entire social benefit by finding work that pays only a small amount above the official minimum cost of living, which would place them in worse conditions than being a welfare recipient.

'I don't want to be a welfare recipient either.'

The respondents made it clear that receiving social assistance was not their preferred way of life. Above all, they were deeply invested themselves in the dominant social morale underpinning the lazy-poor discourse, i.e. self-support via work, and were strong proponents of the idea that work was the only fair and right means of living. People (including those with physical difficulties or health problems) said that they would much prefer living self-sufficiently by their own work to receiving social assistance (which was still granted based on the number of days of work at the public Self-Support (Ja-Hwal) work programmes). Even when they were well aware that sustaining their livelihoods by work was realistically not feasible for them, they still abided by this social expectation and argued that achieving self-support via work was an important social moral code to live up to:

> 'If you are healthy and physically capable of work, you should work.'
> (40s Male, In-poverty, Single-person household)

> 'I can pick up any job, can't I? I think to myself that I must work. Of course I should.'
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-person household)

> 'You must work, if you can, unless your body is hurt or something (…) I don't want to receive it either [i.e. social assistance]. I would probably live better had I made a living from being a cleaner or something [if my health conditions enabled me to work] rather than how I live now [with the benefits I receive]. I feel so miserable living like this.'
> (60s Female, In-poverty, Single-person household)

It was evident that people were self-aware based on their personal truths that neither poverty nor the receipt of social assistance was a consequence of their personal will or intended actions. People were also self-assured of the discrepancy between the poverty-shaming discourses and their personal life situations. Most of the interviewees did not agree with the dominant social discourse of poverty as a fair judgement on their lives – and their personal experiences were treated as substantial truths to them. This indicated that the dominant social discourses and its poverty-shaming rationale were not serving as the basis for people's own

sense of shame. As far as the South Korean case went, this finding was in disagreement with the dominant explanation in the literature that people's shame of poverty was a result of negative social discourses surrounding poverty and people's internalization of them.

Disconfirming the popular explanation for the cause of people's shame in poverty raised the next question regarding *why* or *how* poverty was nonetheless perceived as an undeniable source of shame for the people. When asked further about their own reasons for feeling that way, interviewees generally gave a similarly ambiguous statement that the very fact that they were currently living in poverty was a sufficient source of shame. As the overall data still signalled that there was a deeper and more substantial basis for the shameful implications of poverty, further in-depth analysis was undertaken of the interview data together with a historical contextualization of the findings.

5. 2. 3 Deeper Psycho-Social Construct Underpinning the Shame of Poverty

When closely interrogating the qualitative interview data and tracing the precise basis for people's shame, several key conceptual prerequisites were found to be underpinning people's shame of poverty.[33] People's personal sense of shame in relation to poverty was predicated on several presuppositions, which were difficult to detect on the surface level of people's accounts of shame, yet were found to crucially underpin the process of feeling shame.

First, when feeling ashamed, people were evaluating their own and others' self-value based on a presupposition that each person carried an individual self-based identity as an independent social entity. Such individualized identities of people were treated as varying in

[33] While a more detailed explication of this newly theorized psycho-social construct underpinning the shame of poverty will be discussed in the Conclusion chapter (Chapter 9), this section will briefly discuss a few of the key conceptual and theoretical findings that are relevant to both concluding this section and providing a necessary prologue to the next section on the social underpinnings of the shame of poverty.

value, which both enabled and made it necessary to evaluate and identify its independent value against that of the others. Such value evaluations of *the self* then resulted in awarding either shame or pride in relation to the person's sense of self. In other words, people's shame was arising from an individualistic value evaluation of themselves (and others) as an independent social entity. Second, when people felt ashamed of living in poverty, the barometer of values based on which people evaluated their self-identities was found to be economic values. Third, a more essential presupposition at work was a fundamental sense of *uncertainty* in people's self-identity and its social value, which was upholding the entire process of shame and shaming of people. (This point will be developed in more depth in Chapters 7 and 9.) As will be continuously shown in the following chapters, disclosing this deeper overarching psycho-social construct at work (which is explained more fully in the Conclusion chapter based on the overall findings of the empirical chapters) provided a logically coherent explanation for understanding the root causes, personal level working mechanisms, and impact of shame on the lives of people in poverty.

In short, people's own shame related to their poverty was found to be the result of evaluating their individualized self-identity based on socio-economic values. This finding could explain why the sheer fact of living in poverty was enough to function as a direct source of shame, as people's self-identity (and its relational value) was being weighed against their socio-economic standing. Moreover, another discovery about these underlying working mechanisms of the shame of poverty was that they had socio-historical roots, closely related to the major social level changes that took place in South Korea over the last seventy years or so. This will be discussed next in the following section on the social roots of the current shame of poverty.

5. 3 Pre-Modernity: Predetermined Collectivist Social Identity & Confucianism

This section analyses how people's experience of poverty in relation to shame in pre-modern Korea was significantly different in nature. What constituted the essential difference was found to be the social level changes that occurred in the dominant socio-relational system of South Korea, based on which people identified one another and formed their social relations with one another.

5. 3. 1 Socio-Relational System

Predetermined & Collectivist Social Identities

When reviewing the socio-relational system of pre-modern Korea, a crucial difference in terms of the country's modern socio-relational system was its predetermined and heavily predefined nature of people's social identities according to a Confucianist social status system.

As discussed in Chapter 3, before South Korea became a modern democratic nation with a capitalistic economy in 1948, the influence of Confucianism was all-encompassing in the country for over five hundred years (as the ruling philosophy of Jo-Seon dynasty that lasted from 1392 to 1897), constituting the legal, political, social, and cultural foundations of the country (International Council of Korean Studies[34], 1998; Kizou, 2017). Subsequently, its socio-relational structure was also heavily shaped by Confucianist philosophy and its moral value system, identifying people based primarily on their social status category, and then age and gender, all of which were seen as being representative in themselves of someone's morally defined social status in the society (Kizou, 2017).

As a result, human relations between people in pre-modern Korea were arguably structured

[34] This reference will be abbreviated as 'ICKS' from this point.

by and large according to people's inborn social identities, which were bestowed according to the social status category of one's family ancestry (Shin and Choi, 2002).[35] Such pre-arranged socio-relational boundaries and hierarchies also existed within family relations, characterized by Confucianist patriarchy in which the oldest generation (and male over female) in the family automatically became the highest authority within the family and the rest of the family relations were hierarchically ordered according to generational rank, age, and then gender (Kizou, 2017).

Within such a socio-relational system where people acquired their social status by birth, people's social identity was static by nature throughout their lifetime, with very limited scope for change for both themselves and their descendants. In contrast to the modern social status system, such static and preordained nature of people's social identities from cradle to grave suggested that people's social identity in those times was largely a fatalistic matter over which no individual had control and for which they were not personally responsible for.

Furthermore, people's social status identity was not attainable on an individual basis, unlike in modern times, but was attained on a collective basis. People shared a common social identity when connected via bloodlines (Shin and Choi, 2002: 88), and the collective identity ultimately determined an individual's socio-economic and political status from birth, as well as prescribing their basic social roles and socio-relational terms in interacting with others. This idea of collective identity was based on Confucianism, which did not perceive individuals as social entities that could be independent from the collective, but always as a

[35] Beneath the highest social authority of kingship was the aristocratic upper ruling class composed of government elites and military generals (Moon-Ban and Moo-Ban, together referred to as Yang-Ban), the lower ruling class of technicians, regional and administrative officials (Jung-In), the general commoners class including farmers, merchants, and craftsmen (Pyung-Min), and the lowest class composed of public and private servants, entertainers, butchers, shamans, etc. (Chun-Min).

member of a family holding a specific relational position within one's collective unit (ICKS, 1998: 119). This indicated that people as an individual was much less important in their social identification in the pre-modern times, and thus no need or basis for practising individualistic social evaluation of people.[36] What was much more imperative in pre-modern Korea was upholding the collectively shared social honour of one's family unit (Shin and Choi, 2002; Kizou, 2017) rather than personal name value, as the familial identity functioned as the most significant source and basis of people's social identification.

Collectivist Human Relations

Another notable human relational condition of the pre-modern times was the dominant living environment of people, which was in the form of a collectivist agricultural community. Under the Confucianist family relational structure, people were generally born into an already highly connected social network that included relatives (Shin and Choi, 2002). Due to being generally settled in one region as an agricultural community, social relations with other people were generally limited to long-term communal and familial relationships (ICKS, 1998). This largely static nature of people's human relationships suggested that every day social relations did not require a constant identification procedure between people. That is, there was much less need for evaluating one's social identity in a socio-relational environment where most people were well acquainted with one another. This was notably different to the predominantly urban living conditions of present-day Korea, in which there was a frequent need for people to identify strangers in their everyday lives.

[36] Some have argued that even the very notion of perceiving people as an 'individual' in the modern sense was socially 'non-existent' in Confucianist Korea (ICKS, 1998: 119).

Communal Livelihoods

While Confucianist values faded in cultural salience over the years as South Korea underwent rapid industrialization and urban immigration from the late 1960s, the communal mind-set and Confucianist family values maintained their socio-cultural influence during the earlier period of modernization throughout the 1970s and 1980s (Shin and Choi, 2002). The older age group amongst the interviewees, who were all born in the period 1941-1951 (and were currently in their 60s), clearly recalled those times as when the communal mind-set was still the norm. Their personal values also carried traces of those traditional family-oriented values which seemed to co-exist in an amalgam with more modern social norms.

The older age group in general referred to the earlier period between the 1960s and the 1980s (from their twenties to their forties) as a significantly different social environment to the current one for people living in poverty. One of the most salient differences they identified was that poverty was not considered to be a solitary problem of the individual. Both male and female respondents agreed that communal ties and a reciprocal sharing culture were still the prevalent social norm during those earlier periods of modernization in Seoul, even though Seoul was the most modernized city in the country. They often pointed out that the communal sharing culture of the past prevented people from becoming isolated with no means of support when faced with material shortage. Several spoke of how it was not uncommon to take in the children of relatives to raise them in one's own household if the relative's material situation was worse than your own, even if you yourself were not necessarily very well-off. The older age group in general mentioned how 'even the smallest things that became available' (e.g. food and household gadgets) were frequently shared among people (including neighbours, friends, and relatives) as a sign of their relational connection with one another.

> ‘In terms of people’s sharing heart, it was much better back then. People were willing to help one another, and also depended a lot more on each other in their general living.’
>
> (60s Female, Near-poverty, Single-person household)

Likewise, with regard to seeking material support in poverty, many of the older generation spoke about how revealing one’s material hardship to others in the same community (both familial relations and the neighbourhood) and receiving help were not a source of shame or public embarrassment, as was currently the case.

> ‘There was nothing pressurizing, shameful, or uneasy about exchanging help. You could easily tell others that you were in material hardship. And people nearby would often come to your house. (…) If our family was in hardship we could go to the other family’s house to ask for some food, or they would invite us over to share the food.’
>
> (60s Male, In-poverty, Single-person household)

> ‘I didn’t even know that it (poverty) was something to be ashamed of. I thought we all lived according to what was given to us.’
>
> (60s Female, In-poverty, Single-person household)

The older group generally agreed that, while material living conditions were worse in the 1970s, poverty, in their words, did not entail ‘deprivation of the heart’ as it did now. When further inquired about this expression, they clarified it as referring to both the general loneliness they were currently experiencing by living in seclusion in poverty and the loss of self-esteem with which they were struggling.

> ‘Although we were hungry, there was always laughter in the house when you had each other in the family. So there was no illness of the mind. Things are better now [materially], but my mind is in depression.’
>
> (60s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with one grown-up son)

All in all, the level of socio-relational estrangement between people was said to be much less pronounced in the pre-modern social context of Korea, elements of which were said to have continued into the 1960s and 1970s (and possibly also into the 1980s) with the previous communal ties and traditional values still remaining to a certain extent. Moreover, as the

general social environment of the older interviewees' generation was widespread poverty in the aftermath of the Korean War during their youth and young adulthood, they commonly recalled that 'Everyone's living conditions were roughly the same, whereas now there is no middle ground but only the upper or the lower class' (60s Male, In-poverty, Single-person household).

In summary, historically contextualizing the conceptual findings from the qualitative data – i.e. the basis of people's current shame of poverty being the individualistic recognition of people as socially independent singular entities with uncertain social identity – and identifying the relevant core traits of the pre-modern socio-relational system testified to the fact that the current shame of poverty was a deeply modern phenomenon, and a psycho-social condition underpinned by a very different kind of socio-relational system and contextual environment.

5. 3. 2 Dominant Value System for Social Identification

Confucianist Moral Code of Conduct

What further attested to the poverty-shame association being unlikely to have existed in the past was in its dominant social value system that was very different to the modern times. As mentioned earlier, Confucianism was the ultimate standard of values and moral laws that ruled over the national consciousness of pre-modern Korea (ICKS, 1998: 116). The Jo-Seon Dynasty of Korea has been seen as the most Confucianist country among all Confucianist countries in East Asia (ICKS, 1998: 117), as well as the most 'ethics-oriented nation' compared with other Confucianist countries (Kizou, 2017). It was evident in both the historical sources and in the interview data from the older generation that the dominant social values in Korea had been deeply moralistic until recent decades.

The key Confucianist values that were found to have been particularly dominant in Korea in the past included the importance placed on delivering various social responsibilities that were associated with one's socio-relational (status or familial) position. Those social expectations were considered to bear 'tremendous moral significance', which entailed various social etiquette, rituals, and responsibilities that reflected 'a particular set of virtues, certain kinds of roles and relationships with others, and cultural practices such as the rites or rituals (*li* 禮)'[37] (Cline, 2016: 245). As patriarchal familialism was central to society, practising filial piety and prioritising collective needs over individual needs were critical standards to determine one's social value as a human being (ICKS, 1998; Shin and Choi, 2002; Kizou, 2017).

Moreover, another significant aspect of Confucianist values was that they clearly downgraded the physical and material realm of the world as being inferior to the ethical realm, putting in place a socially shared contempt for selfish materialistic pursuits (Kizou, 2017). As the Confucianist social status system was in principle an embodiment of people's moral hierarchy, the Confucianist aristocrats were also in competition to demonstrate their superior morals and were expected to live a morally justifiable lifestyle (Kizou, 2017). This shows that wealth in itself was not a justified source of gaining higher social honour in pre-modern Korea. On the contrary, pursuit of material wealth itself was perceived to demonstrate one's inferior sense of morality. The accumulation of wealth could even damage one's social reputation if such wealth failed to fulfil the ethical code of society in both its collection and its spending.

The older age group also commonly testified that it was still a person's morality that continued to function as the dominant source and standard of evaluating people in the 1970s

[37] The rites or rituals were central concepts for Confucius' social moral ethics, which '[specified] how one should behave across a broad range of circumstances, including how one should move, speak, dress, eat, and so on, while also including rituals such as funeral rites and ancestral sacrifices' (Cline, 2016: 245).

and that, in contrast to today, economic wealth was not the primary source of defining the social value of a person.[38] A male interviewee from the 60s age group pointed out:

> 'Back then [around the 1970s], you were treated as a good person if you were law-abiding and didn't behave badly. But now, the have-nots are treated badly by the rich. Everything [you do] is fine now, as long as you earn good money.'
>
> (60s Male, In-poverty, Single-person household)

Gender was another important dimension to Confucianist moral values, which underpinned the patriarchal social order of society. For an adult man, his utmost moral responsibility was to upkeep the 'vertical order' of the ethical realm within the household as head of the family and to be in charge of the regular Confucianist rituals for honouring ancestors (Kizou, 2017). For an adult woman, her duty was keeping the 'horizontal order' of the material and physical realm, being the forgiving and affectionate care-taker of family members worn out from keeping the vertical order (Kizou, 2017: 156-157). After the industrialization period, such traditional roles of man and woman in a family became spatially divided between the 'inside' and 'outside work' of the household, with women undertaking housework and raising children inside the house and men bringing in income for the family from outside (ICKS, 1998: 201). According to interviews with the older age group, in the 1970s and 1980s, people 'lost face (*Che-Myun* 체면)' for various moral failures related to such Confucianistic gender roles. Men were said to lose face both socially and within the family for being unable to provide materially as the head of the household, whereas women would face such moral blame for not looking after the household or children as the mother of the family. Such loss of face (or *Che-myun*) held crucial difference from the currently prevalent individualistic sense of shame associated with poverty, as it was a *moral* failing to fulfil one's relational role

[38] Such testimonies were also echoed by the popular social discourse of the 1970s' and 1980s' films, which will be discussed in Chapter 6.

within collectivist social relations (ICKS, 1998: 174), rather than a loss of individualistic pride based on one's *economic* capacities or possessions.

5. 4 Modernity: Uncertain Individualistic Social Identity & Capitalism

The current socio-relational environment of poverty has significantly changed from the past in all three aspects reviewed above. First, the close-knit communal living was largely replaced by loose and individualistic human relations in urban living environments. Second, the collectivist social identification of people based on their predetermined familial membership became individualized and fundamentally uncertain. Third, the moralistic social value system of Confucianism that was used to evaluate people was replaced by materialistic economic values. These major social level changes were found to have constituted a distinctively different socio-relational environment to that of the past, which deeply affected those living in poverty in the psycho-social realms of their lives. Yet, such psycho-social condition was not particular to the living conditions of poverty, but was an all-encompassing change for the society as a whole in its basic socio-relational system. This section spells out how each of the social level changes mentioned above was conducive to constituting the current psycho-social dynamics working between poverty and shame.

5. 4. 1 Socio-Relational System

Estranged Human Relations

As mentioned in Chapter 3, since the 1960s when state-led industrialization began to take place in South Korea, the traditional agriculture-based collectivist living environment began to rapidly disintegrate. As a result, traditional household compositions of extended families (with two or more generations cohabiting in the same household) were rapidly replaced by

nuclear family households of urban immigrants living away from their original relational network. A nuclearized and individualistic living environment had become the general social trend, resulting in a substantial weakening of the relational connections that used to be the default condition for most people.

The traditional means of relational identification between people had not completely vanished, especially at the earlier period of the modernization process, as people continued to draw on collectivist references in forming social relations with others; e.g. via regionalism (*Ji-Yeon* 지연), kinship (*Hyul-Yeon* 혈연), and/or school alumni relations (*Hak-Yeon* 학연) (ICKS, 1998: 164). Nevertheless, the urban social environment was found to have continued to change the nature of people's relationships over the years to become much looser and more estranged from one another compared to the traditional social environment (Shin and Choi, 2002: 127; Kang, 2006). The highly populated urban environment, together with the dismantling of strict social status boundaries, meant that people's human relations were now to be formed between literal strangers and among an incomparably bigger pool of people who were without a definable social identity or pre-existing collectivist relational ties to draw on. Accordingly, the main subject of identification in forming human relations became the individual himself or herself.

Individualization of Livelihoods

Together with the disintegration of close-knit relational ties and the spread of urban living environment, people's livelihoods also became noticeably compartmentalized to a household level, and sometimes to an individual level in the case of single-person households (which also consisted of one third of the interviewees). The respondents from the older age group often spoke of how people's mentality and social culture had generally become conspicuously individualistic and people 'no longer cared for anyone other than themselves.' One male

respondent said, ‘This is an age where people only think about “me” and “my” family’ (60s Male, In-poverty, Single-person household). Another female respondent from the 60s age group also agreed that ‘People protect only themselves. They don’t protect the others. No one does it sincerely anyway. No one would even know if someone dies next to them’ (60s Female, Near-poverty, Single-person household). This was a distinguishable change from the past, when it was the social norm to care for and share material resources with others that included not only family relatives who were not part of the immediate household, but also friends and people in the neighbourhood. That is, the household economy had become strictly independent and its material livelihood now completely depended on the earning capacities of the single or dual breadwinners of the individual household.

This individualization of livelihoods was also reflected in the decline of familialism in informal provision of welfare in people’s lives, not only between neighbours or friends but also between direct family members. Regardless of gender, age, and poverty status, most interviewees referred to poverty as the main source of burden and cause of breakdown in their human relations, rather than a reason to depend on others as in the past (including relationships with family relatives). Common statements by respondents included:

> ‘There is no help [from my extended family]. Absolutely none.’
> (60s Female, Near-poverty, Single-person household)

> ‘We don’t even see each other. It’s because I live in poverty. They just moved away [to live apart from me]. Family is no use [in material hardship].’
> (60s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with one grown-up son)

> ‘Brothers don’t help you even if they live well. Rather, if they think they live pretty well-off [lives compared to yours], they start avoiding you.’
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

While a great majority of the respondents in the older age group had grown-up children, they lived in separate households, with very minimal or no spontaneous contact on the part of their

children. Traditionally, grown-up children (especially the sons and the first son of the family and his spouse) were expected to look after their parents to fulfil filial piety by supporting them financially or looking after them when they were ill. However, in the contemporary social environment that the older age group was experiencing, their livelihoods were completely separated from their grown-up children. Very few were living together with their children, with the exception of when the grown-up children were unable to support themselves financially due to joblessness, physical disability, or health problems. While many of the respondents' children were also said to be financially struggling, the absence of children's support itself was said to be due to the separation of livelihoods and weakening of traditional familial values and norms.

Several of the older male respondents spoke of their deep frustration and sorrow regarding their children not caring for them, as they recalled their fairly recent past (up to the 1970s and 1980s), when filial piety was still a crucial responsibility expected of the grown-up children:

> 'They [i.e. my children] deserted me. I don't understand why they are doing this to me when I have raised and educated them.' (60s Male, In-poverty, Single-person household)

> 'Even if I call them, they wouldn't answer my calls, since I became sick and materially struggling.' (60s Male, In-poverty, Single-person household)

On the other hand, most of the respondents in their 40s did not wish to disclose their economic situations to their elderly parents, saying that they did not want to disappoint or cause emotional distress to them. This showed that the traditional sense of losing face by disappointing parents' expectations was still remaining to a certain extent among the 40s age group, although they did not find it as morally blame-worthy as it used to be to not look after their parents when in need. While a few of the respondents wished to live with their parents to receive some financial help (mainly for reducing housing costs), they faced rejections and were also feeling neglected by their direct kin.

Unless family relatives spontaneously offered assistance, people found it extremely difficult or unable themselves to ask for help from their extended family.[39] Even when they tried asking for help, people's requests were often turned down. It was a largely shared sentiment among the respondents that they felt deeply hurt and traumatized when they met such rejection from their relatives:

> 'They were like strangers to me. Maybe because we live in a hard-hearted world now, but my husband's older brother completely ignored our request.'
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

Respondents agreed unanimously that family ties were not a consistent or reliable source of support any more for maintaining one's livelihood. A few exceptional cases of receiving financial support from extended family were reported; however, these were a one-off occasion, or the nature of support resembled a debtor-creditor relationship in a market economy, rather than the traditional form of communal support:

> 'My father-in-law demanded that we repay everything when he was lending us some money before.' (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

> 'My mother-in-law told me, "You live by yourself. I will live by myself".'
> (40s Male, In-poverty, Single-person household)

> 'This is a very dry and cold era where even siblings ignore your difficult situation. Unless I die, maybe [they will care]. I can't ask them myself to help me, right? They should respond themselves when I let them know of my situation, but they have no reaction whatsoever.'
> (60s Male, In-poverty, Single-person household)

With no other reliable entities to provide additional support for the family, most of the interviewees said that that they felt completely isolated in their poverty. The interviewees

[39] A few segments of this section beginning from this sentence were included in the book chapter, co-authored by myself as the first author and Professor Robert Walker as the second author, which was published in the collective book of the ESRC-DFID poverty and shame studies of seven countries: Jo, Y. N. and Walker, R. (2014) 'Social isolation and poverty in South Korea: A manifestation of the poverty-shame nexus' in E. Chase and G. Banteby-Kyomuhendo (eds.) Poverty and Shame: Global Experiences. Oxford University Press.

were almost unanimous in stating that poverty nowadays was an extremely solitary experience. A statement often used by the interviewees was that ‘Nobody knows’ of their current situations and hardships in poverty. In comparison to the past, informal provision of welfare was significantly diminished and was nearly absent for the majority of respondents, if not a rare one-off occasion for just a few of the interviewees.

Such neglect by kin was not compensated by the urban neighbourhoods either. Most of the respondents had no personal relationship with their neighbours and were said to be on guard against one another. ‘Nowadays, people don’t know who lives next door to them. We don’t even say hello. People are suspicious of one another, worrying they may be deceived by each other’ (60s Female, Near-poverty, Two-person household). Some stated that due to being under a high level of stress and anxiety, it was difficult to make friends with other people in the neighbourhood or with other welfare recipients they met from public work programmes, who were also struggling with material hardships. They spoke about encountering more conflicts, rather than finding support from other people with similar material hardships, due to these people also being under a lot of stress and emotionally depressed, which left people feeling threatened and more estranged from one another.

It was not the case that people did not wish to receive help from other people. Even though most respondents were desperately in need of and desired outside help, there was no help to be found in most cases, and their previous requests that were made out of desperation were met only with an unwillingness to respond that in most cases left traumatic wounds for people. One female respondent said ‘There is a real desperate yearning for outside help, but if you have nothing to spare yourself [i.e. do not have enough to be self-sufficient] you only get hurt [by seeking help] and have to face the inner struggles even without being able to receive any help’ (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with two children). What was

repeatedly found was a clear separation between individual households with overpowering social expectations for independence of livelihoods.

The transition in people's general mentality regarding receiving informal support from others manifested itself most clearly in people's accounts of the rare occasions when they did receive help. One female respondent from the 40s In-poverty group spoke at length about her experience of unexpectedly receiving informal help in getting her prosthetic leg via a distant acquaintance as 'a very awkward experience', and how she was unable to figure out how to comprehend or respond to the help. When an individual received financial aid from another person that they were unable to pay back, the aid tended to become a strain on the personal relationship, as the aid was mostly treated as a loan which was expected to be paid back. If people failed to do so, which was often the case due to their long-term material deprivation, this resulted in severance of the relationship. It appeared that material aid has lost its traditional social connotation of signifying informal relational ties between people, and instead was creating a debtor-creditor relationship between people as economically independent entities.

Subsequently, poverty was found to have become a significantly burdensome issue in people's human relations; and this was one of the reasons raised in relation to what held people back from seeking informal support, as they could risk losing the relationship altogether. For the majority of people who no longer had personal means of accessing informal support from family or other relational networks, the outcome was facing a dead-end situation in material deprivation. This extreme level of isolation in poverty was characteristic of modern social environment where people's livelihoods were strictly separated as individualistic personal realms. Even after becoming an NBLSS (social assistance) recipient, knowingly bearing the shame associated with it, public provision was

neither a reliable nor a sufficient means of living. It was arguably the case that there had been a social level *individualization of poverty* under the modernization process in South Korea, and poverty was now a strictly personal matter, to be faced alone.

Uncertain & Individualistic Social Identities

Unlike the pre-modern mode of social recognition, in which people's social identity was subordinate to their affiliated group, individuals were found to have been treated increasingly as an independent social entity (socially, politically, and economically) and as the main agent of their lives. Several scholars have noted that the social significance of 'I' has augmented over the traditional notion of 'Us' for socially identifying people in Korea (Shin and Choi, 2002: 87), and that this social process of 'centring on the self' (Taylor, 1991: 4) in social perceptions of people and the prioritizing of personal ego over 'undifferentiated family ego' (ICKS, 1998: 208) were characteristic of modernity.

Such social level changes were equally reflected in the increased prominence of self-consciousness among the younger age group (in their 40s). They were noticeably less family-oriented in their sense of self than the dominant trend of the past, with individualistic sense of self functioning as the central basis of their social identification. As an illustration, the 40s age group was much more prone to emphasize self-conscious sentiments, such as 'bruised ego' or 'pride getting hurt', with regard to living in poverty.[40] In comparison, the older age group was noticeably much less concerned about their self-oriented sense of pride or ego, but

[40] This also echoed the dominant cultural discourse of the more recent popular films that were released in the 2000s, the period right after the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997, in which the main cinematic themes regarding poverty were about protagonists struggling to restore their sense of pride and social respect that were damaged or lost by having fallen into poverty. Kizou (2017: 204-208) also reported that an individuation of people as principal agents in society has emerged since the 1990s in South Korea, which was consistent with the findings of this research from both the interview data and cultural discourse analysis of films.

was much more disturbed about losing their traditional sense of 'face (*Che-myun*)' and social honour as a social elder, a parent, or a male head of the household. It was noticeably the case that since around the 1990s, an individualized sense of *self* has become the predominant basis of people's social recognition in South Korea, and increasingly so for younger generations.

Another critical change identified in the individualistic social recognition of people was the incomparably open-ended nature of people's identity. It could be said that modernity has freed people from being locked into a predetermined social identity that was based on a heavily limiting social classification system. In principle, people have become a free agent of their own lives that can work toward changing one's social status, destiny, and social value as an independent social entity. A further implication of this major social change, however, which is given much less attention in general, is that people's social identity has become not just freed from predetermination but endlessly open to redefinition; ultimately conditioning it to become *uncertain*, and thus *unstable* at its core nature. More specific discussion on this aspect of modernity will be given in Chapter 7 with empirical illustrations.

5. 4. 2 Dominant Value System for Social Identification

Capitalistic Value Evaluation of People

As mentioned earlier, while the traditional value system continuously decreased in social salience over time, Confucianism persisted in its influence for several more decades, with traces of traditional socio-relational customs still remaining up to the present. As a result, the current social values reflected a transitional 'dual value system' that was composed of a mixture of both Confucianist values and increasingly prevalent individualistic values (Shin and Choi, 2002). The interviewees in the older age group (in their 60s) especially displayed this dual nature of their value standards. While they recognized how things were notably

different in the current social atmosphere, with the dominance of Western individualistic values, they still shared some of the Confucianist values that were more salient in their past.

Yet, in line with the individualization of the socio-relational identification of people, the dominant values with which people evaluated one another's social identity were found to have become more individualistic in nature. While Confucianist values were still found in people's general language and behavioural customs, the interviewees strongly felt that the most dominant source of value evaluation or social identification of people nowadays was individual level economic differences. A male respondent from the 40s age group emphasized that capitalistic values were now the inescapably dominant social value barometer used by (and against) most people.

> 'This is a capitalistic nation. That's the problem. Everything is connected to money. So everyone thinks in terms of money. Whether the person is a good person or a crook and a bad person doesn't matter anymore as long as the person looks rich on the outside. Everything is about money, everything. People judge by money. If you have money, you feel good. If you don't, then you feel depressed. Everything is money.'
>
> (40s Male, In-poverty, Single-person household)

One female respondent in her 40s also pointed out that material wealth now functioned as the dominant source of social power and the determining source of institutional discrimination, which was a view shared by around half the respondents who had experienced multiple difficulties in gaining access to public forms of support, such as In-poverty social assistance benefits (NBLSS) and public housing.

> 'I think our country puts the haves first in general, the people who have money. Even in the smallest of things. Even the government does that. Though some might see this as my inferiority complex speaking.'
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

When contextualizing such personal level changes in people's value standards in the broader socio-historical context of South Korea, it appeared that the changing values were closely linked to the structural attributes of the capitalist economic system. What was first notable

about the capitalist economic system was its inherent dynamic of *competition*. Capitalist resource allocation systems inevitably created an environment in which competition became compulsory for everyone – not only for commercial enterprises competing as independent corporate companies but also for individual people participating in the labour market. Now people had become independent economic agents, who individually gained their economic resources by participating in the market economy. This granted a normative sense of *equal agency* to people to cultivate their economic livelihoods themselves, while also handing over the ultimate responsibility over their livelihood conditions to the individuals themselves.

A more fundamental attribute working throughout this competitive process was its propensity to highlight, celebrate and exacerbate *difference* between people. The very nature of competition was in comparing differences between individuals, distinguishing which one is better than another in their performance. The different outcome in performance was then celebrated with different prizes that only winners could enjoy. The difference in the subsequent rewards was often very visible, such as exterior looks (e.g. clothing, cars, housing), occupation, consumption pattern, and lifestyle. Such conspicuous difference between individuals became a measurable indicator of each individual's personal economic achievements based on their individual agency in the market. That is, material differences attained a very personal social connotation under the modern capitalistic social value system. People were now socially identifiable as possessing different personal qualities, capacities, and achievements as an individual, based on the socio-economic differences between their individualized selves and livelihoods. Taylor also argued in a similar vein about how people's individual sense of identity was formed in modern times by 'finding what is significant in my difference from others' (1991: 36).

This socio-relational arrangement of modern capitalism seemed internally coherent in its logical framework. However, such socio-relational system also resulted in the consequential socio-economic difference between people to become the new means of social differentiation and stratification in people's relationship with one another. What was unique about this new system's social stratification mechanism was that it produced countless levels of stratification to exist among people, as individuals became the unit of comparison. Moreover, that there was now a personal sense of pride and shame associated with one's relative social status to that of the others.

What seemingly further justified and sustained the resulting personal sense of shame and its hierarchical basis was the notion of *social mobility* – that a person's economic status is open to change, provided they work hard to improve their situation – which was another popular belief and a social discourse to which the interviewees subscribed. However, since the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997, economic polarization has visibly emerged in South Korea (Kim, 2014) with worsening income distribution (Choi, 2007) and a high level of recurrent poverty (Kim, Lee and Son, 2009). When winners largely remain winners, as do their children, the notion of social mobility in the market, 'widely seen as a process by which people are sorted by ability' (Wilkinson and Picket, 2010: 43), can only intensify the shame for those living in long-term poverty. The interviewees also felt that market competition did not provide a level playing field in which anyone could be successful through their personal efforts and determination, and that there was a high chance of their children inheriting their current social status in poverty. Nevertheless, the respondents found it difficult to reject or escape from the current psycho-social framework of poverty that was deeply and logically ingrained in the current social environment of modern capitalism. Eventually, they ended up agreeing with the dominant discourse of the capitalistic social identification system, repeating to

themselves that individuals must bear the ultimate responsibility for their 'personal' problem of poverty.

5. 5 Conclusion

This chapter first explored the nature of the presence of shame in poverty based on the qualitative interview data analysis shame, and found shame to be a shared experience of people in poverty in both age groups (40s and 60s), both male and female, and whatever the type of social assistance they were receiving (as the Near- and In-poverty group). More specific variations between the sub-groups in their experience will be discussed in subsequent chapters. Particularly notable in the findings was that the reason for people's feelings of shame was not due to an internalization of negative social discourse surrounding poverty in contrast to the popular arguments made in the literature. None of the dominant shaming rationales for poverty was found applicable to interviewees' personal sense of truth about their lives, and the basis of people's shame was neither being responsible for resulting in poverty nor the shaming social discourse. Instead, a deeper psycho-social construct underpinning the shame of poverty was identified, which explained the reason for why people felt ashamed nonetheless of living in poverty.

Secondly, the socio-historical origin of such psycho-social construct underpinning the shame of poverty was explored by historically contextualizing the empirical findings. To do this, the key contextual characteristics regarding the socio-relational arrangements of the pre-modern and modern social environment of Korea were put together in a comparative analysis. It was disclosed that the poverty-shame association was not a historically consistent aspect of people's experience of poverty, as the psycho-social dynamics working between poverty and shame was clearly different in nature before and after the modernization of South Korea. The current shame of poverty was identified as having its socio-historical roots in the modern

form of socio-relational structure, underpinned by both individualization of poverty and individualistic social identification of people (who were socially perceived as uncertain and changeable entities in their relational value) that was now based on capitalistic value barometers. Poverty had subsequently acquired a powerful non-material dimension of shame added to its material dimensions.

Chapter 6. Changing Cultural Discourse of Poverty in Popular Films & Emergence of Shame (1975 - 2010)[41]

6. 1 Introduction

In this second chapter of Part I, the final sub-question from the second set of research questions regarding 'Social contextualization of the shame of poverty' will be answered, which is: (iii) how the dominant cultural discourse has portrayed the social implications of poverty regarding shame and whether there has been any change over time. In doing so, based on sociological discourse analysis of popular films, an influential cultural institution in South Korea, this chapter discusses the changing historical trends in the cultural discourse of poverty in relation to shame. By reviewing how the dominant source of shame and the general association between poverty and shame have also significantly changed on the cultural level, this chapter further supports the argument made in Chapter 5 that the shame of poverty is a fairly recent phenomenon in South Korea that is related to wider social contextual changes, and a particularly modern capitalist one.

