

## Recognition in Art World as Social Process: The Case of Oscar and Daejong Film Awards

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**Abstract** We provide answers to the question of how artistic recognitions have changed through a process of consensus building in the film art world and what particular social contexts have influenced artistic recognitions. We examine changes in the categories of the Oscar award since 1929 and those of the Daejong award since 1962. According to Howard Becker, the production and distribution of arts require collective rather than individual effort. It implies that art is not just a product of creative work by individual artist, but an outcome of social construction. Justification and legitimation of artistic value and role depends on the consensus among art world participants and reflects changes in broader social contexts. Since film is an outcome of extensive network of collective cooperation, being awarded for the remarkable achievement in certain role means that the role is recognized as valuable and important. Based on historical examination of proliferation of award categories in Oscar and Daejong award, we conclude that the scope of recognitions has been extended from core to periphery and major factors in such change include development of technology, political environments, collective action, and public discourse on artistic recognition.

**Keywords** art worlds · recognition · film awards · convention

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## Introduction

In this article, we draw on the theory of art world to explain how award categories in film art world changed and how various social contexts have influenced the changes in award categories. Why are we interested in categories of film awards? Judged and bestowed by specialists and experts in film art world(Baumann, 2001: 408-409), film awards can be regarded as official recognition of artistic values and contributions to the film art world. Anand and Watson(2004) have shown that Grammy award has played an important role in the evolution of popular music field in the US. We argue in this article that the same is true of the Oscar award for American film art world and the Daejong award for Korean film art world.

We take each category in these awards as recognition of the role represented by the category. Interest in recognition of various roles in film making stems from the theory of art world(Becker, 1982). Art works are often perceived as produced by individual artists. According to Howard Becker(1982), however, production of art work requires collaborative group efforts of various members in art world. For example, the process of film making normally involves “the separate contributions of directors, screenwriters, actors, cinematographers, film editors, composers, art directors, custom designers, and a host of specialists in makeup, special effects, and sound” (Simonton, 2004). Although Becker acknowledged the contributions of various participants in art world, all the contributions are not recognized from the beginning nor are they recognized with equal weight. While artists have occupied central position and role in the art world from the start, efforts of support personnel have been slowly and gradually recognized.

Award as a form of recognition by peer and expert is a valuable reward and recognition to participants in art world. We highlight the changes of award categories because awards justify the honorific title of “art” and show the popular acceptance of certain categories (Baumann, 2001). Being awarded means that not only their roles are recognized as important, but also they get a great accolade and praise from colleagues (Levy, 2001: 238). In 1929, William C. DeMille, the second Academy president, explained about the winning of the Oscar as mentioned below.

“The most valuable award a worker can get is to have the acknowledged praise of his fellow workers. It means a great deal more to us than just the acclaim of the public.” The Oscar was considered to be the first occasion in film history in which “individual creative work is recognized, and meritorious achievements are passed upon by experts.” (Levy, 2001: 128)

How and why did the recognition of various roles in art world change? What are the circumstances conducive to the recognition of certain roles in making films previously unrecognized? We start from the insight from the theory of art world that convention is critical in coordinating and rewarding various efforts by art world members. According to Becker, convention is based on the consensus among various actors in art worlds and changes slowly as a consequence of changes in consensus reflecting social contexts and environments surrounding art worlds.

The art world belongs to a set of diverse social worlds interconnected to each other. Developments and changes of art world are related to external situations such as technological development, political and economic changes, and shifting discourses among intellectuals (White, 1993: 124). Therefore, in order to explain changing convention and recognition in art

world, we need to look at the social contextual features(White, 1993: 71) as a set of social relationships among artists, institutions, critics, and audiences together construct a recognition of particular activities as artistic(Canclini, 2014: 14).

In this article, we demonstrate how changes in wider society have affected changes of film award categories. We focus on the film art worlds of the U.S. and Korea and examine the creation of new award categories in Oscar from 1929 and Daejong from 1962. Then, we show how social contextual changes and critical discourse played a crucial role in creating new film award categories.

