

SOCIOLOGY OF SQUID GAME: ANALYSIS OF UNDEREXPLORED ASPECTS

UDC 316
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30546/19063.2025.01.10028>

JAHANDAR GALIB JABAROV

Lecturer at the Department of Social Sciences,
Baku Slavic University, and PhD student at the
Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the National
Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan

Republic of Azerbaijan, Baku city,

Istiglalıyyat str., 30. AZ1001

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0075-2398>

E-mail: c.cabarov@bsu-uni.edu.az

SUMMARY

As one of the products of contemporary mass culture, the series *Squid Game* has attracted attention with its global socio-sociological impacts. Within this framework, our study reveals that the series is not limited to the critique of economic inequality and capitalist relations but also encompasses less explored themes such as collective resistance, mechanisms of control in everyday life, trust, solidarity, and the normalization of violence. Content analysis was used as the main method, with the script of the series examined episode by episode through the frequency analysis of key words. The results show that the use of words such as “I,” “we,” and “they” reflects the fluctuation between individualism and solidarity, while the words “money,” “to win,” and “to lose” highlight the dominant role of economic motivation in capitalist relations. On the other hand, the notions of “trust,” “help,” and “death” are explained within the frameworks of social capital, uncertainty in modernity, and structural constraints. The study employs theoretical perspectives such as Bourdieu’s concept of capital, Bauman’s theory of “liquid modernity,” Giddens’s structuration theory, and Baudrillard’s concept of simulacra. The analysis demonstrates that the series is not merely a form of entertainment but also serves as a laboratory for explaining the social structures, power relations, and cultural transformations of contemporary societies. This, in turn, allows for a deeper understanding of the resonance created by the series in global popular culture and its contribution to sociological discourse.

Keywords: *Squid Game, sociological analysis, capitalism, social inequality, solidarity, cultural transformation.*

Introduction

Sociology engages with films and series as these

forms of mass culture play a critical role in reflecting the deeply rooted social structures and processes within society. Through films and series, complex issues such as values influencing individuals’ daily lives, normative systems, class and gender inequalities, power relations, modernization, and globalization are visually presented (Strandvad, 2023). For this reason, sociology does not view these cultural products merely as entertainment but as a rich empirical domain for examining societal thinking patterns, ideological directions, and cultural transformations (Storey, 2024). The events and processes depicted in films and series illustrate relationships among social groups, the identity quests of isolated individuals, and the impact of institutional power on individuals. Thus, these products serve as vital tools for representing or manipulating social realities, necessitating sociological interpretation (McCullagh, 2002). Sociological analysis, in this context, not only focuses on the content of the events but also investigates the processes of their production and reception, as these processes illuminate the power relations and cultural hegemonies embedded within the structure of society (Moghimi, 2023).

Films and series are studied through various sociological methods, including content analysis, semiotics, narrative analysis, and even ethnographic approaches (Easy Sociology, 2024). Content analysis systematically examines the dominant ideological values and social relations of a specific era or culture. Semiotic methods focus on decoding the symbols and their social meanings in films. For example, the series *Breaking Bad* provides a powerful sociological critique of American individualism and capitalist values through the character of Walter White, who transitions from a small entrepreneur to the leader of a drug empire. The series explores issues such as shifts in family structures, economic pressures, and the erosion of moral values. Another example is *The Wire*, which delves into urban-

ization, economic inequality, drug trade, and law enforcement systems, shedding light on complex sociological issues and contributing significantly to urban sociology and criminology. Such analyses not only empirically support sociological theories but also foster new perspectives on social change (Joy, 2017; Connolly, 2022; Johnson, 2016; Sabin, 2010; Schaub, 2010; Parker, 2010). Hence, the sociological examination of films and series offers valuable contributions to understanding social structures and expanding public awareness.

In this context, our aim is to provide a sociological analysis of *Squid Game*, which has aired for two seasons to date. Using content analysis as the primary methodological approach, we seek to address specific thematic gaps in the existing literature. While prior studies have focused on limited themes, such as economic inequality or survival dynamics, significant aspects remain underexplored. By filling these gaps, we intend to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the series' broader sociological implications.

1. Literature Review

Squid Game has emerged as a significant cultural and sociological phenomenon, captivating global audiences with its exploration of deep-rooted social and economic issues. The literature review examines the series through diverse theoretical frameworks, highlighting its critical reflection on inequality, competition, and power dynamics in modern capitalist societies. Studies examining *Squid Game* from the perspective of game theory analyze how the games in the series are recontextualized within social and economic frameworks. Kotan and Arslan (2023) draw on Johan Huizinga's "Game Theory" to emphasize the cultural function of traditional children's games, detailing their role in preparing individuals for social life. Similarly, Kaçar (2024) employs Huizinga's framework to explore how games have been transformed within the capitalist system, highlighting how innocence is replaced by deadly competition under economic pressures and social inequalities. In contrast, Reiland (2022) focuses on Bernard Suits' game theory, questioning the voluntariness and enforcement of rules in the series' games, thus reassessing the boundaries of game theory. Collectively, these studies suggest that *Squid Game* uses the concept of games as a critical tool

to reflect on social and economic dynamics. The games are redefined both as a cultural mechanism preparing individuals for social integration and as a system commodified and driven by competition under capitalist pressures.