The discourse analysis is based on 30 films in the period between 1975 and 2010 that were sampled for analysis. This provides a historical panorama of the changing poverty-shame association within the country's popular cultural discourse. One film was selected per year, on average, out of between one and three films that matched the sampling criteria for each year. There were a couple of years during the mid-eighties and mid-nineties when no suitable

[41] The bulk of the content of this chapter has been published in 2014 as a book chapter under single authorship in *Poverty and Shame: Global Experiences* (edited by E. Chase and G. Banteby-Kyomuhendo). It was titled, 'Disclosing the poverty-shame nexus within popular films in South Korea (1975-2010)'. The work has been further revised and edited into the current thesis chapter.

films were identified, which in itself implied that poverty had less salience within the dominant discourse of popular films during that time (and possibly also on a broader social level). The period over which the films were selected mirrored an era of rapid economic growth via industrialization, political democratization, and socio-cultural changes in South Korea. In particular, the films from the year 2000 reflect the time period when 'New Poverty' (Kim et al., 2007) emerged in South Korea as a result of the structural adjustment austerity measures imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the aftermath of the financial crisis in 1997. As discussed in Chapter 3, the 'New Poverty' in South Korea was characterized by an increase in the absolute poverty rate driven by the growth in unemployment, non-standard employment, inequality, and in-work poverty, all of which have been largely sustained to date.

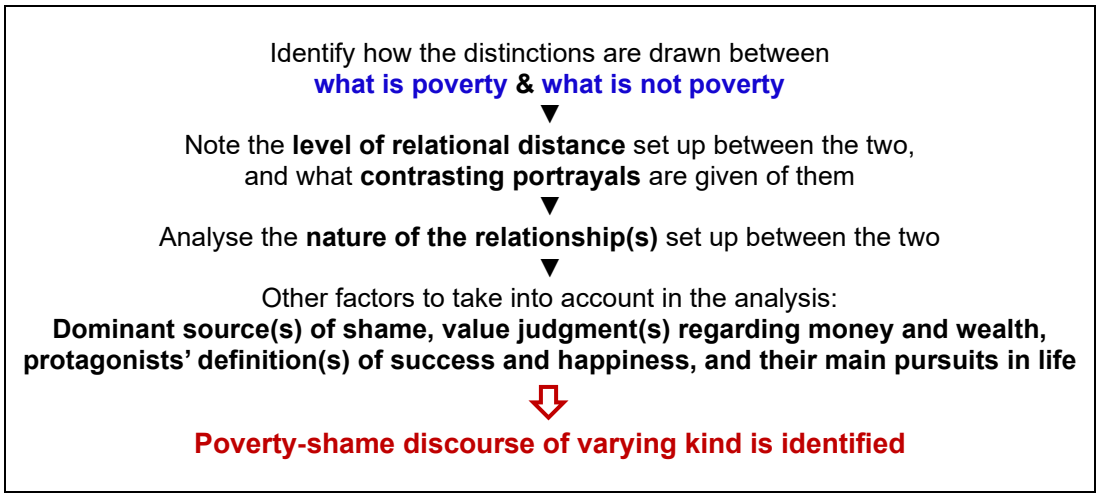
This chapter first reviews the analytical framework for tracing the poverty-shame discourse in popular films, which was developed in the process of undertaking the discourse analysis. It then reports on the more specific findings on the historical trends in the filmic portrayals of poverty, the juxtaposition of poverty and wealth, the space for shame in the relationship between 'the poor' and 'the non-poor', and people's responses to both poverty and shame. Based on these empirical findings, an overview is given of the changing trends in the poverty-shame discourse as a whole in the cultural discourse of film. Finally, some of the common features across time are reviewed, followed by a conclusion that draws out the main implications of the findings in relation to the research questions.

6. 2 Analytical Framework for Disclosing Poverty-Shame Discourse in Film

For poverty to exist as a narrative element in a film, it needs to be represented on the screen in such a way as to be recognized and understood by the viewers of cinema. Accordingly,

screenwriters, photographers, and directors behind the camera choose various cues that to them signify poverty in the belief that they will be similarly identified by viewers, enabling them to distinguish characters who are living in poverty from those who are not. Sometimes they may convey messages about poverty of which they themselves are unaware. In the process of analysing the films according to the method of analysis designed in Chapter 4, it was found that a more systemic analytical framework was required to trace and compare the poverty-shame discourse across 30 different films. Accordingly, after undertaking the initial rounds of analysis and collecting the analytical data of all 30 films as planned in Chapter 4, an original analytical framework was developed as shown below in Table 6.1

Table 6. 1 Analytical framework for tracing the poverty-shame discourse embedded within a film



To explain further how this analytical framework was developed, while analysing the filmic discourse of poverty across 30 different films, a common starting point was found in tracing the portrayals of poverty on film. It was in identifying when the initial distinctions were being drawn on the screen between who is poor and who is not. Once such distinctions were drawn and poverty (or the protagonists living in poverty) became recognizable on the screen, a relational dynamic began to unfold in the film between the poor and the non-poor, which contained the possibility for shame to arise. Then, depending on the nature of the relationship

set up between the poor and the non-poor, that could be measured based on several factors (such as the physical and/or emotional distance between the two, and the types of juxtaposition of their portrayals), the kind of shame and its intensity associated with poverty varied between films. This analytical framework was also developed in the light of the conceptual understanding of shame discussed in Chapter 2 that shame is an emotion that arises from the perceived difference or separation of the self from others (Fromm, 1956). Other components that were also found to be relevant to take into account for analysing poverty-shame discourse included: dominant sources of shame and the settings in which shame occurred, central standard of values used to judge the meaning of money and wealth, definitions of success and happiness, and popular life aspirations of the protagonists. In essence, analysing each film's specific portrayal of the distance and relational dynamic between poverty (people in poverty) and non-poverty (those who were not in poverty), and the central values upheld in the discourse were found to be the two main keys to unpacking the poverty-shame discourse in the cultural discourse of each film, and to analysing their changing trends over time.

6. 3 Historical Trends in the Filmic Portrayals of Poverty & Its Space for Shame

In the analysis of South Korean films, portrayals of poverty varied much more over time than they did within any particular year when there was more than one film that matched the sampling framework. Such trends in the changing cultural discourse of poverty also reflected and were related to the wider social level changes of South Korea that occurred when the sampled films were being produced. This section reviews the main changes that occurred in the filmic portrayals of poverty that were identified in popular films during the period from 1975 to 2010.

6. 3. 1 Portrayals of Poverty

From the mid-1970s until the early 1980s (precisely, in the period 1975–1982), a very typical visual cue for signifying poverty was its location in the city, most often in the form of Moon villages (*Dal-Dong-Nae*), as in the 1978 film *The Woman I Abandoned* (Jung, 1978). Moon villages were well-known at the time as homogeneously deprived neighbourhoods, which were unauthorized settlements on top of the steep hillsides (being nearer to the moon and thus named the 'Moon villages') surrounding the city of Seoul, in which new migrants from outside Seoul congregated. Reflecting this social reality, poverty was portrayed during this time period as a collective urban phenomenon that encapsulated the aspirations of migrant workers chasing the dream of a better life for their families back home in the rural hinterland, while they themselves were living in urban squalor.

Yet, the city of Seoul was still presented as a place of opportunity and hope, embodying a sense of zeal and the heartfelt aspirations of the general public for a better future. Protagonists were generally filled with such hope and aspiration for improving their materially impoverished life conditions, and were portrayed as people with a strong determination to support their family by seeking new economic opportunities in urban cities, and as good-hearted hardworking people (both adults and children) even amidst their difficult living conditions. As an illustration, Young-Ja in *Young-Ja's Heyday* (Kim, 1975), while unexpectedly finding love in the city of Seoul, is determined and self-aware that she migrated in search of earning more money for her family back home: 'I didn't come to Seoul searching for romance. I am here to earn money! […] I came with a strong-willed heart. I have got to earn money'. Even if not hardworking, people in poverty were still portrayed as characters with confidence, who express their desires and have a charm that attracts other people's attention and affection, as also in the case of Jung-Hey in *The Woman I Abandoned* (Jung,

1978).

Having a collectively shared occupation was another popular cue for poverty during the late 1970s and early 1980s. People living in the same area often had similar kinds of occupations. For example, most of the characters appearing in the 1975 film *Young-Ja's Heyday* (Kim, 1975) are portrayed as working in manufacturing occupations, and those in *The World Without a Mother* (Lee, 1977) all worked as colleagues in the same saltpans. Sometimes the life trajectories of the protagonists were told in terms of their changing occupations that were quite typical of poverty during this period. In the case of Young-Ja in *Young-Ja's Heyday* (Kim, 1975), her decline in life was mapped out as a series of five jobs, all of which were symbolic of the female poverty of the time but differed in the degree of degradation associated with them: a housemaid in a rich household, a bus guide, a sewing factory worker, a hostess in a bar, and finally a prostitute. These occupations also symbolized urban poverty in the 1970s and they tended not to feature in films released after the early 1980s.

Moreover, a common feature in the filmic portrayals of poverty during the mid to late 1970s was that poverty was portrayed as a collective experience within urban industrial areas, rather than as a socio-economic condition of an individual, as a story of a tight-knit family or an orphan protagonist with friends or acquaintances in his/her local community. When a young boy, Young-Chul, lost his mother in *The World Without a Mother* (Lee, 1977), the neighbourhood is shown as collectively finding ways to find a place to stay for him and his younger brothers and a job that he can work at to make a living, and as forming a charitable fundraising group to support his family. Young-Chul thinks upon his lost mother in a monologue and says, 'Mom, although I live in a world without a mother, our neighbours have

not abandoned us'.[42] Beginning from the year 1980, the films began to portray people moving up the social ladder from being in poverty to becoming rich overnight via estate speculation, such as in *Love Me Once Again despite Hatred '80* (Byun, 1980) and *Mrs. Speculator* (Lim, 1980). Nevertheless, those means of escaping poverty were clearly portrayed as 'disgraceful money' earned via moral failure such as greed and deceit, and as a source of moral shame. The general sense of communal solidarity in the neighbourhood and family relations were also sustained in this period of the early 1980s.

By the mid-1980s, the Moon Village largely disappeared from the film screen and poverty itself was largely neglected in the cultural discourse of film in general. From the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, the meaning of wealth and money appears to noticeably strengthen in terms of its importance in life for the protagonists. Rather than portraying poverty as the main theme in the film, the narrative focus was often placed on people's pursuit of or need for earning more money and their envy for a wealthier lifestyle, juxtaposed against a deterioration of their moral values (e.g. loss of innocence, dishonesty, sexual immorality, etc.). A common line of the protagonists during this period was to question others about whether money was indeed the most important resource to pursue and the answer to every human need in life – as in the case of, e.g. *I Stand Up Every Day* (Kang, 1990), *Money, Money, Money* (Yoo, 1991), *Stairway to Heaven* (Bae, 1992), *A Heavy Bird* (Kwak, 1994), or *The Day a Pig Fell into the Well* (Hong, 1996).

Thereafter, in the years until the Asian financial crisis and its aftermath in 1997, poverty became largely invisible on screen as filmic attention panned to the lower middle class and their aspirations to become rich. Although the Moon Village returned to the film screen in the

[42] All the film dialogues are translated from Korean to English by myself.

2000s, it became merely the backdrop to a much more individualized experience of poverty. In contrast to the 1970s, from the year 2000 onwards, individualized experiences of poverty became a noticeable trend in the filmic portrayals of poverty. This also echoed the historical context of the time when South Korea was undergoing structural reforms after the Asian Financial Crisis that led to the spread of neo-liberal ideals of increased competition, growing inequality, and a high divorce rate due to economic bankruptcy. These general trends in the cultural discourse, characterised by individualisation of poverty, echoed the broader social trends in relation to poverty discussed in Chapter 5.

6. 3. 2 Juxtaposition of Poverty and Wealth

In the 1970s through to the early 1980s, the poverty found in the Moon Village was frequently contrasted with the wealthy areas and bright lights of Seoul that showed the prosperity attained by a relatively small group of people through the fruits of national economic development. During this period, Seoul was shown to bring together the stark distinctions between poverty and wealth, united in a single life. Abject poverty, portrayed as hunger, homelessness, unemployment, orphanhood, the inability to attend school, and the powerlessness to keep family together was, nevertheless, set against a brighter future nearby which was attainable through education and hard work. For instance, a thirteen-year-old boy, Young-Chul in *The World Without a Mother* (Lee, 1977), is told by his teacher, '[N]o matter how hard the environment is, you should never give in. (…) You have to live with courage and faith. I also lost my parents when young, but I studied hard [and established my life by myself by becoming a teacher]'.

When poverty and wealth were represented through protagonists during this time, the affluent were frequently shown to derive their riches from illegitimate and unjust activity, the pursuit of money driven by greed and achieved through selfishness, abuse of power, and often

exploitation of people in poverty. This means of attaining wealth was clearly condemned in the films as a moral failing of the rich and as the main location for shame in the storyline. The wealthy person was often portrayed as enjoying a world of their own characterized by comfort, luxury, and security, spatially disconnected from disadvantaged neighbourhoods and largely immune to the pressures found there. People in poverty, on the other hand, were depicted as representing the moral high ground. They were upright and hard-working, as mentioned earlier, prioritizing the virtues of love, justice, family, and a sense of community. The injustice that was conveyed during this period was palpable: the virtuous poor were exploited by the amoral rich such that the finger of blame and shame were firmly pointed at the wealthy. This moral sense of shaming of the rich continued throughout the 1980s and 1990s, although the personal sense of envy for the wealthy and importance of money also continuously grew in the cultural discourse of film during the 1990s.

Yet, by the 2000s, the object of shame was completely switched to the people in poverty, who were portrayed as economic and social failures in a society undergoing economic depression, when others still became prosperous and powerful. While the rich were often still portrayed as being cruel, as in the film *The Game* (Yoon, 2008), perhaps even more so than in the 1970s, they were also portrayed as the undisputable victors, willing and able to exert power and authority over the dejected and disorganized losers languishing at the bottom of the economic ladder. In this modern era, people in poverty portrayed on film seem to acknowledge this reversal in fortune and feel the need to hide their poverty from public display. This was in stark contrast to the dominant discourse in the 1970s. In *The World without a Mother* (Lee, 1977), for instance, a thirteen-year-old boy, Young-Chul, readily acknowledged the family's state of impoverishment and the difficulty of coping, yet he described his dilapidated house as a 'heaven' that is 'cosy' and a 'precious home' to him in a genuinely self-believing tone.

The protagonists in films made in the 2000s, however, try to conceal their poverty and impoverished living conditions from others.

Moreover, from the year 2000 onwards, people in poverty were presented as evident failures rather than confident people striving to improve their livelihoods, as in the case of Young-Chool in the 1970s or hard-working factory workers in *Kuro Arirang* (Park, 1989) in the late 1980s. For example, Sung-Woo in *Waikiki Brothers* (Lim, 2001) and Tae-Shik in *Crying Fist* (Ryu, 2005) in the 2000s were depicted in visuals, actions, and words as being low in self-esteem, depressive, and cowed. Poverty takes its toll in leading to divorce, isolation, and loss of pride. Emotionally wounded, people in poverty were portrayed as hot-tempered and unstable, finding that they were disliked and shamed by other people, even by those to whom they have previously been close. They end up frightened, angry, and bitter, placing all their hopes of rebuilding their lives, which seems possible only through winning prosperity and success again, on one-off opportunities that carry a high risk of ultimate failure, such as boxing, lottery, and gambling of various kinds. This was the first period in which the protagonists began to admit their own shortfalls and inadequacy as the reason for their poverty. In *Ulala Sisters* (Park, 2002), the main female protagonist says to her fellow business partners after their live music club failed to compete against a rival club next door; 'It was due to my lack of competence. I feel I am out of my depth as well… It was thanks to you guys that I held out this far'.

6. 3. 3 Relationship, Distance, and the Space for Shame

Once the distinction was established on film between who is in poverty and who is not, the relationship between the two was then shaped in various ways. In the late 1970s to the early 1980s, the distinction was very clear between poverty and wealth, with reference to humble origins contrasted with established lineage, inherited wealth, and educational achievement.

But despite these differences, films such as *The Woman I Abandoned* (Jung, 1978) and *Barefooted Youth* (1979) tended to establish a distinctively common bond - based on love or good-heartedness - which could unite the protagonists. For instance, Hae-Mee in *Barefooted Youth*, who comes from a wealthy background, meets the poverty-stricken Doo-Shik, a boxer, who was brought up in an orphanage and has a criminal record. They fall in love and, while Hae-Mee's father objects and belittles Doo-Shik's aspirations to become successful, Hae-Mee acknowledges a goodness of heart in Doo-Shik, calling him 'a good person', and with genuine love overcomes the gulf of socio-economic difference between them. Love was the key medium during this period to draw the poor and non-poor together as equals in the pursuit of mutual happiness. With no emotional distance left between them, there was no space left for shame.

In the 1980s (until around 1987), distinctions between rich and poor became blurred as the result of a shifting focus towards rapid social mobility, which emphasized competition within socio-economic classes rather than between them. People in poverty were portrayed as themselves becoming rich (*Mrs Speculator*, Lim, 1980), or achieving riches through marrying the wealthy without love (*Our Joyful Young Days*, Bae, 1987) or by foul means and hypocritically displaying illicit prosperity (*X*, Ha, 1983). The prospect of higher income and the competition for prosperity emerged as a source of conflict during this period. Accordingly, jealousy became the motivation, and deceit and fakery became tools to climb the financial and social ladder, with shame being associated with both success and failure. With the notion of social mobility being introduced and the common pursuit in life becoming the acquisition of wealth itself rather than improving one's standard of living from abject poverty for the sake of family values as in the 1970s, the distinctions between rich and poor became less clear-cut. Instead, status comparisons and moral judgments between people of similar

economic status became unprecedentedly acute. Consequently, the space for shame and shaming began to open up within families and close social milieu, driven by the emotional distance that grew between people with increasingly individualistic aspirations for economic advancement.

The quest for money and prosperity continued as a popular theme in films up to 2010, though with subtle differences in tone. Around the turn of the 1990s, the clear distinction between rich and poor returned briefly, although with harsher edges than in the 1970s and little prospect for reconciliation in the relationship through love or any other relationally connecting emotions. During this time in the 1990s, rich and poor were often presented as being in opposition to one another, demarcated by differences in social interest and power. Employee was set against employer, and property owner against tenant, with nothing to recommend poverty over wealth. Instead, everyone aspired to achieve the latter and to access the privileges that were denied to the poor. Again, the endeavours of the rich were treated with some disdain, and those intent on success were portrayed as being necessarily cut-throat or corrupt. Yet, this time around, they were seldom juxtaposed with the 'virtuous poor' but usually with the economically unsuccessful.

By the 2000s, films were prone to use poverty as the symbolic manifestation of the loss of pride associated with economic failure and to present the fear of poverty as an important motivator in life. Rich and poor were presented as distinct and distant groups; while protagonists in poverty aspired to be rich, the rich feared the enormous shame of becoming poor. Shame, accordingly, was presented as a product of economic failure rather than as a result of moral avarice or corruption. By the late 2000s, direct shaming of people in poverty was common, and the use of derogatory language and exploitative interactions were shaped by the power of wealth.

6. 3. 4 Responses to Poverty and Shame

There were also detectable changes over time in the ways that South Korean film portrayed people responding to poverty and the shame associated with it. These reflected the evolving social conceptualizations of poverty from something inevitable to something structural, or at least outside individual control, to poverty being a product mainly of personal failure. During the 1970s, film-makers portrayed positive and often highly romanticized and aspirational responses to poverty. Both *Barefooted Youth* (Kim, 1979) and *A Little Ball Sent off by a Dwarf* (Lee, 1981), for example, emphasized that virtue can offset the pain of poverty and that a commitment to values such as love, family, justice, and truth lays the foundation for self-respect and social approval irrespective of any shame attaching to rags and missing school events due to them being unaffordable. Alternatively, films such as *Young-Ja's Heydey* (Kim, 1975) and *The World without a Mother* (Lee, 1977) recognized the hardship of poverty and its moral uncertainties, yet still pointed to the role of family and community ties and solidarity in supporting people to cope, if not prosper. This reflected the traditional collectivist culture of Korean society and the importance of 'Jung'—a Korean term describing warm affection shared with others extending beyond direct family ties to include, for example, neighbours and colleagues at work. *Barefooted Youth* (Kim, 1979) and *A Little Ball Sent off by a Dwarf* (Lee, 1981) contained elements of both philosophies.

Films in the 1970s that adopted a more heroic take on poverty emphasized the power of individual agency, which was strongly echoing the political propaganda that dominated the social discourse of the time, as discussed in Chapter 3. Sometimes protagonists were rebellious, taking up the cudgels of a cause and challenging the status quo that held people down and put them in their place. Elements of this can again be seen in the characterizations of the main female protagonists in *Young-Ja's Heydey* (Kim, 1975) and *The Woman I*

Abandoned (Jung, 1978) in which the two both speak with no signs of shame or timid behaviour against the better-off. Furthermore, films of the time seemed to preach the virtues of hard work and resilience, to dream the dream and to turn aspiration into reality through study and hard graft as is epitomized by Young-Chul's school teacher in *The World without a Mother* (Lee, 1977) as mentioned earlier. While poverty was presented as endemic, the solutions proposed were individualistic, portending the more explicitly individualistic attitudes that were to become evident in film a couple of decades later.

Occasionally, even in the 1970s, films dwelt on the negative and destructive consequences of poverty. *Young-Ja's Heydey* (Kim, 1975), for instance, documented the social isolation and mental breakdown that can follow poverty. Yet it was a morally based shame rather than shame based on one's socio-economic status, as discussed earlier. The negative implications of poverty became more evident in the 1980s and 1990s when films such as *The Day a Pig Fell into the Well* (Hong, 1996) showed protagonists hiding their poverty and becoming embroiled in a web of lies and deceit. On the one hand, the pursuit of money was being portrayed as futile and the product of greed only attained by sacrificing morality and humility, as in *Stairway to Heaven* (Bae, 1992). However, gradually over the course of time in the 1990s, the first films were produced that heaped praise on protagonists who aspired to have more money and a good life defined in terms of material consumption. *Something to Die For* (Koo, 1999) was a case in point, in which wealth was pursued almost to death solely for the sake of attaining more money, not as a by-product of the hero being virtuous or for any other morally meaningful purpose. Such films typified South Korean cinema in the 2000s much more than films such as *Ku-Ro Arirang* (Park, 1989) which sought to explore the structural causes of poverty and to promote the cause of labour movements seeking to shift the balance of power from state-supported industrial conglomerates to workers.

While the grim negativity attached to poverty and shame continued into the 2000s with an emphasis on the consequential lying, deceit, fantasy, and self-pretence (*A Family*, Lee, 2004; *Miracle on First Street*, Yoon, 2007), personal breakdown (*Crying Fist*, Ryu, 2005), crime and violence (*Sympathy for Mr Vengeance*, Park, 2002; *Breathless*, Yang, 2009), a marked difference was the growing acceptance that it was okay and somewhat inevitable to shame those in poverty as failures in society. Largely unseen was any evidence of 'Jung', the traditional spirit of sharing communal support. Instead, individuals were on left their own, being solely responsible for their poverty and for its continuation. For the protagonist, salvation and social acceptability arrived when they acknowledged this new social truth and became empowered through their own effort to become economically successful again themselves. In films such as *Ulala Sisters* (Park, 2002), *Miracle on First Street* (Yoon, 2007), and *Breathless* (Yang, 2009), it looks as if the audience sits in judgement, metaphorically shaming protagonists until they accept the shame, at which point, feeling ashamed, they have no choice but to motivate him or herself toward restoring self-pride via self-improvement, pursuing any given pathway out of poverty no matter how brutal in the process.

While, in earlier films, shame associated with poverty was often contingent on the presence of other stigmatizing characteristics such as physical disability, lack of basic education, or morally disreputable behaviours, shame portrayed in the period after the 1997 Asian financial crisis was more often than not attached to the state of living in poverty itself. The shame of poverty was shown to be invariably personally destructive. It was variously presented in films such as *Ulala Sisters* (Park, 2002), *A Family* (Lee, 2004), *Crying Fist* (Ryu, 2005), and *A Dirty Carnival* (Yoo, 2006) as a loss of confidence in oneself, as the erosion of manhood, and as a decline in social standing, leading to the loss of self-respect. This then was led to self-neglect, social isolation, and deep despair. In *Crying Fist* (Ryu, 2005), *A Family* (Lee, 2004),

and *A Dirty Carnival* (Yoo, 2006), the impact of shame led to the breakdown of all human relationships, including divorce, which led to a deep sense of loneliness and the need to struggle single-handedly without help or support. In other films, *Waikiki Brothers* (Lim, 2001) and *Miracle on First Street* (Yoon, 2007), the consequences of poverty-related shame were even more severe, leading to depression and suicide. Subsequently, the protagonists in the 2000s were generally portrayed as facing a dead-end situation in poverty, often isolated as an individual, placed only under the shame of having failed in life in mainly economic terms. As a response to such situations, the protagonists of *The Game* (Yoon, 2008), *Ulala Sisters* (Park, 2002), and *Sympathy for Mr Vengeance* (Park, 2002) who were alone and bereft, gamble everything out of desperation on risky ventures in an effort to escape poverty so that they could regain their social respectability and all else in life (e.g. family relations, social relations with others, normal happy living, etc.) that rested on the restoration of their lost self-pride. The dominant tone of these cultural discourses of the 2000s also closely echoed the recent experience of the people in poverty who were interviewed in this research.[43]

6. 4 Emergence of the Poverty-Shame Discourse in Film

With regard to the main locus of shame, poverty was not the most important source of shame during the 1970s, as the main values upheld in the cultural discourse were not socio-economic but moralistic ones. Accordingly, the general source of shame for the protagonists in poverty was predominantly Confucianist moral transgressions such as lying, stealing, failure to fulfil filial piety, and sexual immorality, even when this was made necessary by the need to survive without adequate resources. As an illustration, a female character in *The*

[43] Similar personal accounts of the interviewees will be discussed in Chapter 8 in the discussion of the personal level impact of poverty-related shame.

World Without a Mother (Lee, 1977) was shown to prioritize preserving a book that recorded the family's genealogy (*Jok-Bo* 족보) over her own health. In case of female protagonists, some of the urban female occupations often portrayed in those period, such as working as a hostess or a prostitute, were treated as a source of shame and belittlement not necessarily for their low socio-economic value but for the moral sense of shame they brought. Young-Ja in *Young-Ja's Heyday* (Kim, 1975) was shown as being scolded by an older male character in the film for engaging in 'sinful' behaviour by prostituting her female body. In the case of male protagonists, they were seen as deserving shame when they appeared as physically weak, or sought after romance rather than working hard to advance their names in society, as in the case of the role of the father in *The World Without a Mother* (Lee, 1977) or Chang-Soo in *Young-Ja's Heyday* (Kim, 1975). This again was a reflection of Confucianist moral values. In this way, pre-modern values were still portrayed to be of higher social significance and value than material wealth during this period.

Moreover, poverty was mostly portrayed as an inevitable outcome of a series of misfortune in life within a harsh social reality, such as ill-health, an unforeseen accident that led to physical disability, or a result of corrupt behaviours of the greedy rich. Also, poverty was portrayed as a shared condition on the family or neighbourhood level. In the 1970s, poverty provided a backdrop to social life that was held together by strong bonds of family and community. The rich were portrayed as greedy and corrupt and deserving of moral shame. This is not to say that no shame was attached to poverty in film during this period. It was, but was associated with other moralistic factors that were related to the living conditions in poverty, such as engaging with occupations treated with moral disdain, such as prostitution. The cultural discourse during this time not only emphasized morality over the pursuit of self-oriented socio-economic desires, but also the importance of solace provided by the family or

community. The relational distance between the rich and the poor protagonists was also closed via other relational values such as love, honesty, and integrity. This closing of the relational gap and distance between people subsequently left no room for shame to arise in the relational dynamic – based neither on poverty nor on other moral failures.

Table 6. 2 Changing cultural discourse of poverty and shame in South Korean films (1975 - 2010)

	'75 – '82	**'83 – '89**	**'90 – '99**	**2001- 2010**
Values & Pursuits	Love, family, being genuine, community	Prosperous, intellectual lifestyle, better life	Money, fame, sex above pure love	Self-pride based on economic status
Money	Means to life but not an end in itself	Unavoidable reality that binds and separates people	Common object of pursuit and desire	Without it, one's entire life and happiness are at stake
Reason for Poverty	Endemic, not being greedy or opportunistic enough	Belonging to a different social group	Unemployment, bankruptcy of business, social status	Individual inadequacy, structural factors, fate
Response to Poverty-Shame	Priority given to ethical values rather than material circumstances, collective support from community (*Jung)*	Pursuit of truth and genuine love, anti-thesis of structural blame for poverty	Concealment of poverty, deceit, violence, social Isolation, pursuit of wealth	Acceptance of personal responsibility, violence, personal breakdown, social isolation
The Rich	Greedy, corrupt, unjust wealth, despise poverty	Hypocritical, exploitative, no heart for genuine love or pursuing truth	Use and pursue money as the power to attain anything they want, oppressive	Evil employer, ultimate power-holder, relatively rich
Main Place of Shame	**Unjust Rich**	**Exploitative Rich**	**Immoral Rich**	**Failed Poor**

However, as summarized in Table 6.2 above, there was a major shift in the overall socio-cultural association between poverty and shame from the 2000s. Film charts the decline in collectivist values over the subsequent 20 years and responds to the societal decline in the levels of absolute poverty by making it often largely invisible until the 1997 financial crisis generated bankruptcies, unemployment, and a new social context for film. The portrayal of poverty shifted from being an endemic collective experience to being a marginalized personal experience in the 2000s. Also, the Confucianist value of anti-materialism that upheld the hierarchical superiority of moral values in the 1970s and even into the 1980s began to show a conspicuous decline throughout the cultural discourse in the 1990s and especially after the

Asian Financial Crisis period from the early 2000s. For much of the earlier period analysed here, the rich remained the principal targets of opprobrium, being variously seen as unjust or greedy in the 1970s, structurally exploitative in the 1980s, and increasingly immoral in the 1990s. By the 2000s, however, the compass of blame had entirely reversed direction.

From the 2000s, poverty was portrayed as an unavoidable consequence of not succeeding against the new social expectation of prosperity. To be rich was to be successful and strong; to be poor was to be a social failure. Moreover, the portrayal of the causes of poverty in the film narratives became much more individualistic and less societal or structural. While poverty in contemporary film was still portrayed as cruel, hard, and violent, as it had been in the past, it was now presented as the result of individual misfortune or weakness, intended to be interpreted as both a reflection of character and a result of personal incompetence. This shift in the cultural discourse was found to be mainly underpinned by changes in three factors that together constituted these dynamics in the relationship between poverty and shame: the shift in the main social value system, the social significance of money, and the relational ties between people and their nature. For instance, in the 2000s, the dominant tone in the cultural discourse was clearly different from that in the past, with much less moral shaming directed towards the rich for their immoral behaviours, and money achieving a vital significance in terms of its value in sustaining one's individual life as well as self-pride. The relational distance between the rich and the poor began to be portrayed as being irreconcilably wide, together with a general individualization of people's lives. The resulting poverty-shame association of the 2000s included shame clearly being directed towards people in poverty as failures in society, who lost all valuable things in life as a result of falling into poverty, and were left to suffer in solitude with only their damaged self-pride.

6. 5 Common Features Across Time in the Cultural Discourse of Poverty

While the portrayal of poverty and poverty–shame dynamics within the cultural discourse of South Korean films has significantly shifted in the last 40 years or so, certain things have remained largely consistent. Poverty has always been seen as something unpleasant or a circumstance to be overcome. This was as true in the 1970s as it was in the 2000s, the difference being that in the earlier period poverty was typically portrayed as endemic, unavoidable, and an inevitable backdrop to the lives of the majority. Hence, the prevailing emotions evident in films of the time were those of struggle, distress, and sorrow rather than a personal sense of shame. That being said, even in the 1970s protagonists in poverty were likely to experience shame and shaming, but not so much owing to their state of poverty, as discussed above.

Another constant element in the cinematic portrayal of poverty was the assault that poverty made against masculinity. Traditional South Korean society built on Confucian principles of filial piety placed precise and often onerous obligations on men to provide for the wider family and thereby to justify their status as the family head. Without wealth, and experiencing poverty, or confronting the prospect of becoming poor, men were shown as vulnerable to losing face and self-pride due to being unable to fulfil the social expectations that society laid down for them; a theme prominent in films across time, including *Young-Ja's Heyday* (Kim, 1975), *A Little Ball Sent off by a Dwarf* (Lee, 1981), and *Crying Fist* (Ryu, 2005). Men in such circumstances were portrayed as losing wives and lovers, engaging in criminality, and gambling to restore wealth and respectability, expressing their self-loathing and participating in directed and gratuitous violence.

Violence also emerged as a dominant theme in South Korean films in dealing with poverty. Sometimes it was a by-product of dangerous occupations made necessary by poverty, such as

pick-pocketing, robbery, illegal organ donation, hostess work, and prostitution, which left the protagonists as likely to be victims of violence as they were to be perpetrators. In older films, violence was often a subtext, a necessary aspect of a life made hard by poverty but which, on screen, was largely manifest in fist fights, resulting from people being cheated or betrayed. In the aftermath of the 1997 financial crisis, a new genre of film (often dubbed 'gangster movies') emerged, characterized by extreme violence often triggered by a protagonist's experience of total financial loss and their desire for both societal revenge and recovery of their social status. *Crying Fist* (Ryu, 2005) was typical of many others, including *A Dirty Carnival* (Yoo, 2006), *The Game* (Yoon, 2008), and *Breathless* (Yang, 2009). In it, Tae-Shik, an ex-national champion boxer, loses everything when his business becomes bankrupt. His wife and child leave him and he is despised or ignored by his friends until he climbs back into the ring to fight to restore his pride and masculinity on which his life depends.

6. 6 Conclusion

While film reflects society a great deal in all sorts of ways, ranging from the scenario drafting and production to the historical context of the time and so forth, it has a social existence of its own and in turn influences and shapes social perceptions and cultural discourses through its own medium of cinema. In this respect, film, as a significant cultural text in South Korea, can meaningfully demonstrate how the cultural discourse of poverty and its association with shame has changed over time in South Korea. Most notable in the overall trends of the cultural discourse of film is how the poverty-shame association has recently emerged since the 2000s together with the major changes in the main standard of values, the nature of relation between people, the level of individualization of people's lives, and the increased significance of their self-pride. All these factors echo the key elements that were also found in Chapter 5 to constitute the psycho-social dynamics of shame in poverty on the wider socio-

historical level. The overall trends in poverty-shame discourse identified in the cultural discourse of film further supports the findings in Chapter 5 that the socio-cultural association between poverty and shame has not been consistent over time, but is a fairly recent social phenomenon in the case of South Korea that has become particularly prominent since the early 2000s.

Part II.

Personal Level Manifestations, Working Mechanisms, & Impact of the Psycho-Social Dynamics of Shame in Poverty

Chapter 7. Personal Level Manifestations & Working Mechanisms of the Psycho-Social Dynamics of Shame in Poverty

Chapter 8. Personal Level Impact & Responses to Shame in Poverty

Chapter 7. Personal Level Manifestations & Working Mechanisms of the Psycho-Social Dynamics of Shame in Poverty

7. 1 Introduction

It has been examined thus far how poverty has become an acute source of personal shame in South Korea as a consequence of major social changes in its socio-relational environment. Based on the empirical findings from the analysis of qualitative interview data, this chapter discusses how the current social level dynamics working between poverty and shame manifested and functioned on the personal level of people's lives in poverty. This addresses the first sub-question from the third set of research questions regarding the 'Personal level working mechanisms & impact of shame in poverty'[44]: (i) what are the personal level working mechanisms of shame in poverty. Furthermore, the fourth research question on the 'Role of the social assistance policy in people's experiences of shame in poverty' is addressed in the last section of this chapter when discussing the shaming conditions that were specific to poverty.

First, this chapter discusses how the respondents' individualistic self-identity was predominantly assessed against socio-economic value barometers in their social relations. Second, it reports on how this socio-relational recognition system resulted in shame by explaining its main working mechanism of competitively attained self-value based on relative superiority. Notable characteristics of this social identification mechanism are further discussed with regard to how the psycho-social dynamics currently working between poverty

[44] The second and third sub-questions of the third set of research questions, regarding the impact of shame in poverty and people's responses to it, will be answered in Chapter 8.

and shame is not a phenomenon limited to poverty but a broader societal condition. Lastly, several distinctive conditions of poverty that are conducive to shame are discussed in the third and final section of this chapter. This last section includes a discussion of the empirical findings on the institutional shaming of the NBLSS social assistance policy (which is the central means of public provision for poverty in South Korea) and its role in aggravating people's shame in poverty.