## Theoretical Perspectives

Artistic works are produced, appraised and distributed through cooperation of a number of people in art worlds (Becker, 2008: 1). Film world shows the complicated division of labor in art worlds very well. To raise understanding, he presents an example of movie *Hurricane* made in 1978.

The film employed a director of photography, but Sven Nykvist did not actually operate the camera; Edward Lachman did that. Lachman, however, did not do all the jobs associated with operating the camera; Dan Myhrman loaded it and, when the focus had to be shifted in the course of filming a scene, Lars Karlsson “pulled” the focus. If something went wrong with a camera, camera mechanic Gerhard Hentschel fixed it. The work of clothing and making up the actors, preparing and taking care of the scripts, preparing scenery and props, seeing to the continuity of the dialogue and the visual appearance of the film, even the management of financial matters during filming - all these jobs were similarly divided among a number of people. (Becker, 2008: 7-9).

In this way, film is made not only by core members like actors and directors, but also by those playing minor roles such as copying screenplay books. Because of complicated division of labor in film making, film art world needs convention to regulate relations among diverse people cooperating to produce art works and to specify their rights and obligations (Becker, 1982: 29). According to Becker (1982: 30), “conventions make possible the easy and efficient coordination of activity among artists and support personnel”. Since convention helps cooperation and coordination in film making, convention is stable and resists changes. It does not mean, however, that convention is immune to changes. Convention does changes but only gradually and slowly, reflecting changes in social and technological conditions. With changing convention, art world changes as well.

Production, distribution, and consumption of films in art worlds change with availability of new resources and technology. Inventing or providing creative resources and devices give artists new opportunities to make a new leap forward (Becker, 2008: 74). Development of new technologies can also create new artistic opportunities. In movie making, the emergence of new technology made it possible to produce full-length films and also enabled transition from silent to talkie movie. On the other hand, new materials can constrain certain activities. For example, increasing penetration of TV in households severely dropped the number of film-goers and this

constricted film markets. However, this crisis encouraged people in the film world to invent or adopt new resources and technologies. New attempts of using bigger screens or newly developed special effects have stimulated the growth of film industry.

In this way, new resources and technologies affecting the overall production and distribution of art works serve to change the distribution of recognition in the art world. Participants in the production and distribution of art works with fairly high level of knowledge or complex technologies can claim recognition since their contributions are essential and are hard to substitute. When a specific area becomes highly specialized, the area could be recognized as indispensable. Thus availability of new resources and technologies can have profound impacts on changing artistic recognition.

The state and governmental institutions influence production and distribution of art works pursuing their own interests (Becker, 1982: 165). The state offers legal protection and economic support for artist so that they can create art works. The state protects arts with certain laws or regulation such as protection of authorship and contributes to the growth of art world in many respects. However, the state also imposes a constraint on artistic activities (Becker, 1982: 191). The interventions take forms of support, censorship, and suppression (Becker, 1982: 180) depending on their own interests. For example, political leaders have regarded art as a tool in service of justifying and stabilizing their authority.

There are many historical examples of culture and arts used by dominant groups to justify and strengthen their power. The dominant authorities may justify their *raison d'être* and create halo effects by deeply intervening in culture and arts fields (Ha, 2005: 288). According to Balandier's political anthropological research(1992) the symbolizing process effectively contributes to maintaining power often in the form of a ritual, within which transformation of meaning, production of images, and manipulating of symbols are transpired following political intentions (Balandier, 1992: 16). Since the state can deeply involve in making artistic reputations and approving particular artistic activities, we pay attention to the relationship between political conditions and changes of film award categories.