Studies examining the series within the context of capitalism have analyzed the multifaceted impacts of the modern capitalist system on individuals and societal structures. Şeşen and Akyıldız (2022) emphasize how globalization exacerbates economic inequalities, forcing individuals to accept harsh competitive conditions. They present the series as a dramatic metaphor for how the neoliberal order transforms individuals into "disposable people." Similarly, Rybalskaya and Suslov (2022) analyze class inequalities and the destructive effects of individualism through symbols and spaces, highlighting how the illusion of equality devolves into moral collapse under competitive pressures. Conversely, Kim and Park (2022) examine the dehumanizing aspects of capitalist ideology while noting the series' unexpected themes of solidarity and cooperation, framing it as a deeply human drama. Stekl (2022) employs McLuhan's concept of the "global village," evaluating the series as a media phenomenon that critiques the violent desires spurred by neoliberal capitalism and the representations of lower classes.

Studies focusing on *Squid Game* in the context of neoliberalism analyze the social, psychological, and economic effects of modern capitalism from diverse perspectives. Yıldız (2024) uses Richard Sennett's concept of "Character Erosion" to analyze the psychological pressures and dystopian elements brought about by neoliberal capitalism's themes of insecurity and risk. Similarly, Kurtuluş and İnci (2022) interpret the series as a metaphor for neoliberal policies that systematically control individuals through a culture of debt and financialization. They argue that debt functions not only as an economic tool but also as a disciplinary mechanism, with the series' game metaphor illustrating how capitalism drives individuals into cycles of competition and consumption. Together, these studies critically highlight the layered impacts of neoliberalism on individuals. They collectively argue that the Netflix hit reflects the social, economic, and moral consequences of the capitalist system, emphasizing the destructive effects of inequality, individualism, and competition on individuals and society.

Studies examining *Squid Game* in the context of economic inequalities and debt have explored the multifaceted impacts of the modern capitalist system on individuals and society. Boikova (2021) interprets the series as a dramatic reflection of household debt and economic inequalities in South Korea, while Beaunoyer (2024) critiques how social inequalities drive individuals to the point of "consenting to death" and commodify mortality. Gabriel (2022) links the series to South Korea's economic transformation and its current socioeconomic challenges, emphasizing how economic pressures push individuals away from solidarity and toward solitary survival efforts. Chowdhury (2022) analyzes the central role of debt in modern capitalist relations, arguing that *Squid Game* illustrates how debt serves as a mechanism to force individuals into cycles of consumption. Collectively, these studies highlight the series as a critical reflection of the profound effects of economic inequalities and indebtedness within the capitalist system on individuals and society.

Studies analyzing *Squid Game* within the context of philosophical and political theories examine individuals' positions in social and economic relations from different perspectives. Soydaş and Dirimeşe (2023) analyze the series through Georg Simmel's philosophy of money, highlighting the instrumentalization of money for individual goals and the alienation this process entails. Their study portrays the series as a dramatic reflection of economic relationships and moral conflicts in modern capitalist society. Adryan Allen et al. (2021), on the other hand, evaluate the series through Thomas Hobbes' political theory, focusing on the concepts of the state of nature and social contract. They argue that the elements of competition and violence in the series align with Hobbes' notion that "man is a wolf to man," while noting inconsistencies with the Leviathan analogy. Both studies demonstrate the dystopian story as a critical lens to explore individuals' struggles within economic and social contexts, using philosophical and political theories.

Analyses grounded in Michel Foucault's concepts illustrate how *Squid Game* reflects the effects of neoliberal structures on individuals and societal systems. Ağkaya (2023) employs Foucault's concept of *dispositif* to argue that debt functions as a tool of neoliberalism, compelling individuals into consumption and power dynamics, interpreting the

series as a metaphor for this system. Similarly, Kim (2022) applies Foucault's biopolitics and Agamben's "homo sacer" framework to examine the reduction of individuals to a state of "bare life," interpreting the series as an allegory questioning human rights and the necessity of solidarity in a competitive, inequality-driven environment. Shayahmetova and Grinchuk (2022) connect the series with Foucault's concept of the disciplinary society, analyzing how social inequalities and ethical values are challenged under oppressive conditions. Collectively, these studies argue that *Squid Game* critically reflects the biopolitical mechanisms of control in neoliberal systems and the deepening of social inequalities, presenting an allegory of the moral and social crises resulting from consumerism and competition.