7. 2 Socio-Economic Relational Identification Between Estranged Selves

Interviewees in both the In- and Near-poverty group were living with a notable scarcity of human relationships. Yet, people's individualized sense of self-worth and social identity was still found to be heavily socio-relational in nature, both in its evaluative basis and its process of identification. Based on empirical findings from the qualitative interview data, this section discusses the predominant evaluative basis and the basic unit of evaluation in the present day's socio-relational identification of people. (The process of self-worth identification, through which shame arose, will be discussed in the next section.)

Various Socio-Economic Conditions as the Sources of Self-Identity

As discussed in Chapter 5, the dominant evaluative basis for assessing people's individualized social identity was found to have shifted from Confucianism to individual level socio-economic conditions. The common sources of evaluation included the quality of one's material living conditions (e.g. clothing, cars, area of residence, type and market value of housing, consumption patterns, and so forth), type of occupation (that signified a certain level of income), and level of education (in relation also to job prospects). One female respondent in her 40s spoke of having faced shaming and being laughed at by her colleagues at work when they found out she did not have a college degree. She had to leave the job soon

afterwards, as the people's gossiping about her educational background became unbearable for her.

The shaming treatments from other people were experienced not only in verbal forms, but also in non-verbal forms, such as gazing with disregard or disparagement in ways that were 'obviously visible' to the respondents. People were aware they were being treated in such ways precisely because of their 'poor-looking' clothes and appearances, and that such external appearances clearly conveyed their social value as an independent social entity.

> 'If you go around wearing unclean and poor clothes, you are treated with disdain straight away.' (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with three children)

> 'I used to go to the borough office to learn how to make hand-made flowers. Not everyone who came was like me, people like us, who came to learn because of being in real hardship [with a real need to learn the skill as a means of living]. They lived well and came for it as a leisurely hobby. When I went, I got the staring looks. That's what I hated, having to face that kind of situation whenever I went there. People like us can't really make up or dress up when we go out, right? I just try to keep clean and not to smell. They gave me the stare for whatever I was doing. They won't ever talk to me. Not even a single word, and then totally shut me out. So because of those things, I don't go [any more] if I can.' (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with three children)

In the same vein, various other individual level socio-economic attributes have all come to carry acute personal implications in the present day South Korea, depicting people's individualized social identity. In the case of respondents with children, the quality of care they were providing for their children, particularly in a material sense, was the most frequently mentioned signifier of one's personal capability as a parent and an unavoidable source of shame in society. Speaking for many, a female respondent in her 40s spoke of the shaming she experienced from the parents of her child's friends at school, based on her inability to financially contribute to her child's school events.

> 'I don't like talking to the mothers of my children's friends. When my child became the class president at school by vote, the mother of another child that became the vice-

> president came to me and said, - and this was when we were living in a house with briquette heating[45] - "If the student is a president, so should the mother be. The mother should be able to support the child properly [i.e. financially]. If not, one [the child] should give up the position" and so on. I cried so much that evening because of that incident.'
>
> (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with three children)

These findings showed that the broader social level changes discussed in Chapter 5 were equally manifesting on the personal level of people's lives. That is, individualistic socio-economic identification of people and subsequent belittlement and shaming were now unavoidable socio-relational conditions of people's lives.

Moreover, such value evaluation of people's individualized social identities based on their socio-economic conditions was found to take place not only in interpersonal social relations, but also in people's intrapersonal relation to their own sense of self. People were found to equally objectify their own selves and make value evaluations of themselves. While a more detailed discussion with empirical illustrations will follow in the section 7.3, the fact that people needed to evaluate and identify not only other people's self-value but also their own demonstrated that people's individualized self-identities themselves carried a deep sense of *uncertainty*. It was this general sense of uncertainty in individualized self-value which underpinned the relational distance that lay not only between people but also in people's self-perception of themselves. Namely, people's social identities in present day South Korea were in a state of *relational estrangement from within*.

Gender-based Shaming

As the unit of people's social recognition became individualized in modern times as a universal principle, personal shame that was now heavily associated with economic status

[45] The type of housing with a briquette heating system, instead of an electric or gas heating, is a socially common signifier of poor households.

was affecting all those in poverty regardless of gender. However, there were a few cases that manifested a gender-based difference in the shame people experienced in poverty. While most of the male and female respondents clearly expressed a feeling of shame (or damaged self-pride) in relation to living in poverty, a few of the female respondents saw the main bearer of shame for their current living conditions to be their male partners rather than themselves. As an illustration, a female respondent from the 40s Near-poverty group spoke of how she used to belittle her husband for his incompetence in providing for the household, when she also had earning capacity herself, having worked full-time previously.

> 'A man looks impressive and respectable when he has a job and works at it with ambition. But let alone being respectable, there was nothing like that [with my husband]. So I put my husband down. (…) I thought maybe my husband was struggling to establish himself in the family relations because I was working [in contrast to him not having a stable job]. So I quit my job [and became a full-time mother at home with the children], hoping that my husband will pull himself together and begin working properly.'
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with four children)

A few others also ascribed their poverty to their male partners' lack of economic earning capacities rather than their own. They saw their male partners to have failed as a husband, who for them had the primary duty to financially provide for the family as the head of the household. Also, when speaking about other female friends who lived comparatively better off than they did, those female respondents attributed the friends' living conditions to their husbands' earning capacities or wealth. Moreover, while the male lone parents clearly expressed their shame about 'being a man' in exercising their legal rights to request their ex-wives to make a financial contribution to the childcare expenses, the female lone parents did not express such shame when faced with the same situation. Rather, they saw it to be the rightful responsibility of their ex-husbands to financially provide for the children (although this was not made in most cases, due to the impoverished situations of the ex-husbands).

Such gender-based shaming of poverty echoed the typical Confucianist social values that lived on into the early modernization period, during which time a man's familial authority as head of the household depended upon fulfilling his role as the primary breadwinner. For those who still retained such social values from the pre-modern heritage, men could not maintain their social face as 'the head of the household (*Ga-Jang* 가장)', having failed to materially provide for their families. While respondents were generally found to carry an individualistic self-perception, for a minority of them (especially among the older generation), traditional patriarchal norms were still exercised alongside other modern values. This could be explained, as discussed in Chapter 5, by the fact that the interviewees grew up in the time when Confucianism remained culturally salient to a certain extent, especially regarding family relations.

What seemed to be at work in this minority of cases of traditional gender-based shaming was that, for some parts of the population in South Korea, a female's socio-economically defined self-identity was still seen as being subordinate to that of their male partner's. This indicated that females were still undergoing the process of becoming fully recognized as an independent socio-economic entity in the South Korean society. The initial disproportionate difficulty in recruiting male participants also seemed to reflect such traditional gender-based shaming. It could arguably be the case that the level of shame people felt in exposing their poverty was deeper and more heartfelt for males still than it was for females. The social developmental process of capitalistic modernization has been one of individuation of people's socio-economic status, and females in South Korea have also increasingly become economically independent from their male partners. In this respect, there is a probability that socio-economic shame may become even more equally shared by both man and woman in the

coming future, if females' social identities were to become fully individualized and independent from their male partners.

Every Individual as Both the Judge and the Judged

While it was people of relatively higher economic status (i.e. who were richer than the respondents) that were most frequently reported to have been the evaluative (shaming) judge of the respondents, shaming evaluations were also found to occur between people who seemed by and large to share a similar socio-economic status. Speaking for several others, one female respondent in her 40s spoke of being treated with disdain when she was working as a caregiver at a hospital, which was part of the public works programme tied to her Near-poverty (Cha-Sang-Wee) benefit recipient status. The agents of shaming were not only the patients who were economically better off than herself, who the respondent thought treated her badly based on their perception of her as living on their tax money – it was also the patients who were supposedly worse off than the respondent as In-poverty benefit recipients.

> 'They think that they are giving me a job by being [a patient] in the ward. A patient told me to do for him whatever he told me to. That patient who said that was a Soo-Geup-Ja (NBLSS recipient) himself.'
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with one child)

She spoke of feeling additionally mortified by the fact that the shaming agent was a person of similar social status to her own (or lower, to be precise, in her view). Not only was the other patient of similar social status making a status evaluation of the interviewee, but the interviewee herself was also in the position of evaluating others based on essentially the same standard of values. She was noticeably distinguishing people based on their individual socio-economic status in relation to her own, and differentiating the nature of the same disdainful treatment.

There were also a few other cases when the respondents themselves were making shaming evaluations of other NBLSS recipients with the same official status. A few of the respondents in the 40s In-poverty (Soo-Geup) group, both female and male, spoke in a language of disdain about the other recipients wishing to receive further governmental support for their children's college tuition fees.

> 'It's not like poverty is some special status of authority, you know? If you are poor, you should put in the effort and build up your own capacity. [Wanting] to receive a scholarship when you don't even study hard [is not justifiable].'
>
> (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-parent household with two children)

Those respondents were making critical value judgements of those who were receiving the same public support as they were, under the same social logic – i.e. people should earn their economic gains themselves to justify those as their own. Multiple cases suggested that it was a common practice for the respondents to make value judgements about others with the same socio-economic status as themselves, especially when they were referring to them as general others (as 'Soo-Geup-Ja' or 'the have-nones'). Yet, the shaming language would visibly soften when those other social assistance recipients were discussed as specific people within the context of an actual personal anecdote.

These shaming evaluations made by the people in poverty were no different in essence from the shaming done by people of higher economic status, in that the act involved a relational distance based on separated livelihoods and individualized identities of people which were then assessed against their economic values. The equally judgemental attitudes found between people of similar social status indicated that being the agent and the object of socio-economic shaming were not socially divided roles between 'the rich' and 'the poor'. People in poverty were also subject to playing both the judge and the judged in their socio-relational identification of others as well as their own selves.

This deeper relational pattern is consistent with the broader socio-historical finding of Chapter 5. That is, as every individual, in principle, came to possess an independent social identity of their own based on their socially independent and undefined sense of *self*, no one is exempt from the socio-relational practice of self-based social identification of him/herself. On the other hand, it is also the individuals themselves who now act as the judge of those individualized self-identities of the others well as their own. In short, individual people now carried both an estranged sense of *self* (that requires a relational identification of its self-value), as well as an evaluative eye cast upon such selves (what can be anything *other* than 'the self'*)* based on the state of estrangement. This finding points to a broader socio-relational condition of the present times that shaming or feeling ashamed of the self, especially based on one's socio-economic conditions, has become a highly pervasive phenomenon for people in general, not limited to those in poverty.

7. 3 Competitively Attained Self-Worth Based on Relative Superiority

The previous section showed that personal sense of shame (and shaming) based on one's socio-economic conditions was not a psychological phenomenon particular to those in poverty, but was a manifestation of broader socio-relational condition of the time. What still remains unanswered is whether there is an absolute socio-economic threshold for evaluating an individual self to be worthy of shame – that is, whether poverty is the absolute source and threshold of shame – and if not, how or when shame arises (i.e. its working mechanisms). This section answers this question by discussing the process via which people identified *the self* based on its socio-economic value and consequently put it to shame.

7. 3. 1 Self-Evaluation Based on a Relative Standard: 'To Live as well as the Others'

When the respondents spoke of their personal shame regarding their socio-economic

conditions, the shame was most often based on a comparative analysis of themselves against other individuals in their personal lives. Such comparative evaluation based on individual level socio-economic differences seemed to have become an unavoidable facet of people's ordinary social relational interactions. As a female respondent from the 40s age group put it in a nutshell, 'In our country, it becomes so obviously comparable in many ways if you look at how people live'. While comparative evaluation of one's self-value was a common practice among the interviewees, it was particularly prevalent among the 40s age group compared to the older age group. The younger age group being more prone to making such value evaluations was consistent with the fact that they were more used to the recent socio-relational environment than the older age group, in which individualistic and capitalistic identification of people is prevailing.

What was notable about the comparative evaluations that the respondents were making was the wide variation in the living standard of the comparable others. While a few respondents also mentioned 'feeling deprived' as compared with the people living in the richest part of Seoul or the political elites in power, the most prevalent object of comparison was close acquaintances, such as old friends who were currently better off than themselves. A popular statement of the interviewees in the 40s age group was, 'None of my friends live like this. They all live pretty well'. There was no single threshold or identifiable level of living that was considered to be the absolute standard of 'living well' that must be met to avoid shame. Rather, it was the comparable differences in living conditions in and of themselves that were bringing the same kind of shame on people.

> 'I am also someone who likes to travel and enjoy those leisure activities. I think I feel this way more so because I see those things [i.e. how my friends live]. I feel more miserable about myself because of how those friends live their lives. It hurts my pride. I get really angered, thinking why can't I live better than this, why can't I be better than this.'
>
> (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

> ‘When I looked at how my friends lived, my goodness, it really hurt my pride. And so... I’m thinking of working in sales maybe... Something that can actually make money [than the small of amount of benefits I am currently living on]. So I’m looking into it right now. (…) You have to hang out with people who also live in a similar situation to be able to talk about it, but I have no one around me who lives like that [myself]… So it feels really shameful.’ (40s, In-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

Among the respondents in their 40s with young children, the quality of their material provision for their children and how it compared to other children’s upbringing was the most pronounced source of shame in their everyday lives. The specific sources of comparison included clothing, stationary, computer, food, providing children’s own room in the house, taking them to recreational activities, and so forth. What brought the shame was not necessarily the absolute lack of those material goods, but the comparative difference in both quantity and quality. As an illustration, several of the female respondents were feeling inadequate as a parent because other children of better off families wore newly bought clothes, while their children wore second-hand giveaways from a wealthier family. The respondents spoke about how their children’s clothes displayed a clear ‘gap’ in quality in comparison to the other children who wore specific brand items that were popular amongst their peer groups. Another kind of comparison made was regarding the quantity of provision, that other children had a surplus amount of notebooks that were enough to give away to their children, whereas the respondents could only give their children what was absolutely necessary; or that others had ‘more dishes on the dinner table’ and could ‘eat what they wanted to eat’, while their children could not make such a choice. As such, the evaluative standard of their individual level competence as a parent was mostly phrased in relative terms. People were deeply disturbed by the fact that they could not provide for their own children ‘as much as the other children got’ or that their houses were ‘not as well equipped with things as the others’. In essence, the threshold for people’s shame as a parent was also in their relative inadequacy or comparatively lower quality in provision to that of the other parents.

Among the various essential needs of children in South Korea, it was education that the respondents viewed as the most crucial need above all else, as the educational performance of a child was understood to determine the child's socio-economic prospects.[46] While the respondents' children of school age were all attending school regularly,[47] the intensely competitive educational environment in South Korea often called for privately sourced extracurricular education as a common practice, which the respondents generally felt was most lacking in their provision for children. Under the highly competitive social environment, the necessary education also seemed to be determined in relative terms against the practice of the 'other parents' in the 'other households'. It was a shared understanding among the respondents that without providing their children with opportunities to attend the private academies (*Hak-Won* 학원), the chances of their children keeping up with the other children, who were much more advanced in their learning curve at school, and ultimately entering a high-ranking University, were low. However, extracurricular lessons often incurred high additional costs, and the respondents generally could not afford them with their shortage of disposable income, as well as being unable to save up for the prospective tuition fees for their children's college education. The respondents who were lone parents, being the only provider for their children, in particular blamed themselves greatly for being unable to provide the equivalent level of education as did the other parents. 'I cannot send them to Hak-Won when

[46] The labour market situation in South Korea has been increasingly becoming more competitive on the one hand, while on the other the traditional support network of family ties has been continuously diminishing without being sufficiently replaced by public means of support. Within such a social context, a good college degree was not simply a sign of educational achievement, but was one of the most significant resources to survive in the labour market competition and to secure a well-paying job which will possibly become the only source of one's income.

[47] While schooling was universally free for children aged between seven and fifteen (primary and middle school), tuition fees were charged for students aged between sixteen and eighteen (high school). The people with the Soo-Geup (In-poverty) or Cha-Sang-Wee (Near-poverty) status could apply for educational benefit for their children's tuition, school lunch, and after-school learning programmes.

other mothers do. The fact that I cannot educate the child who can actually do well…[distresses me].' They were ultimately concerned about their children falling behind in society and ending up in the same socio-economic status as themselves.

> 'Nowadays, poverty is transferred to the children. It is said that once you become poor, you cannot escape it. And the parents' economic capacity is related to the child's capacity, because the parents' informational power is directly connected to [the quality of] care they give their children. (…) Nowadays, money raises the children. Hak-Won and things. When you see how the world works like that, for people like us, I can only become intimidated. [Because] It is something I cannot do [for my children].'
>
> (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

> 'What I am worried about the most is that the way my life looks will get transmitted right to my children. In order for that to not happen, they need to go learn quickly [at the Hak-Wons like the other children], but I can't support them... If they start working and are required [officially by the NBLSS conditions] to financially support the household and pay for the rent and so on, then it'll just become the same situation as mine. Like the past... So sometimes, I feel like I can see them become just like... their mother, and their father.' (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with three children)

Another respondent pointed out that the level of material support and socio-economic capacities of the parent determined not only the child's academic achievements, but also other ways in which the child was treated at school.

> In the past, children were evaluated only based on their [academic] abilities [at school], regardless of whether they lived well or not. Now it isn't, is it? (…) Even if the child is not good at studying, if the child's mother can afford to bring a lot of [material] things to school and visit the school often, those children also get many school awards. It is astonishing that those things are all related to money. I don't visit my child's school, because I don't like being compared to those mothers.'
>
> (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

The comparative evaluation was drawn not only in relation to the people in their immediate social milieu, but also people of much higher economic status, who were referred to as 'the haves' or 'the household that has quite a bit to spare'. The interviewees would often say that 'The children from the households with money to spare, you know, ... their parents buy them all the pretty things'. It was the comparative gaps, big or small, in socio-economic living

conditions between people that functioned as the marker of relative superiority (or inferiority) in personal capacity as a parent, which subsequently brought a sense of shame for the respondents in poverty.

Such a relatively defined nature of the threshold of shame was also shown in how people's sense of shame-worthiness depended on the specific relational context within which a value evaluation of a person's self-worth was made. For instance, one female respondent noted that when there were many classmates in her child's school who also received the same kind of social assistance benefits, 'there was nothing shameful about it [i.e. the receipt of the benefits]'. That is, when there was no comparative difference in people's economic conditions within a specific socio-relational context, shame did not surface with regard to one's poverty or the receipt of social assistance (as far as the specific relational context went). This showed that the evaluative barometer of people's self-identity was not an absolute one by nature, but a relative threshold contingent upon the comparative *other* that functioned as the evaluative standard of the *self* (identifying its relative hierarchical position) within that specific relational context.

Endless Differentiation Made Between the Better and Worse off

The economic difference did not have to be major to create a sufficient basis for comparison; relational distance based on socio-economic differentiation was also found to occur between people living in broadly similar conditions of material deprivation. Echoing a dozen other interviewees, one female respondent in the 40s In-poverty group spoke about feeling alienated and unable to connect with people who were also social assistance recipients but lived in a more stable type of public housing.

> 'The people whose housing condition is stabilized, those living in the rental apartments, think differently. Even if they lack in living and other expenses for raising children [like

> myself], they don't worry about their housing. Those people cannot genuinely be on the same wavelength with us. There are many times when I feel alienated [from them]. There are so many comparisons drawn, even between people who are also in hardship.'
>
> (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with three children)

Some of the respondents from the Near-poverty group also spoke with envy about the In-poverty group who lived in public rental apartments, which were prioritized in provision for the In-poverty groups, for their better living conditions, higher security in maintaining the housing, and lower rents. On the other hand, the respondents who did live there spoke of the shame that their children faced at school for living in the public rental apartments that signified their Soo-Geup-Ja (In-poverty welfare recipient) status. Several respondents spoke of their children desperately wanting to move to a better housing because of such shaming comparisons being drawn between their peers at school. The respondents spoke in distress about how their children could only socialize with the children who also lived in the same type of public rental apartments. As such, comparative evaluations were drawn based on varying levels of material difference on the individual level, including relatively minor differences. This showed that there was no clear threshold for when the comparative evaluations for shaming and feeling ashamed began or ended between people.

Within the sampling group in this study, composed of people who were either officially living in poverty or near the poverty line, comparative evaluations were also made based on the particular differences between the Near-poverty and In-poverty groups. While they were both in receipt of social benefits, the main source of comparison was in the hierarchical difference in their official social status. The In-poverty group was officially the lower economic status than the Near-poverty status, and hence was seen as the worse off position to be in when compared to the Near-poverty group. The Near-poverty group thus showed a momentary sense of pride when addressing themselves as 'I am not a Soo-Geup-Ja, though' with a

noticeable confidence in their voice.

Furthermore, the comparative difference in the amount of state benefit that each group received (particularly the living expense benefit that was only provided for the In-poverty group) was a significant source of comparison, with receiving more benefit being the shameful position. There were several respondents from the Near-poverty group who emphasized that the In-poverty (Soo-Geup) group received much more benefits from the state, and that what they were receiving was very minor compared to the In-poverty group. They sometimes showed envy toward the In-poverty group regarding their current shortage of money for living expenses, but they also saw it as the basis of certifying their relatively higher social status position, regardless of how their actual economic situations compared. This was one of the major reasons why some people in the Near-poverty group, who were a non-recipient in-poverty group in terms of their actual socio-economic conditions, chose not to apply for the In-poverty (Soo-Geup) status for which they were eligible. Becoming an In-poverty welfare recipient was seen as being officially certified as being on the lowest and the poorest social rung of society.

On the flip side, several of the In-poverty group felt that people with a higher standard of living received better public provision in general situations (e.g. public housing which demanded a substantial amount of self-funded deposit as a precondition to applying), and spoke of feeling further marginalized and neglected by the state due to their lowest In-poverty social status. One female respondent in the 40s In-poverty group spoke with a deep sense of frustration that she experienced the government putting first the people who were still ‘the haves’ (compared to herself), and that it made her feel socially disrespected for being in the lowest economic status.

For the In-poverty group, they tended to differentiate themselves from the ‘illegitimate’,

‘alcoholic’, ‘lazy and dependent’ welfare recipients who were frequently criticized in the media as being illegal recipients who deceivingly and selfishly benefited from the social assistance system. When further asked about how they thought or felt that the NBLSS recipients or people in material hardships were portrayed on TV or in the news media, one female respondent from the In-poverty group said:

> ‘I think [they are portrayed] as a bit of a lazy person. That they become lazy being in receipt of this [NBLSS benefits]. I think there is such a tendency, though. Indulging in too much alcohol and living a hopeless life, relying on the state a bit too much. Like the developed countries where the welfare system is too good and people don’t work any more, people being too reliant on the country and becoming lazy. I don’t think they put in the effort. Yeah, I think there are some tendencies like that. I am also a Soo-Geup-Ja myself, but those kinds of people live on alcohol, to the extent that it makes me think of them as pathetic people.’
>
> (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

Respondents had tales too about other people that were undeserving of their ‘Soo-Geup-Ja’ status, having lied and cheated when making their claims for benefit, none of whom respondents knew personally but whom they had heard rumours about. At times, such stories of the moral hazard of some NBLSS recipients were brought up by the respondents quite explicitly to distance themselves from the shame to the so-called ‘people who are in poverty due to their own lack of effort (being lazy)’. They believed that those people should be ashamed, and be disqualified from the benefit for illegitimately abusing the system. This kind of ‘othering’ tendency found within the In-poverty group could be understood as a defensive mechanism to separate themselves from a group which was, without exception, perceived as undeserving of welfare assistance. In turn, this tendency placed their recipient status in a more justifiable position.

When people attained such relatively superior value positions within a context of comparison, the relatively lower relational positions that they occupied elsewhere in other relational

contexts were not taken into account. This showed that an individual's self-evaluation was bound to the comparative context of evaluation. In a nutshell, people's shame and shaming of others did not occur based on failing to meet an absolute socio-economic threshold for shame, but on one's position relative to others within the specific context of evaluation. This also displayed the unstable nature of today's social identity of people; depending on one's relative superiority or inferiority, which could vary between relational contexts of comparison, the resulting self-evaluation (that bestows shame or pride on oneself) could frequently change and vary for the exact same person.

7. 3. 2 Transient Identification Based on the Present State of the Self

The 'other' who interviewees compared against themselves was not limited to other people. It also included their past selves, at times when their socio-economic circumstances had differed from the present. Less than 40% of respondents had lived in poverty since childhood, and the others had experienced a significant decline in their financial status. This latter group of people often expressed feelings of shame via comparing their current status to their past; 'I was someone who was always well put together. I had never struggled in material terms'. The sources of comparison included various parts of their past self's socio-economic conditions, such as consumption patterns, level of income, type of job, relational network, and so on. For instance, the kinds of clothing they used to wear were raised as an illustration of how their socio-economic status clearly differed from the current one; 'I used to wear a lot of pretty shoes too, you see. I used to earn quite a lot of money in the past. Really' (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with four children).

These intrapersonal comparisons that people drew between their past and current selves were said to bring about an equally excruciating sense of shame and damage to the self-pride they had previously attained, which was said to be based on relative wealth compared to their

friends. The severity of the shame was substantial and some people had moved out of the city in which they used to lead a lifestyle that had given them a sense of self-pride.

> 'Back in the days I had grown up in a good environment and was living as if I was someone big. I had my own car to go around and bought clothes from the department stores… But as my life changed and my pride got hurt, I couldn't possibly live in the city [I grew up in] any longer. So I came to Seoul, and here, no one seemed to care or interfered with people living next door… That put me at so much more ease… If I kept on living in that city [my hometown], I would have needed mental therapy because of my pride getting so damaged.'
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

Respondents' socio-economic status in the past was treated as irrelevant to their current social identity as an individual. Instead, respondents' identification of their self-worth was precisely based on the present state of their selves; i.e. based on their relative socio-economic status at the point of evaluation. The fact that even the past self of the same person could be distanced from the notion of 'the self' as a comparable 'other' further supported the conceptual finding discussed earlier: people's current self-identities were in a relational estrangement not only in relation to other people but also within themselves.

Based on the findings discussed so far, facing shame with regard to one's relatively lower socio-economic status is not a psycho-social condition that is specific to poverty. That is to say, a fairly rich person who has the majority of the population in the society worse off than him or herself could also face shame when being in a relational context with people who are still meaningfully better off, or when comparing oneself to one's past self following a major shift in one's socio-economic conditions. It is arguably the case that anyone living under the current socio-relational environment is unavoidably exposed to such social relational identification of oneself.

7. 4 Poverty-Specific Shaming Conditions

While socio-economic shame was arguably a shared socio-relational condition in present-day South Korea as discussed above, poverty, nevertheless, carried several additional conditions that exposed them to a more frequent and unavoidable sense of shame. This section, therefore, discusses such shaming conditions that were specific to poverty: standing on the lowest socio-economic rung in society, being unable to self-support oneself economically, and institutional shaming received through the social assistance programme.

7. 4. 1 General Status of Inferiority in Comparative Evaluations: 'the Have-Nones'

What was distinctive about the shame people faced in poverty was its absolute frequency. Some specific differences (e.g. type of public housing) could place them in a better off position in relation to others of a similarly low-income group, as discussed above. However, the respondents living around the poverty line were inevitably finding themselves frequently placed in a lower socio-economic position in their social relations with other people. As people's general sense of self-worth and socio-relational value largely depended on their relative position in society, their general status of inferiority was leaving them with very scarce or no identifiable basis to draw a sense of self-pride or self-worth from. The respondents often spoke of having nothing to be proud of in their lives, as none of their socio-economic conditions was better than or as good as that of the others. Self-deprecating statements were often made in such a context, such as: 'It's not like I have a particularly presentable job, or have anything outstanding like some others do' (40s Male, In-poverty, Single-person household). One male respondent was even feeling apologetic for his 'weak' socio-economic status and for lacking aspirational things to share about himself, as if it was a kind of moral deficit.

Many spoke of having no pride in themselves. When asked about their proudest memory, the great majority of the interviewees said, ‘I have never felt proud of myself’, except for a few who said that giving birth to and raising their children was the proudest moment of their lives. Most of the respondents found that the social status implications of poverty, within the dominant self-evaluative framework of socio-economic comparison, caused them to feel shabby and ashamed, consequently damaging their self-confidence. One female respondent from the 40s Near-poverty group talked about how other social assistance recipients she met at the Ja-Hwal (Self-Support) work programmes were generally lacking in self-confidence. She saw the reasons for their low self-confidence to be related to not having anything substantial to be proud of as an individual, and finding all aspects of their lives in a comparatively worse off condition than others – such as not being healthy (physically and/or mentally), bad marriage conditions, children’s delinquency, being unable to look after their appearance, and having no confidence to find a proper job. Self-evaluation as having nothing of social value and thus to be standing in the lowest rung of society was especially prominent among the In-poverty group. A popular expression they used to refer to people within the same In-poverty status was ‘the have-nones’ or ‘the dead-end (*Mak-Jang* 막장) life that can’t get any lower or worse than it already is’.

7. 4. 2 Being Unable to Self-Support Oneself

Another distinctive source of shame in poverty was that the shortage of financial resources impaired people’s ability to self-support themselves with basic, yet crucial, everyday needs. Self-support was seen as an integral condition to meet for every working-age member of society who was physically capable of work. When asked what their current wishes were in life, many of the respondents who were not in formal work wanted to make themselves self-supportive by finding work.

> ‘All I wish is to become healthy soon, so that I can work… So that even if I can’t live as well as other people, I can at least live up to a certain level of their standard... Others are able to do so [when can’t I]…’ (40s Male, In-poverty, Single-person household)

Various unmet needs and desires in the respondents’ lives were usually ascribed to their lack of personal ‘capacity’ to afford those things, and perceived as a shameful sign of lacking in the ability to self-support oneself.

> ‘If you want to do those things, you have to be able to afford it. But I can’t join those people [at the events]. How can I, when I don’t have the capacity...’
> (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with three children)

Being unable to meet their children’s needs was bringing an even more poignant sense of shame, guilt, and self-blame for the respondents. Their role as a parent was taken particularly seriously as their primary responsibility in life as a person. And, as parental responsibility was also treated as a personal matter (together with the partner, if there was one), failing to meet their children’s needs was seen as an indication of their personal lack of ‘capacity’ as a parent.

> ‘I feel sorry for my children and think that it is because of my lack of capacity. That breaks my heart.’ (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

> ‘When my daughter told me she doesn’t want to live in the underground house, I said, “What can we do when mommy doesn’t have the capacity…”.’
> (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

The interviewees also felt deeply responsible for their children’s academic performance at school and ascribed it to their lack of financial capacity as the parent when their children’s grades went down. In particular, it was ascribed to their inability to afford the extracurricular education for their children compared to the other parents.

> ‘My daughter did well at school until the end of middle school, but her grades started to suffer after she went to high school. I can’t send her to private institutions in my circumstances… Because I don’t have any [money], I can’t educate my children

> properly... That's what gets to me the most... (…) I have a lot of guilt for not being able to educate my children well because I don't have anything.'
>
> (40s Male, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

> '[The reason for my children not performing well at school] is because "I" can't send them [to the private academies].'
>
> (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

Several had experiences of having actively discouraged or prevented their children from pursuing their genuine talents or interests due to the unaffordable financial costs involved in the educational route, which they also attributed to their own incompetence as a parent. 'Because I don't have any money or the capacity [to support my children], they can't even have any dreams for their future' (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with three children). Being unable to financially support their children's aspirations brought a deep sense of anguish and guilt for the respondents as parents. 'Wouldn't it be sad if you cannot raise your children well when they have all the potential to succeed?' (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with two children). Several respondents lowered their heads as they spoke about having transferred their children to a different school (several times in some cases), in order to discourage their children's natural talents in music or sports. These fields of interest were commonly understood to incur high educational costs and required extra parental support and time, neither of which the respondents could afford to provide themselves.

In some cases, having multiple children was also considered to be shameful if the person was living in poverty, as the person was seen as lacking in the capacity (economically defined) to be a parent. One female respondent in the 40s Near-poverty group spoke about feeling ashamed of recently becoming unexpectedly pregnant with another child. She worried that she will be judged as an irresponsible mother as she will be seen as lacking in the economic capacity as a parent.

Receipt of Social Assistance

Receipt of social assistance was a particularly poverty-specific source of shame. Its shame was associated with the inability to self-support, as receiving social assistance benefits was seen as an official recognition of one's complete loss of (and failure to achieve) economic self-sufficiency and dependence on other people. As socio-economic comparisons were justified on the premise that economic possessions were personally attained through one's own work and performance, unemployment or inability to self-support carried a social connotation that the person was even without the very basis to conduct an identification of the self. Consequently, the general terms used for social assistance recipient status, such as 'Soo-Geup' (In-poverty status) or 'Cha-Sang-Wee' (Near-poverty status), were comprehended as distinct social labels that distinguished a person from the rest of society as bearing a serious inadequacy, making it a particularly excruciating source of shame. This was equally the case for the older age group, who had formally passed the retirement age. One female respondent in her 60s stated that receiving the social assistance itself made her feel like being 'a pitiful person'.

> 'I feel ashamed. It hurts my pride, so to speak.'
>
> (40s Male, In-poverty, Single-person household)

> 'It hurts my pride. If I had enough to get by, I wouldn't want to live like this [being in receipt of welfare benefits]. I also have pride.'
>
> (60s Male, In-poverty, Single-person household)

> 'It feels quite shameful when my children's friends look at me and say, "That woman is a Soo-Geup-Ja. She lives on begging for food, because she doesn't have any money".'
>
> (60s Female, In-poverty, Single-person household)

The shameful sentiments were also shared to a certain extent by the people in the Cha-Sang-Wee (Near-poverty benefit recipient) group.

> 'It feels shabby to live as a Cha-Sang-Wee. (…) The fact that I maintain my living with

it... (…) It also feels shameful for me, because it makes me feel as if I am begging.'[48]
(40s Female, Near-poverty, Couple household with two children)

The interviewees with children also worried about the shame that their children felt towards their household's welfare recipient status.

'I also feel sorry for the children. If only I was not ill, we would have been able to live on me working. (…) My children hate it [i.e. receiving welfare] and feel ashamed about it, because children nowadays are ignored by the others if they [are known to] live in poverty.' (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

In one rare case, a male respondent in his 40s (Near-poverty, single-headed household with two children) spoke of being 'surprised and thankful' for his children who were 'proactive about applying for the current welfare benefit and were not feeling too bad or ashamed about it'. Yet, while the household was currently placed under the 'Cha-Sang-Wee (Near-poverty)' category in the official welfare system, the benefit the male respondent had officially applied for was the single-parent household benefit. Hence, the less powerful sense of shame his children expressed could have been due to the different kind and level of shame that was associated with single parenthood in the current times.

The official social assistance recipient status also exposed people to maltreatment, disdain, or shaming from other people. One female respondent in the 60s In-poverty group spoke about having been reproached and publicly shamed by someone she knew, when it was discovered that she was receiving a living expenses benefit from the state instead of sourcing it herself through her own work.

[48] The feelings of begging for receiving public assistance seemed to be triggered also in large part by the institutional shaming in the design of the anti-poverty social assistance itself. This will be discussed in the next section.

> ‘I would also like to be healthy and make my own living. It is because I’m physically not healthy enough that I became like this to receive the [governmental] help, but some people swear at me, you know? That I am eating into their tax money. Some people swore directly at my face. (…) He told me “You look [physically] fine and you live on receiving that kind of thing from the state”. Maybe he grudged the tax money he was paying. I suppose he pays a lot because he runs a business. But I don’t know how much he can pay on his own to be so condescending. It felt bad to hear that. (…) It’s not like I want to receive the benefit. I would live as a cleaner [if I could work] to live a better life than how I live now [as a benefit recipient]. I felt so miserable being treated like that.’
>
> (60s Female, In-poverty, Single-person household)

Discriminatory maltreatment also occurred in public places and more than two thirds of the respondents had received such treatment based on their welfare recipient status. A few of the respondents, from both the In- and Near-poverty group, spoke of having been discriminated against at hospitals compared to other self-paying patients in relation to their medical treatment. They felt that they were not being treated equally due to their inability to pay for the service themselves, although they were paying for the full amount via the public health care benefit system that was connected to their recipient status. A few others spoke of having been treated with disrespect at hospitals when they had gone to attain the official health certificate (which is a documentary requirement to prove their inability to work in order to receive the living expenses benefit).