Art world and its convention may change as a consequence of collective action by the certain members of art world. Participants in art world, who feel mistreated in the art world, may raise questions to and criticize the dominant convention. They may even form contentious group and challenge the dominant group in the art world. If they succeed in gaining enough support either from within or from outside the art world, new convention is established reflecting the perspectives of the challengers and brings about the changes in art world (Becker, 1982; Bourdieu, 1996).

The emergence of impressionism and transition from academy to dealer-critique system in French art world is a famous case of art world change resulting from collective action (White, 1993). Under the academy system, rewards and recognition in the French art world were monopolized by the small number of academy members. Academy's classical style of painting became the aesthetic standard for the aspiring painters, who were trained, selected and recruited to academy by the members of academy themselves. Aesthetic and economic monopoly of academy system was challenged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by a group of young painters who rejected the convention and held independent exhibition showing their new styles of painting. Supported by the dealers who sympathized with them, impressionists changed the convention of production, appreciation, and distribution of painting, eventually leading to the establishment

of new dealer-critique system in place of old academy system.

The rise of Jazz art world provides another interesting historical example (Lopes, 2002). In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, black musicians have made great contribution to the development of commercial music art world. Their innovative music writing and playing have given rise to swing music, the first commercial dance music, in major cities of the US. However their contributions have long been unrecognized and they could not even claim fair rewards for their work nor can have copyright for their own art works. This situation began to change with bebop revolution. Black musicians in the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century around New York have created their own new musical language and also their own art world by making venues for play, recording companies, and magazines with the help of Jazz aficionados recruited from white intellectuals. Collective action by the black musicians and white supporters has succeeded in modifying old racist convention to provide black musicians with recognitions they deserve.

Collective action in art world often entails new aesthetic discourse. Becker claims that aestheticians provide rationale by which art works justify their existence and distinctiveness (Becker, 1982: 164) and critics apply aesthetic standards to art works, so that they reach the judgment on the worth of art works and offer an explanation about the worth (Becker, 2008: 131). Aestheticians create ideologies of art, and critics frame particular works of art by appealing to the theories and values of specific ideologies (Bauman, 2007: 59).

## Oscar and Daejong Awards

The official name of the Oscar film awards is the Academy Awards. This is an annual film awards recognizing artistic achievement in film art world since 1929 in the U.S.

In 1920s, rapid economic growth of the U.S. brought a series of movements toward improving the rights and interests of laborers. Following the trends, actors and professional film staffs made attempts to organize labor unions in the U.S. film world. Fearing the economic damage caused by such movement, business leaders of the film industry, who moved swiftly to build a mass production line in their studios through vertical integration of production and distribution, raised strong opposition to the attempts of organizing union (Seo, 2009: 86).

Louise B. Mayer, president of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), in 1927 at a party, insisted on organizing business association in response to labor unions and proposed to award those who made great contributions to the film world. Thirty six leaders of film industry gathered at the party agreed and organized 'The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science.' The Academy succeeded in having more than 200 prominent figures of film art world sign up to be members (Seo, 86-87). The Academy took the initiative to confer awards for outstanding films and actors which became the Oscar awards.

Daejong film award is a representative film award in Korea. While Oscar award is set up by the business association in film art world, Daejong award started with the initiative from the government in 1958. The first award was conferred by the Ministry of Culture in 1962, and later, in 1973, the newly established Korean Film Promotion Agency—which is a government agency and renamed as Korean Film Council in 1999—took charge of the award. In 1992, the managing agency was transferred to private sector and then it has become a genuine festival of film art world in Korea. Except in 1998 of IMF crisis, this award has held every year since 1962.

## Data and Method

In this paper, we examine the changes in award categories of Oscar and Daejong to explain how film art worlds have changed in aspects of recognition over 50 years. The data for this article come from history of film industry and film awards. For the Oscar award, *80 Years of the Oscar: The Official History of the Academy Awards* (Osbourne, 2008) is used to examine the annual changes in categories of award. For the Daejong award, *The Off Screen Korean Film History* (Kim, 2002a, 2002b) is used to reconstruct the changes in award categories each year.