Studies analyzing *Squid Game* through various theoretical frameworks examine the psychological, social, and biological characteristics of individuals and their interactions with social dynamics. Tutar (2022) evaluates the series within the context of Social Darwinism, critiquing how the exploitation of the weak by the strong legitimizes social inequalities. Tuna and Akgün (2022) utilize Lacan and Freud's psychoanalytic theories to highlight how themes of violence and the subconscious in the series reflect the destructive effects of the capitalist system on individuals. So et al. (2024) analyze the series using East Asia's Eum-Yang biopsychosocial theory and Sasang typology, detailing the biological and psychological traits of characters and reinterpreting traditional East Asian theories within a global context. These studies collectively demonstrate how the series explores multidimensional connections between social inequalities, psychological struggles, and cultural identities.

Studies focusing on artistic, spatial, and mythical elements in *Squid Game* analyze the series' aesthetic structure and its social critique in depth. Tıngır and Tarlakazan (2022) emphasize the unconscious effects and aesthetic depth of references to works of art, highlighting how the use of colors strengthens the contrast between a childlike atmosphere and violence. Kotancı (2024) examines the series through the Parsifal Myth, detailing how mythical elements are reimagined in modern narratives and situating the protagonist's journey within a mythical framework. Huntington (2024) analyzes how the series' settings transform from childhood playgrounds

into metaphorical prisons of modern capitalist society, exposing the continuity of social hierarchies through spatial arrangements. Çelik and Köse (2022) interpret the spatial designs and symbols as visual critiques representing the hierarchical structures of capitalist society. These studies collectively highlight how the aesthetic elements of Squid Game serve as a powerful tool to enhance its critique of social inequalities.

The deeply explored social and economic themes in this production go beyond being a narrative tool, resonating globally and generating significant social and cultural impacts. Studies examining the series in the context of popular culture and global influence highlight how it has become a cultural, economic, and social phenomenon from various perspectives. Payzın and Tuncer (2022) analyze the series' connection to consumer culture, emphasizing its transformation into popular culture objects and its role in fostering a sense of belonging among individuals. Geçimli (2022) interprets the series through Guy Debord's concept of the "Society of the Spectacle," arguing that while it critiques social inequalities, it also reproduces them through commodified products. Plotnikova (2022) examines the series within the framework of transmedia storytelling, analyzing how digital platforms and social media amplify its global impact by encouraging multimodal audience participation. Solomeina (2022) focuses on the use of Squid Game as a tool for situational marketing on social media, noting how brands creatively incorporate the series' symbols into their campaigns to generate commercial value. Nim and Tarasova (2022) position the series as a medium for showcasing the global popularity of East Asian media culture and as a strategic tool in South Korea's soft power diplomacy.

Studies focusing on the series' impact on viewers analyze its reflections in social media and cultural contexts from various angles. Syahriyani et al. (2022) apply Henry Jenkins' participatory culture theory to explore how the series is reinterpreted through social media, with fans creating and sharing localized content that blends the phenomenon with their own cultural contexts, highlighting the role of digital technology in empowering fan communities. Similarly, Avcı, Bayrakdar, and Kılınçarslan (2023) investigate how the series combines traditional children's games with violence to impact viewers, using Twitter sentiment analysis to reveal predominantly

positive reactions while also noting critical perspectives on its violent content. Collectively, these studies emphasize how Squid Game has become a part of global popular culture, reaching vast audiences through social media and digital platforms while creating both cultural and social impacts. The series' influence on consumer culture, participatory culture, and media highlights its profound effects on individuals and society.

The literature review reveals the multifaceted sociological impacts of Squid Game as a phenomenon. Themes such as social inequality, individualism, competition, and the capitalist order in the series go beyond mere narrative elements, reflecting the structural problems of individuals and societies. From the perspective of game theory, traditional children's games are redefined as a system commodified under capitalist pressures, forcing individuals into ruthless competition. Critiques of capitalism and neoliberalism emphasize how individuals are made dependent on the system through processes of indebtedness, consumption, and precarity. Furthermore, the series' representations of economic inequality, debt culture, and social injustice expose the mechanisms shaping individuals' psychological and social conditions. Philosophical and political theories contextualize the series within power dynamics, ethical conflicts, and individuals' struggles for survival, while artistic and spatial analyses highlight how visual elements amplify its critical social commentary. On a global scale, the series' interaction with popular culture, its reach through social media, and its influence on identity formation, belonging, and consumer behavior demonstrate its role as a phenomenon deepening the relationship between modern societies, media, and culture. In this context, the literature collectively concludes that the show functions as a powerful tool for sociological critique and analysis. From a sociological perspective, Squid Game can be seen as a critical lens that prompts individuals to question their position within the social system and serves as a valuable framework for understanding the economic, cultural, and social dynamics of modern societies.