> ‘Even though they [i.e. staff at the hospital] were being paid the same amount for issuing the certificate [as the other people did who paid for it themselves], they were telling me things like “What are you going to do with this anyway?” with an annoyed look.’
>
> (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

Such internal and external shaming people faced with regard to receiving social assistance was unavoidable for the people, because of the official nature of being identified as a person with his or her lack of ability to self-support oneself. Being unable to blame anyone other than themselves, people talked about questioning themselves whenever they looked on their lives in poverty, ‘Why can’t I do any better than this? Like the others do’.

7. 4. 3 Institutional Shaming via the National Basic Living Security Scheme[49]

Application processes for the NBLSS were described as having been a very daunting experience for more than half the respondents, and especially for the older respondents, due to the challenging level of its required documentation, thorough means-testing inspection of financial situations (including those of family members), and the low quality of human interactions they experienced in its delivery system. This section addresses the role that the central anti-poverty social policy in South Korea, the National Basic Living Security Scheme (NBLSS), was playing in significantly aggravating shame for people in poverty. The institutional shaming found in the NBLSS system will be discussed in terms of its central policy discourse, policy design and structure, and its delivery system. The policy analysis findings will be discussed alongside their personal level implications by drawing on people's own experience of encountering such policy measures on the ground. The findings are based on policy analysis of the NBLSS and qualitative interviews of people currently in receipt of the scheme either as the In-poverty (Soo-Geup) or the Near-poverty (Cha-Sang-Wee) status.

7. 4. 3 – 1 Underlying Shaming in the Design and Structure of the NBLSS

Personal Obligation of Self-Support: Feeling Undeserving & Ashamed of Social Assistance

While NBLSS was a notable departure from the previous Livelihood Protection Law as the first comprehensively applicable social assistance for poverty, the retention of the work

[49] Some parts of this chapter on the social policy analysis of the social assistance programme was published as a book chapter in the Policy Press volume 'The Shame of It: Global Perspectives on Anti-Poverty Policies', which was a collective output of the international research project on poverty and shame that was noted in Chapter 4. The book chapter was solely authored by myself in terms of its contents, and the second author, Professor Robert Walker, my supervisor, had given an editing input for completing the book chapter. The empirical findings drawn from the interview data in this section are new additions made in the thesis version of this work.

capability clause[50] in its design was functioning as an underlying shaming mechanism for people both applying for and receiving the social assistance. Although people capable of work were still eligible to apply for and receive the benefits (provided that they participate in the Ja-Hwal work programmes), the strongly embedded political propaganda that 'one must be self-supportive via work' was deeply ingrained among the welfare recipients themselves. A general consensus among the In-poverty status group, most of whom were in receipt of the living expenses benefit (unlike the Near-poverty group), was that self-support via work was a social and moral requirement for every member of society, apart from the exceptional cases of a total loss of physical ability to work. They generally believed that 'undeserving recipients' of social assistance benefits were not only those who had illegitimately acquired their recipient status by fabricating their personal information, but also those who had no visible physical restrictions to work (i.e. physical disability, and serious illness). A recently registered NBLSS recipient, who did not fit into the 'deserving' recipient category himself, said:

> 'From what I know, in order to become a Soo-Geup-Ja, you have to be physically uncomfortable to take part in hard physical labour or have physical limitations to participating in social life... and have an official disability rating.'
>
> (40s Male, In-poverty, Single-person household)

What became paradoxical was that taking visible physical problems as the only acceptable grounds for the inevitable worklessness of a 'deserving recipient' excluded most of the

[50] The Article 9, Paragraph 5 of the National Basic Living Security Act states that a person who is capable of work is eligible for the assistance on the condition of participating in the Ja-Hwal (Self-Support) work programmes. It is largely agreed in the literature that the decision to retain the work capability clause echoed the long-lasting political emphasis on self-sufficiency, a preoccupation with the risks of moral hazard and welfare dependence, and the media's portrayal of recipients as abusing the benefit system (Ahn and Song, 2006; Kang et al., 2008). However, interviewees (who were NBLSS recipients) were consistent in showing that there was an overwhelming desire to work, which was not merely for the financial return but also for an emotional sense of belonging and confirmation of one's self-worth in society that being in work granted them.

respondents themselves, who had various other reasons for their current worklessness; e.g. lack of required skill sets or educational qualifications, physical or mental health problems that were not visibly observable but significantly hindered their ability to work, or lack of adequate work in the job market. Many indeed felt that they were not fitting into the prevailing framework of who are 'deserving of [others', or public] help', and thus were feeling undeserving of the current assistance they were receiving. Most of the In-poverty group respondents in their 40s repeatedly underlined that it was not their desire to receive social assistance benefits, expressing their feelings of inadequacy in receiving the living expenses benefit. They emphasized that they should be able to resolve their 'own problems' (i.e. material shortage) by themselves, although they were currently unable to do so.

> 'It did hurt my pride (…) It's not that I wanted to receive this kind of help, is it? It was inevitable. It greatly hurt my pride (…) I always think about graduating, exiting this status soon, but there is no way, is there? It hurts my pride and I want to be independent in my living.' (60s Male, In-poverty, Single-person household)

For several of the Near-poverty group respondents, the emphasis on visible work capability underlying the Soo-Geup (In-poverty) status had made them feel undeserving to apply for the In-poverty benefit, although they were in financial need of it. A female respondent from the Near-poverty group spoke of having felt undeserving of social benefits altogether because of the widespread social perception that 'A Soo-Geup-Ja usually has a physical disability or is a disabled person'. She was unable to apply for the current Near-poverty benefit either, until someone encouraged her to apply by telling her that her situation was sufficiently eligible to receive the benefit.

Moreover, the Ja-Hwal (Self-Support) work programme to which NBLSS claimants capable of work were assigned were still considered to be associated with the shame of work-capable people receiving social assistance. Ja-Hwal work programme was not seen as a normal

employment or as an actual self-supportive work. Rather, it was seen by the respondents as an unavoidably enforced requirement to receive the social assistance, which could only keep them in the current state of living as a welfare recipient with lowly-paid and socially belittled work that provided no future prospects for improving their lives:

> 'Let's say a young woman gave birth to a baby, and say she is in her twenties, then this mother in her twenties has to live for the rest of her life being poor! Helping [through government] to escape poverty is a good thing, but it doesn't quite work out like that. I want to work to better support my daughter, but as soon as I earn more than the minimum threshold, I lose the status right away. So I'm always here in the situation of looking only at the 700,000 Won (£370 per month) living assistance. They should set a five-year or 10-year plan for us to be supported by the government while we try to seek extra income through work.' (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with one child)

There was nonetheless a clear sense of need for increased public support among the many respondents that found it impossible to make ends meet within their current economic situations. Yet, an acknowledgement of such need was only to incur personal shame as a sign of one's economic inadequacy and as a moral failure to deny the personal responsibility to self-support oneself. When asked about how they would like to see the social assistance system improved, many agreed that there needed to be an increase in the living expenses benefit for them to lead a humanly living and to acquire a sense of stability in life to come up with ways to improve their economic situation and exit their welfare recipient status. However, they then undermined these needs straight away, by saying that one could not be 'justified' in wanting more provision as 'wanting more would be my greed', and that they had no intention of satisfying their own greed with the state benefit. Many also followed up by making apologetic comments about being less deserving than others that must exist who had a greater shortage of resources than themselves and truly 'deserved' help.

> 'I felt like I was being too greedy. [I asked myself whether] I was trying to receive benefit out of my own greed (…) There are quite a lot of people who think like me, that "There must be many more people who are in a deeper struggle than I am [to really deserve the

> welfare benefits]". Also worrying, "What if I apply and then get turned down [because I am not eligible]".' (40s Female, Near-poverty, Couple household with two children)

While there were deep frustrations over the insufficiency of the current social assistance, the shame associated with receiving help as an undignifying and even an immoral reliance on other people was restricting the interviewees from freely addressing both their needs and the problems in the current welfare system. There was a shared sentiment among both In-poverty and Near-poverty group that social assistance was not a social right but a special social advantage that they should feel grateful for (and anyone in receipt of assistance) as others did not receive it. The interviewees repeatedly said that they 'should not complain' even if the current level of social assistance was very difficult to live on and placed them in distressing hardship. The current social and institutional discourse regarding the boundary of the 'deserving welfare recipient' was seemingly carrying within itself moral disapproval of the act of seeking outside help in poverty for reasons outside the narrow concept of severe physically visible inability to work. As a consequence, for the great majority of the respondents, regardless of their actual inability to work, it was unavoidable to question themselves the validity of their receipt of public help, and feel undeserving of the benefit and ashamed to receive it or to disclose it before others.

A few other respondents tried to present other socially accepted reasons as the blameless and shameless basis for the validity of their receipt of benefit. One female respondent from the 60s In-poverty group stressed that she never thought about relying on someone else to receive help or expected money from others. But she tried to argue that she was socially dignified and deserving of further state provision, not based on her poverty but based on her husband being a war veteran. This case further revealed that the absence of a socially accepted poverty discourse providing a moral and normative basis to justify some people's need for support

was resulting in a shameful receipt of social assistance for many. It was further restraining people's own efforts to seek outside help, in case of eligible non-recipient in-poverty group, due to them self-identifying as being undeserving of the social assistance.

Obligatory Family Support: Feeling Forced into Achieving the Unachievable

In order to apply for the In-poverty status (and not Near-Poverty status) that is entitled to the living expenses benefit (which is the main benefit to receive income support), it was mandatory to fulfil the conditions of the family obligation of support clause. This clause required the applicant to prove that his or her direct family members (spouse, parents, and children) and other related family members too, if living in the same household (including siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, and grandson-/daughter-in-law), were financially not able or willingly not choosing to support the applicant. This clause was one of the most frequently mentioned policy element of NBLSS that people had struggled with for many reasons, including its shaming effects.

Several facets of the obligatory clause were causing shaming situations for people. First, the applicants were obliged to divulge their precarious financial state to their wider family to whom they had not disclosed their living conditions or had seldom interacted with. Second, the family obligation clause required applicants to personally solicit the agreement of all relevant family members to means testing for what appeared to be their personal failings, even if the quality of the actual relationship is such that the applicant would otherwise consider it inappropriate to ask for financial help. Third, the applicants had to prove their kin's financial inability[51] or unwillingness to support them, and if they failed to do so, they

[51] The official calculation for determining the ability of family members to provide support required only that one eligible family member earned 130% or more of the combined minimum cost of living amount for the applicant and relevant family member(s).

were placing their kin in an official position to support them financially. Either way, the expected results were seen as both emotionally burdensome and shaming for both applicants themselves as well as their family members (in case of proving their financially inability).

What was more fundamentally problematic of including the clause in the policy design of the NBLSS was its noticeable contradiction with the reality of people's lives. In practice, the family relatives expected to provide financial support were found to provide either insufficient or no support at all, and the failed applicant was left in a state of poverty with no further access available to the social assistance system; this was also consistent with previous findings in the literature (Yeo, 2004; Yeo, 2005; Huh, 2009: 286). As discussed in earlier chapters, individualization of people's economic livelihoods and decline of traditional family relations that used to provide informal source of support were now the prevailing social conditions. As an illustration, even the respondents in their 60s, who had grown up in a social climate when filial piety of children to support and care for their old parents were still the dominant social norm, were not considering their grown-up children in their 30s and 40s as their rightful providers of financial support. They expressed frustrations over the unrealistic expectation of the current social assistance system:

> 'The government thinks that my sons are my supporting family, but sons can never take the responsibility over their parents. If they (the government) insist, then it means my sons have to get divorced and ruin their own lives. The daughters-in-law wouldn't like to take care of us. You can't tell them (your children of your need for their support). If they give spontaneously, then you can take it. But if they don't, you can't ask for it. Old people have to live alone. Sons are absolutely not the supporting family.'
>
> (60s Female, Near-poverty, Two people household)

> 'As I couldn't tell them [my children] of my (financial) situation, I tried to apply for the social assistance programme. As there were calls from the welfare office to them (regarding the obligatory family support condition), my daughter called me to scold at me saying, "why are you keep going to the welfare office!". So I had to even explain myself that 'I am just trying to receive some benefit. I am not trying to be a trouble for you all'. I could then understand why people on TV take their own lives because of material hardship.' (60s Male, In-poverty, Single-person household)

It was also not unusual for the family relatives to ignore the request altogether to cooperate in the application procedure, which became a deeply hurtful and sometimes shaming experience for people. Divorced lone-parent families, who were likely to be exposed to more severe poverty, were particularly affected by this clause, since ex-partners were often uncooperative and applicants themselves preferred to avoid contact for fear of reopening old wounds or for other personal reasons. For male lone parents, the experience of contacting his ex-spouse and children for such cause also incurred a poignant gender-based shame as discussed earlier. For the older age group, the issue was often one of losing face having to make such request to financially depend on their grown-up children when they were usually unwilling to give the help. Some respondents had given up on applying for the In-poverty benefit as they found it shameful to expose their concealed shame to other family members, involving them in the process of going through official investigations of their financial capacity to support the claimant. A female interviewee in her 40s, who was currently in receipt of a minor benefit as a single-parent (but with an evident need for the In-poverty benefit, being a single income-earner with multiple children and with no current work due to childcare responsibilities), said that she gave up on the application as it was too distressing for her to inform her mother of her current situation. Many of the respondents, regardless of sub-group divisions, expressed their resentment towards the obligatory family support clause, and saw it not only as a shameful process and a substantial barrier to accessing the social assistance system but also as a policy feature that served to further disintegrate their family relationships.

7. 4. 3 - 2 Shaming Faced in the Delivery System of the NBLSS

It was at the point of delivery that the most salient experiences of shaming were found to occur in the NBLSS system, as this involved direct and personal interaction between officials and the applicants.

(1) Application & Assessment System

Documents-Oriented Assessment: 'Documents were more important than my own life'

One of the main facets of the application system that was raised by the respondents as a great source of shame was the heavily documents-oriented assessment of their current socio-economic conditions without taking into account the actual situations in need. Many talked about being faced with an interrogative questioning from the officer who demanded that they bring in 'proof' for their impoverished conditions that were deserving of receiving the benefits. They often stated that, 'Everything was about the documentary evidence' and that such assessment felt unfair in its lack of appreciation for listening to the actual voice of the people themselves in hardship. While people generally found it difficult to make criticisms or complaints over the public provision they were receiving, many who had failed to receive living expenses benefit or those were placed instead in Near-poverty group with minimal entitlement to benefits (who were in reality non-recipient In-poverty group) said 'Something is wrong with the law of this country' and that they felt very upset for being unjustly declined. Several from both age groups spoke in tears of having felt that the assessment system valued documents of proof more than their actual lives:

> 'Only based on documents! That's how it worked… (…) When in reality, I was… really… in hardship and was struggling, I was just told that I can't [receive the assistance] because of what shows in the overall documents. How can it be just because of the documents, when I'm really struggling. But they just [dealt with it like that]… If I could afford it [to avoid these situations], I would because it hurts my pride, its' shameful, and I'm still young. But as I'm raising children, that's really hard [to afford]… That's why I went [to apply for the social assistance]. Based on documents… (Trying not to cry,) What can I say when I'm told that it says so on my documents...'
>
> (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with two children).

Especially having failed to pass the application process, the process up to that point turned into a deeply distressing memory of rejection:

> '(crying)... It was because I was under, so much, so much hardship that I went there [to the Dong office to apply], having swallowed my pride, to go and tell everything, and just everything I had that I could show [as a proof of my situation in need]. But then, that was it. [I got rejected right away because of my lack of documentary proof.] (sighing, holding back the tears)'. (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

Such outright rejection without a substantial attentiveness in the assessment process left people feeling as being treated with no respect as a human being with dignity in his/her life. Such emotional distress was owing to being treated with no respect regarding the difficult process that people had gone through up to that point of making the decision to go in and apply for the assistance. It required people to conjure up great strengths to seek outside help as they were under the social pressure to be self-supportive, yet they had made the decision to apply for the public support out of unavoidably desperate situations. People wanted the assessment process to involve a proper evaluation of their actual conditions, as the documents-oriented rejection left them feeling deeply mortified and put to shame by the state.

Meeting the Conditionality that Proves 'I have absolutely nothing'

Many of the respondents defined the official label of 'Soo-Geup-Ja' (In-poverty benefit recipient of NBLSS) as someone 'Who has nothing on them. That is why they made me a Soo-Geup-Ja. Because I have nothing'. Several of the respondents in the Near-poverty group also used the expression when speaking of who a Soo-Geup-Ja is: 'Isn't someone who has no family, no assets, no car, no house, a Soo-Geup-Ja?' When exploring why such expression was widespread, the very conditionality of NBLSS that needed to be met to receive the In-poverty benefits was found to precisely reflect those language.

The eligibility criteria seemed to be based on an unrealistically narrow definition of what it means to live in poverty. The list of conditions included having no ownership of a house, no family to support him/herself, no income more than the basic living expenses amount, no

asset that amounts to having more monetary resources than the minimum cost of living line (based on the official formula for calculation), not having good health that enables them to work. The conditionality also legally mandated that the person should not own more than a small car that was less than ten years old. One of the respondents spoke of having felt forced to dispose of his car, as it was counted as an impediment to proving his eligibility for the In-poverty benefit. People found such conditionality of NBLSS to be both cultivating the notion that a Soo-Geup-Ja (In-poverty welfare recipient) is someone who possesses absolutely nothing of value, as well as compelling them to become a person who fits that mould without a choice for survival. Even after meeting all of the required conditionality, becoming a Soo-Geup-Ja could only officialise one's rock-bottom status in society, as one who possesses 'nothing' of value both in the eyes of the recipients themselves as well as the beholder. Under such official framework of 'poverty', becoming a social assistance recipient could only be perceived as earning an official marker of shame.

Unwanted Exposure of Personal Situations of Inadequacies

When the NBLSS recipients needed to access the in-kind benefits, such as discounted fees for mobile phone bills and children's school lunch fees, they were mostly first obliged to visit the social welfare office to obtain an official document that displayed their name and address, and the proof of their status as receiving the In-poverty benefits. This document was then to be shown or submitted to the service supplier in public places. Recipients found the need to repeatedly request such document in public view in the community Dong office shameful, as well as the requirement to submit it to various public places such as children's schools, restaurants and shops.

> 'I have my pride too. Do I really have to say (quietly muttering) "I am a Soo-Geup-Ja" every time I need to issue the [NBLSS recipient status verification] certificate that costs 600, 700 won (equivalent to 50 pence) each? And several hundred times over for every

time I am applying [for water fees, telephone bills, etc.]? I really want that to be changed. They should rather make me an ID card that certifies the Soo-Geup-Ja status and have us show it [without having to verbalize it out loud], but they make me say it myself for every single thing.' (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

It also concerned several of the respondents that their 'social status identity' as a NBLSS recipient will be the source of social discrimination.

'[Having to expose my Soo-Geup status] is uncomfortable, to be honest. Because, I might get disadvantaged. And it's not so good that my social status identity is completely revealed that I am a Soo-Geup-Ja, which only some people know about. It doesn't feel blameless to be receiving money from the state, to be honest.'
(60s Female, In-poverty, Single-person household)

The respondents' children were also said to find the formal process shameful and were upset that they were required to submit the application once every school term to their teacher for benefits that covered their school fees and school lunches. A few respondents' children went to a school that had an online application system for the educational benefit, for which they had to apply once a year (which was much less frequent than other schools), which they found much less pressurizing and less distressing. Sometimes, however, adults noted with surprise that their children did not complain, accepting the need to go without or put up with shaming circumstances.

'My daughter has no problem. (…) You know her friends and girls of her age can be quite ashamed about it, but she just says God feeds us. When some aid comes, she says God did it for me and that she is thankful for it. She is a rare kind, so I'm very thankful. I was worried that her pride will get hurt with such things, but no.'
(40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with one child)

'My first child has a very strong sense of self. So I was worried about [applying for] this [benefit]. But to my surprise, the child said 'why don't you just give it a go?', so I asked 'Would you be okay?' And he showed his consent to apply for it. So I did.'
(40s Female, Near-poverty, Couple household with two children)

The respondents themselves, who were parents, nevertheless tended to blame themselves and

feel guilty for being unable to afford things the children needed and wanted.

(2) Quality of Human Interaction in the Delivery System

Evidence suggested that recipients repeatedly found themselves in situations in which they were exposed to shaming practices from the officialdom that included being treated with a lack of respect, interrogated under the presumption of guilt, and being rendered powerless and voiceless at times. The quality of the personal interactions with officialdom was usually described as 'cold, rigid, unsupportive, not listening, no empathy, no understanding, no acknowledgement of the actual situation of my living conditions', and that they generally felt that the officials had no respect for them as a person, looking down on them as being 'inferior'. As an illustration, one of the Near-poverty respondents had withdrawn her application for the NBLSS after experiencing a thoroughly and unbearably shaming interrogation during the interview in which a welfare officer deliberately shamed and accused her of being an irresponsible and incapable mother and of exposing her children to poverty. The extent of such shaming did seem to possibly vary between officers, as in the case of one welfare officer; the respondents she had helped to recruit all testified to their positive experience with her, which was said to have been one of empathy, respect, and a willingness to help using all available official means of support.

Such shaming involved in the process of claiming social assistance had been the main obstacle for several of the Near-poverty group to applying for the In-poverty status, who were in reality non-recipient in-poverty group. One female respondent in the Near-poverty group, as an illustration, who was in receipt of the single-parent household benefit (which entailed a very minimal financial provision aimed at supplementing the expenses of looking after children), had given up on applying for In-poverty status after she experienced shaming treatment at the local Dong office by the welfare official when she last tried to apply for the

NBLSS benefit. As a mother of four children without a partner, she was currently without a job due to childcare responsibilities for her young children with no other available source of financial support. However, due to her shaming experience in the past, the NBLSS benefit for her had become equivalent to a shameful way of living that one had to accept in return for receiving the social assistance. Although receiving social assistance was the only way to cover the living expenses in her life as it currently stood, the shaming experience was so powerfully degrading for her that she chose to give up on the application and choose to live in abject poverty rather than bear the shame of going through the official process again to receive the benefit.

> 'They were asking everything... in this really inquisitive way. You know, something like, why did you have to come here, are you getting divorced or what, how are you going to live from now on and so forth… Of course, he is in the position to ask those things, but for people who are wounded inside, there are things that you don't want to bring out… Do I have to show the bottom [of my pains] and display myself so poorly like this to receive this money… (…) I just couldn't bear the kinds of answers I had to give to his questions. Only tears fell down my cheeks... If the person was another woman like I am, then I could have maybe talked about it, but it was a man and he had such an abrupt manner... (…) So I thought to myself I never want to go through this again, here, in front of this person... That stuck in my mind. (…) Let's just, live, as I have been living... (…) That's when I began to have my mind set [that I would never go back to apply for the assistance]. (…) It was just so shaming.'
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with four children)

If, for some, claiming social assistance offered respite from the financial dependency on family that poverty creates, for many others, interactions with officialdom ratcheted up the sense of shame to a more intense level. This is partly because of attitudes towards social assistance which was first introduced in 1961 and largely modelled on the residual, strictly regulated charitable provisions that had previously been available as a foreign aid in the post-Korean War period (first under American military rule and subsequently under President Lee Seung-Man) (Huh, 2009; Kim, 2010). The current system, NBLSS, while couched within a progressive rhetoric of civil rights, remains residual, enforces familial responsibility for

extended kin which does not exist in practice, and operates a workfare system that differentiates between people on the grounds of employability, and discriminates against those who are work-capable by paying them lower benefits. In terms of its impact on the personal level, a substantial number of people actively chose to give up on the assistance application altogether:

> 'I choose to not live that life, where I have to feel that way. (…) I really don't want to go back to the welfare office, I just don't want to live that kind of life…'
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with four children)

(3) Poor Quality of the Contents in Provision

Another more indirect element that caused shaming in receiving social assistance was its low quality of the content of provision. For instance, several people found that the tutorial support programmes, free lunch card services, or the rice they were enabled to purchase at a lower price were noticeably of poor quality. They felt that receiving such poor quality provision felt like a sign of being disrespected by the state in their public treatment through the welfare system. Several others, who were currently working at the Self-Support work programme, spoke of the shaming and demeaning treatment they received from the managers of the programme.

> 'We have a meeting once a month... In the meeting, the manager tells us to give our opinion on an agenda that he/she proposes. But no one says anything... They can't even raise any complaints even when the manager says something disadvantageous to them, because they are worried that they will fall into disfavour… They can't even tell them when the side dishes run out during lunch time… That's when I really see them [as having lost all their sense of self-esteem and confidence]'.
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

Even when they felt it was obviously wrong and should be fixed, they were said to be unable to express any complaints or ideas for change, due to the fear of provoking any disadvantage

that could lead to them losing their current recipient status:

> 'You see, what that is, if they fall out of this [recipient status], they have nowhere else to go... Their children are young, and they don't have the self-confidence to go out in society and live like a normal person… and not like a Soo-Geup-Ja… They are generally overweight, unhealthy, don't have the confidence to work, and they had problems in their married life while coming this far in life… So it's a compound problem…'
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

Such lopsided power dynamics in human interactions lacking of basic social respect clearly implied that social assistance was not delivered as a justified social right of the recipients, and only a very few of the respondents were able to claim it as their rightful social entitlement as a citizen. In other words, being a welfare recipient of the NBLSS social assistance was bringing in another layer of shame to the already compounded sources of shame in people's current lives in poverty.

7. 5 Conclusion

Based on the empirical findings from the qualitative interviews of people officially living in and near poverty, this chapter showed how the social level psycho-social dynamics of shame manifested and functioned on the personal level of poverty. First, it was found that people's personal level socio-relational practices were consistent with the increased individualistic social identification of people and the societal shift in values (from Confucianism to capitalism). Perceptions of women's self-identities still manifested some remaining traces of Confucian values mixed with modern capitalistic value evaluations of people. Such socio-economic evaluation of people's social identities was not a one-sided judgement made only by the socially rich and powerful, but was a shared socio-relational practice also by people in poverty in their perception of others as well as their own selves. It was arguably the case that people, under the modern socio-relational condition, have become both the evaluative judge

of people's self-identities as well as the object of such judgements.

Second, when people experienced shame with regard to their socio-economic living conditions, shame arose not based on failing to meet an absolute threshold of some kind, such as absolute poverty. Rather, the way people identified one another's individualized social identity and its value was ultimately based on individual level socio-economic position within the relational context of the *self*, and shame was placed based on the comparative inferiority of the self's socio-economic condition to that of the *others* at the point of evaluation. The others with whom they compared themselves included people of widely varying socio-economic status, but were most frequently those in their immediate social milieu, as well as their past selves that were equally estranged from their current self-identity. In short, people's sense of self-worth was being competitively attained by nature, and the ability to stay out of shame in relation to poverty was based on their socio-economically defined comparative superiority to others within their specific relational contexts. What was further notable of this evaluative mechanism of a person's social identity was its inherent instability. People's socio-economic conditions that formed the basis of such evaluation were changeable, and the evaluation itself could vary based on who was compared against the self. These findings demonstrated that the current socio-relational environment required a constant re-evaluation of people's self-values, and such psycho-social dynamics of shame was not a phenomenon limited to poverty but a broader social condition that was equally manifesting in poverty.

Third, while the shame based on socio-economic differences was found to be a society-wide phenomenon, there were nonetheless several conditions specific to poverty that were further conducive to facing shame in everyday life. To begin with, there was a higher chance for those in the lowest income group to identify their self-value to be a shameful one (i.e. comparatively lower in value) when compared to others in society, due to their generally

worse off socio-economic conditions. Moreover, the sheer inability to meet one's basic needs, namely being unable to self-support oneself, as well as being in receipt of official social assistance, functioned as a particular source of shame and social degradation of people in poverty.

Furthermore, there was an institutional level shaming by what was the central public provision for poverty in South Korea, the NBLSS social assistance policy. In both its policy design and delivery system, an embedded policy discourse of self-sufficiency via work that originated from the developmental period of the past was still prevailing in the current NBLSS system. Its self-support and family-support oriented policy framework was suitable for the 1970s, 80s, or 90s' social climate when job opportunities and family ties were still viable sources of support. However, such policy framework did not adequately reflect the current social environment that people were in, in which well-paying jobs were scarce and family ties functioned no more as reliable source of welfare provision. The low quality in both human interaction with the officialdom and the content of provision in the delivery system also reflected such passive nature of the current social assistance for the 'work-capable' poor, and were in effect reaffirming its underlying policy agenda that people should essentially be self-supporting themselves.

Due to such preoccupation with enforcing people's self-support above all other policy objectives, its current design and delivery system now carried multiple layers of unavoidable institutional shaming in the system; e.g. obliging people to prove they possess nothing of value, no family members willing to support them, no physical capacity to work, and treating them with contempt or lack of respect and low quality provision of welfare. This overall status of the current NBLSS was undermining its original policy objectives as the first rights-based social assistance program. Such institutional shaming was further aggravating people's

living conditions in hardship (for both in receipt of the benefits and not), and substantially hindered people from claiming their rightful social assistance.

Chapter 8. Personal Level Impact & Responses to Shame in Poverty

8. 1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the remaining two sub-questions from the third set of research questions: (ii) what the personal level impact was that shame had on people's lives in poverty, and (iii) what people's responses to shame were (whether it was possible to feel less or no shame with regard to poverty). The analysis is based on the qualitative data from interviews with people living in and near the official minimum cost of living line. First, this chapter discusses the immediate impact that shame had on people's perceptions of their own lives and the ways in which they managed them, which were characterized by concealment of poverty. Second, it addresses how people in poverty became trapped in social isolation following the concealment of their poverty, and how they were kept away from both relational and material sources of support that were both vital and potentially attainable. Third, it discusses the continuing impact of shame within the state of social isolation, which could drive people's loss of self-confidence and lead to a serious state of despair and loss of hope in the long run. Fourth, this chapter discusses a deeper sense of self-awareness that people generally seemed to carry, which appeared to be fundamentally opposing the shame cast upon them. Lastly, three main types of coping mechanisms that were adopted by the people are reviewed, discussing what was the most effective means of tackling the core working mechanisms of shame and why.

8. 2 Concealment of Poverty Through Shame

Unlike the past, as individual level socio-economic conditions became the most significant source of evaluating people's social identity, for those living in poverty, exposing their socio-

economic conditions to others have become a particularly sensitive matter. This section discusses how the current shame of poverty led to the concealment of poverty and hindered people's social relations with others.

Relational Implications of Exposing Poverty

The great majority of the respondents were living in a state of seclusion with very limited social life. Most people said they had no close relationships with people outside their immediate household, nor did they go to public spaces to socialize with others. One of the main reasons for people's social seclusion was the financial constraints in affording the costs of participating in socializing and outdoor activities, e.g. the costs of eating out, transport, recreational activities, and so on. Yet, an equally important reason was that the people felt they were 'not presentable' in front of the others, as they would appear 'shabby' in their exterior looks.

> 'One needs to invest some money to look presentable to go outside. Why would I go around looking like this? I wouldn't go out [like this]. (…) [Also], if one goes out, everything costs money, so I don't go out.'
>
> (60s Female, Near-poverty, Two-person household)

More than half the respondents displayed an acute self-consciousness about their visible appearance, worrying that it could reveal to others their living conditions in poverty. A female respondent in the 40s Near-poverty group spoke at length about the significance that clothing had for her confidence and emotional mood in going outside to collect her children when she had to appear before the neighbours and other parents. She said that she would consciously make sure that her children's clothing 'looks clean at least at all times', as she could not buy them 'new and pretty clothes' like the other parents and hated the thought of her children looking shabby in front of others. In a few cases of the female respondents from the Near-poverty group, whom I met outside in a public space, it was impossible to tell that they were

in material hardship by the way they dressed and presented themselves. It was not until I sat down and had an in-depth conversation with them that their actual living conditions in hardship became evident to me.

Other material conditions also functioned as a source of shame that should be hidden from exposure, which further prevented them from freely socializing with others. Many deliberately avoided having to invite other people to their house, even direct family members and old friends from childhood, as it required them to expose their current living conditions, which they thought were shamefully unpresentable.

> 'After I fell into [material] hardship, I stopped contacting my friends. (…) I really hate it when they are in town and say that "I will come to your house". I tell them to meet me outside instead.' (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

> 'I would like to live with my mother [to get some help with taking care of the children, so that I could go out to work] (…) but I can't, because my house looks shabby. I have never shown her that I live like this, you see.'
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with four children)

This strict avoidance of exposing one's living conditions to others was a prevalent tendency also reported of the respondents' children. A female interviewee in the 40s In-poverty group spoke about how she felt sad that her daughter would never bring her friends to the house due to being ashamed that it looked shabby in comparison to her friends' houses.

The main reason behind people's strong resistance to exposing their poverty was the emotional damage it caused to their self-esteem and pride. A female interviewee from the 40s Near-poverty group said, when asked about whether she speaks to her friends about the various emotional hardships she faced in poverty, 'I can tell them. But it would upset me, so I can't... It would hurt my pride' (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with three children). A male respondent used the word 'shame' as the specific reason for hiding his situation in front of his friends.

> ‘Even if I meet my friends, they are all working... and have a family [unlike myself]... (…) When I don’t have anything myself, ... because of the shame... and my ego... I don’t want to look like I don’t have anything, even when I really don’t. Although I am in hardship, others don’t see me that way. Because I act like I am confident. So they don’t see me as living in hardship. Because I act confidently...’
>
> (40s Male, In-poverty, Single-person household)

Socio-Economic Equivalence as the Basic Relational Condition

What was further notable in terms of the impact of socio-economic shame was the significance that socio-economic equivalence held in the present-day society in both forming and maintaining human relations. Speaking for many, a female respondent from the 40s In-poverty group stated that, ‘In case of the friends who live well, I choose not to see them. It’s also a burden for you to be treated with food when you cannot treat them back in return’. Many who said they had no real human relations often spoke in accordance with these two quotes given by a male respondent from the 60s In-poverty group and a female respondent from the 40s In-poverty group: ‘If there is no money in my pocket, I have no friends’, and ‘One needs to socialize with people who are in similarly difficult conditions to be able to have a real conversation, but I don’t have anyone who lives like that around me. [So I have no one to talk to]’. For the few exceptional respondents who did socialize with others from time to time, they were also finding it inevitable that they met up only with those who lived in similar economic conditions.

> ‘I meet up with the people from my workplace. Yeah... the kinds of friends whom I can comfortably get to know, as they share similar living conditions and a mutual understanding of each other... It naturally turns out that way. The friends who live well, I don’t see them. (…) If I meet friends and they eat a 10,000 won (equitable to 7 pounds) dish, I need to also eat a 10,000 won dish, but my living standard cannot live up to it. So I keep cutting them off, and end up meeting similar people [as myself] and go to eat a 5,000 won dish each. Even if they tell me to come out, that they will treat me with the meal, I don’t meet them because it makes me uncomfortable. So I give excuses saying that I am busy or that I have to go somewhere.’
>
> (60s Female, In-poverty, Single-person household)

It was found that people had to be considered as social equals to build a genuine human relationship with one another in the current social environment. Socio-economic equivalence itself was not easy to establish between people, as discussed in Chapter 7, due to the endless comparative evaluations that could take place based on individual level differences. On the flip side, what divided and stratified people nowadays were individual level socio-economic differences which could instantly create a relational distance between people and deprive someone of their membership of economically non-equivalent social relations. Shame was the emotional awareness of one's failure to attain relational membership of a relatively higher status group (or an individual) than one's own. The mechanisms of both economic difference and equivalence were fundamentally rooted in the same socio-relational system discussed in earlier chapters, within which economic status functioned as the individual's social membership pass to social relations of equivalent status.

Poverty Becoming a Personal Secret

Consequently, living in poverty had become people's most personal secret, with critical socio-relational implications. The majority of the respondents had kept their living conditions a complete secret from almost everyone they knew in their lives.