Both historical sources list each year's winners of the awards by categories. From each historical account, we have compared consecutive years' award categories and coded the newly added category for each year. In our coding, we exclude categories that were awarded less than five times to focus on the major changes of categories. We disregarded the mere name changes in award categories and coded only the addition of previous missing categories.

In this paper, we regard the film award as the locus of changes in general consensus about artistic recognitions. Focusing on changes in award categories shows how general perception of participants and their consensus on which factors are important and valuable in film making have changed over several decades and how different social contexts in the U.S. and Korea have influenced these changes.

## Findings

Chronologies of major newly added categories to Oscar and Daejong film awards are presented in figure 1 and figure 2 respectively. Complete lists of award categories and their duration of existence are presented in Appendix.

From the chronologies of category addition in Oscar and Daejong awards, we can make the following observations.

First, we find that the scope of recognition in film art worlds has expanded. Oscar and Daejong both, from the beginning, have awarded the categories of 'Best Picture', 'Directing', 'Actor', 'Actress', 'Cinematography', and 'Writing'. These categories are traditionally regarded as core parts in film making. In the case of supporting actor and actress, their contributions

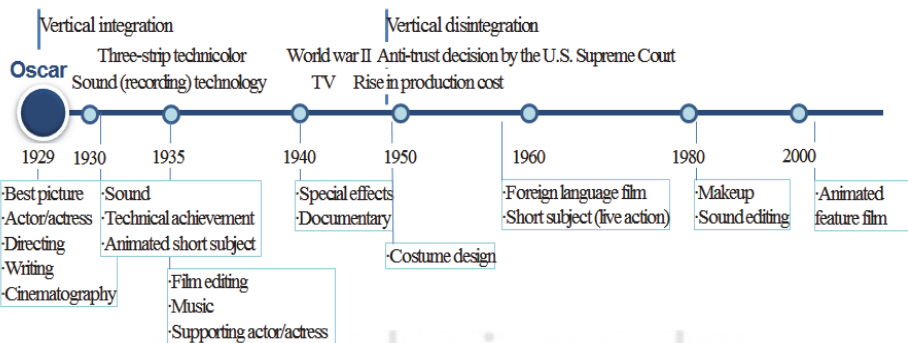
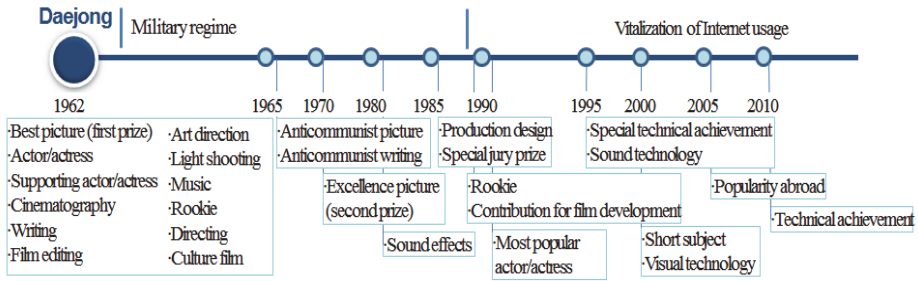


Fig. 1 Chronology of category addition in Oscar award and major changes in film art world



**Fig. 2** Chronology of category addition in Daejong award and major changes in film art world

have been recognized relatively late, after eight years, in Oscar. Category of film editing was added six years later. It means that supporting roles such as supporting actor and actress, and film editing were not regarded as crucial in the beginning. The scope of recognition by experts, however, has expanded with the growth of industry. Contrary to Oscar, Daejong has awarded them from the beginning, which reflects imitation and learning by Daejong from the Oscar from late departure. Therefore we can observe changes in award categories more prominently in the case of Oscar.