2. Gaps in the Literature: Sociological Blind Spots

2.1. Collective Resistance

The oppressive influence of capitalist systems on individuals has been extensively studied, often fo-

ocusing on individual reactions and their corresponding moral and psychological consequences. However, the representation of collective resistance, forms of organization, and social movements has remained an overlooked sociological context. While the first season of *Squid Game* depicts individuals' struggle for survival within the system at a personal level, the second season introduces a significant shift. The main character, Seong Gi-hun, embarks on an attempt to challenge the system's foundations, allowing the series to be reinterpreted within the framework of collective resistance.

In sociological literature, social movements are generally understood as organized expressions of dissatisfaction with systemic injustice or societal pressures. In the series, the initial focus of individuals on their personal survival underscores the relationship between social movements and collective consciousness. The cooperation among players in the first season is temporary and driven by survival instincts. However, as it lacks the support of an ideology or collective consciousness, it is inevitably short-lived. In contrast, Gi-hun's attempt at rebellion in the second season is remarkable for demonstrating how an individual awakening can evolve into a broader social movement. Having survived the games in the first season, Gi-hun gains firsthand experience of the system's mechanisms, realizing both its inherent injustices and the manipulation of individuals. This awareness prompts him to initiate an uprising against the game organizers with the support of a few other players. Nevertheless, the rebellion fails, resulting in the deaths of many participants, including Gi-hun's close ally, Jung-bae. This trajectory aligns with Tilly and Wood's (2009) discourse on the origins of social movements, which argues that collective action emerges from individuals uniting around a common goal and demanding systemic change. Gi-hun's decision to reject a life outside the system, despite winning a substantial prize, and to initiate a rebellion instead, underscores the potential for individual tragedy to transform into collective resistance. This narrative also highlights the necessity of leadership and organizational structures for the success of collective movements. Gi-hun's rebellion, driven by personal anger and a quest for justice rather than a deep ideological foundation, illustrates the challenges of sustaining collective resistance. Many players act primarily out of self-in-

terest, motivated by survival and the pursuit of the prize money, which undermines the formation of a unified front. The swift and brutal suppression of the rebellion by the game organizers further emphasizes the system's formidable power and its capacity to deter dissent.

Gi-hun's rebellion underscores the significance of leadership and organizational structures necessary for the success of collective movements. However, the rebellion lacks a deep ideological foundation; it is primarily a reflection of individual anger and a quest for justice. This highlights the necessity of a shared ideology for the sustainability of collective resistance. Most players act based on the motivation of survival and winning the monetary prize. These individual interests hinder the formation of a cohesive collective resistance and contribute to the rebellion's failure. The game organizers swiftly and brutally suppress the rebellion, demonstrating the system's strength and control. This reinforces the perception of the current order's immutability and discourages individuals from challenging the system.

In particular, the Front Man's infiltration among the players reflects the themes of the invisibility and omnipresence of power. According to Michel Foucault's theory of power (1980), power operates not only through repression but also through knowledge and surveillance. The Front Man's presence among the players illustrates that power can be everywhere at any moment and that individuals are constantly under scrutiny. His initial involvement in the rebellion represents criticism emerging from within the system. However, his subsequent shift in allegiance to maintain his position demonstrates that individuals, even when opposing existing power structures, may still uphold the status quo due to personal interests or security concerns. This aligns with Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony, wherein the ideology of the ruling class is internalized even by the subjugated classes, thus ensuring the continuation of the existing order. The Front Man's behavior also reflects the fluidity of individuals' roles within the system. Movement up or down within the system is shaped not only by the actions and choices of individuals but also by the needs and dynamics of the system itself. In this context, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus helps to understand how individuals' positions within the social field are constituted and reproduced. Ultimately, the Front Man's infiltration

among the players, participation in the rebellion, and later shift in allegiance to secure his position reflect profound sociological themes about the nature of power, the individual's place within the system, and the continuity of social structures. This demonstrates that individuals' roles within the system are not fixed and that power is continually reproduced through their actions and choices.

Overall, *Squid Game* provides a compelling critique of the pressures exerted by the capitalist system on individuals, while presenting an incomplete framework regarding the role of collective movements in societal change. This gap in the literature should be reassessed through the lens of social movement theories. Specifically, the rebellion attempt in the second season must be analyzed in light of themes such as the formation of collective consciousness, strategy development, and the reasons for the failure of social movements. This perspective enables a reading of *Squid Game* not only as a field of individual struggle but also as a domain of societal conflict.

2.2. Routines as a Mechanism of Control

From the perspective of the sociology of everyday life, daily routines serve as crucial tools for maintaining social order and sustaining authority over individuals. In *Squid Game*, the artificial structure created for the daily lives of participants in the game arena vividly reflects this reality. The provision of identical meals to players every day and the strict regulation of sleeping and rest hours clearly demonstrate how routines are reorganized by control and authority. This process raises several significant issues in the context of the systematic reproduction of daily life. Firstly, as emphasized in Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, routines are a powerful means of ensuring the surveillance and control of individuals (1995). In *Squid Game*, the enforcement of the same meals and sleeping schedules for players every day aims to discipline their bodies and minds. This process not only ensures physical but also mental subjugation. The game organizers' use of this structure as an institutional tool recalls similar mechanisms observed in modern institutions such as prisons, schools, or factories.