> 'My old friends and the people I know now don't know about how I [actually] look right now. Only you know [because I am telling you now]. Nobody knows, no one, because I am strict on self-management and I also have my pride. I don't want to reveal how I didn't turn out well. So even if I meet a friend, she doesn't know that I am living in a public rental apartment and that I divorced my husband.'
>
> (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

> 'No one knows that I am a Soo-Geup-Ja. None of my friends knows either… It hurts my pride so much... Not even my parents know, because I didn't tell them... I don't want to tell them. (…) It's so shameful. You would have to be with people who live like that to talk about it, but no one [around me] lives like this so... It was too shameful [to talk about it to other people].' (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

Several were also hiding their welfare recipient status from their children, and a few

expressed discomfort about their living situations being known already to their children's friends at school.

> 'I don't tell my children clearly… about our situation... If there is an official document to fill out from school, I just tell the teacher... so that about 80% of it could be kept a secret [from the children]... I ask a lot for help [from the teacher, to keep it a secret]... Because nowadays the children are also looked down on [based on their economic living conditions]… Even the children at the level of preschool are said to be divided based on whether they live in a particular apartment or in a villa[52].'
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

As the interviewees avoided exposing their poverty, because of its shameful and negative relational implications, this was leading to an aggravation of seclusion and therefore of problems in dealing with their hardships in poverty. Facing the various hardships of poverty alone incurred an overwhelming level of stress, and long-term seclusion in such a stressful condition made poverty become an even more sensitive matter of hurtful privacy and a source of shame. Consequently, respondents were angry and upset when they felt forced to reveal their lives in poverty to others who had been complete outsiders and strangers to what they had been struggling with alone in their lives.

8. 3 Social Isolation in Poverty

The resulting personal level impact of poverty becoming a shameful secret was found to be social isolation of people living in poverty. This section explains the personal level processes at work that relate the shame of poverty to the consequential social isolation of people. The processes of social isolation will be discussed in two aspects: isolation in material deprivation

[52] 'Villa' is a general term used to refer to low-rise housing usually shared by multiple households, which is also considered to be a cheaper type of housing when compared to apartments (except for the apartments built for public renting purposes).

and isolation in relational deprivation, addressing their respective implications for the well-being of people living in poverty.

8. 3. 1 Becoming Isolated in Material Deprivation

The interviewees often spoke of their struggle with solitude, having no one but themselves to face the everyday challenges of making ends meet. Even for those in the In-poverty group who were receiving the living expenses benefit felt that they were relying solely on themselves, as the self-support conditionality of the benefit mandated people to work for the benefit via public Ja-Hwal (Self-Support) work programmes.[53] Most were aware of their need for outside help, as they were struggling with a shortage of resources within their secluded living conditions. There were, however, several emotional impediments rooted in shame that restricted people from seeking outside help, eventually leading them to a state of social isolation in material deprivation.

The Shame of Seeking and Receiving Outside Help

Due to the shameful implications now surrounding poverty, both seeking and receiving outside help also acquired acutely shameful social connotations as indicating one's failure to be economically independent and self-supporting. The great majority of respondents spoke of their experiences of seeking and receiving others' help as emotionally painful memories, which hurt their pride and brought unavoidable shame upon them. Thus, due to the potential shame they knew they would have to face, many found asking for help to be a very difficult thing to do themselves.

[53] This was mandatory unless they could clearly prove their physical inability to work, which had been unsuccessful for many participants who had health problems that were difficult to prove in the mandated form.

> ‘I can’t do that, asking for favours. Not when I need something myself. Unless someone spontaneously gives out of a genuine heart, then I would accept out of thanks. But if others don’t give themselves [I won’t ask for it]. I don’t want my story to be going around my friends, and I have never asked for such favours before either.’
>
> (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

In the case of those who had received proactive help from others, it still incurred feelings of shame even when the help was desperately needed.

> ‘[When I unexpectedly received help with getting my prosthetic leg,] I had such mixed feelings… of shame… that I ended up in this kind of a position [of receiving help from others]… And I wasn’t sure how I should express my thanks when I received [help] like this... Whether I should say something, or should just put on a facial expression [of gratitude]. It felt like if I say “thank you” then it would look like I am being too… too grovelling. Receiving [help] for the first time provoked many mixed feelings. I guess you never know what could happen to a person’s life. How it will turn out to be… [sigh]’.
>
> (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

It was, however, possible for the outside help to be not associated with shame when socio-economically defined equivalence was established within the relationship. As an illustration, a female respondent from the 40s Near-poverty group spoke of having borrowed money from her father-in-law and feeling no shame due to having possessed an equitable economic capacity to pay it back at the time. However, when the help was given within a relational dynamic of economic non-equivalence, the help instantly became shameful, as an act of undeserved begging from a lower or weaker socio-economic position. This finding was consistent with the earlier finding from the previous section on economic equivalence functioning as the relational basis for people’s general social relations. The problem was that for those living in poverty, people of equivalent socio-economic status were also lacking resources.

> ‘You know people, when they are the haves, they are good at confidently asking others to buy them meals, if they have a fat purse themselves. But for the have-nots, it’s really, really difficult to say things like, “Hey, can you buy me something”.’
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with four children)

> ‘Sometimes when I go to the church, women who can afford things bring some fruits from time to time… But I couldn’t find it in my heart to tell that I want some [because I couldn’t afford it myself]. So I said instead, “Because I am pregnant, I am having an appetite for fruits, so please give me one”, and I actually got some to eat. Last week also, someone brought some sweet potatoes [for the children]. I said “My children don’t like sweet potatoes, haha, but I really like them”, and ate some like that.’
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with four children)

Nevertheless, many found asking others for monetary help unavoidable from time to time. One female interviewee from the 40s In-poverty group with two children spoke of how being unable to meet her everyday needs by herself brought about many incidents of having to seek other people’s favours on a regular basis, which she found extremely difficult and shameful every time. She spoke of having repeatedly asked her boss to give her an advance on her salary, while visiting her child’s school crying for help to the teacher to defer the payment for the cost of the child’s mandatory school materials.

> ‘Really, I mean really, it was so distressing having to go to other people every day to ask for favours to borrow money [for my daughter’s school fees].’
>
> (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

A prevalent perception was that you have to be shameless to receive such outside help. Several respondents spoke of others being ‘tough’, ‘relentless’, and ‘shameless’ in order to receive the help they needed. Then they blamed themselves for not being able to secure help, due to not being shameless enough.

> ‘I heard that an old grandma went to the borough office to complain about her situation and got her public rental apartment [that she wanted]. I wonder why I can’t do that myself, when some people can do such [shameless] things.’
>
> (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

> ‘Some people are shamelessly receiving social benefits, but I can’t do those kinds of things, because it feels like I am begging.’
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with four children)

What further solidified people’s wish to avoid seeking help was their previous failure in

soliciting their acquaintances for help in desperate circumstances. All respondents, without exception, had found the rejection of help unbearably shaming and it had left a painful, and in some cases deeply traumatic, wound in relation to their sense of self.

> 'It is really difficult for me to ask for help, … but most people [still] say that they can't help. I can buy cheap rice as a Soo-Geup-Ja from the dong-office, so I just only eat rice. Now I live on seven hundred thousand won [equivalent to 500 pounds] since May or June, and I just prepare a watery soup and eat it with rice, because that's all there is.'
> (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

People were met with rejections also from family acquaintances, which reflected the wider socio-cultural changes in people's social relations with one another, as discussed in Chapter 5.

> 'I actually once asked [my eldest sister] to lend me 8,500 Won (equivalent to 5 pounds) when my daughter was sick. Since then, I have never been back to ask again. I don't even consider her as a sister [now]. Even until now, those incidents stay in my heart as a wound. How can a big sister ignore you in your utmost lowest moments. (...) There is no love, should I say.' (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with one child)

Being rejected or ignored in their request for help was detrimental in its shameful impact on people, especially when they were self-aware that they were asking from a socio-economically – and thus, relationally – lower position. A few of the female respondents in their 40s (from both the In-poverty and Near-poverty groups) stressed, for example, that 'The people who don't have anything, they really get hurt when they get rejected in their request for help'. The rejection resulted in an even worse sense of shame, as others confirmed the internal fears surrounding shame that had prevented people from asking in the first place. Such trauma from having been rejected in the past was strengthening the avoidance of any potentially shame-inducing situations.

Emotionally Restrained from Accessing Help

As most people tried to avoid such foreseeable shame as much as possible, the prospect of

shame in seeking help subsequently functioned as a major obstacle to people's access to external sources of material support. For some, the fear of facing shame was completely debilitating in their desire to seek help, as they tried to avoid shaming situations even at the expense of meeting their essential material needs.

> 'I would rather endure the hardships than having to say "help me because I am struggling".' (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with four children)

> 'If there is nothing [I have got], I starve. If there is something, then I eat. That's how I live. I would rather give to others myself, [than ask for help myself]. I also have pride. I reject right away the kinds help that seek to use me as a means of dignifying themselves. Even if I don't have anything to eat right now. Even if I die [I won't receive that kind of help].' (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

Such avoidance of seeking outside help was a kind of coping mechanism, as a means of protecting oneself against the anticipated shame. Avoiding such shameful incidents was seen as a more dignifying choice for some than choosing to bear the shame involved in seeking help. For those people, the non-material and relational sense of dignity was seen as being more vital to their lives than having a better material condition. One female respondent thought that she was able to be confident and unbowed in front of other people on the basis of not having relied on anyone but herself.

> 'I have many siblings, but I can confess here and now that I pulled through my life alone and have never been helped with even a penny from them. Nor have I ever asked for a penny. (…) So even if I meet my siblings I can be confident before them. (…) Because I live on my own strengths. (…) I do not feel weaker than my siblings [who are better off]. And when we fight, I fight confidently, because I have never asked or received any help from them. I lived all on my own until today.'
> (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with one child)

8. 3. 2 Becoming Isolated in Relational Deprivation

As poverty was now concealed, having become a generally shameful social status position to be in, poverty was now functioning as a significant hindrance to forming human relations for

the interviewees. As psychiatrist Ha (2011) explained, 'Every secret that exists in the world functions to separate people in their relations. If the secret is a very important one, then it becomes too much of a burden for the person to bear the secret' (2011: 223).[54] Being restrained by shame from openly sharing one's actual living situation and the emotional difficulties one faced as a result, many felt unable to be fully understood by others, which led to becoming further estranged in their social relations.

> 'You can't tell [that I'm struggling] from the outside, right? That's what makes it more difficult.' (40s Male, In-poverty, Single-person household)

> 'I smile when I am working outside, but the more I put on a smile when I am out, my face hardens and turns worse at home. It's because I have to pretend on the outside that I am doing okay, when I am a mess on the inside.'
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

The respondents generally stressed that the main hardship they faced in poverty was not material hardship, but the solitude of having to face the various (material and non-material) hardships alone. The level of anxiety arising from multifarious insecurities in life was said to be aggravated further by being deprived of human relations from which to draw emotional support. Many said they had no human relationships at all due to the emotional constraints (i.e. the shame of poverty) that they felt in their social relations, although they had a desire for and were in need of emotional support from others. Consequently, a great majority of respondents were regularly struggling with a deep sense of loneliness, regardless of age, gender, and type of benefit recipience status, which intensely aggravated the hardships they faced in poverty.

> 'It's very lonely. And when I say "lonely", I am not talking about wanting to be with a woman, but about the loneliness toward life (…) I feel lonely in the hardships that I am in,

[54] This quote has been translated into English by myself, due to the original text being published only in Korean.

which makes me want to rely on something, mentally.'
(40s Male, In-poverty, Single-person household)

'You feel like no one is going to come and knock on your door, unless you do something about it yourself.' (40s Female, Near-poverty, Couple household with one child)

The respondents with children (both with and without a partner)[55] were particularly struggling with juggling multifarious roles alone in managing their lives in poverty. As an illustration, a female respondent in her 40s from the Near-poverty group spoke of having felt intensely overwhelmed when she suddenly became solely in charge of bringing in income after her husband's car accident. She had to make a living for the family, pay off the debt, look after two children, do housework, and then nurse her husband at night in the hospital. She said, 'I was struggling to death. I was like a wonder-woman. I don't know how I did it all by myself. It's horrific to look back at that time'. Her experience was not uncommon among the interviewees who had generally experienced facing an excessive volume of material and emotional hardships on their own, with no other available source of material or emotional support. Generally being without any savings or other resources to draw on, most people saw their own physical selves as the only available means of making a living that they had. A common desire among the respondents, as a female respondent in her 40s said, was that they wanted to have just one person in their lives who was willing to give them the sense of emotional support. A common statement was: 'If only there was someone to hold my hand when I was struggling. If only I had somewhere to talk about my struggles'.

In order to reduce the isolating effects of shame, it was seemingly important to share one's concealed source of shame with others, as while 'no one wants to talk about it [i.e. shame].

[55] Even for couple households, many of the partners were unable to work or bring in stable income due to physical or mental illness (which itself was quite often connected to poverty-related shame, depression and other mental health conditions).

[But] unless you talk about it, the more you have it' (Brown, 2010). As Brown (2010) further noted, 'In order for connection to happen, we have to allow ourselves to be seen, really seen'. However, due to the significant need for self-protection from the foreseeable emotional detriments caused by the shaming treatment of others, or other kinds of substantial loss from being on the receiving end of discrimination in society, people were compelled to hide their poverty rather than bet on the low possibility of social acceptance of their lowly-valued social identity. As a response to such social relational pressure to hide their actual living conditions from others, some respondents wanted to isolate themselves completely to a remote countryside where there was much less need for social interaction or social participation to make a living.

Consequent Emotional Deprivation

These conditions - living in relational deprivation - were said by the people to be pushing them to the edges of life, undermining the emotional and mental well-being of the respondents and that of other welfare recipients they knew. One female respondent from the 40s Near-poverty group believed her emotional pains and hard feelings were due to supressing her hardships within herself for too long without being able to express or share them with others. The excessive level of pressure, distress, and anxiety people had been carrying alone was said by them to seriously undermine their mental health. Many spoke of how they were 'barely holding up right now' and that 'I live only because I cannot die'.

> 'It felt like I always had piles of documents [inside my head] that needed to be sorted out. I would agonize over them, over and over again on my own. (…) There was nowhere to talk about it. So it [i.e. the stress] led me to extreme thoughts, like running away from the house and from everything. But I couldn't leave the children behind.'
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with four children)

> 'I try not to talk with other people. I just stay at home. (…) Because of that [being in seclusion from other people], I'm taking medication for depression…'
>
> (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with three children)

Respondents commonly talked about how shame and the consequent relational isolation in poverty led to emotional deprivation, most often characterized by depression, and for some, suicidal thoughts when they felt there was no hope of escaping the overwhelming hardships on their own.

> 'It's distressful, hateful, and hurtful to see my pride get hurt [in my current living situation], and some take their own lives because of it, but I have to live as my children's lives are more important [than mine].'
>
> (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

> 'I could absolutely understand when I heard on the TV or the radio that people took their own lives [in material hardship]. They must have done so because they were lonely, not being taken care of by their brothers or sisters, or their children, with only the loneliness growing [in them]. I thought to myself, "Ah, this is why. This is what people must have felt when they chose to take their own lives".'
>
> (60s Male, In-poverty, Single-person household)

8. 3. 3 Trapped in Isolation by the Agenda of Shame: 'Restore Your Pride by Yourself'

As a result of this isolating process under the influence of shame, most respondents' living conditions in terms of both material and emotional deprivation were left to deteriorate on their own. What seemed to ultimately trap many of the people (particularly the respondents in their 40s) in such a state of isolation was an internal logic of shame, which dictated that people should restore their self-confidence by improving their economic conditions (and escaping poverty) by themselves. Just as people were made individually responsible for poverty and the consequent shaming evaluation of themselves, the shame also mandated people to escape the shame-driven isolation by themselves. That is, both losing and restoring one's self-connection with others were framed for the interviewees as being up to them and their own socio-economic performance. Yet it was highly unlikely that people would be able to escape or improve their living conditions by themselves, when they were isolated with a shortage of both material and emotional resources. Thus, in order to escape the perpetual material deprivation and the aggravating loop of shame in isolation, it was crucial to first

escape from the state of isolation itself by reconnecting back to others in society. However, people were often trapped in the mentality of shame, feeling that the only way out of both poverty and the shame that followed was to wait until they could restore their self-pride by overcoming the situation themselves. Hence, many of the respondents were kept in a state of isolation, being emotionally held back from seeking after an external source of support to ameliorate the material and the emotional hardships of poverty.

8. 4 Deterioration of Personal Agency: The Only Available Means of Escaping Both Poverty & Shame

The consequent impact of being trapped in social isolation, gated by the self-help agenda of shame, was deterioration of people's self-confidence which hindered their individual agency in poverty. This section reports on the self-aggravating cycle of shame that was working in the social isolation of poverty. It will also discuss how this deterioration of self-confidence in personal agency was detrimental, due to individual agency being the only available way for people in the current social environment of poverty to improve their living conditions.

8. 4. 1 Losing Self-Confidence in One's Own Agency

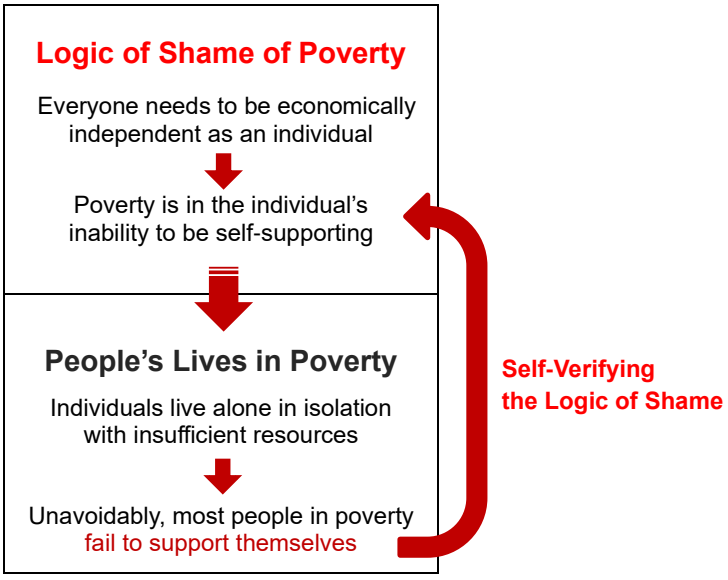
Although people could avoid shaming encounters with others to a certain extent by self-isolation, what ironically solidified and aggravated shameful self-perception was the perpetual condition of living in isolation, itself.

Self-Aggravating Mechanism of Shame in Isolated Poverty

In isolated living conditions, the interviewees' individual selves became the only available agent and means of both bringing about any change to and sustaining their current lives. The problem was that people were unable to make their ends meet by definition, when they were isolated in a state of perpetual shortage of resources. As a result, the general experience in

such isolation was repeated encounters of their failure to meet their own needs on a regular basis – an incessant loop of self-verifying the logic of shame that ascribed poverty to their personal lack of ability to support themselves. Arguably, a self-fulfilling prophecy was at work, as it was practically impossible to disprove such logic in isolated conditions of poverty.

Table 8. 1 Self-fulfilling prophecy of shame in isolated poverty



After being made responsible for falling into poverty and then isolated both physically and emotionally from society to suffer alone, the hardships and suffering in poverty started to feel like a punishment to people. Several respondents said 'Poverty is the sin, isn't it' in a pensive tone after speaking about the shame and various other struggles they faced alone in poverty. As many were subscribed to the logic of shame of poverty, agreeing to its primary principle that people must be self-supporting and financially independent, they were unable to oppose the shame itself. Hence, many took the blame on themselves for being in a position that seemed worthy of shame – i.e. being unable to adequately support themselves – regardless of their personal truths that their poverty was not self-induced. Some said in an angry self-blaming tone, 'Why couldn't I do any better than this'. Being emotionally isolated as well in the face of shame, several blamed themselves as well for feeling ashamed itself, attributing

the shame to their own personhood:

> ‘I am kind of like that… (giving a hollow smile) Very timid in these aspects. (…) I lack in the ability to say those kinds of things, to go before the others at the Dong office [where the local welfare official is] and say that I am struggling a lot in this way, so please help me... I don’t know why. Maybe I lack in confidence... I just... I don’t know’.
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with four children)

Dolezal and Lyons (2017) stated that this tendency to blame oneself for feeling ashamed was in line with what Scheff (2000) and Lewis (1971) had reported – that shame ‘leads to an intensification or multiplication of itself’ (Dolezal and Lyons, 2017: 258). In the same vein, individual situations that prohibited them from working were also described as a personal shortcoming that brought poverty and subsequent shame upon them: ‘If only “I” were not ill [and were able to work], I wouldn’t have had to receive this [kind of shameful treatment]’ (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with two children). It was again the self-help agenda inherent to the current logic of poverty-related shame that constrained the people to endure their solitary struggle as their personal fault and problem.

Trapped in isolation under the self-blaming mechanism of shame in poverty, many were struggling with low self-esteem and a damaged sense of self-confidence in their personal agency.

> ‘I think self-confidence is the most important thing. I could do something, but the fact that I have no educational background and know so little, and [am inadequate] in every way holds me back from coming forward to appear before others. (...) I think that’s the biggest hurdle in my mind... I have thought of doing a po-jang-ma-cha[56] or peddling on the street and all sorts of other things in order to work. But I can’t bring myself to it, although I have the willingness to work. I don’t have the confidence in reality to take the lead myself in my work. It’s hard to set foot in it. I am scared. And I don’t like other people staring at me [if I work on the streets in public spaces].’
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with three children)

[56] A small wheeled snack bar with a tent.

The Critical Significance of Self-Confidence in Current Poverty

What made people's loss of self-confidence in their own agency more problematic was that it was equivalent to losing their only means of making a living, as they were essentially self-reliant, without any extra resource or source of support to maintain their livelihoods. Several respondents specifically pointed out that 'What a Soo-Geup-Ja needs is not the money itself. What he or she really needs is the restoration of self-confidence' (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with one child).

> 'You see, you have to like yourself to a certain extent in your life to be able to make some actions. You can become more proactive [when you like yourself]. But all I do is continuously restrain myself, so I just get upset [instead, about myself and my life].'
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

> 'Money is also a problem, but I think what people really need is psychological therapy. I think it would be helpful. Money is important, but don't they need some hope planted in them? They are in deep despair, you see. (…) So I thought that a Soo-Geup-Ja needs to receive some psychological therapy and to control their minds rather than just be given some money, because their minds are in devastation. I think it's because they don't have any hope in them.' (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

With their personal selves being the only available means of making a living, deterioration of self-confidence in their own agency implied deprivation of all reliable agency in people's lives. Consequently, without restoration of their self-confidence in their own agency, people could not find the hope or the courage to both sustain and improve their livelihoods. Thus, avoiding shame in these aspects was also now a vital matter for people to protect not only their self-confidence but also the critical significance it held in present-day poverty as the only remaining foundation of their current and future life prospects.

Falling into Despair & Social Pathological Symptoms

In some cases, the sustained state of repressed and undermined self-agency under the impact

of shame had led to an actual loss of all hope for a better future in the people's lives. More than half of the interviewees explicitly expressed a deep sense of frustration or hopelessness that 'There is no sign of improvement in my livelihood', and many in the In-poverty benefit recipients group agreed that 'You cannot escape from this life of a Soo-Geup-Ja', working for and living on the completely insufficient amount of the living expense benefit. There were a considerable number of episodes of people falling into a state of despair with low motivation to work, having lost hope and belief that they could improve their lives themselves via their current work. Those people commonly made statements such as 'My life feels futile. I have no desire to live at all'.

The secondary impact emanating from the state of despair was described as social pathological problems, such as addiction to alcohol, internet games, or gambling on horse racing. Many of the respondents, who had experiences of participating in public Ja-Hwal (Self-Support) work programmes, spoke of having witnessed many welfare recipients in poverty who relied on those addictions to forget about themselves and their painful reality, as a result of losing all hope in despair. Such pathological symptoms were said to have led several respondents in the past to a fatal state both physically and mentally, which created further risk of falling into deeper and long-term poverty by being unable to work and increasing one's debt, as well as negatively affecting other areas in life such as the quality of care for children.

8. 5 A Deeper Undertone: Ultimately Indefinable by the Shame of Poverty

Towards the end of the data analysis process, a deeper undertone in the data began to emerge, which was that the shame of poverty was not able to truly define people's identities and who they were in an ultimate sense. Their emotional response of shame was itself a visceral

reaction to an internal dissonance between the degrading value evaluation they had been given and an instinctive inclination to distinguish themselves from it by othering the ashamed 'self' from within. While the interviewees admitted openly that they were struggling to support themselves as society expected, they also saw being labelled simply as a 'Soo-Geup-Ja who is incapable of supporting him/herself and is in need of help' to be an inadequate accusation, which degraded their entire sense of self based on a single aspect of their lives. Moreover, it appeared that people generally carried what seemed to be a deeper and more intuitive awareness that poverty was not what defined their being as a person, but was just the hardship they were currently in. Furthermore, in some people's rejection of the social assistance that was socially framed as being provided to those who have completely lost their self-agency, people expressed that such social assistance is not for them as they were aware of their inner strength and self-agency that they had.

Nevertheless, people still operated within the current social-relational system that identified their self-value as such which was practically very difficult to evade. Moreover, the interviewees' self-awareness of their dignity and value was usually not grounded in any specific source to validate it, existing only as a deep and a quiet undertone that was much less pronounced compared to shame. Hence, except for those who fell into a state of despair and lost hope in the possibility of redeeming their social identity and self-esteem, people were generally in pursuit of improving both their material living conditions and their downgraded social value by themselves. The problem was, as discussed above, that the generally isolated living conditions in poverty often created a self-aggravating loop of both poverty and shame.[57] The coping mechanisms discussed next were inevitably needed for people living in

[57] Even if people overcame the shame of poverty by exiting poverty, it was unlikely that they would be freed from the possibility of facing shame altogether with regard to their socio-economic status, as the threshold of

such a reality within which their social relations and social identity were shaped and defined by their economic social status.

8. 6 Responses to Shame

As shame had become a part of their regular struggles in poverty together with other emotional hardships, the interviewees often commented that 'The less you have, the more important your mental attitude becomes'. This section discusses three main types of responses and coping mechanisms that the people adopted to avoid or deal with the impact of shame, which seemed to reflect individual level beliefs and temperaments. The first type was the most self-defensive kind: guarding one's pride by evading shaming evaluations of oneself. The second type was more selective in adaptation to the shaming situations: enduring shame to a certain extent when it was required to meet essential material needs. The third type was the rarest but the most effective in counteracting shame: internally adopting an alternative value system to the general social values, or overcoming the state of isolation that undergirds shame via finding empathetic human relationships.

Dolezal and Lyons argued that '[t]he intensity and expression of a shame experience depends on an extensive constellation of factors including one's culture, background, family experiences, personality and the immediate context' (2017: 258). While the social level factors were discussed earlier as a shared aspect of the respondents' conditions in poverty – i.e. the social level processes and contextual influences –, the individual level differences (such as, family experience, personality, and other personal backgrounds) were what were entailed in the different responses people displayed and adopted in the face of essentially the

---

shame was not an absolute one by nature but could be drawn endlessly according to the comparative context within which an individual's social value status was evaluated (as shown in Chapter 7).

same kind of shame in poverty. The relationship between the individual level factors and the difference in people's responses to shame will not be discussed here, as it goes beyond the scope of this research. Besides, people were often adopting a mix of responses and coping mechanisms from these three main types of responses discussed below, with varying levels of preference of one over the others. While there were significant differences, especially between the first two types in their prioritization of what to protect the most, all of the responses ubiquitously manifested the deeper sense of resistance that people displayed against shame as discussed in the previous section.

8. 6. 1 Evasion of Shame by Othering

The most self-defensive coping mechanism was 'othering' themselves from their current position of shame by comparing themselves to people who were worse off, or by self-distancing from their current socio-economic status as a temporary one.

Othering: 'I am not a Soo-Geup-Ja'

A common response especially among the Near-poverty group was raising the fact that 'There are people way worse off than I am'. Quite often the Near-poverty respondents were othering themselves from the In-poverty group, who were officially categorized as having a lower socio-economic status than themselves. The source of comparison was often the extra sets of benefits that only the In-poverty group were receiving (especially the living expense benefit), which were associated with the particular shame of relying on external sources other than their own (discussed in Chapter 7). When asked about benefits that they did not receive, the Near-poverty group respondents usually spoke with a heightened sense of confidence in a louder voice tone and underlined that 'I am not a Soo-Geup-Ja'. The verbal nuance in the way they spoke of not being a 'Soo-Geup-Ja' carried a certain level of pride, and a moral sense of

justification for receiving comparatively much less social provision:

> 'By the way, in community welfare centres, they prioritize helping the Soo-Geup first, such as in giving out educational scholarships or donations. For us Cha-Sang-Wee status, we were given some [minor] benefits for gas bills and things once every two or three years, taking turns. (…) I went to the welfare centre once and so confidently said, "I recently registered as a Cha-Sang-Wee, can we have some benefits too?". Then the staff told me, "There isn't much benefits for Cha-Sang-Wee". (hahaha) She embarrassed me for asking.' (40s Female, Near-poverty, Couple household with one child)

Evading shame via othering, looking to one's relative superiority to some others, seemed to enable people in the Near-poverty group to attain a sense of self-confidence in that moment of self-evaluation. Those who employed this type of response found it to provide a sense of consolation, of hope and encouragement to take current hardships more lightly, with a sense of relief for not standing at the bottom of the social ladder as they saw Soo-Geup-Ja status to be. A few others distanced themselves further from their current Near-poverty status as well, saying 'I'm not sure if I deserve this benefit when there are people who are much worse off than I am'.

What was ironic was that this was being said, for instance, by a respondent who was living solely on the Single-parent benefit (equivalent to 200 pounds a month), while raising four children alone without a source of income (after having given up on the Soo-Geup benefit application on a traumatizing shaming experience at the welfare office). The amount was less than one third of what a two-person household of an In-poverty benefit recipient was receiving. Although not always the case, the Near-poverty group respondents were quite frequently found to live in a condition that was similar to or even worse than that of the In-poverty group, and some of them were aware of this.[58]

[58] For various reasons, such as not being supported by the family members that were officially obligated as the financial supporter in the application screening process, or being unable to work while having failed to prove their physical inability to work in order to receive living expense benefit, and so on. Many of the female Near-

> ‘It’s just that I am not a Soo-Geup-Ja, but the Soo-Geup people’s situation is better than ours. They receive the living expense benefit and are benefited in various other ways. Our situation is really obscure. (…) They [local welfare office] just take care of the Soo-Geup-Ja. It seemed like they only care about Soo-Geup-Ja. (…) Soo-Geup people live better than us.’ (60s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with one child)

Nevertheless, shame was still attached to having official Soo-Geup status and receiving its benefits rather than living in more intense material deprivation, especially for those who had given up on applying for the In-poverty social assistance due to its shameful implications. Most of the respondents were caught in an internal conflict in terms of choosing between officially the most shameful social status and giving up on extra financial support for meeting their basic needs. This first type of response was generally given by people who had chosen the latter over becoming the official Soo-Geup-Ja (which literally means ‘a person receiving In-poverty benefits’). This type of response was one that still submitted to and operated within the current socio-economic identification of people, whereby people made comparative self-evaluations of one another down to the very bottom of the social ladder (as discussed in Chapter 7).

Self-Othering from the Current Status of Shame

Another kind of othering that was found especially among some of the respondents in their 40s (regardless of gender and type of recipient status) was self-othering from their current social status, one that put them to shame. This type of response was used to distance themselves from their currently shameful social status by interpreting it as a temporary phase in life that will pass, which will not define their social identity forever when it is replaced by a more successful one in the future. While repeatedly frustrated in their ambitions, they

---

poverty participants in their 60s seemed no different in their living conditions and income levels from the In-poverty group in their 60s, and seemed to be more of non-takeup In-poverty group rather than Near-poverty group.

emphatically denied having given up, placing unwarranted hopes in their future social mobility:

> ‘Money keeps going round and round. I think that I can also succeed somehow, and not always continue to live how I live now.’
>
> (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with one child)

> ‘You never know what could happen in a person’s life. Things will work out in the end, because I am trying hard to live well.’
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with four children)

> ‘I have a job right now and have experienced both being the haves and the have-nots, also raising children like this. Everything is relative when you look at it. (…) And you can’t always have good things happen to you.’
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

A common feature of such self-othering was that the people found their current self-image (judged against the dominant capitalistic social values) unacceptable to claim ownership over. While they were self-othering on the inside, they were hiding their poverty from the others on the outside. They said they kept their living conditions in poverty a complete secret to all their acquaintances, including their direct kin, pretending to live in much better living conditions and acting more confidently in front of others.

> ‘If I speak right now [about myself to others] when I don’t have anything, my past looks shabby, my present status is shabby, my pride will get hurt as well. So right now, when I meet someone, I pretend a bit… like I have it [money]. And I never lose to the person. That’s what I do. So I always want to succeed in my life [someday]. That is my goal. Though I don’t know where the end is to that “success”…’
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

The same respondent said that while her current living status was a painful hardship she carried in solitude and a shameful weakness, it would become acceptable when she has her self-esteem restored by self-earned success someday. Then, she said, she will be able to share her current life with others as her own, as ‘a beautiful story of the past’. Another respondent also felt the same way:

> ‘Because... I don’t think that this recipient status will last forever, but it will end when my children graduate from school... So I’ll just hide it… until then... And I will try to change this living somehow... Of course it won’t be fixed overnight, but... that’s what I think, so I don’t want to open it up to other people.’
>
> (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

In the meantime, people were carrying an internally alienated sense of their individualized selves, waiting in disguise and in isolation until their self-identities were re-established someday by their personal ‘success’ in socio-economic terms.

8. 6. 2 Selective Adaptation To Shame

The second type of response to shame was renouncing some of the desire to avoid shame by selectively adapting to the shameful situations in order to receive access to others’ help and public support. Such a compromise was made by both In- and Near-poverty groups and in both age groups, but predominantly by female rather than by male respondents. When people had pressing material needs that they saw were more imminent than protecting their pride, they were willing to selectively expose themselves to some of the shameful situations, given that there was a real possibility of attaining the help they needed.

> ‘If the person is someone who will lend me money when I have asked for it, then I will bow down even if that makes me feel a bit shameful, because at least I get paid for it. If not, I won’t ever do that, as it would hurt my pride.’
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

One female respondent in her 40s ranked the priority of the problems she thought people faced in poverty, and explained that it was the priority in life that enabled people to choose to face shame sometimes, even when it was a deeply unwanted situation. She ranked the expenses of raising children as the most important priority of all, followed by restoring self-confidence, and ranked other financial hardships as the lowest priority. In the case of this respondent, securing her child’s educational expenses was a more vital priority in life than protecting her pride, while her pride was still more important over other shortages of

resources. There were others for whom avoiding shame was of the utmost importance to sustaining their lives as a whole, as their lives depended solely on themselves and their personal agency which was underpinned by their self-confidence.

In response to the shaming involved in accessing the public welfare system, the respondents who chose to selectively adapt to the shaming reality saw it as an inevitable price to pay for gaining the financial help they needed, saying that 'nothing in the world comes without a price'. They also stressed the fact that in the current social environment, one needs to be more proactive in seeking for help even if it feels shameful:

> 'Because if you don't let others know of your difficulties or things like that, no one knows. Crying alone and agonizing alone will not make anyone come knock on your door, visit your house, and understand your hardships. Even if I feel a bit ashamed and so on, I have to burst it out and say "Help me, help me please".'
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Couple household with one child)

Above all, the main reason for such selective adaptation was the concern for falling into a state of despair in isolation without any available source of material support, which was known to lead to extreme situations of suicide and losing hope for life altogether. For these people, their choice was valuing survival over the protection of self-pride, that it was for one's own good to not become cornered in a dead-end situation in severe destitution:

> 'So, pride. Yeah. You see a lot [on the TV] about the people who were in real hardship, but couldn't ask for help because of pride… and took their own lives jumping off from the rooftop with those little children… When I saw that... [I thought that] they could have thought of saving their children's lives with that courage [to take their own lives] rather than saving their pride... Even if they have had to crumple their pride, they should have lived in order to at least make their children not become like them in the future… How poor are the children. They couldn't even blossom after being born…'
>
> (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

These respondents disagreed with, and felt bad for, those who chose to avoid shame and live in isolation from outside help:

> ‘But she should do it [apply for the In-poverty benefit]… I don’t think that’s right... That’s a foolish thing to do... She even gave birth to five children for the country... She should receive it... even if she had not paid any tax... Pride lasts just for a short while... The person who said that is not going to feed her, right? No one really understands how you live... Even the people around me, who know how I live, cannot help me. And that person [who shamed her] didn’t even know [how she really lived]. I don’t think that’s right [for her to give up on the application for becoming the In-poverty status].’
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with three children)

Although they acknowledged the shameful implications in asking for help, saying that ‘I close my eyes for that moment and endure it’, it was still seen as the only available choice for their survival.