Second, film award categories have changed reflecting development of technologies in the film industry over the decades. For example, all the nominees for the first best picture were silent films (Levy, 2001: 28). However, the development of sound recording technology led to addition of new award categories. As a result, award categories for the sound mixing and music were newly added in 1930s. Moreover, the advent of color films brought about separate awards by black-and-white and color for the cinematography and art direction in 1939 (Levy, 2001: 29). Since then, the number of color films consistently increased, while the production of black-and-white decreased. As a consequence, the separate awards in the art direction and cinematography for black-and-white and color films were discontinued from 1967 (Levy, 2001: 29).

In 1980s, color TV broadcasting began in Korea and media technologies have markedly improved. Since then, various award categories related to new technologies such as sound and visual effects have been added to Daejong. In 1999, new media such as internet started to fundamentally influence the making and distributing films in Korea. Many internet sites showing films appeared and internet users were able to watch movies on the monitor screen rather than on the theatre screen. Digital media technology made it possible for lay people including even children to produce short films. Aspiring short film producers could promote and distribute their works easily on the internet. Reflecting proliferation of short films, Daejong made new award categories for Best Short Film and Short Film Director in 1999.

Third, government had more direct influences on the award categories under the authoritarian regime than under the democratic regime. Since Daejong film award was initially started and organized by the government under authoritarian regime during 1960s, its awards categories were vulnerable to intentions of the government. In 1960s, the Korea government had dual policy lines in the field of cultural production. One was the repressive one that monitored and censored contents of culture and art, and then punished producers of works the contents of which were against the government. The other one was selective promotion policy, in which

the ministry of culture started the Daejong film awards. During the late 1960s, the Korea government started providing more direct supports for films that served its political goals by establishing and conferring awards for the best anti-communist film and best anti-communist scenario in 1966 (Lee, 2013: 301). The winners of these awards enjoyed the privilege of importing commercially lucrative foreign films, which was severely restricted by the government (Kim, 2002a: 205). Under the authoritarian regime, Daejong award cooperated with the government, which intended to overcome ideological division and to support liberalism and capitalistic system, by promoting and infusing the anticommunist ideology among people in Korea (Lee, 2012). With political transition from authoritarianism to democracy, the initiative of the award was transferred from the government to private sector and the awards for best anti-communist film and scenarios disappeared.

Oscar award was not completely free from the political influence either, although much less than for the Daejong award. During the World War II, attention to documentary films increased in the US film and it became an important and popular genre. Reflecting the trend, the Oscar created new award category for the best documentary for the first time in the 1940s (Osborne, 2008: 70). The rising production cost for commercial film in the 1940s also contributed to the popularity of short documentary films (Osborne, 2008: 112).

Fourth, the diffusion of egalitarian values and collective action by the marginal participants in film making paved the way for broader recognition for the previously unrecognized roles by establishing new award categories. In 1982, the Oscar started awarding best makeup and hairstyling as a consequence of long-lasting campaign waged by makeup artists (Levy, 2001: 30). Makeup artists consistently raised voice for acknowledging their important contributions to films and organized collective action to establish the award for makeup and hairstyling. These efforts started from their belief that receiving the awards would help legitimizing their artistic value and solidify their artistic status in the film art world. According to Baumann (2007), justification of the artistic value and worth depends on the fact that particular roles and efforts are publicly explained, discussed and communicated within art worlds. The critics play a pivotal role in initiating and leading such public discourse. The New York Film Critics Circle was founded in 1935 with the mission of recognizing the finest film achievements and maintaining highest standard of film criticism. They were successfully instrumental in creating new award categories by initiating fresh discourse. They cooperated with the Screen Actors Guild and the Screen Writers Guild, both of which were founded in 1933 and boycotted Oscar award, and their united efforts resulted in the addition of award categories for supporting actor and actress to the Oscar award in 1935.