Moreover, repetitive routines pacify individuals' inner lives, making them more easily adapt to the system's rules. The imposition of monotony leads to

alienation among individuals as part of the process of reproducing daily life. This condition, which can be explained through Marx's concept of alienation, causes individuals to become detached from their own experiences and view themselves merely as parts of the system. In *Squid Game*, this alienation becomes visible as players initially strive to maintain their individual identities but gradually lose them, focusing solely on survival.

Daily routines also force individuals to comply with rules, making resistance less likely. In the series, players eventually stop questioning meal times or sleeping schedules, which reflects submission to the power of the system. This can be interpreted through Hannah Arendt's concept of the banality of authoritarianism, where players cease to question the system's demands and normalize the rules over time. This situation mirrors the passive position of individuals in the face of authority in modern societies.

The social relationships and interactions among the players in *Squid Game* offer a rich opportunity to analyze how social hierarchies are reproduced. Within the framework of the sociology of everyday life, these hierarchies can be discussed through several key themes. Temporary alliances among the players illustrate that trust relationships are pragmatic and contingent. In scenes like the "Glass Bridge" game, individuals initially attempt to cooperate but ultimately prioritize their personal interests. This highlights the fragility of trust relationships in modern societies and the capitalist structure that prioritizes individual gain. Georg Simmel's work on the social function of trust provides a foundation for understanding these dynamics in *Squid Game*. According to Simmel (2005), trust is vital for the continuity of social relationships; however, in the series, this trust is consistently manipulated and undermined by the system.

Moreover, violence among players in the series gradually becomes normalized, offering critical insights into how violence is rendered invisible in everyday life. The normalization of violence results in its acceptance as an ordinary part of daily life. Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence serves as a significant analytical tool here. Beyond the physical violence among players, the competitive environment created by the system leads individuals to exert symbolic violence against one another. For instance, the occasional unfair distribution of food

forces individuals into conflict to survive. Although food distribution generally appears equal, there are specific moments where deliberate manipulations by the game organizers create a perception of inequality. Notably, in the scenes involving eggs and bottled water, the limited supply of resources compels players to clash; those who assert physical dominance gain an advantage, while weaker individuals are left hungry. This vividly demonstrates how the unequal distribution of resources erodes trust among individuals and normalizes violence.

Additionally, the hierarchies that emerge during the games expose the controlling and divisive nature of the system. The elevation of stronger or more intelligent players to leadership positions illustrates how natural inequalities among individuals are reproduced as a social hierarchy. Furthermore, the characters referred to as VIPs watching the players as mere objects underscore how this hierarchy is transformed into an aesthetic indulgence. It highlights the privilege of the powerful to view violence as a source of entertainment.

In conclusion, while *Squid Game* provides profound sociological critiques regarding the use of daily routines as a control mechanism, the manipulation of social hierarchies and trust relationships, and the normalization of violence, these themes have been insufficiently explored in the literature. Existing studies predominantly focus on the series' critique of capitalism or the psychological conditions of individuals. However, critical sociological contexts such as the systematic reproduction of everyday life, the reasons behind the failure of collective movements, and the effects of symbolic violence on social order have been overlooked. These gaps hinder the full realization of the series' potential for offering a comprehensive social analysis.

3. Squid Game and the Applicability of Sociological Theories: New Perspectives for a Theoretical Framework

Squid Game, while exploring the effects of modern capitalism on individuals, offers significant potential for a deeper analysis of its social relationships, interpersonal dynamics, and structural frameworks through various sociological theories. However, existing literature has largely overlooked this potential, failing to fully evaluate the series' capacity for social critique. For example, Erving Goff-

man's dramaturgical theory provides a complementary perspective for understanding how individuals display their social and cultural capital. According to Goffman (1956), individuals perform frontstage and backstage behaviors in social settings. In the series, characters effectively display their capital in frontstage interactions while employing different strategies backstage to protect their personal interests. For instance, Sang-woo's manipulation of group dynamics exemplifies how social capital is instrumentalized, as interpreted through the dramaturgical perspective. When combined, Bourdieu's and Goffman's theories offer a more robust analytical framework for understanding individuals' positions within social structures and their interactions with these frameworks.

Anthony Giddens' structuration theory (1984) explains how individuals both reproduce and are shaped by social structures. The rules imposed by the game organizers in *Squid Game* provide a critical context for examining these interactions. However, to analyze the blurred boundaries between reality and fiction within these structures, Jean Baudrillard's concept of simulacra (1981) serves as an essential complement. *Squid Game* creates a simulation environment where real-world rules are transplanted into the game world, yet their excessively theatrical and artificial nature challenges perceptions of reality. Giddens' emphasis on the reciprocal interaction between structures and individuals, combined with Baudrillard's discussion of how simulacra distort reality, allows for a clearer understanding of the dynamics underpinning the social order in *Squid Game*. For instance, the players' simultaneous adherence to and manipulation of rules illustrates the dual restrictive and creative nature of structural forces.