> ‘Otherwise, you can’t resolve it with [your own] strength or with [your own] money. Rather than driving the whole family into an abyss and commit suicide by struggling alone like that, I think it’s better to be helped. Let the world know that “I am struggling like this, so please help in this way”. I think that’s okay’.
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Couple household with one child)

‘I must live as if I don’t have a thinking mind’

The resulting coping mechanism of choosing to endure some of the shaming experiences was making conscious efforts to mentally disengage from shaming incidents and to not argue against this with anyone (including themselves). Some of the frequently used statements were ‘You must live as if you don’t have a thinking mind’, or that ‘I must live having loosened a screw in my life’, followed by other statements that consistently indicated that it was not possible to reduce or remove the shame in this type of response, but that it could be endured by mentally disengaging from it.

> ‘I didn’t think deeply about it. I’m not a person who thinks deeply about those kinds of things. (…) You just have to take things lightly. You cannot take things too seriously to heart. Because so many things then will become a burden on your heart. You [have to] take things lightly and just shove it away.’
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Couple household with one child)

> ‘I just live having given up to a certain level. If someone says some things, well... I know that when I don’t have anything like this, there is no way out for now even if I put in all

> my effort. So I give up on those things and just live moderately, giving up on things that cannot be done. So, I don't get stressed as much [as I used to].'
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with four children)

Although these people appeared to be under less visible stress and some even had a cheerful disposition, this external demeanour was not consonant with their internal state of mind that soon turned out to have many untold wounds and pains that they were keeping to themselves as their inevitable reality. Many broke down in tears of distress when they began to open up about their experiences of shame regarding poverty, and it became clearer that such a cheerful attitude was more of a coping mechanism, rather than a fundamental resolution to shame. It was desensitising them to the unavoidable emotional distress. When a female respondent, who was applying this coping mechanism, was told that she seemed to be doing well, judging from her cheerful appearance, she denied it right away and said:

> 'Not really... I cannot be not cheerful, because nothing can be resolved even if I agonize over it. So... I just live, accepting things as they are.'
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with four children)

Several of the respondents emphasized the importance of dealing with their minds as they live in poverty, and that it was necessary for them to change their personality to stay in a light-hearted mood so as to not think about their emotional distress, to sustain their life:

> 'You have to keep trying to change your personality. Consciously. Because if I look depressed, it becomes hard to relate with other people. And I cannot die anyway. If you are going to live, you should live fun. So I just laughed out loud watching comedy programmes on TV like a person without a thinking mind. Yea. I just watch those kinds of things that are not serious, and I try to keep changing my mind to live in a positive mood.'
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Couple household with one child)

Choosing to Humble Oneself

Some chose to perceive the shameful public provision through the lens of gratitude by humbling themselves, lowering their pride themselves to prevent others from wounding it:

> ‘I think one should first just carry the mind-set of “I have done more wrong”. If I look at the world with that mind-set, then I won’t think whether they are disregarding me because I don’t have anything. Instead, I will be thankful for these small provisions. Everything is to be thankful for, as a bonus [in life]. (…) I think that is important.’
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

This type of response was adapting to the shaming discourse by adjusting one’s own mind-set and lowering one’s expectations in relation to both protecting one’s pride and the quality of public provision. ‘I try to go with the flow, and accept the shortage as it is. Who can I blame for the shortage anyway.’ It was seemingly a conscious effort by people to cope with both the shameful implications of receiving social assistance and the stressful discontent arising from the insufficiency of their welfare provision. These respondents often said that they believed that whether they will interpret their receipt of public welfare assistance in positive or negative terms was all in their minds:

> ‘It’s all in the mind. (…) I didn’t think this way before either, but after I have lived some life [now I say to myself], “Ah, if it wasn’t for this benefit I receive, my life would have hit rock bottom”. Holding hands with my daughter, we say “mom, this kind of policy is really good. It’s really really good”. Rather than feel ashamed, we say that we are grateful to receive so much benefit [from the state], and that “I like that about this policy” and so on.’ (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

These respondents were well aware of the shameful implications of receiving social assistance, and at times they showed an emotional ambivalence and inconsistency in their statements that swayed between expressions of shame and gratitude within the same interview.[59] Yet, letting go of the need to have their expectations and desires properly met, which they described as a source of significant stress, by choosing to humble themselves was seen as a way to feel less stressed or ashamed about the shortage in their current provision: ‘I

[59] Such expression of gratitude toward social benefits was still a response that subscribed to the shaming discourse surrounding anti-poverty social assistance, as discussed in Chapter 7 on the shaming effects of the current social assistance system.

find happiness in small things so that I can live happily right now. I don't expect anything [from anyone]. But when something is given [outside of my expectation], it feels like a bonus and makes me happy and be thankful'.

8. 6. 3 Most Effective Antidotes to Shame: Undercutting the Very Basis of Shame

While they were the rarest cases, several people were feeling significantly unashamed of poverty when they were employing certain types of responses to shame. The conceptual foundation of shame, as discussed in Chapter 5 (and further developed in Chapter 9), was composed of two main pillars: an independent social entity of the 'self' (that was uncertain in its value) as the basis of people's individualized social identification, and a standard of value against which the socio-relational value of the 'self' could be identified. This third type of response was one that undercut the shame of poverty by dismantling either of those two conceptual pillars required in its psycho-social construction. First, I discuss below how some people managed to effectively tackle the capitalistic value barometer by drawing on an alternative value system or social discourse to evaluate their self-identities. Second, I discuss how quality human relationships based on empathy were found to effectively decrease the level of estrangement of people and prevented them from putting one another to individualistic and comparative value evaluations that led to shame.

8. 6. 3 - 1 Drawing on Alternative Value Systems

When some of the people drew on an alternative value system in their internal identification of themselves, they were noticeably feeling unashamed of their living conditions in poverty. In the case of a female respondent from the 40s In-poverty group who had been in comparatively long-term poverty with over seven years of receiving NBLSS benefits, she had experienced multiple shaming from her family members and was deeply wounded from

having been rejected in her request for help. However, she was able to blockade the external shaming and mortifying experiences by submitting to an alternative value system of Christianity. Her Christian faith had taken over the role as the internal value barometer of her self-identity. She said her Christian values taught her that 'Money is not what determines my value as a person' and that she had an absolute sense of value from her faith in 'being greatly loved by God unconditionally'. As opposed to the other two types of responses discussed above, the respondent expressed a clear sense of assurance in her self-value, which was not based on any conditionality that she had to meet to verify her value. This case demonstrated that the internal shaming of the self by capitalistic value evaluation could be negated by replacing the internal standard of values with an alternative one that provides an absolute basis for identifying an undifferentiated relational value of every individual.

> 'If it wasn't for my faith in Jesus, I would have already done something. Either taken drugs and killed myself, or killed someone else. (…) I am the happiest when I am praying before God. I feel happy when God gives me faith. I find inner peace through conversing with God, even if I live a hard life. It gives me confidence too.'
>
> (40s Female, In-poverty, Single-headed household with one child)

Another, more partial, means of deflecting the shame of poverty was drawing on an alternative value judgement that devalued the capitalistic consumerism in society. As noted in earlier chapters, education, which included not only formal schooling but also extra private education, was greatly valued by parents in South Korean culture as the most significant determinant of a child's future prospects. A female respondent with young children spoke of actively averting feeling ashamed by the comparative lack of educational provision for her children by devaluing such trends altogether:

> 'When I meet the mothers of my children's friends, they brag about their children's private education, saying "My kid goes to learn piano, kendo, and painting". I DO NOT (said with an emphasis) admire those moms, and think to myself that kids should learn to study on their own, and should be playing outside at their age.'
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with four children)

Similarly, a few respondents also drew on a counteractive discourse against the shame of receiving social assistance benefits. They spoke about having felt much more justified and dignified in exercising their benefit entitlements at the hospital after hearing that their medical expenses were an official allotment from the government to the hospital and not a charitable discount given by the hospital. These were female respondents from both In- and Near-poverty groups and from both age groups, who said ‘What’s to be ashamed of, it’s not like we are committing a crime, or asking for something I don’t deserve’.

8. 6. 3 - 2 Quality Human Relationships Based on Empathy

The other way for individuals to undercut the basis of shame was reducing the level of relational estrangement by coming out of the state of isolation and finding quality human relationships with other people. In the case of a few of the respondents in their 60s who were able to socialize with others by attending singing or English classes in local welfare centres (which were free of charge with free lunches) were struggling a lot less with a sense of isolation and shame compared to other isolated respondents in the same sampling group. The reason for their lowered shame and improved mood was said to be the emotional support they were finding in empathetic conversations with others who would not judge them and could understand their situations without having to explain because of sharing similar living conditions. The freely accessible and well-maintained social space of the local welfare centre also seemed to contribute to allowing such quality relational bonds to form between people.

While it was generally even rarer for the respondents in their 40s to attend welfare centres, a few of those who did also experienced improvement in their emotional well-being by beginning to socialize with people via a local welfare centre. As comparative self-evaluation has become a common practice in socio-relational formation, having only a small socio-economic difference was found conducive to building such empathetic relational bonds.

People were said to empathize and understand one another more easily when they shared similar living conditions, as there was less concern about evident comparisons being drawn between people.

> 'Because the people gathered [at the welfare centre] are much like each other, it's easier to talk as well. I go home feeling much more comfortable in my mind [after conversing with others at the centre].'
>
> (40s Female, Near-poverty, Single-headed household with two children)

While small in number, these cases nevertheless illustrated that restoring a relational sense of connection with others through increased interaction and empathy – and not separation and differentiation – was effective in freeing people from the self-aggravating mechanism of shame that worked within isolated poverty. In essence, the less the relational separation and distance between people, the less room there was for objectification and shaming evaluations to arise. This finding also echoes Brown's (2010) qualitative findings on the power of empathy against shame, who concluded that 'shame cannot survive empathy'.

Comparative Effectiveness

In the case of the first two types of responses to shame, the people were trying their best to avoid shame or its effects by distancing themselves from their current status of shame. However, those responses were still functioning within the socio-relational system that individualized people's relational value and evaluated them by their relative socio-economic superiority as an individual. Accordingly, those responses could not enable the people to be freed from the influence of shame both in their choices of action in everyday life and in their internal perception and relationship with themselves.

Unlike the above two types, the third type of response was the most effective antidote to shame among the responses to shame explored here, due to the nature of its approach that

undercut the very basis of shame. The people employing this last type of approach were either feeling more solid and justified about their self-value, in the case of drawing on an alternative (more absolutist) value system, or were experiencing non-shameful relational connections with others based on empathy (although in only part of their lives) that closed down the relational distance needed for shaming value evaluations. While the emotional state of being guarded from shame was not completely consistent for those employing this third type of response, they still appeared comparatively more self-confident and emotionally stable in many aspects (general emotional well-being, voice, facial expression, and postures) than others employing the earlier two responses. This last type of response showed that properly counteracting shame required stepping out of the shame-inducing socio-relational framework itself, i.e. individualized social identification of people based on relativistic social value systems that can only produce a hierarchical value-identification of people.

8. 7 Conclusion

Based on the empirical findings from the qualitative interview data analysis, this chapter reviewed the impacts and the working mechanisms of shame in poverty, as well as the main types of people's responses to counter this shame. The findings showed that as poverty became shameful on the social level, poverty was concealed on the personal level by people in poverty. Socio-economic equivalence was now functioning as the general relational basis between people. As a result, exposing one's poverty was made difficult and people in poverty became socially isolated in terms of both material and relational deprivation, while being constrained by the self-help agenda of shame. Such isolation was also found to activate a self-aggravating mechanism of shame via people's repeated encounters with their own failures to support themselves financially. The result of such a sustained state of isolation was a deterioration in both material and emotional well-being of the people, which could further

damage their sense of self-confidence in their agency. The loss of self-confidence held serious implications, as it could be the loss of people's only means of sustaining their lives, i.e. their own agency, and lead them to even further deterioration of their living conditions and health.

Thus, while the interviewees were feeling most in need of outside help and support, they often became most deprived of it by being emotionally pressurised and wavering between accepting the shame of seeking and receiving outside help or continuing to live in isolation with material and emotional deprivation which also led to self-aggravating shame. Neither one of these choices created a relational connection between them and others in society. Rather, it led to the same paths of shame that would estrange and isolate people even more from society and from the possibility of getting the help they most needed in their lives.

A more in-depth finding was that while the literature has generally addressed shame only from the aspect of its overpowering negative consequences (placing the entire self under the umbrella effect of shame), it was found that even when the people were feeling significantly ashamed, the shame was not able to completely dictate a person's human worth. That is, the people carried a deeper and more intuitive sense of self-awareness of their value as a person, demonstrated consistently in their ubiquitous rejection to agree to the shame they were bearing. In other words, although people could become seriously debilitated by shame, the shame of poverty could not ultimately represent people's identity. This finding was also displayed in people's responses to dealing and coping with shame. While most people struggled to completely rule out the dominant socio-relational arrangements of the present-day society, some nevertheless managed to find an effective means of counteracting shame by perceiving themselves via a different basis of value or attaining human relational bonds with others based on empathy.

Summary of Findings & Further Implications

Chapter 9. Conclusions & Discussions

Chapter 9. Conclusions & Discussions

9. 1 Introduction

This last chapter of the thesis offers an overview of the key empirical findings, and discusses the original contribution of this thesis to the literature and its further implications. The chapter includes, first, a summary of the empirical findings, noting the logical structure of the thesis and the interrelationship between the chapters in answering the research questions. Second, the theoretical level findings are synthesized that explicate the psycho-social dynamics of shame working in poverty, which are based on the overall empirical findings of this research. Third, the chapter will discuss how the findings of this research relate and add to some of the key debates in the literature. In this third section, further implications for anti-poverty social policy will be addressed regarding how to approach the non-material dimensions of poverty with social policy interventions (particularly with regard to the issue of shame). Moreover, it discusses the implications of this research for other rapidly developing countries that are undergoing a similar developmental process of modern capitalism, and are either experiencing, or are expected to experience, similar social problems to those of South Korea. Lastly, the limitations of this research will be addressed, together with suggestions for future research in this area of study.

9. 2 Summary of Empirical Findings

While people's negative experience of shame in poverty and its potential significance in terms of wider social implications have been continuously raised in the literature, there has been a general lack of an in-depth empirical investigation of the topic. In the case of South Korea, due to an even more pronounced lack of research undertaken on the non-material

dimensions of poverty as a whole, the very presence of shame in poverty had first to be empirically established. Although the significance of the role of social policy in constituting the non-material dimensions of poverty was a well-established idea in western social policy literature, it was also yet to be explored in the social policy literature of South Korea. Acknowledging these research gaps in the literature, this research focused on bringing a clarity of understanding to the following themes based on empirical investigations: the nature of the association between poverty and shame and its conceptual construct, its root cause(s), personal level working mechanisms and impact of shame in poverty, and the role of anti-poverty social policy in people's experience of shame in poverty.

The main body of the thesis was composed of two parts. Part I focused on the social level psycho-social dynamics underpinning the shame of poverty, and Part II on the personal level manifestations, working mechanisms, and impact of such psycho-social dynamics of shame in poverty.

Part I. Psycho-Social Dynamics Underpinning the Shame of Poverty

Part I of the thesis began in Chapter 5 by first establishing the **significant presence of shame** in people's lived experience of poverty in South Korea. This provided the basic empirical basis for the rest of the thesis to probe further into the root causes, working mechanisms and impact of shame in poverty. Shame was found to be commonly experienced by the participants living in both Near- and In-poverty, defined by the official minimum cost of living line of South Korea. It was further found that people's own rationale for feeling ashamed of their poverty was not on the moralistic grounds that the popular social discourse often dictated (that poverty was the result of a personal failure or moral deficit). It was notable that even when the respondents were self-aware that their current poverty was not self-induced, and that none of the dominant poverty-shaming discourses was applicable in

their case, their current living conditions in poverty were in themselves seen as sufficient sources of shame.

After acknowledging that dominant social discourses were not the very basis or direct cause of people's shame of poverty, a deeper psycho-social construct underpinning the shame of poverty was addressed. The psycho-social construct upholding the shame of poverty was found to have **socio-historical roots** and to have **changed over time in its psycho-social dynamics** in accordance with social environmental changes. Based on historically contextualizing the empirical data from the in-depth interviews, Chapter 5 further showed how the shame of poverty had its roots in the socio-relational conditions of modern capitalism. In the pre-modern social environment of Korea, there was no psycho-social basis for a personal sense of shame to arise, as the social identity of people was largely pre-determined in nature and was based on collectively shared (familial) social status identity. The social value system against which people were predominantly evaluated in pre-modern Korea was also moralistic in nature, being based on Confucianism, rather than being materialistic. Such socio-cultural residues of pre-modern times were still traceable in the older generation's experience of poverty until the 1970s and 1980s. In conclusion, the shame of poverty was found to be a fairly recent phenomenon that has only become noticeably prevalent since the 1990s in South Korea.

Drawing a historical comparison of the current socio-relational identification system of people to that of the past demonstrated that the modern social systems (political, economic, and cultural values) constituted a distinctive socio-relational condition in which poverty became a source of personal identification. These empirical findings in Chapter 5 verified that the shame of poverty was not an intrinsically absolute aspect of poverty, but rather a modern capitalistic phenomenon that has been newly added to the non-material dimension of

poverty. This finding was further confirmed by the cultural discourse analysis of popular films in Chapter 6, which showed that the poverty-shame association in the cultural discourse also displayed a very similar pattern of change over time.

Based on a sociological discourse analysis of 30 popular films over a timespan of 36 years in South Korea (from 1975 to 2010), Chapter 6 verified that economic success (and poverty on the flipside) had not been the central source of evaluating people's personhood or social value in the cultural discourse until the early 2000s. Echoing the findings in Chapter 5, the cultural discourse of the 1970s also exhibited the remaining dominance of traditional communal ties and Confucianist values in the relational dynamics between people. This pre-modern form of social-relational identification was found to have shown a steady decline over the 1980s and 1990s, during which time socio-economic success increasingly came to be perceived as desirable rather than a source of moral shaming as in the past. It was from the 2000s, in the aftermath of the Asian Financial Crisis that hit the country in 1997, that poverty started to be interpreted as a blatant evidence of personal failure and loss of self-pride, resulting in unavoidable shame for the individual.

The cultural discourse analysis of films revealed a finding that was consistent with Chapter 5, that shaming evaluation of people based on their economic differences was neither an intrinsic propensity of people nor an absolute facet of poverty itself. The changes in the socio-cultural discourse of poverty-related shame were also deeply connected to the broader socio-historical context of how people's social values were identified at the time that consequently shaped the socio-relational arrangement between people. To sum up, the empirical findings of Part I were consistent as a whole in demonstrating that the current prevalence of shame in poverty was a historically conditioned phenomenon that emerged fairly recently (since around the 1990s) in the case of South Korea.

Part II. Personal Level Manifestations, Working Mechanisms, and Impact of the Psycho-Social Dynamics of Shame in Poverty

Part II examined how the current psycho-social dynamics relating poverty and shame was manifest on the personal level and was shaping people's lives in poverty. Based on the empirical findings from qualitative interview data analysis, Chapters 7 and 8 each addressed the **working mechanisms of shame on the personal level** of poverty, and the **subsequent impact** that shame had upon people's lives.

Chapter 7 demonstrated how the personal lives of people in poverty also reflected and were shaped by the wider socio-relational system of the present day, in which people identified one another's socio-relational value and status based on their individual level socio-economic differences. People in poverty were not simply the object of social shaming, but were found to act as both the evaluative judge and the object of such evaluation themselves in their social relations with others. Depending on the relative value of their socio-economic conditions to that of others within the evaluative context of their self-identities – i.e. whether one was in a relatively superior or inferior socio-economic position to the other(s) within the specific relational context at the point of evaluation – people in poverty could experience both shame and pride in their social relations. The others to be compared with included not only people in better or worse socio-economic conditions than oneself, but also one's own past selves. These findings coherently showed that the current socio-economic shame was not determined by an absolute threshold, such as living under the absolute poverty line, but by the relational context within which the person's self-value was identified. In fact, the value of one's social identity and one's shame-worthiness were found to constantly fluctuate and to be endlessly open to redefinition depending on the varying living standard of the others that one could be compared against as well as one's own changing socio-economic conditions.

There were, however, several poverty-specific conditions that brought additional sources of shame and increased the frequency of facing shame for those living in poverty. Due to poverty being positioned generally on the lower socio-economic rung of society, the overall probability of finding oneself in an inferior relational position to another person was absolutely higher for those living in poverty than for others in society. Moreover, the loss of the financial ability to support oneself - which was a deeply moralized notion in modern capitalistic society as a basic individual responsibility of all adults (including elders who have passed retirement age) -, and official social assistance recipient status were functioning as added sources of shame that frequently exposed people in poverty to both internal and external shaming of their social identity.

Furthermore, Chapter 7 reported on the function that anti-poverty social assistance (the NBLSS) was playing in people's experience of shame in poverty. The NBLSS, which is the central anti-poverty social policy measure in South Korea, was found to have multiple shaming effects in its design and structure, and its delivery system on the ground. The analysis included both identifying the institutional level elements of shaming embedded in the social assistance system as well as their personal level impact, based on documentary analysis of the social assistance system and analysis of qualitative interview data of welfare recipients' personal experience of the system.

As it currently stood, social assistance in South Korea (the NBLSS) had multiple institutional layers of shaming from the initial application process, to the assessment process (including contact with the officialdom), as well as during actual receipt of the social assistance benefits. Primarily emphasizing the role of people's personal self-agency (i.e. to support themselves via work), in order to receive public support, the system obliged people to prove they possessed nothing of economic value as an individual, no family members willing to support

them, and no physical self-agency; allowed them to be treated with contempt or lack of respect by the officialdom; and induced a feeling of degradation with the low quality provision of welfare when they became a recipient. The major irony in such institutional shaming, which came from the system's preoccupation with enforcing people's self-support above all other policy objectives, was that it functioned not only as gate-keeping measures for eligible claimants but also as a systemic deterioration of people's self-agency by undermining the applicants' and recipients' sense of self-value in society and dignity as an individual. That is, it was the NBLSS system itself that was eroding people's emotional resources to put their agency into practice. Such institutional shaming was further legitimising and sustaining the negative self-aggravating processes of shame that were at work in present-day poverty. In order for its work-orientation to be properly realised without such agency-deteriorating effects of shaming, the system required substantial reforms in its very ethos that underpins its overall structure, including its delivery.

Chapter 8 discussed several personal level processes driven by the impact of shame that were significantly affecting the lives of people in poverty. Due to poverty becoming a source of shame in people's social relations, poverty was now treated as a personal secret – as it was an instant marker of someone's socio-economic inferiority to others – to be concealed by people in poverty. Concealment of one's socio-economic conditions significantly hindered people's social relational interactions with others, as well as the act of seeking and receiving outside support when short of essential resources. The subsequent result of this concealment of poverty was social isolation of people in both relational and material deprivation. People were feeling trapped by their internal self-help agenda of shame rather than choosing to live in such seclusion, which persuaded people to stay isolated until they restored their pride by overcoming and escaping their current poverty (the source of shame) themselves. This

internal logic of shame found on the personal level of poverty was in sync with the socio-cultural discourse of the time found in popular films in Chapter 6, which also portrayed escaping poverty via self-earned success as the ultimate means of recovering one's self-esteem, upon which the restoration of one's entire life (including one's human relations) rested. Individual people in poverty were depicted as being responsible for restoring their dignity in their lives themselves by becoming winners in social competition, through which came socio-economic success as the winner's prize.

Such social isolation was found to be detrimental to people's lives and their well-being, not only for the sustained deprivation of their basic social and physical needs, but also for the living condition it created within which the self-aggravating mechanism of shame was activated. With repeated failures of self-support and having no one to blame but themselves, the logic of shame that poverty was due to the personal inability to support oneself was serving as a self-fulfilling prophecy for people isolated in poverty. That is, people became socially conditioned to keep their hardships to themselves, and those hardships were increasingly perceived and treated by the people themselves as personal deficiencies and as a source of shame. As a consequence, people's self-confidence in their self-agency was being damaged, which was a critical loss for people whose current and future life prospects depended solely on their own agency. Many were also found to struggle with various kinds of emotional deprivations, such as depression, high levels of anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. Some had fallen into a state of complete despair, struggling with pathological symptoms of various addictions to alcohol, games, and gambling. In this respect, the impact of shame, losing socio-relational recognition of one's self-value, led to not only socio-relational damage but also internal damage to an individual.

What was extraordinary nonetheless was people's inner resistance against shame, showing

that their self-value as a human being could not ultimately be defined by the shame of poverty. The investigations of people's varying responses to shame further elucidated a potentially very significant understanding of shame. That is, an individualistic approach to the shame of poverty, whereby people are encouraged to escape shame by promoting their self-agency or to pursue the self-help route of competing to gain their own relative basis for social respect and self-pride, will ultimately keep people under the same shame-inducing framework. Moreover, such approach is likely to simply sustain the condition of being trapped in isolation under the agenda of shame, as it is very difficult to escape such situation alone as an individual. The most effective and promising means of counteracting the shame of poverty, as far as the personal level process goes, was stepping outside the shame-inducing socio-relational frame of mind itself (i.e. not subscribing to the individualized social identification of people against a relativistic value barometer), rather than continuing to strive for recognition by staying within the established rules of the system that inevitably requires negative value recognition of someone else in order to grant positive value to another.

9. 3 Synthesis of Theoretical Findings: Psycho-Social Dynamics of Shame in Poverty

This section synthesizes and discusses the theoretical findings of this research. While navigating through the extremely rich qualitative data sets and in trying to address all the research questions, it became imperative to develop a more refined explanatory framework regarding the shame of poverty. The initial conceptual framework of shame (discussed in Chapter 2), which was necessary and valuable as the basic framework for undertaking this research,[60] was found insufficient in its theoretical properties to answer the set of questions

[60] It mainly recognized the dual dimensions of shame – i.e. how the ashamed sense of 'self' and the shaming act by the voice of 'others' functioned together to lead to the emotional experience of shame.

of this research (i.e. the nature and root causes of the poverty-shame association, personal level working mechanisms of shame, and its impact in poverty). To understand the precise basis of people's personal sense of shame regarding poverty, i.e. its root causes and working mechanisms, the research ultimately required an understanding of the psycho-social nature of shame in poverty. Accordingly, the initial conceptual framework of shame was revised and further developed after undertaking a more in-depth theoretical level analysis of the empirical data. Once the theoretical framework was sufficiently distilled, the research questions and the answers drawn from the empirical findings were found to be both internally coherent and interconnected with one another, with their explanations organically unfolding from the foundational understanding of the *psycho-social dynamics of shame in poverty*.[61] The theoretical level investigation ultimately produced an overarching framework for understanding how shame arises and functions in poverty from beginning to end (i.e. its root causes, working mechanisms, and subsequent impacts) in the current social environment.

The theoretical findings are deeply grounded on a synthetic analysis of the empirical findings after having completed all three elements of the empirical investigation (qualitative analysis of in-depth interview data, sociological film discourse analysis, and documentary social policy analysis), together with historical contextualization of those findings. The theoretical concepts used in this section have all been introduced and discussed with empirical illustrations throughout the empirical chapters of the thesis. Hence, this section provides a synthesis of the theoretical findings alone.

[61] The term 'psycho-social dynamics' has been devised in this thesis to encompass the socio-historically conditioned psychology of shame, its personal level working mechanisms and subsequent impact that were both deeply personal and socio-relational in nature.

9. 3. 1 Conceptual Basis of Shame: Socially Uncertain Entity of 'the Self'

When participants spoke about feeling ashamed of their poverty, the emotion was directed precisely at the personal sense of *self* as an individual. In the previous literature on shame, the notion of 'self' had been used as a straightforward concept to refer to the person who felt ashamed of himself or herself. It was quite simply put that 'self-consciousness' was required for a person to experience shame (Cooley, 1922; Scheff, 2000; Tracy et al., 2007). Yet what was discovered in addition in unravelling the conceptual construct of shame with the qualitative interview data in this research was that there were several presuppositional conceptual bases that were required to underpin the notion of 'the self' to ultimately uphold the entire process of shame. Those conceptual premises included the *individuality* of 'the self' as an independent social entity, its *disparity* in terms of value, and *uncertainty* in its absolute value identity, all of which carried crucial theoretical implications that brought clarity to both the psycho-social construct and the subsequent working mechanisms of shame in poverty.

Relational Estrangement of 'the Self' from Within

The first prerequisite for the shaming of 'the self' was to assume its *individuality* – that is, each person is an independent social entity with his/her own personhood. Without such acknowledgement of the individuality of each person's social identity, there was no basis for making a shaming evaluation of a person. The second presumption was that people's individualized selves carried a hierarchical *disparity* in value. As shaming was a stratifying value judgement of 'the self', discerning it to be inferior or lacking of worth in comparison to others, shaming was implicitly predicated on the assumption that people's individual self-value was not the same and could vary in a hierarchical sense. The third conceptual premise underpinning the act of shaming was a fundamental sense of *uncertainty*, an absence of an absolute recognition, of the value of people's individualized self-identities. If an absolute

value was assumed for people's identities, their value would not have been brought into question in the first place. This absence of an absolute value recognition of 'the self' was displayed in how none of the interviewees considered themselves or others to be inherently (absolutely) shameful, yet no individual was perceived to carry an identity of absolute value that could be exempt from being put to shame.

The combination of these three conceptual premises underlying the notion of 'the self' was found to uphold the entire process of shame. First, the deep sense of uncertainty in people's individualized self-values, which was arguably a modern phenomenon, was conditioning people to become relationally estranged from one another as independent social entities. Such an estrangement of *the self*, perceiving it to be uncertain of its value, was opening up a relational sense of distance for objectifying and evaluating the value of the self. This implied that for any other social entity outside the particular conceptual boundary of *the self,* it could automatically become the evaluative 'other' to 'the self'.

Moreover, such relational condition of estrangement and subsequent objectification of the self also lay within each person in terms of their self-awareness of themselves. That is, people evaluated not only other people's individual self-value but also their own as being worthy of shame, indicating that they were relationally estranged from their own sense of 'self' as well. In this respect, shaming of 'the self' occurred not only interpersonally between people, but also intrapersonally from within each person. This internal estrangement of the self was equally based on the fundamental absence of an absolute value that was attributed to the independent entity of 'the self'. This psycho-social condition has been termed in the thesis as the *relational estrangement of the self from within*. Shame could be said to result from the failure of *the self* to overcome its relational state of estrangement by restoring its connection with the *other than the self* by proving its relational value.

In the case of the intrapersonal relationship with one's own sense of 'self', which was also estranged from the person him/herself, the evaluative 'other than the self' lay from within, with the dual dimensions of shame (the shaming, and the ashamed) operating together in the person. This conceptualization further clarifies Erikson's conceptualization of the 'self' in relation to shame, which Lynd saw as describing the 'self' to be both an 'observer and observed' (1958: 204). Erikson's concept of the 'self' is now more clearly distinguishable as the observed-self being the estranged sense of self of a person, and the observer-self being the internal identification (i.e. value evaluation) made of such self.

Disclosing the estranged nature of 'the self' from within could further address what was left unanswerable in the initial conceptual framework (established in Chapter 2), in which the 'others' required in the shaming of 'the self' were defined quite vaguely as either being 'real life people or the imaginary internal voice of the others'. In that case, the conceptual distinction and the interrelationship between the concepts of the 'self' and the 'others' were left rather obscure, especially in the case of the internal shaming process that involved the 'imaginary internal voice of the others'.[62] According to this new conceptualization, the internal shaming process could be explained by the fact that 'the self' is relationally estranged also from people themselves. Depending on the relational context of 'the self' (i.e. interpersonal or intrapersonal relationship with 'the self'), the shaming 'others' emerged as physical others or as an internal voice making a value identification of 'the self'.

Furthermore, the evaluative *other than the self,* in essence, was an inherent conceptual pair that was in a relational dynamic with *the self*, as the concept emerged out of demarcating 'the

[62] Benedict (1946) and Freud (1950), who also tried to acknowledge the social nature of shame, defined the locus of shame to be the point of separation between the self and others, and described the others simply as the audience of the self, without clearly explicating its nature.

self' as an independent entity fundamentally unknown in terms of its relational value. Recognizing the conceptual relationship between the dual dimensions of shame as an inherently interconnected mechanism also explains why shame is an intensely personal emotion and yet also a social emotion by nature. This understanding also explains people's strong discomfort with the emotion of shame (rather than shame being felt as a relational severance between inherently separate entities), as it is, in essence, a disruption of the sociality that inherently lies within people.

When contextualizing these key conceptual underpinnings of the current psycho-social construct of shame found in poverty within the broader historical context of South Korea, they were found to have evident socio-historical roots. First, the socio-relational estrangement and objectification of the individualized selves that formed the basis of shame were found to be profoundly affected by the general socio-relational system of the society. Second, the value barometer for evaluating people's self-based identity, which subsequently determined the source of shame, was largely shaped by the currently dominant value system of the society. The significance of these social underpinnings of shame was also demonstrated in the findings from the changing cultural discourse of poverty and shame in popular films.

9. 3. 2 The Act of Shaming: An Arbitrary Value Evaluation of 'the Self'

Due to the underlying uncertainty and presumed disparity in value of people's individualized self-identities, an absolutist value identification of a person was essentially unattainable within the dominant socio-relational conditions of the current times. Therefore, the estranged sense of 'self' that was undefined of its 'identity' necessarily required, and led to, a provisional identification of its relative value against arbitrary value barometers.

Standard of Evaluation

There were several kinds of measures used by the interviewees in assessing the shame-worthiness of an individual. However, the main source of evaluation was socio-economic disparities between people, e.g. type of housing, educational background, income level, and so forth. There was some variation in people's individual choices regarding which particular source of shame they showed a stronger inclination towards in making a value judgement of 'the self' (including their own selves) – e.g. one respondent felt more ashamed about her lower educational level than the type of housing she resided in, whereas another respondent felt the reverse.

Taylor (1991) had written in a related vein about the 'general presumption of subjectivism of value' dominant in the contemporary world, i.e. 'things have significance not of themselves but because people deem them to have it – as though people could determine what is significant, either by decision, or perhaps unwittingly and unwillingly by just feeling that way' (1991: 36). Yet, as Taylor (1991: 35, 40-41) further argued, there had to be a certain parameter to such a subjective choice of values, as the chosen value had to have some sort of significance that differentiated it from other possible sources of value and validated it as a credible standard of evaluation. The respondents as a whole also tended to draw on similar sources of evaluation, which were mostly socio-economic in nature, that were evidently socially conceived rather than being originally subjective values of the specific individual.[63] This socially conditioned nature of the dominant source of shame was also shown in comparing the different age groups in interviews (in Chapter 5) and in analysing the changing

[63] The argument above that the evaluative barometer of an individual's identity was deeply shaped and conditioned in social relational terms echoed what had been articulated in various related forms in the literature (Cooley, 1922; Mead, 1934; Lynd, 1958; Goffman, 1967; Scheff, 2000).

trends of the dominant cultural discourse in popular films (in Chapter 6), where certain social values dominated as the barometer of shame for a certain period of time and then were replaced by different standard of values. As shown in Part One of the thesis, it was a fairly recent and a particularly modern capitalistic social phenomenon in South Korea that individual level socio-economic conditions began to function as the most significant source of shame and determinant of a person's socio-relational value.

Unstable Nature of the Arbitrary Identification of the Self

What was further notable about the value barometers that were employed in the process of shaming was their arbitrary nature. It was arbitrary in the sense that it was not an absolute standard of values, as mentioned earlier. First, depending on which value barometer was socially prevalent at the time of the evaluation, which determined the source of shame, the consequential shame-worthiness of a person could vary substantially. This meant that both shame and shaming were based on an artificial value identification of the self that could alter and vary over time.

Second, the very object of evaluation, 'the self', was also liable to change in its status position on the scale of values – especially in the case of socio-economic values that were easily measurable in numerical and material terms. To illustrate, if a person who was the richest person in the country became bankrupt due to an unexpected turn in the economy, that person's socio-economic value status could change from one extreme to another overnight.