## Conclusion

Recognition is an important aspect of social relationship and interaction process (Honneth, 1996). Artistic recognition is a form of symbolic reward pursued by many participants in the art world. This article examines the changes in the distribution of recognition among art world participants through the changes in award categories. Theory of art world (Becker 1982) states that division of labor and consequent distribution of rewards among participants in the production of culture depends on the convention shared in the art world. Therefore artistic recognition as a



form of reward would be influenced by the changes in convention of art world. In this paper, we have examined how the factors in changing convention of art world such as technology, government, collective action and public discourse bring about changes in distribution of artistic recognition by analyzing the changes in category of awards. Historical chronology of Oscar award in the US and Daejong award in Korea provide valuable information on the changes in the categories of the awards. Over several decades, Oscar and Daejong awards have added numerous categories. Addition of categories such as best special effects, best sound mixing and best film editing reflects the ever-increasing importance of technology in film making. Addition of categories for certain film genres such as anti-communist film or documentary film shows the intervention of political factors. Addition of categories for hairstyling and make-up or supporting actor and actress follows successful collective action and public discourse by art world members. These results combine to show that artistic recognition as an important form of social reward for art world members depends fundamentally on the changing social contexts and convention based on the consensus among art world members mediate the influence of wider social contexts on the changes in artistic recognition.

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**Table 1** Award categories of Oscar

Categories	Period	Note
Best Picture	1929~2014	
Actor	1929~2014	
Actress	1929~2014	
Directing	1929~2014	
Writing (Original & Adapted Screenplay)	1929~2014	
Cinematography	1929~2014	This category was classified into 'Black & White' and 'Color' until 1940
Art Direction (Production Design)	1929~2014	This category was classified into 'Black & White' and 'Color' until 1941
Sound (Recording & Mixing)	1931~2014	
Scientific or Technical achievements	1932~2014	
Short Subject (Animated)	1932~2014	
Film Editing	1935~2014	
Music (Song & Scoring)	1935~2014	
Supporting Actor	1937~2014	
Supporting Actress	1937~2014	
Special Effects (Visual effects)	1940~2014	
Documentary (Short subjects & Feature)	1942~2014	
Costume Design	1949~2014	This category was classified into 'Black & White' and 'Color' until 1967
Foreign Language Film	1957~2014	
Short Subject (Live Action)	1958~2014	
Makeup	1982~2014	
Sound Editing	1983~2014	
Animated Feature Film	2002~2014	

**Table 2** Award categories of Daejong

Categories	Period	Not awarded
Best Picture (first prize)	1962~2014	
Actor	1962~2014	
Actress	1962~2014	
Supporting Actor	1962~2014	
Supporting Actress	1962~2014	
Cinematography	1962~2014	
Writing (original & adapted screenplay)	1962~2014	
Film Editing	1962~2014	
Art Direction	1962~2014	1990, 1991
Light Shooting	1962~2014	1964, 1966
Music	1962~2014	
Rookie (actor, actress, director)	1962~2014	
Directing	1963~2014	
Culture Film	1962~1992	1979~1980
Sound Recording	1962~1994	
Anticommunist Picture	1966~1987	1986
Anticommunist Writing	1966~1971	
Excellence Picture (second prize)	1973~1992	1982~1984, 1986, 1987
Sound Effects	1982, 1985~1991	
Rookie (technical achievement)	1989~2002	1994, 1996
Special technical achievement	1994~2002	1995
Production Design	1986~2014	
Visual Technology	2000~2012	2002
Technical Award	2013~2014	
Costume Design	1991~2014	1995
Sound Technology	1995~2012	1996
Special Achievement Award	1987~2013	1991~1992, 2005~2008, 2010~2011, 2014
Contribution for film development award	1989~2014	1990~1991, 1996, 2003~2004, 2007~2009
Popularity Award (actor)	1991~2012	1992, 1995~1996, 2003
Popularity Award (actress)	1991~2010	1992, 1995~1996, 2003
Short Subjects	1999~2012	2003~2008, 2010~2011
Popularity in Abroad Award	2006, 2007, 2010	