Zygmunt Bauman's theory of liquid modernity (2006) provides a crucial theoretical framework for understanding how *Squid Game* dramatizes the feelings of uncertainty and insecurity experienced by individuals. According to Bauman, modern individuals must constantly adapt to ever-changing circumstances. This phenomenon is vividly illustrated in the series, where players struggle to cope with the constantly shifting conditions of the games. When Bauman's emphasis on liquid modernity is analyzed alongside Bourdieu's concepts of capital, the strategies individuals use to manage uncertainty become

more comprehensible. For example, Gi-hun's use of social capital to form coalitions and Sang-woo's exploitation of cultural capital for strategic advantage reveal how individuals instrumentalize their capital in response to uncertainty. However, the impact of these types of capital in liquid modernity is limited; individuals must continuously adapt to the evolving dynamics of social structures.

The integration of these theories provides a more comprehensive perspective for analyzing *Squid Game*. While Bourdieu's concepts of capital (2021) elucidate individuals' positions within social structures, Goffman's dramaturgical theory offers a tool for understanding how these positions are performed in social settings. Giddens' structuration theory emphasizes the interplay between social structures and individuals, while Baudrillard's concept of simulacra explains how these structures distort perceptions of reality. Finally, Bauman's liquid modernity theory highlights how individuals adapt to the fluid nature of these structures. This theoretical framework enables an interpretation of *Squid Game* not merely as a television series but as a laboratory for examining the dynamics of modern society. By reevaluating the series through the lens of these theories, its potential for social critique extends beyond individual stories to encompass social structures and dynamics. This framework not only opens new avenues for examining the series but also presents an opportunity to address existing gaps in sociological literature.

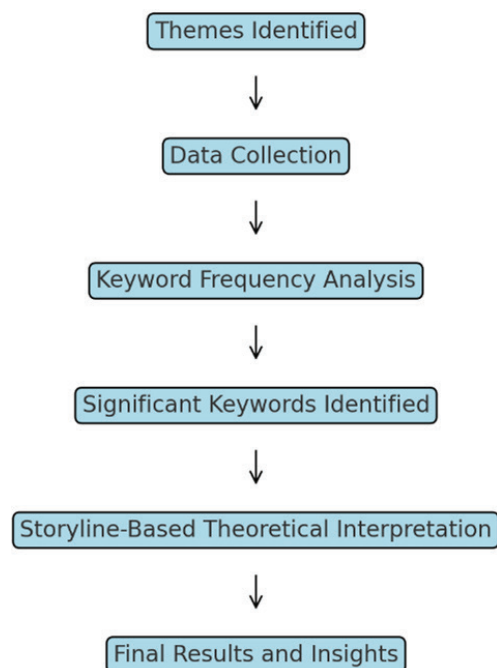
4. Research

4.1. Data Collection and Analysis Method

In the research, a content analysis of the series' script was conducted. Each episode's script was scanned using relevant software, and the frequency of context-sensitive keywords was calculated. Initially, the keywords selected for content analysis were categorized into three thematic groups—power and control, emotional and relational, and equality and manipulation—based on their relevance to sociological and psychological theories discussed in the literature review. For instance, terms like "power," "control," and "rebellion" were chosen to examine Michel Foucault's concepts of power dynamics and surveillance, while "to survive" and "death" connected to Zygmunt Bauman's liquid modernity, highlighting insecurity and the human struggle for stability. Emotional and relational words such as

"deceive", "trust," "betrayal," and "unity" aligned with Georg Simmel's work on trust and cooperation, revealing the fragility of social bonds under systemic pressures. Equality and manipulation terms like "equality," "lie," and "manipulation" reflect the influence of Giddens' structuration theory and Baudrillard's simulacra, exploring how structures distort perceptions of fairness. However, statistical analysis revealed only a subset of these words—money, I/me, we, they, death/dead/die/kill, survive, trust, help, manage, right, wrong, lose, win, and target—as significant within the series' script. This refinement suggests that while the broader selection was theoretically informed, the statistically significant terms capture the most dominant sociological themes, focusing on survival, morality, and systemic power dynamics. Among these keywords, "target," "survive," and "manage" demonstrated patterns that could not be explained sequentially, while "right" and "wrong" exhibited distributions that could not be accounted for by theoretical frameworks.