Third, as the value of 'the self' was ultimately uncertain as an independent entity, the value identification process could never be completed once and for all, as the individual's self-worth was always going to be open to question. This was leading to endlessly repeatable evaluations of the self by countless others than the self, resulting in a precarious potential

shame-worthiness of 'the self'. However, such an arbitrary nature of a shaming evaluation was not apparent to people in practice, and people did not question the validity of the value evaluations they were making of people (including themselves). Rather, these value judgements were treated as an authoritative verdict at the point of evaluation, and shame was momentous in its resulting impact on people.

9. 4 Discussions of the Findings

This section discusses how the findings of this research specifically speak to some of the key debates in the literature discussed in Chapter 2. This will include discussions about the nature of the association between poverty and shame, its root causes, and its wider social implications. Further implications of this research for social policy discourse in South Korea as well as other country contexts are also discussed in this section.

9. 4. 1 Some of the Key Debates in the Literature

Root Cause(s) of the Shame of Poverty

In the literature, one of the central causes of the shame faced by people in poverty has often been attributed to the denigrating public and policy discourse of poverty (by Lister, Dorling, and others). Accordingly, social discourse was also acknowledged and included in the investigative framework of this research, as one of the potential social mechanisms that shaped the shaming voice of 'others' in society. The research then investigated whether the popular social discourse of poverty was indeed functioning as a significant basis for people's personal sense of shame regarding poverty. If an internalization of socially constructed shaming (or stigmatizing) social discourse was the main cause of people's shame in poverty, the typical rationale for the shame of poverty propagated by public discourse was to be reflected also in people's self-perception of themselves or in their own reasons for feeling

ashamed of poverty. However, as far as the South Korean case study went, the main cause of people's own shame of poverty was not the poverty-shaming rationale of the widespread public discourse. While the interviewees also subscribed to such discourse themselves, assuming that it must represent some people in society, they were well aware that none of the poverty-shame rationales of the public discourse applied to their personal situations. This showed that while the shaming social discourse may contribute to generating social prejudice regarding people in poverty (as the participants themselves had towards other people in poverty), it was nonetheless not the central cause of people's personal sense of shame (especially when people in poverty could not relate to the rationales themselves).

When further analysing the psycho-social construct of people's shame in poverty, there were several presuppositional underpinnings that upheld such shame, disclosing much deeper socio-historical roots to the shame of poverty. As discussed throughout the thesis, the particular socio-relational condition that underpinned the psycho-social dynamics of shame in poverty was attributable to the major social level shifts from Confucianistic feudalism to modern capitalism. While I learned about the socio-historical argument after completing this research – i.e. that the shame of poverty in the Western world was also found to have a broader historical backdrop – the findings of this research on the South Korean case study resonated with this view. This thesis is on the same page with the socio-historical argument to the extent of recognizing that individual level socio-economic shame is a relatively recent social phenomenon, and that it is a natural product of modern capitalism. What this research further contributed is its explicability of how the current shame of poverty is deeply underpinned by the *socio-relational system* of modern capitalism, and what its *working mechanisms* are. It also demonstrated that socio-economic shame is not a condition limited to poverty, but is a shared social condition embedded in the socio-relational system of current

society as a whole.

Another lesson from undertaking this research was that wider socio-historical contextualization is of critical importance in elucidating the interrelationship between the personal level experience of poverty and the social level processes that shape and influence it. In searching for the root causes of the poverty-shame association, the qualitative interview data alone were somewhat limiting in the scope of their explanations, although they provided numerous pieces of rich information that could potentially form a bigger picture. It was not until historically contextualizing the empirical findings from all three sets of data, and particularly the qualitative interview data, that the series of research questions and the underlying conceptual foundations at work began to come together to form a coherent and explicable theoretical narrative. Further insights into the socio-historical contextual changes provided the crucial keys to unlocking the deeper social level underpinnings (and the holistic interrelationships) of the various working mechanisms and processes of shame that were found on the personal level investigation of poverty.

Moreover, being able to cross-check the findings from the interview data with the film discourse analysis as well as the historical context was also immensely valuable in order to gain a more solid ground of evidence to draw out the conclusions from the findings. Undertaking solely quantitative or qualitative investigations could have led to misinterpreting the association or to more scattered descriptive level findings by being uninformed of the social level processes that deeply connect and shape them to a large extent. Equally, considering only one aspect of the psycho-social dimension of poverty, either the personal or the social level processes alone, would have led to ungrounded and possibly biased interpretations of the empirical findings. Thus, it was highly advantageous to consider the personal level processes alongside the social level analysis in the research design, as it further

disclosed how the social level dynamics working between poverty and shame were deeply related to and manifested on the personal level. It also enabled the discovery of more in-depth personal level working mechanisms of shame and how it affected the lives of people in poverty, as well as providing explanations for the comparative effectiveness of some response to shame over others. These new insights can be instrumental to devising more effective antidotes and counteractive measures for tackling shame, and possibly also for addressing other non-material dimensions of poverty.

Deeper Root of Shame than Inequality

This thesis has also elaborated on the more fundamental underpinnings of shame, which was an absence of an absolute basis to recognize people's relational value as an individual social entity, which consequently led to multiple working mechanisms of shame, e.g. individuals becoming the judge of their own selves as well as others, with endless comparisons and differentiations being necessarily drawn based on personal level differences. In this respect, the shame of poverty, or shaming based on any other personal level differences, is not simply a manifestation of social ignorance or an unsubstantiated propagation of denigrating ideas in society, but an intrinsic outcome of a wider socio-relational condition that requires everyone involved in the system to competitively attain their self-value by their relative superiority over others. Particularly in modern society, the source of people's social identification has been incomparably diversified based on their individual level differences, which has placed people under a constant and much more frequent need to compete with one another for their own self-recognition in society. Shame was essentially a product of trying to define people's socio-relational value based on a fundamentally indefinable entity of personal 'self'.

This finding had several further implications. As the present state of the self became the ultimate basis for determining a person's social value, a much more heightened sense of

socio-relational significance was to be placed now on people's daily exposure of themselves in public spaces. Moreover, such value evaluation of the self was essentially a provisional judgement until a change occurred either in its own status (when it then becomes another comparative 'other') or in that of the others. This transient nature of modern social identification explains the inherent insecurity in people's personal sense of 'self' and the general growth in people's social anxiety – or 'status anxiety' according to De Botton (2005) – in modern developed nations (see also Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010).

In other words, on a more fundamental level, in order to combat the shame of poverty (or any other individualistic sources of identity, as a matter of fact), personal level differences should not be treated as the basis of people's social identification. Hypothetically speaking, in order to completely eradicate the need to place a person under stratifying value evaluations that inevitably leads to shame for many, an absolute basis would be needed that does not require a differentiation to recognize an equal value, the same kind of dignity, of every human being and members of society.

However, in the current social environment, strongly underpinned by modern values, people facing an arbitrary judgement of their social value, and the subsequent stratification of people, become inevitable and unavoidable. Anyhow, as studying people's own responses to shame in this study also demonstrated, seeking to attain and establish one's own value, whilst still functioning within the socio-relational framework that necessarily produces differentiation and shame, would be inherently infeasible. That is, it would be a logically incoherent mandate for the current socio-relational system to perform contrary to its own coherent set of rules – for instance, seeking to attain an equal sense of dignity while promoting self-agency to climb up the same ladder of a social value system, or seeking to attain an equal validation of people while basing their social identities on their individual level differences.

This argument also necessarily departs from the idea that inequality, material difference, is the root cause of shame. Wilkinson and Pickett argued that tackling inequality will be a sufficient antidote to dealing with the issue of shame in modern capitalistic societies, and that a more egalitarian social system would reduce the cultural pressure to consume as well as the scope for comparison that resulted in shame. However, based on the findings of this research, the root cause of the issue was not the specific source of shame but the relational mechanism that unavoidably produces divisive value judgments of people (constantly bestowing both shame and pride) based on their individual level differences. While maintaining the fundamental basis of shame within the current socio-relational framework, anything can and inevitably will become the source of differentiating people. That is to say, reducing inequality alone would not solve the root cause of shame or the growing social trend of the 'struggle for recognition' in Honneth's (1995) terms.

This theoretical inference is also illustrated in the findings from the cultural discourse of popular films during the 1990s, when South Korea was experiencing the lowest rate of absolute and relative poverty together with the highest percentage of the population being identifiable as middle class. The predominant tone of the cultural discourse during this period was not a decrease in the economic value evaluation of people in their social relations. While poverty noticeably decreased in its amount of exposure or importance in the cultural discourse, there was instead an increasing significance of the inferiority complex and shame of the middle class, who evaluated themselves as being inferior to the richer part of the population. As such, a socio-relational system that identifies people's individual value based on their comparative superiority cannot, intrinsically, be free from producing a divisive relational condition for people, endlessly bestowing shame or pride between people. In this sense, material deprivation itself is not what damages people's dignity in their social relations,

but it is the socio-relational system within which material differences become the basis of acknowledging people's personal value in society.

Changing Nature of the Association between Poverty and Shame

One notable divergence in opinion in the literature was on the nature of the association between poverty and shame, i.e. whether or not shame was a universal and an absolute facet of poverty. Yet both the empirical and historical findings of this research verified that the social coupling of poverty with shame had a much more recent history. The possibility of an intrinsic and universal association between poverty and shame in some absolute sense was a compelling idea when observing how ingrained and prevalent shame was found to be in people's lived experience of poverty. The pervasiveness of shame in people's current lives in poverty was undeniably supported by the interview data. However, the current pervasiveness itself could not substantiate an argument that shame must therefore be an intrinsic aspect of poverty.

Evidence against the intrinsic association between poverty and shame was provided in Chapter 5 that addressed the socio-historical roots of the current association between poverty and shame, and in Chapter 6 that discussed the changing poverty-shame dynamics in the socio-cultural discourse surrounding poverty, both of which suggested that the shame of poverty began to really emerge only since the end of the 1990s (or early 2000s) in South Korea. Chapter 7 on the personal level working mechanisms of shame also demonstrated that people in poverty could attain a sense of both pride and shame, depending on the relational context within which their relative value position was identified. These findings consistently and coherently demonstrate that shame is a socio-historically conditioned phenomenon rather than a universally absolute nature of poverty. This refutes Amartya Sen's usage of shame in the conceptualization of the 'absolutist aspect of poverty' (1984: 159) that postulates poverty

to be an absolutely shameful condition to live in for an individual. Furthermore, his conceptual postulation that shame in relation to poverty holds an absolute threshold upon which a person will either be ashamed or not ashamed was also disproved by the empirical findings of this research (in Chapter 7).

9. 4. 2 Further Implications of this Research

Policy Implications

The findings of this research have shown that the current shame of poverty is a manifestation of the current social environment in which poverty is situated. It is a newly added dimension of poverty, rather than its intrinsic attribute. Nevertheless, the impact of shame in poverty has been found to be detrimental on many levels - functioning as a barrier to individuals trying to escape poverty, aggravating both their emotional and material hardships, and significantly undermining the personal agency of people who are largely living in isolated conditions relying solely on themselves.

As found in this research, institutional shaming by welfare institutions not only affected the effectiveness of the policy by deterring both the access and exit of the system, but also significantly deteriorated the well-being of people in already difficult life situations, further damaging their only means of living, their self-esteem and confidence in their own agency. This clearly indicates that policy measures that are designed in a way that can only aggravate the shame that people are already in – for example, treating applicants as people worthy of shame, the low quality provision of welfare, or framing social assistance as a charity for who have 'failed' to support themselves – are much more likely to cause more harm than lead to any success in enabling people to actually become self-supporting. Recipients capable of work not only found themselves in a poverty trap that made it difficult for them to move on to

decent work situations; they were also experiencing a shaming trap. The analysis of the social assistance system showed that in order to introduce a more effective and dignified receipt of public support that does not potentially exclude people in desperate need, social assistance should not be recognized as a negative privilege from its very design and the objectives of the social welfare system.

Empowering individuals and their agency, while it may not be the actual antidote to shame itself, is nevertheless a necessary measure and approach within the current socio-economic environment and welfare system of South Korea. In this respect, what requires critical reform in the current social assistance system is implementing a more proactive ethos to position itself as an available means of support for struggling individuals, and help mitigate the sense of low self-esteem and self-belief that is a barrier to people's efforts and desires to escape poverty themselves. Providing a sense of trust in people, rather than suspecting first that they may have caused their own poverty themselves or that they would choose to 'depend' on benefits, and supporting them as they seek to recover their damaged sense of self-pride, would be the more productive and effective means of promoting improvement in people's lives via their own agency. However, the current social assistance programme was found to have been more shaming or aggravating the shame for people, rather than helping them to restore their actual self-supporting capacities as individuals. Given that the current welfare system of South Korea relies heavily on people's own resilience and personal agency for escaping poverty, the actual design and delivery of the system should also be geared toward valuing people's dignity and improving their genuine sense of agency.

Implications for Other Country Contexts with Similar Social Problems

The broader social level conditions that underpinned the current prevalence of socio-economic shame in South Korea were not unique to South Korea, but equivalent parallels

could be found in many of the countries operating under modern capitalism. The pre-modern socio-relational characteristics were also not unique to Korea alone, although they may significantly differ in their specific content. According to Taylor (1991), in the western world also, 'social recognition' of individual people prior to modern times 'was built into the socially derived identity from the very fact that it was based on social categories everyone took for granted' (Taylor, 1991: 47- 48). While Taylor was describing western pre-modern feudalism, his observations closely echoed how the feudal hierarchical system functioned in pre-modern Korea with socially defined and preordained social recognition of people. These parallel findings further implied that the findings of this research were not exceptional to Korea, but could be characteristic of the modern and pre-modern social structures themselves, in which human relations were collectively organized and the social identification of people was static. Such parallels seem to reflect the more recent major historical change that began from the West and later expanded to the East.

These findings also show that the modern demolition of the Confucianist feudal social status system has not in itself ended the socio-relational stratification of people in their relations with one another. Social stratification of people in terms of their relative social value has not only persisted into modern society but was also found to be ingrained in the modern system of social recognition of people. Moreover, the modern capitalistic social hierarchy brought about a new dimension of shame (as well as pride) to people's social relations, with a focus on independent agency and individuality of people. Consequently, poverty not only corresponds to standing on the lowest rungs of the social status hierarchy but in addition has come to function as a social signifier of being the least successful or competent as an independent social agent. In this respect, the only genuine sense of equality that has been attained in the social transition to modern capitalism would be the universally shared

possibility of facing both shame and pride according to how one's changing socio-economic social status compares to others'. The possibility of facing such shame was also high, due to socio-relational identification being frequently required in the urban social environment. Furthermore, people's relationships were not only shaped in a hierarchical order (see also Barkow, 1989; Gilbert, 1989, 1997) but were also even more finely stratified now that social status was built upon individual level differences. Such social stratification inevitably exacerbated the sense of differentiation and relational distance between people, opening up the possible room for shame to emerge, as well as its general frequency which could increase a general sense of anxiety for people in society.

As other developing countries' pre-modern forms of socio-relational identification system are replaced with modern capitalism, there is a strong probability that the kinds of issues and problems currently faced in South Korea may be replicated in these other country contexts as well. Other countries also in similar stages of social development characterised by capitalistic modernization with a developmentalist welfare state in East Asia, such as Japan (that also shares the previous Confucianist background), would also benefit from the findings from this South Korean case study. The key socio-relational mechanism of South Korea that has been identified in this research seemingly also operates in many other countries that are advanced in their modernization process and capitalist social development.

9. 5 Limitations & Suggestions for Future Research

9. 5. 1 Limitations

This research had a purposive sampling framework for identifying and recruiting the relevant interview participants. There was a significant challenge, however, in the recruitment process of male participants in particular. The welfare official at the local Dong office who supported

the recruitment explained that the difficulty was due to male welfare recipients finding it more ‘tough’ to speak about and expose their living conditions to others. While this in itself provided some meaningful implications with regard to the gendered shame of poverty, it nonetheless resulted in a much greater representation of female participants than male participants in the data (23 females, 8 males). Hence, within the attained scope of this research, the dimension of gender could not be explored in further depth in the analysis with the relative lack of male participants. Also there was relatively more ease in recruiting the participants in their 40s than those in their 60s by the welfare official, which also produced a higher representation of the younger age group in the interview data (20 people in their 40s, and 11 people in their 60s).

In studying past experiences of the older age group, there are several cautions raised in the literature as possible limitations of life-history type investigations, such as the ‘golden age’ effect it may have. In this respect, it should be noted that the findings of this research are not a focused analysis of the pre-modern time period itself, and thus should not be interpreted as giving a holistic picture of the past. This research has its main focus on the particular socio-relational condition of poverty in current times, and does so by drawing on its noticeable disparities from the past that the older age group, who have experienced both periods, could effectively identify. Such historical comparisons are drawn to enhance the understanding of the current social situations by underlining what has newly emerged or withered in relation to the past and exploring why. As an illustration, one of the older age group’s accounts of the main difference in today’s experience of poverty was a notable increase in public provision for poverty (which was seen as a positive change) and a significant decline in familial and communal support networks (which was described as a negative change). People inevitably focused on these ‘negative’ social level changes, as they were speaking of their current

hardships in poverty. As this research is aimed at understanding the current social conditions of poverty and its critical dimensions, there should be caution and a limit to referencing this research for giving a holistic account of pre-modern times or the social conditions of poverty as a whole at that time.

9. 5. 2 Possible Further Research

As mentioned above, the South Korean case study could be compared and contrasted with other countries operating under modern capitalistic social systems to further contextualize the findings of this research. It would also be valuable to compare the social assistance systems of the different jurisdictions that share similar socio-relational conditions for poverty. Particularly, it would be beneficial to further investigate what other kinds of social policy measures would be effective in mitigating the currently prevalent impact of shame faced in poverty. Moreover, the experience of socio-economic shame among different demographic groups (e.g. focusing on old age, young adults, or children) may also yield further specific insights on this topic for its inference with regard to social policy developments. Additionally, given that the findings of this research suggest that individualization of poverty was a noticeably widespread condition, the inherent contradictions in the current system of the NBLSS (social assistance system) – that employs family household as the unit of assessment, as well as enforcing obligatory family support clause for family members not part of the household – should be addressed further in research.

There are also other possible ways of expanding the implications of this research and further exploring the changing social status and class dynamics in modern capitalist societies, including the shame experienced by the middle-class in relation to their relative socio-economic position and how that affects the overall human relational environment of society. As Lister (2004:13) also pointed out, ‘shame itself is not unique to the condition of poverty. It

can be found in various other circumstances as ethnic and gender discriminations'. In this respect, it would be valuable to investigate further how the combination of other sources of modern individual self-identity, such as gender or other personal level differences, together with socio-economic social identity, interact with one another in the wider present-day social dynamics, which I would describe here as an *inherently competitive* 'struggle for recognition' (Honneth, 1995).

Bibliography

Abrahamson, P. (1999) The welfare modelling business. *Social Policy & Administration*, 33 (4), 394-415.

Ahn, J. and Song, J. (2006) Introducing the Korean EITC: Its effects and plans. *Jae-Jung-Non-Jib*, 20 (2), 33-71.

Alexander, F. (1954) *Dynamic Psychiatry*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Alkire, S. (2002) *Valuing Freedoms: Sen's Capability Approach and Poverty Reduction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Allan, S., Gilbert, P. and Goss, K. (1994) An exploration of shame measures-II: Psychopathology. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 17, 719–722.

Anderson, H. (1997) *Conversation, Language, and Possibilities: A Postmodern Approach to Therapy*. New York: Basic Books.

Anderson, S. G. (2001) Welfare recipients' views about caseworker performance: Lessons for developing case management practices. *Families in Society*, 82, 165-174.

Arino, B. (2004) *The stigma of mental illness*. [Online]. Available from: http://www.psychiatry-inpractice.com/psychiatryinpractice/default.aspx?tabid=61&

Bang, H.-N., et al. (2004) *현대 한국사회의 불평등 (Social Inequality in Contemporary Korea)*. Pa-Ju: Hanul Academy.

Barkow, J. H. (1989) *Darwin, Sex and Status: Biological Approaches to Mind and Culture*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Barry, B. (2002) Social exclusion, social isolation, and the distribution of income. In: J. Hills, J. Le Grand and D. Piachaud (eds.). *Understanding Social Exclusion.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 13-29.

Bates, A. and Clark, D. M. (1998) A new cognitive treatment for social phobia: a single case study. *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy*, An International Quarterly, 12, 289–302.

Baumberg, B. (2016) The stigma of claiming benefits: a quantitative study. *Journal of Social Policy*, 45 (2), 181-199.

Baumberg, B., Bell, K. and Gaffney, D. with Deacon, R., Hood, C. and Sage, D. (2012) *Benefits Stigma in Britain*. London: Elizabeth Finn Care/Turn2us.

Baumeister, R. F., Stillwell, A. and Heatherton, T. F. (1994) Guilt: an interpersonal approach. *Psychological Bulletin*, 115, 243–267.

Baumeister, R. F., Tice, D. M. and Hutton, D. G. (1989) Self-presentational motivation of differences in self-esteem. *Journal of Personality*, 57, 547–579.

Beck, A. T., Emery, G. and Greenberg, R. L. (1985) *Anxiety Disorders and Phobias: A Cognitive Approach.* New York: Basic Books.

Benedict, R. (1946) *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Beresford, P., Green, D., Lister, R. and Woodard, K. (1999) *Poverty First Hand: Poor People Speak for Themselves*. London: Child Poverty Action Group.

Bernstein, B. (1990) *The Structuring of Pedagogic Discourse*. London: Routledge.

Bourdieu, P. (1991) *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge: Polity.

Bower, P., Knowles, S., Coventry, P. A. and Rowland, N. (2011) Counselling for mental health and psychosocial problems in primary care. *Cochrane Database Systematic Review*, 9, CD001025.

Bradshaw, J. (2005) *Healing the Shame that Binds You*. 2nd ed., Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications.

Briar, S. (1966) Welfare from below: recipients' views of the public welfare system. *California Law Review*, 54, 370-385.

Brown, B. (2010) *The Power of Vulnerability*. [Ted Talk]. Held on June 2010, TEDxHouston. Available from: https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_on_vulnerability [Accessed 14 August 2014]

Butler, J. (1990) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity.* New York: Routledge.

Chandhoke, N. (2009) Equality for what? Or the troublesome relation between egalitarianism and respect. In: G. Guru (ed.). *Humiliation: Claims and Context*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 140-160.

Charlesworth, S. (2000) Bourdieu, social suffering and working-class life. In: B. Flower (ed.). *Reading Bourdieu on Society and Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell, 49-65.

Chase, E. and Walker, R. (2012) *Portrayals of poverty and shame in British literature and contemporary film.* [Online]. Working Paper, Department of Social Policy and Intervention, University of Oxford. Available from: https://www.spi.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/WP1CulturalconceptionsUK_0.pdf

Cheek, C. and Piercy, K.W. (2001) The other side of the desk: former welfare recipients who now work for "the system". *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 28, 139-156.

Chilton, M. (2006) Developing a measure of dignity for stress-related health outcomes. *Health and Human Rights,* 9 (2), 208-233.

Choi, K.-S. (2007) 한국의 빈곤기간 구조 (The structure of poverty spells in South Korea). *한국노동패널 학술대회 논문집 (Journal Issue of South Korea's Labour Panel Study Symposium)*, 8, Seoul: KiHASA, 383-406.

Cline, E. M. (2016) The boundaries of manners: ritual and etiquette in early Confucianism and Stohr's On Manners. *Dao*, 15 (2), 241-255.

Cohen, S., Doyle, W. J., Skoner, D. P., Rabin, B. S. and Gwaltney, J. M. (1997) Social ties and susceptibility to the common cold. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 227 (24), 1940-1944.

Cooley, C. H. (1922) *Human Nature and the Social Order*. New York: Scribner's.

Crocker, J., Major, B. and Steele, C. (1998) Social stigma. In: D. Gilbert, S.T. Fiske and G. Lindzey (eds.). *Handbook of Social Psychology*. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 504-553.

Davis, L. and Hagen, J. (1996) Stereotypes and stigma: what's changed for welfare mothers. *Affilia*, 11, 319-337.

Dean, H. (1992) Poverty discourse and the disempowerment of the poor. *Critical Social Policy*, 12 (35), 79-88.

Dean, H. and Melrose, M. (1999) *Poverty, Riches and Social Citizenship*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

De Botton, A. (2005) *불안 (Status Anxiety)*. Kyung-Ki-Do: IRE Publishing.

Demos, E. V. (ed.) (1995) *Exploring Affect: The Selected Writings of Silvan S. Tomkins*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Denzin, N. (1989) *Interpretive Interactionism*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Dickens, C. (1861) *Great Expectations.* 4th ed., London: Chapman and Hall.

Dolezal, L. and Lyons, B. (2017) Health-related shame: an affective determinant of health?. *Med Humanitities,* 43, 257-263.

Dorling, D. (2010) *Injustice: Why Social Inequality Still Persists*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Drew, P., Toerien, M., Irvine, A. and Sainsbury, R. (2010) A study of language and communication between advisers and claimants in work focused interviews. *Department for Work and Pensions Research Report*, 633, London: Department for Work and Pensions.

Dwyer, P. (1998) Conditional citizens? Welfare rights and responsibilities in the late 1990s. *Critical Social Policy*, 18 (57), 493-517.

Edmiston, D. (2017) 'How the other half live': poor and rich citizenship in austere welfare regimes. *Social Policy and Society*, 16 (2), 315-325.

Erikson, E. (1946) *Ego Development and Historical Change*. New York: Norton.

Erikson, E. (1950) *Childhood and Society*. New York: Norton.

Evans, M. and Griggs, J. (2010) *Sanctions within conditional benefit systems: a review of evidence*. [Online]. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Available from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/review-of-benefit-sanctions

Finn, D., Mason, D., Rahim, N. and Casebourne, J. (2008) *Problems in the Delivery of Benefits, Tax Credits and Employment Services*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Fontana, A. and Frey, J. H. (1994) Interviewing, the art of science. In: N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln

(eds.). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage, 361-375.

Foucault, M. (1975) *Abnormal: Lectures at the College de France 1974-1975.* London: Verso.

Foucault, M. (2001) *Fearless Speech.* California: Semiotext(e).

Frank, R. H. (1985) *Choosing the Right Pond*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Fraser, N. (1997) *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition*. New York; London: Routledge.

Fraser, N.; Olson, K. (ed.) (2008) *Adding Insult to Injury: Nancy Fraser Debates Her Critics*. London: Verso.

Freud, S. (1896) Further remarks on the neuro-psychoses of defence. *SE*, 3, 157-185.

Freud, S. and Breuer, J. (1966) *Studies of Hysteria*. New York: Avon.

Frey, B. S. and Stutzer, A. (2002) *Happiness and Economics: How the Economy and Institutions Affect Human Well-Being.* Chichester: Princeton University Press.

Fromm, E. (1956) *The Art of Loving*. New York: Harper.

Furnham, A. (1982) Why are the poor always with us? Explanations for poverty in Britain. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 21 (4), 311-322.

Gallie, D. and Paugam, S. (2002) *Social Precarity and Social Integration*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

Galloway, K. (2002) *A Scotland Where Everyone Matters: A Report on CAP's Scottish Poverty Indicators Project*. Manchester: Church Action on Poverty.

Garthwaite, K. (2014) Fear of the brown envelope: exploring welfare reform with long-term sickness benefits recipients. *Social Policy & Administration*, 48 (7), 782–798.

Gerdes, K. E. and Brown-Standridge, M. D. (1997) Discovering rules that govern AFDC recipient worker interactions: a qualitative study. *Journal of Applied Social Sciences*, 21, 123-130.

Gilbert, P. (1989) *Human Nature and Suffering*. Hove: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Gilbert, P. (1997) The evolution of social attractiveness and its role in shame, humiliation, guilt and therapy. *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 70 (2), 113–147.

Gilbert, P. (1998) What is shame? Some core issues and controversies. In: P. Gilbert and B. Andrews (eds.). *Shame: Interpersonal Behavior, Psychopathology and Culture.* New York: Oxford University Press, 3-38.

Gilbert, P. (2000) The relationship of shame, social anxiety and depression: the role of the evaluation of social rank. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy,* 7 (3), 174-189.

Gilbert, P. and McGuire, M. (1998) Shame, social roles and status: the psychobiological continuum from monkey to human. In: P. Gilbert and B. Andrews (eds.). *Shame: Interpersonal Behavior, Psychopathology and Culture.* New York: Oxford University Press, 99-125.

Gilbert, P., Pehl, J. and Allan, S. (1994) The phenomenology of shame and guilt: an empirical investigation. *British Journal of Medical Psychology,* 67 (1), 23-36.

Gilliom, J. (2001) *Overseers of the Poor: Surveillance, Resistance, and the Limits of Privacy.* Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press.

Goffman, E. (1963) *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Goffman, E. (1967) *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-To-Face Behavior*. New York: Anchor.

Goldberg, C. (2005) *Mental illness and poverty: does one cause the other?.* [Online]. Available from: http://www.boston.com/yourlife/health/mental/articles/2005/03/08/mental_illness [Accessed 4 Feb 2010]

Golding, P. and Middleton, S. (1982) *Images of Welfare: Press and Public Attitudes to Poverty*. Oxford: Martin Robertson.

Goodban, N. (1985) The psychological impact of being on welfare. *Social Service Review*, 59 (3), 403-422.

Gore, C. and Figueiredo, J. B. (eds.) (1997) *Social Exclusion and Anti-Poverty Policy: A Debate*. International Institute for Labour Studies, International Labour Organization.

Goss, K., Gilbert, P. and Allan, S. (1994) An exploration of shame measures – I: The other as Shamer scale. *Personality and Individual Differences,* 17 (5), 713-717.

Gray, K. A. (2005) Pride, prejudice, and a dose of shame: the meaning of public assistance. *Affilia,* 20 (3), 329-345.

Griggs, J. and Bennett, F. (2009) Rights and responsibilities in the social security system. *Occasional Paper*, 6, London: Social Security Advisory Committee. [Online]. Available from: http://www.ssac.org.uk/pdf/occasional/Rights_Responsibilities_Social_Security.pdf

Gubrium, E. and Lødemel, I. (2011) *Literary representations of shame, poverty and social exclusion in Norway*. Oslo: Oslo University College.

Guru, G. (2009) *Humiliation: Claims and Context*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Ha, J.-H. (2011) *심야 치유 식당 (Midnight Healing Restaurant)*. Paju: Prunsoop.

Handler, J. and Hasenfeld, Y. (1997) *We the Poor People: Work, Poverty, and Welfare.* New Haven/London: Yale University Press.

Handler, J. L. and Hollingsworth, E. J. (1971) *The Deserving Poor: A Study of Welfare Administration*. Chicago: Markham.

Hartling, L. M. and Luchetta, T. (1999) Humiliation: assessing the impact of derision, degradation, and debasement. *The Journal of Primary Prevention*, 19 (4), 259-278.

Hendrickson, R. M. and Axelson, L. J. (1985) Middle-class attitudes toward the poor: are they changing?. *Social Service Review*, 59 (2), 295-304.

Herd, D., Mitchell, A. and Lightman, E. (2005) Rituals of degradation: administration as policy in the Ontario Works Programme. *Social Policy and Administration*, 39 (1), 65-79.

Hesse-Biber, S. and Leavy, P. (2011) *The Practice of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hill, R. P. (2001) Surviving in a material world: evidence from ethnographic consumer research on people in poverty. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 30 (4), 364-391.

Hirschman, C. (2011) The Demographic Transition in Asia: 1950 to 2050. Kuala Lumpur: Paper presented at the Population Dynamism of Asia Conference, 11 July.

Honneth, A. (1995) *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hooks, B. (1994) *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representation.* New York/London: Routledge.

Howard, M. T. and Millard, A. V. (1997) *Hunger and Shame: Poverty and Child Malnutrition on Mount Kilimanjaro*. New York/London : Routledge.

Huberman, A. M. and Miles, M. B. (1994) Data management and analysis methods. In: N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds.). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage, 428-442.

Huh, S. (2002) The social assistance system and National Basic Livelihood Security Scheme. *Korean Academy of Social Welfare*, Spring Symposium, 4, 51-69.

Huh, S. (2005) Evaluation of the National Basic Livelihood Security Act in its 5th year. *Welfare Archive*, 10, 21-27.

Huh, S. (2009) The 10th anniversary of enactment of National Basic Livelihood Security Act: the limits and tasks. *Citizen & World*, 16 (12), 274-289.

Humpage, L. (2008) Talking about citizenship in New Zealand. *Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online*, 3 (2), 121-134.

International Council of Korean Studies (1998) *한국문화와 한국인 (Korean Culture and Korean People)*. Seoul: Sakyejul.

Irvine, A., Sainsbury, R., Drew, P. and Toerien, M. (2010) An exploratory comparison of the interactions between advisers and younger and older clients during work focused interviews. *Department for Work and Pensions Research Report,* No. 634, London: Department for Work and Pensions.

Jackson, M. A. (1999) *Distinguishing Shame and Humiliation*. PhD, Department of Philosophy, University of Kentucky.

Jenkins, R. (1996) *Social Identity.* London/New York: Routledge.

Jo, Y. N. (2013) Psycho-social dimensions of poverty: when poverty becomes shameful. *Critical Social Policy*, 33 (3), 514-531.

Jo, Y. N. (2014) Disclosing the poverty-shame nexus within popular films in South Korea (1975-2010). In: E. Chase and G. Banteby-Kyomuhendo (eds.). *Poverty and Shame: Global Experiences*.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 86-98.

Jo, Y. N. and Walker, R. (2013) Self-sufficiency, social assistance and the shaming of poverty in South Korea. In: E. Gubrium, S. Pellissery and I. Lødemel (eds.). *The Shame of It: Global perspectives on Anti-Poverty Policies.* Bristol: Policy Press, 61-84.

Jo, Y. N. and Walker, R. (2014) Social isolation and poverty in South Korea: a manifestation of the poverty-shame nexus. In: E. Chase and G. Banteby-Kyomuhendo (eds.). *Poverty and Shame: Global Experiences*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 175-187.

Johnson, J. M. (2002) In-depth interviewing. In: J. F. Gubrium and J. A. Holstein (eds.). *Handbook of Interview Research: Context & Method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 103-120.

Jones, C. and Novak, T. (1999) *Poverty, Welfare and the Disciplinary State.* London/New York: Routledge.

Jung, S. (2011) *The effects of the Korean welfare system in reducing economic hardship.* Paper presented at the Society for Social Work and Research Conference, Tampa, 16 January.

Jung, S.-N., Kwon, Y.-I., Park, K. and Eun, K.-S. (2012) '청춘' 밖의 청춘, 그들의 성인기 이행과 자아정체성: 빈곤 청년을 대상으로 ('Youth' outside of youth, their transition to adulthood and self-identity: focusing on the young people in poverty). *Culture and Society*, 12, 35-103.

Kang, H. (2003) The delivery of the basic social security programs: status and issues. *Health & Welfare Forum*, October, Seoul: KiHASA, 36-53.

Kang, H. (2005) Issues on the delivery system for the National Basic Livelihood Security. *Health & Welfare Forum*, October, Seoul: KiHASA, 65-81.

Kang, J.-M. (2006) *강남, 낯선 대한민국의 자화상 (Kang-Nam, a Strange Self-Portrait of the Republic of Korea)*. Seoul: Person and Idea.

Kang, S., et al. (2008) *Poverty Characteristics and Implications on Welfare Expenditure Programs Associated with Labor Supply.* Seoul: KiHASA and KiPF.

Katz, M. B. (1989) *The Undeserving Poor: From the War on Poverty to the War on Wel*fare. New York: Pantheon Books.

Kaufman, G. (1989) *The Psychology of Shame*. New York: Springer.

KDI (2013) *KDI Economic Outlook, the First Half of 2013*. 30 (1), KDI.

Keller, T. (1998) *Blessed are the poor*. [Sermon]. Given on 5 April 1998, The Church - How to Believe Despite Christians Series. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GRmMccP1A9M

Kim, H. (2005) Current situation of self-reliance programmes and direction for the future. *Labour and Society*, 95, January. Available from: http://www.klsi.org/magazine/magazine.htm?no=1284 [Accessed 9 March 2012]

Kim, J. and Hur, J. (2002) A study on evaluation and policy development of National Basic Livelihood Guarantees. *Social Security Study*, 18 (2), 43-70.

Kim, K.-S. (2011) 사회정책 빈곤연구의 동향과 과제 (A critical review of poverty studies in social policy). *Korea Social Policy Review*, 18 (1), 43-82.

Kim, M. (2010) A change of public awareness and attitude towards the National Basic Social Security System and its implications. *Health & Welfare Forum*, September, Seoul: KiHASA, 39- 52.

Kim, M.-K. (2014) 빈곤, 불평등 추이 및 전망 (Trend and forecast of poverty and inequality in Korea). *Health & Welfare Forum*, 215, September, Seoul: KiHASA, 6-16.

Kim, S. (2009) The pilot project period: the beginning of the institutionalization. In: Korean Association of Self-Sufficiency Promotion Center, *The History and Philosophy of the Self-Reliance Movement*. Seoul: KASPC.

Kim, S.-H., Lee, H.-J. and Son, B.-D. (2009) *한국의 가난 - 새로운 빈곤, 오래된 과제 (Poverty in Korea – New Poverty, Old Problem)*. Kyung-Ki-Do: Han-Wool Academy.

Kim, T.-H. (2009) *새로 쓴 심리학 (Newly Written Psychology).* Seoul: Sechang Publish.

Kim, T.-W. (2006) *성장, 불평등 및 빈곤에 관한 연구: 여성경제활동참가 및 친빈곤적 성장을 중심으로 (On the Study of Growth, Inequality and Poverty: Focusing on the Female Labor Force Participation and Pro-Poor Growth).* PhD, Hanyang University.

Kim, Y., Kim, K., Kim, J., Jang, K. and Jung, K. (2007) *Social Welfare in Korea*. Kyung-Ki-Do: Yang-Seo-Won.

Kizou, O. (2017) *Korea Is One Philosophy*. Translated by Sung-Hwan Jo. Seoul: Moshinsaram.

Klein, D. C. (1991) The humiliation dynamic: an overview. *Journal of Primary Prevention*, 12 (2), 93-121.

Korea Suicide Prevention Centre (2015) *자살통계 - OECD 주요 회원국 정기적 추이 (Statistics on suicide Rate – Regular trends of the OECD member countries)*. [Online]. Korea Suicide Prevention Centre. Available from: http://www.spckorea.or.kr/new/sub03/sub04.php [Accessed 1 September 2019]

KOSIS (2007) *행정구역, 가구원수, 핵가족수별 가구* (*Household by administrative district, number of household member, number of nuclear families).* [Online]. Korean Statistical Information Service. Last updated: 21 May 2007. Available from: http://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT_1GA7002 [Accessed 16 March 2018]

KOSIS (2017a) *성, 연령 및 세대구성별 인구 – 시군구 (Population by sex, age and household composition – city, district, province).* [Online]. Korean Statistical Information Service. Last updated: 31 Aug 2017. Available from: http://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT_1IN1509& [Accessed 16 March 2018]

KOSIS (2017b) *시도별 1인가구 (Single-person household per city and province).* [Online]. Korean Statistical Information Service. Last updated: 21 Jun 2017. Available from: http://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT_1ES4I002 [Accessed 15 March 2018]

KOSIS (2018a) *도시지역 인구현황 (연도별) (Population in urban areas (annual statistics))*. [Online]. Korean Statistical Information Service. Last updated: 7 Aug 2018. Available from: http://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=315&tblId=TX_315_2009_H1114 [Accessed 15 March 2018]

KOSIS (2018b) *추계인구 (시도) (Estimation of the population (cities and provinces)).* [Online]. Korean Statistical Information Service. Last updated: 16 Mar 2018. Available from: http://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT_1YL4201&vw_cd=MT_GTITLE01&list_id=101&seqNo=&lang_mode=ko&language=kor&obj_var_id=&itm_id=&conn_path=MT_GTITLE01 [Accessed 15 March 2018]

KOSTAT (2017) *2017년 사망원인통계 (Statistics on Reason for Death in the year 2017).* [Online]. KOSTAT. Available from: file:///C:/Users/yongm/Downloads/2017%EB%85%84_%EC%82%AC%EB%A7%9D%EC%9B%90%EC%9D%B8%ED%86%B5%EA%B3%84_%EA%B2%B0%EA%B3%BC_vf.pdf [Accessed 1 August 2019]

Ku, I.-H. (2004) Poverty in Korea, why it remains high?: analysis of the trend in poverty since the 1990s. *Korean Journal of Social Welfare*, 56 (4), 57-78.

Ku, I.-H. (2006) *한국의 소득불평등과 빈곤 (Income Inequality and Poverty in Korea: Worsening Income Distribution and the Need for Social Policy Reform).* Seoul: Seoul National University Press.

Langmore, J. (2000) Reducing poverty: the implications of the 1995 Copenhagen Agreement for research on poverty. In: D. Gordon and P. Townsend (eds.). *Breadline Europe: The Measurement of Poverty*. Bristol: Policy Press, 35-47.

Larsen, C. A. (2006) *The Institutional Logic of Welfare Attitudes: How Welfare Regimes Influence Public Support*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Leary, M. R. and Kowalski, R. M. (1995) *Social Anxiety.* New York: Guilford Press.

Lee, H.-B. and Lee, S.-C. (2007) 사회복지 전담공무원의 행정재량행위가 국민기초생활보장 수급자 선정에 미치는 영향요인 분석 (A study on influence factors of welfare bureaucrats' administrative discretion on National Basic Livelihood Guarantees). *Korean Journal of Public Management*, 21 (3), 1-23.

Lee, H.-J. (1999) 국민기초생활보장법 제정 배경 및 의의 (The enactment background and the implications of the National Basic Livelihood Security Act). *Health & Welfare Forum*, 37 (0), October, Seoul: KiHASA, 5-17.

Lee, H.-J., et al. (2006) 우리나라 빈곤실태와 정책적 함의 - 구조 분석을 중심으로 (The

structure of poverty in Korea). *Research Report*, 2006-10, Seoul: KiHASA.

Lee, H.-J., Ahn, S.-H. and Park, K.-H. (2009) 가난한 사람들의 일과 삶 - 심리사회적 접근을 중심으로 (The life and work of the poor: a psychological approach). *Research Report*, 2009-26-2, Seoul: KiHASA.

Lee, H.-K. (2009) *Emergence of the post-developmental welfare regime: a case of South Korea.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of RC19, Montreal, 20-22 August.

Lee, M.-S. (2009) *나를 사랑하게 하는 자존감 (Self-Esteem That Allows to Love Myself)*. Seoul: Vision and Leadership.

Lee, S.-H. and Ku, I.-H. (2010) Evaluating the family support obligation rules in the National Basic Livelihood Security Program. *Health and Social Welfare Review*, 30 (1), 29-61.

Lee, W.-J. (2010) 국민기초생활보장제도 수급지위 변화와 우울의 관계 (Depression and welfare transitions of the National Basic Livelihood Protection Program). *Korean Journal of Social Welfare*, 62 (4), 249-274.

Lee-Gong, E. (2011) *The role of NGOs in welfare delivery: the case of South Korea*. Paper presented at the Social Policy Association Annual Conference, 4-6 July.

Lepianka, D., Gelissen, J. and Van Oorschot, W. (2010) Popular explanations of poverty in Europe: effects of contextual and individual characteristics across 28 European countries. *Acta Sociologica*, 53 (1), 53-72.

Lepianka, D., Van Oorschot, W. and Gelissen, J. (2009) Popular explanations of poverty: a critical discussion of empirical research. *Journal of Social Policy*, 38 (3), 421-438.

Lesniewski, R. (2016) *Administrative and political map of South Korea capital, Seoul.* [Online]. Dreamstime.com. Available from: https://www.dreamstime.com/stock-illustration-administrative-map-seoul-political-south-korea-capital-image70769302 [Accessed 4 October 2016]

Lewis, H. B. (1971) *Shame and Guilt in Neurosis*. New York: International Universities Press.

Lewis, M. (1992) *Shame: The Exposed Self*. New York: The Free Press.

Lindner, E. G. (2007) In times of globalization and human rights: does humiliation become the most disruptive force?. [Online]. *Journal of Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies*. Available from: http://www.humiliationstudies.org/documents/evelin/HumiliationandFearinGlobalizingWorldHumanDHSJournal.pdf

Lister, R. (2004) *Poverty*. Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity.

Lister, R. (2015) 'To count for nothing': poverty beyond the statistics. *Journal of British Academy*, 3, 139-165.

Lødemel, I. and Dahl, E. (2000) Public works programmes in Korea: a comparison to active labour market policies and workfare in Europe and the US. Preliminary Report prepared for the World Bank,

Oslo: Fafo.

Lukes, S. (1997) Humiliation and politics of identity. *Social Research,* 64 (1), 36-51.

Lutwak, N., Panish, J. and Ferrari, J. (2003) Shame and guilt: characterological vs. behavioral self-blame and their relationship to fear of intimacy. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 35, 909-916.

Lynd, H. M. (1958) *On Shame and the Search for Identity*. New York: Science Editions.

Lyons, B. and Dolezal, L. (2017) Shame, stigma and medicine. *Med Humanit*, 43 (4), 208–210. Available from: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5739841/ [Accessed 20 November 2018]

Madianou, M. (2011) News as a looking-glass: shame and the symbolic power of mediation. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 15 (1), 3-16.

Major, B. and O'Brien, L.T. (2005) The social psychology of stigma. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 56, 393-421.

Margalit, A. (1996) *The Decent Society*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Mathur, N. (2014) *Consumer Culture, Modernity and Identity*. New Delhi: Sage.

Mead, G. H. (1934) *Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviourist.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Miller, C. (1998) *Managing for social cohesion*. [Online]. Available from: http://www.opm.co.uk/download/soc-ex1.pdf

Miller, M. (2006) *Shame and psychotherapy.* [Online]. Available from: http://03435df.netsolhost.com/images/SHAME_AND_PSYCHOTHERAPY.pdf [Accessed 10 July 2010]

Moon, J. (1999a) A study of debates on and enforcement of the National Basic Livelihood Act. *Korean Journal of Social Welfare*, 38, September, 100-125.

Moon, J. (1999b) Productive welfare and the National Basic Livelihood Security Scheme. *Welfare Archive*, August, PSPD, 18-21.

Morris, L. (2009) Civic stratification and the cosmopolitan ideal. *European Societies*, 11 (4), 603-624.

Munt, S. (2007) *Queer Attachment: the Cultural Politics of Shame*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Nam, C. (2004) The 5th anniversary of National Basic Livelihood Security Law enactment, *Welfare Archive*, October, PSPD, 43-52.

Nam, H.-Y. (2013) Korean cinema ten-million hit era! What changed in 2013?. [Online]. *Sports Seoul*, 25 November. Available from: http://www.sportsseoul.com/?c=v&m=n&i=32253 [Accessed 27 November 2013]

Narayan, D., et al. (2000) *Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us?*. Oxford: Oxford University Press for the World Bank.

Nathanson, D. L. (1992) *Shame and Pride: Affect, Sex and the Birth of the Self*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company.

Noh, D.-M. (2003) 한국의 빈곤실태, 그 현황과 쟁점 (Poverty in Korea: its current state and key issues). *기억과 전망 (Journal of Memory and Vision)*, 5 (12), 194-217.

O'Brien, J. (2006) *The Production of Reality.* 4th ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

OECD (2000) *Pushing Ahead with Reform in Korea: Labour Market and Social Safety-Net Policies*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

OECD (2012) *OECD Economic Surveys Korea.* Paris: Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development.

OECD (2019) *Suicide rates*. [Online]. indicator doi: 10.1787/a82f3459-en. Available from: https://data.oecd.org/healthstat/suicide-rates.htm [Accessed 14 October 2019]

OPHI (2010) *Initiatives*. [Online]. Available from: http://www.ophi.org.uk/research/missing-dimensions/without-shame/ [Accessed 10 March 2010]

Øyen, E. (1996) Poverty research rethought. In: E. Øyen, S. M. Miller and S. A. Samad (eds.). *Poverty: A Global Review: Handbook on International Poverty Research.* Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 3-17.

Pan American Health Organization (2003) *Understanding and Responding to HIV/AIDS-Related Stigma and Discrimination in the Health Sector.* Washington DC: Pan American Health Organization.

Pachankis, J. E. (2007) The psychological implications of concealing a stigma: a cognitive-affective-behavioral model. *Psychological Bulletin*, 133 (2), 328-345.

Park, N. (2001) *Poverty rate and poverty line in Korea.* Paper presented at the Philippines Institute for Development Studies Conference, April.

Park, N. (2002) Issues on the National Basic Livelihood Security Program. *Health & Welfare Forum*, May, Seoul: KiHASA, 5-16.

Park, N. (2008) The non take-up in the National Basic Livelihood Security Program. *Social Welfare Policy*, 35 (12), 271-295.

Park, R. and Burgess, E. (1921) *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Park, Y. (2002) A study on the policy making process of the National Basic Livelihood Institution – Focused on enactment of the National Basic Livelihood Act. *Korean Journal of Social Welfare*, 49, May, 264-295.

Perese, E. F. (2007) Stigma, poverty, and victimization: roadblocks to recovery for individuals with severe mental illness. *Journal of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association*, 13 (5), 285-295.

Phillips, A. (1999) *Which Equalities Matter?.* Cambridge: Polity.

Pickering, M. (2001) *Stereotyping: The Politics of Representation.* Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Piers, G. and Singer, M. B. (1953) *Shame and Guilt: a Psychoanalytic and a Cultural Study.* Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas.

Popkin, S. J. (1990) Welfare: views from the bottom. *Social Problems,* 37 (1), 64-79.

PSPD/UNDP (2000) *Poverty Status and Monitoring of Korea in the Aftermath of the Financial Crisis*. People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy and the United Nations Development Programme, PSPD/UNDP.

Quinton, A. (1997) Humiliation. *Social Research*, 64 (1), 77-89.

Ragin, C. C. (1987) *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Rank, M. R. (1994) *Living on the Edge: the Realities of Welfare in America*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Rawls, J. (1973) *A Theory of Justice.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Reid, C. and Tom, A. (2006) Poor women's discourses of legitimacy, poverty, and health. *Gender and Society*, 20 (3), 402-421.

Reutter, L. I., et al. (2009) "Who do they think we are, anyway?": perceptions of and responses to poverty stigma. *Qualitative Health Research*, 19 (3), 297-311.

Reyles, D. Z. (2007) The ability to go about without shame: a proposal for internationally comparable indicators of shame and humiliation. *Oxford Development Studies*, 35 (4), 405-430.

Rimstead, R. (2001) *Remnants of Nation: on Poverty Narratives by Women*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Ritchie, J. and Lewis, J. (eds.) (2003) *Qualitative Research Practice: a Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. London: Sage.

Rogers-Dillon, R. (1995) The dynamics of welfare stigma. *Qualitative Sociology,* 16 (4), 439-456.

Room, G. J. (1999) Social exclusion, solidarity and the challenge of globalization. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 8 (3), 166-174.

Runciman, W. G. (1966) *Relative Deprivation and Social Justice: a Study of Attitudes to Social Inequality in Twentieth-Century England*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Sabini, J. and Silver, M. (1997) In defense of shame: shame in the context of guilt and embarrassment. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 27 (1), 1-15.

Santor, D. and Walker, J. (1999) Garnering the interests of others: mediating the effects among physical attractiveness, self-worth and dominance. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 38, 461-477.

Saraceno, C. (ed.) (2002) *Social Assistance Dynamics in Europe*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Scheff, T. J. (2000) Shame and the social bond: a sociological theory. *Sociological Theory*, 18 (1), 84-

99.

Scheff, T. J. (2011) Shame in self and society. *Symbolic Interaction*, 26 (2), 239-262.

Schick, F. (1997) On humiliation. *Social Research,* 64 (1), 131-146.

Schram, S. F. (1995) *Words of Welfare*. Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press.

Seccombe, K. (1999) *"So You Think I Drive a Cadillac?": Welfare Recipients' Perspectives on the System and its Reform.* Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Seccombe, K., James, D. and Walters, K. B. (1998) "They think you ain't much of nothing": the social construction of the welfare mother. *Journal of Marriage and the Family,* 60, 849-865.

SEDA (2011) *Survey on the Status and Working Conditions of the Staff in Local Self-Reliance Centres.* Social Enterprises Development Agency, Seoul: Korean Association of Self-Sufficiency Promotion Centre.

Sen, A. (1983) Poor, relatively speaking. *Oxford Economic Papers*, 35, 153-169.

Sen, A. (2000) Social exclusion: concept, application, and scrutiny. *Social Development Papers*, No. 1, Office of Environment and Social Development, Manila: Asian Development Bank.

Sennett, R. (1980) *Authority*. London: Secker & Warburg.

Sennett, R. (2003) *Respect.* London: Allen Lane.

Sennett, R. and Cobb, J. (1972) *The Hidden Injuries of Class*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Seo, J. (2007) *60 Years of Modern History of Korea*. Seoul: Yuk-Sa-Bi-Pyung-Sa.

Shiel, M. (2001) Cinema and the city in history and theory. In: M. Shiel and T. Fitzmaurice (eds.). *Cinema and the City: Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1-18.

Shin, S.-J. and Choi, J.-S. (2002) *현대 한국사회의 이중가치체계 (Dual Value System of Modern South Korean Society)*. ASAN Foundation Research Series, 108, Seoul: Jibmundang.

Silverman, D. (2001) *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction*. 2nd ed., London: Sage.

Simmel, G. (1904) Fashion. *International Quarterly*, X, 130-155.

Sjoberg, G., Williams, N., Vaughan, T. and Sjoberg, A. (1991) The case study approach in social research: basic methodological issues. In: J. Feagin, T. Orum and G. Sjoberg (eds.). *A Case for the Case Study*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 27-79.

Smart, L. and Wegner, D. M. (1999) Covering up what can't be seen: concealable stigma and mental control. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 77 (3), 474-486.

Smith, A. (1776) *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. London: printed for A. Strahan and T. Cadell.

Smith, K. B. and Stone, L. H. (1989) Rags, riches, and bootstraps: beliefs about the causes of wealth and poverty. *Sociological Quarterly*, 30, 93-107.

Spicker, P. (2006) *Policy Analysis for Practice: Applying Social Policy*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Statistics Korea (2017a) 가족형태별 분포 (Distribution of family in respective forms). *인구주택총조사 (Population and Housing Census).* [Online]. Statistics Korea. Last updated: 20 Jan 2017. Available from: http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx_cd=1576 [Accessed 16 March 2018]

Statistics Korea (2017b) *인구총조사 (Population Census).* [Online]. Statistics Korea. Last updated: 8 Sep 2017. Available from: http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx_cd=4030#quick_05 [Accessed 16 March 2018]

Stevenson, C., Hopkins, N., Luyt, R. and Dixon, J. (2015) The social psychology of citizenship: engagement with citizenship studies and future research. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, 3 (2), 192-210.

Stewart, F. (2001) Horizontal inequalities: a neglected dimension of development. WIDER Annual Lecture, Helsinki: UNU-WIDER; reprinted in 2005. In: *Wider Perspectives on Global Development.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 101-135.

Sutherland, J.-A. and Fetley, K. (2010) *Cinematic Sociology: Social Life in Film.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Sutton, E., Pemberton, S., Fahmy, E. and Tamiya, Y. (2014) Stigma, shame and the experience of poverty in Japan and the United Kingdom. *Social Policy & Society*, 13 (1), 143-154.

Syal, M. (1996) *Anita and Me*. London: Flamingo.

Tangney, J. P. (1995) Shame and guilt in interpersonal relationships. In: J. P. Tangney and K. W. Fischer (eds.). *Self-Conscious Emotions: The Psychology of Shame, Guilt, Embarrassment and Pride*. New York: Guilford Press, 114-390.

Tangney, J. P., Burggraf, S. A. and Wagner, P. E. (1995) Shame-proneness, guilt-proneness, and psychological symptoms. In: J. P. Tangney and K. W. Fischer (eds.). *Self-Conscious Emotions: The Psychology of Shame, Guilt, Embarrassment and Pride.* New York: Guilford Press, 343-367.

Tangney, J. P. and Dearing, R. L. (2002) *Shame and Guilt*. New York: Guilford Press.

Tangney, J. P. and Fischer, K. W. (eds.) (1995) S*elf-Conscious Emotions: The Psychology of Shame, Guilt, Embarrassment and Pride*. New York: Guilford Press.

Tangney, J. P., Wagner, P. and Gramzow, R. (1992) Proneness to shame, proneness to guilt, and psychopathology. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology,* 101 (3), 469-478.

Taylor, C. (1991) *The Ethics of Authenticity*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Taylor, C. (1994) The politics of recognition. In A. Gutmann (ed.). *Multiculturalism: Examining the*

Politics of Recognition. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 25-74.

Terrade, A. (2011) *Map of North and South Korea*. [Online]. RFI. Available from: http://en.rfi.fr/asia-pacific/20111219-kim-jong-un-takes-over-north-korean-leader-after-death-father-kim-jong-ii [Accessed 4 October 2016]

Titmuss, R. (1974) *Social Policy*. London: Alien and Unwin.

Titmuss, R.; Abel-Smith, B. and Titmuss, K. (eds.) (1987) *The Philosophy of Welfare: Selected Writings of Richard M. Titmuss.* London: Allen and Unwin.

Tomkins, S. S. (1963) *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness: Volume II. The Negative Affects*. New York: Springer.

Tomlinson, M., Walker, R. and Williams, G. (2008) Measuring poverty in Britain as a multi-dimensional Concept, 1991 to 2003. *Journal of Social Policy*, 37 (4), 597-620.

Tonkiss, F. (2000) Analysing discourse. In: C. Seale (ed.). *Researching Society and Culture*. London: Sage.

Tracy, J., Robins, R. and Tangney, J. (eds.) (2007) *The Self Conscious Emotions: Theory and Research.* London: Guilford Press.

Tuchman, G. (1994) Historical social science, methodologies, methods, and meanings. In: N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds.). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage, 306-318.

Tudor, A. (1974) *Image and Influence: Studies in the Sociology of Film.* London: Allen & Unwin.

Uhm, T.-W. (2006) 저소득층의 우울증에 대한 무망감과 사회적 문제해결능력의 영향 (The impacts of social problem solving capabilities and hopelessness in depression among low-income residents). *Korean Journal of Social Welfare*, 58 (1), 59-85.

Uhm, T.-W. (2008) 빈곤층의 경제적 스트레스와 우울관계에서 자기효능감과 사회적 지지의 효과 (The effects of self-efficacy and social support in the relationship between economic stress and depression of the indigent population). *Mental Health & Social Work*, 28, 36-66.

UKCAP (1997) *Poverty & Participation*. London: UK Coalition Against Poverty.

Van Maanen, J. (1988) *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press.

Van Oorschot, W. (2002) Targeting welfare: on the functions and dysfunctions of means-testing in social policy. In: P. Townsend and D. Gordon (eds.). *World Poverty: New Policies to Defeat an Old Enemy.* Bristol: Policy Press, 171-193.

Van Oorschot, W. and Halman, L. (2000) Blame or fate, individual or society? An international comparison of popular explanations of poverty. *European Societies,* 2 (1), 1-28.

Walker, R. (ed.) (1985) *Applied Qualitative Research*. Aldershot: Gower.

Walker, R. (2005) *Social Security and Welfare: Concepts and Comparisons*. Milton Keynes: Open

University Press.

Walker, R. (2008) European and American welfare values: case-studies in cash benefits reform. In: W. Van Oorschot, M. Opielka and B. Pfau-Effinger (eds.). *Culture and Welfare State Values of Social Policy from a Comparative Perspective*. London: Edward Elgar, 117-140.

Walker, R. (2011) *Ireland 2011, The Setting of National Poverty Targets: Synthesis Report*. Vienna: for European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Available from: http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.eu/peer-reviews/2011/the-setting-of-poverty-targets

Walker, R. (2014) *The Shame of Poverty*: *Global Perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ware, N. C. and Goldfinger, S. M. (1997) Poverty and rehabilitation in severe psychiatric disorders. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal,* 21 (1), 3-9.

Watson, J. (2005) *Shame: Biblical Reflections and Pastoral Advice on Living with Shame*. Cambridge: Grove Books Limited.

Weekly Gonggam (2006) Korean films' steaming dominance over the film industry. [Online]. *Weekly Gonggam*, 3 June. Available from: http://gonggam.korea.kr/gonggamWeb/branch.do?act=detailView&currPage=18&dataId=148683947&flComment=1&flReply=0&sectionId=gg_sec_52&type=news [Accessed 20 April 2010]

Wicker, F. W., Payne, G. C. and Morgan, R. D. (1983) Participant descriptions of guilt and shame. *Motivation and Emotion*, 7, 25–39.

Wiles, N., et al. (2013) Cognitive behavioural therapy as an adjunct to pharmacotherapy for primary care based patients with treatment resistant depression: results of the CoBalT randomised controlled trial. *Lancet*, 381, 375-384.

Wilkinson, R. and Pickett, K. (2010) *The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone*. London: Penguin Books.

Wilton, R. (2004) Putting policy into practice? Poverty and people with serious mental illness. *Social Science & Medicine*, 58, 25-39.

Wood, L. A. and Kroger, R. (2000) *Doing Discourse Analysis.* London: Sage.

Wright, S. and Haux, T. (2011) *Welfare Reform on the Receiving End: User and Adviser Perspectives*. London: Child Poverty Action Group.

Wright, S. E. (2003) *Confronting Unemployment in a Street-Level Bureaucracy: Jobcentre Staff and Client Perspectives*. PhD, Stirling: University of Stirling.

Yeo, Y. (2004) 국민기초생활보장제도 부양의무자기준과 빈곤사각지대 - 공적부양과 사적부양의 관계를 중심으로 (Family support obligation rules and those excluded from the National Basic Livelihood Security Law). *Health and Social Welfare Review*, 24 (1), 3-29.

Yeo, Y. (2005) 국민기초생활보장제도 선정 및 급여 현황과 문제점 (National Basic Livelihood Security: selection criteria, benefits rules, and problems). *Health & Welfare Forum*, 101,

March, Seoul: KiHASA, 67-79.

Appendix 1. List of the Sampled South Korean Films in Chapter 6 (1975 - 2010)

In chronological order

1	Young Ja's Heydeys (1975). Film. Directed by KIM Ho-Sun. South Korea: Tae-Chang-Heung-Up
2	The World Without a Mother (1977). Film. Directed by LEE Won-Sae. South Korea: Han-Jin Heung-Up
3	The Woman I Abandoned (1978). Film. Directed by JUNG So-Young . South Korea: Woo-Sung-Sa
4	Barefooted Youth (1979). Film. Directed by KIM Soo-Hyung. South Korea: Hab-Dong Film
5	Love Me Once Again despite Hatred '80 (1980). Film. Directed by BYUN Jang-Ho. South Korea: Han-Lim Film
6	Mrs. Speculator (1980). Film. Directed by LIM Kwon-Taek. South Korea: Sae-Kyung Heung-Up
7	A Little Ball Sent Off by a Dwarf (1981). Film. Directed by LEE Won-Sae. South Korea: Han-Jin Heung-Up
8	People in the Slum (1982). Film. Directed by BAE Chang-Ho. South Korea: Hyun-Jin
9	X (1983). Film. Directed by HA Myung-Joong. South Korea: Hab-Dong Film
10	Whale Hunting (1984). Film. Directed by BAE Chang-Ho. South Korea: Sam-Young Film
11	Our Joyful Young Days (1987). Film. Directed by BAE Chang-Ho. South Korea: Tae-Heung Film
12	Prostitution (1988). Film. Directed by YOU Jin-Sun. South Korea: Choon-Woo Film
13	Kuro Arirang (1989). Film. Directed by PARK Jong-Won. South Korea: Hwa-Chun Kong-Sa
14	I Stand Up Every Day (1990). Film. Directed by KANG Woo-Suk . South Korea: Hwang-Ki-Sung Sa-Dan
15	Money, Money, Money (1991). Film. Directed by YOO Jin-Sun. South Korea: Keuk-Dong Screen
16	Stairway to Heaven (1992). Film. Directed by BAE Chang-Ho . South Korea: Dong-A Export
17	A Heavy Bird (1994). Film. Directed by KWAK Jung-Hwan. South Korea: Eun-Ha Film
18	The Day a Pig Fell into the Well (1996). Film. Directed by HONG Sang-Soo. South Korea: Dong-A Export
19	Threesome (1997). Film. Directed by PARK Chan-Wook. South Korea: Cine 2000
20	Something to Die For (1999). Film. Directed by KOO Im-Seo. South Korea: Tae-Won Entertainment
21	Waikiki Brothers (2001). Film. Directed by LIM Soon-Lae. South Korea: Myung Film

22	Sympathy for Mr. Vengeance (2002). Film. Directed by PARK Chan-Wook. South Korea: Studio Box
23	Ulala Sisters (2002). Film. Directed by PARK Jae-Hyun. South Korea: May Film
24	A Family (2004). Film. Directed by LEE Jung-Chul. South Korea: Tube Pictures
25	Crying Fist (2005). Film. Directed by RYU Seung-Wan. South Korea: Sio Film
26	A Dirty Carnival (2006). Film. Directed by YOO Ha. South Korea: Sidus FNH
27	Miracle on 1st Street (2007). Film. Directed by YOON Jae-Kyoon. South Korea: Doo-Sa-Boo Film
28	The Game (2008). Film. Directed by YOON In-Ho. South Korea: Prime Entertainment
29	Breathless (2009). Film. Directed by YANG Ik-Joon. South Korea: Mole Film
30	He's on Duty (2010). Film. Directed by YOOK Sang-Hyo. South Korea: Sang-Sang-Yeok Entertainment

Appendix 2. Topic Guide for In-Depth Interviews

'What does it mean to live in poverty in South Korea?'

- General questions about the current life (Daily routine, Family relations, Financial Situations)
  - How long have you lived in this area/house; If you moved before, where did you live before
  - Daily lives: e.g., work, family responsibilities, people you often spend time with, places you often go to, hobbies, etc.
  - Family members in the household (partner, children, age, what they are up to, availability of familial support outside of the immediate household)
  - If currently not in employment, any previous jobs; was the payment enough to make a living
  - The time, momentum (reasons), and situations at the time of applying for the current social assistance (In-poverty group) / specific benefits (Near-poverty group)

- Past & Present life experience in relation to poverty

  Past:
  - Changes in the financial situation of the household; since when did it become difficult; or better/worse than the past (both childhood and adulthood)
  - Have you ever experienced when you couldn't do something you wanted because of the material conditions, or felt limited in your life choices in decision-making
  - When was the time that things in life were the most challenging/difficult (not limited to but also including one's financial situation); what was difficult & why
  - When/What was the proudest moment in your life; any recent memories

  Present:
  - What is currently the most difficult aspect of life (emotionally); its impacts on one's life; was there any changes in the past few years
  - When you are emotionally struggling, how do you usually try to overcome/deal with it
  - What are your current goals in life or wishes for the future

- Other people's perceptions & Social relations with other people

  Human relations:
  - Do you meet up often/socialize with (How is your relationship with) your direct family/relatives/friends/people you know
  - Have your relations with people ever been affected/changed due/in relation to your economic situations
  - Are other people's living situations around you, whom you meet often, similar to yours
  - Have you ever asked for support/help (economically or otherwise) to other people you know
  - Do you share with others (close & not so close) about your current economic situations/receipt

of social assistance; If yes, how did you find the sharing or other's response to it; If not, were there any reasons for it

Other people's perceptions:

- What do you think is the general portrayal of economic hardship in the society/media/general perceptions of others; what are your own thoughts or feelings about them
- Are there any wrong perceptions/views/understandings in the other people's view of those in economic hardship/or the hardship itself

- Personal experience regarding social assistance policy

  - What were the applicable public means of support regarding material hardship
  - Memories of the application process; how was the experience; the positives/negatives of the application system
  - (In-poverty) Levels of satisfaction regarding the contents/conditions of the current assistance you are receiving; any desires for change; current difficulties
  - (Near-poverty) Have you ever applied/considered applying for the In-poverty social assistance; If so, what do you think was the reason you were given the Near-poverty status; If not, why did you decide not to/or never considered it
  - How was your experience of the delivery system; any positives/negatives
  - Any personal thoughts/suggestions about the current social assistance policy/system; what are the most needed support in your current life (materially, emotionally); how could it be improved

---

- For the 60s age group

  - What was the poverty situation like (personally, socially) back in your 20-30s (1970s-1980s); was it prevalent; what were the reasons for poverty
  - Did people/you have any external (outside of the immediate household) support network to draw on
  - Was it generally considered difficult to seek outside help when in material hardship
  - What was the most difficult aspect of life at the time
  - How does the current living conditions/social situations differ from those times (personally, socially)

Appendix 3. Information Sheet about the Research for the Interview Participants

✔ **Purpose of the study**

This study is aimed at improving the understanding of the realities of poverty experience in the Republic of Korea.

✔ **Purpose of recording the interview**

The reason for recording the interview is, first, for the researcher to focus on the interview without being distracted by taking notes. Second, the recorded materials will enable the researcher to keep an accurate record of the content of the interview and apply them to the research without incorrect dictation.

✔ **Ethical rule of the study**

Above study has been reviewed and approved by the Central Ethics Committee of the University of Oxford. Within the transcripts of the recorded interviews, there will be no actual names mentioned. The reports of the research will also contain no actual names.

? **How will the recorded materials including my personal information be treated in the research?**

All the recorded materials will be treated anonymously and with complete confidentiality outside of the principal investigator. Once the research is completed and the report is written up, the recorded tape will be distorted completely.

? **What if I want to withdraw from the study?**

You may withdraw at any point of your participation in the study.

? **How do I raise any uncertainties or questions?**

If you feel uncertain about any issue or want to raise questions at any point in time, you can ask the researcher and she will do her best to answer them all.

ⓘ **Principal Investigator:** Yong Mie Jo (DPhil Student)

ⓘ **Contact Address:** Yong Mie Jo
Barnett House
32 Wellington Square
Oxford, OX1 2ER, UK
(e-mail: yong.jo@stx.ox.ac.uk)

Appendix 4. Interview and Voice Recording Consent Form



Name of the Study: The Lived Experience of Poverty in South Korea
Principal Investigator: Yong Mie Jo

I confirm that I have read the information sheet about the study, and that the purpose of the study has been fully explained to me.

I confirm that the purpose of recording my participation in this research has been fully explained to me, and I acknowledge that the recorded files of my voice will not be owned by myself.

I understand that this project has been reviewed by and received ethical clearance from the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee.

I understand who will have access to my personal data, how the data will be stored, and what will happen to the data at the end of the project.

I understand that I may withdraw my consent to participation at any time during the research and that I do not have to give a reason for my decision. I acknowledge that such withdrawal of my consent will not prejudice my participation in this research project.

I understand how to raise my concern and make a complaint before, after, and during the interview.

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study and received satisfactory answers to my questions.

I agree to participate in this study.

I agree to allow voice-recording of my interview.

Print Name……..(Participant)

Signed……..(Participant)

Witnessed by, Print name ……...…….(Researcher)

Signed ……...……...(Researcher)

Date…….

Appendix 5. Research Ethics Approval (CUREC 2)

SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES
INTER-DIVISIONAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Hayes House, 75 George Street, Oxford. OX1 2BQ
Tel: +44(0)1865 614871 Fax: +44(0)1865 614855
ethics@socsci.ox.ac.uk www.socsci.ox.ac.uk

Co-ordinator of the IDREC
Social Sciences Divisional Office



Ref. SSD/2/3/IDREC

26 July, 2011

Ms Yong Mie Jo
Department of Social Policy & Intervention

Dear Ms Yong Mie Jo,

Research Ethics Approval

Ref No.: SSD/CUREC2/11-25

Title: What does it mean to live in poverty?: Poverty and Shame Nexus in the Republic of Korea.

The above application has been considered on behalf of the Social Sciences and Humanities Inter-divisional Research Ethics Committee (IDREC) in accordance with the procedures laid down by the University for ethical approval of all research involving human participants.

I am pleased to inform you that, on the basis of the information provided to the IDREC, the proposed research has been judged as meeting appropriate ethical standards, and accordingly approval has been granted.

Should there be any subsequent changes to the project, which raise ethical issues not covered in the original application, you should submit details to the IDREC for consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Chris. Ballinger

cc: Professor Robert Walker, Department of Social Policy & Intervention
Bryony Groves, Department of Social Policy & Intervention

CAJB