After calculating the frequency of keywords across all episodes, the results were compiled into a chart. Subsequently, the frequency fluctuations of statistically significant keywords were interpreted in relation to the series' plotline and evaluated from the perspective of relevant theoretical frameworks. The keywords were not grouped under broader themes, as there was no necessity for such categorization. This can be modeled as follows:



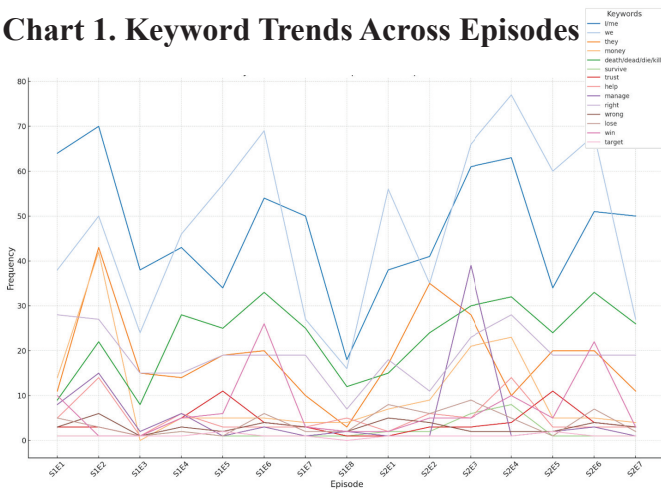
Model 1. Research Process

This model illustrates the structured progression of the research, from identifying thematic categories to interpreting the statistically significant keywords in relation to the series' plotline. By integrating storyline-based analysis with theoretical frameworks, it provides a comprehensive approach to understanding the sociological and psychological dynamics within Squid Game. This ensures that the findings are not only grounded in data but also aligned with relevant academic theories, offering both depth and contextual relevance.

4.2. Analysis Results

The analysis results are presented in both visual and tabular formats, providing a clear representation of keyword frequencies and their fluctuations across episodes. These results are accompanied by detailed interpretations that align the observed patterns with the series' narrative and relevant sociological theories. This approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of the data while maintaining a strong connection to the thematic and theoretical framework established earlier in the study.

Chart 1. Keyword Trends Across Episodes



The chart illustrates the frequency of all keywords across episodes; however, certain keywords exhibit more pronounced fluctuations compared to others. This highlights the importance of focusing primarily on numerically significant or high-frequency keywords for a more effective analysis. Keywords with minimal variability may contribute little to the overall analysis and therefore do not warrant detailed examination. A more detailed examination is provided below.

Table 1. Frequency of the Keywords "I/me", "We" and "They"

Episod	I/me	we	they
S1E1	64	38	11
S1E2	70	50	43
S1E3	38	24	15
S1E4	43	46	14
S1E5	34	57	19
S1E6	54	69	20
S1E7	50	27	10
S1E8	18	16	3
S2E1	38	56	17
S2E2	41	35	35
S2E3	61	66	28
S2E4	63	77	10
S2E5	34	60	20
S2E6	51	68	20
S2E7	50	27	11

The individualism, represented by the keyword "I," peaks particularly in episodes S1E1 and S2E4. In the first episode, the prominence of survival instincts and personal interests compels participants to adopt a self-centered mindset; the deadly nature of the games necessitates the development of individual strategies. In S2E4, individualism resurges due to the "Six-Legged Pentathlon," a game where individual performance plays a decisive role even within a group setting. Conversely, individualism diminishes in S1E8 and S2E7, as the reduced number of players shifts the focus to group dynamics and confronting the system. Especially in the final episodes, individuals prioritize understanding the nature of the system and resisting it, rather than mere survival.

The solidarity, signified by the keyword "We," is particularly pronounced in S1E5 and S2E4. In S1E5, a tug-of-war game necessitating complete group cooperation underscores the insufficiency of individual effort and compels participants to collaborate. Similarly, in S2E4, the requirement for teamwork elevates solidarity to its peak. However, solidarity diminishes in S1E8 and S2E7. In S1E8, as the finale approaches, the instinct for survival drives participants to prioritize individual strategies over collective effort. In S2E7, the fragility of human relationships and the dominance of individual gains underscore the erosion of trust and solidarity.

The keyword "They," representing systemic power, becomes more prominent in S2E3 and S2E1. In S2E3, the organizers' manipulations, such as Hwang In-ho's participation disguised as "Player 001," highlight the mechanisms of systemic control. In S2E1, the participants' growing suspicion of the organizers and their scrutiny of the system strengthen the theme of systemic dominance. In contrast, this theme recedes in S1E8 and S2E5. In these episodes, the focus shifts toward internal conflicts among participants, with the influence of the organizers being less apparent.

Regression analyses indicate a weak to moderate relationship between the keywords. For example, the Multiple R values suggest some degree of connection between the dependent and independent variables. However, the low R Square values (in the range of 17-18%) reveal that the independent variables explain only a small portion of the variance in the dependent variable. Furthermore, the F-statistic and Significance F values, which test the overall significance of the model, indicate that the models are not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). This suggests that incorporating these keywords into the model would not enhance the results or provide meaningful contributions to the research. Therefore, as the regression models were not significant, these variables and all the others were deemed unnecessary for inclusion in the study.

Table 2. Frequency of the Keywords "Money", "Lose" and "Win"

Episod	money	lose	win
S1E1	14	5	10
S1E2	42	3	1
S1E3	0	1	1
S1E4	5	2	5
S1E5	5	1	6
S1E6	5	6	26
S1E7	4	2	3
S1E8	4	2	2
S2E1	7	8	2
S2E2	9	6	5
S2E3	21	9	5
S2E4	23	5	10
S2E5	5	1	5
S2E6	5	7	22
S2E7	4	2	3

"Money" reaches its peak in episode S1E2 (42), as the participants decide to return to the deadly game despite its dangers, driven by the allure of the massive cash prize. Throughout the episode, the transformative power of money and its ability to change lives is emphasized, making it a central motivator for characters trapped in economic struggles. Conversely, in S1E3, the "money" theme is absent (0), as the episode focuses on the honeycomb game, where individual survival and precision skills take precedence. Here, the presence of the prize is overshadowed by the immediate demands of survival, as players must rely on fine motor skills and concentration to succeed.

The "lose" keyword peaks in S2E1 (8), but this rise is unrelated to the games themselves, instead tied to flashbacks of the participants' lives. The episode highlights the economic and social losses they face in their daily struggles, providing psychological and financial context for their decision to rejoin the game. On the other hand, in S1E5, the "lose" theme is minimal (1), as the tug-of-war game demonstrates how collective effort and strategy can minimize losses. This episode emphasizes the power of teamwork, which reduces individual vulnerabilities and limits the toll of the game.

"Win" reaches its highest point in S1E6 (26), during the marble game, where participants showcase their intelligence, manipulation skills, and emotional connections to secure survival. Notable moments include Gi-hun deceiving Oh Il-nam (Player 001) and Sang-woo betraying Ali to achieve victory, highlighting the prominence of individual gains. In contrast, the "win" theme is minimal in S1E3 (1), as the honeycomb game shifts the focus to survival over triumph. Similarly, S2E1 almost entirely omits the "win" theme, as the episode focuses on the participants' real-world losses and struggles rather than gameplay or achievements.

Table 3. Frequency of the Keywords "Trust", "Help" and "Death-Related"

Episod	trust	help	death/dead/die/kill
S1E1	3	5	9
S1E2	3	14	22
S1E3	1	1	8
S1E4	5	6	28
S1E5	11	3	25
S1E6	4	3	33
S1E7	3	3	25
S1E8	1	5	12
S2E1	1	2	15
S2E2	3	6	24
S2E3	3	5	30
S2E4	4	14	32
S2E5	11	3	24
S2E6	4	3	33
S2E7	3	3	26

The "trust" keyword peaks in episodes S1E5 and S2E5 (11). In S1E5, during the tug-of-war game, group solidarity, strategic collaboration, and mutual trust become essential for survival. Players overcome individual differences and form a strong bond within their team, elevating the prominence of the trust theme. Similarly, in S2E5, group dynamics and the players' interdependence bring trust to the forefront. In particular, during the physically demanding "Six-Legged Pentathlon" game, players must rely on each other to survive, making trust a crucial component of success. Each individual's trust in their teammates plays a pivotal role in ensuring their survival and winning the game. In contrast, the "trust" theme is significantly lower in episodes S1E3 and S2E1 (1). In S1E3, during the honeycomb game, all participants focus on individual effort and survival, leaving trust as a secondary concern. In S2E1, as no game takes place, trust dynamics remain underdeveloped. This episode focuses on introducing the characters and providing background information about their personal struggles, leaving little room for trust-building interactions.

The "help" keyword peaks in episodes S1E2 and S2E4 (14). In S1E2, flashback scenes reveal the players' economic desperation and emphasize their desire to help their families and loved ones. This

episode highlights the emotional and financial motivations behind acts of helping, placing them in the context of socioeconomic struggles. In S2E4, solidarity and cooperation during team-based games become prominent, further amplifying the help theme. Conversely, in episodes like S1E3, the "help" theme is significantly lower (1). In the honeycomb game, each participant is isolated, and cooperation is impossible as every individual is solely focused on their survival.

The "death" keyword peaks in episodes S1E4, S1E6, and S2E6 (28, 33, 33). In S1E4, chaos erupts during the night as the organizers incite violence among the players, leading to numerous deaths. In S1E6, the marble game brings one-on-one confrontations where players experience both physical and emotional devastation. Each individual must employ manipulation and betrayal strategies to defeat their partner. Similarly, in S2E6, the deadly nature of the games intensifies, with deaths increasing as the finale approaches. In contrast, the "death" theme is relatively lower in S1E1 (9). While the initial game introduces shocking and rapid deaths, these are not the central focus throughout the entire episode, as much of it establishes the game's rules and participants' reactions to its deadly nature.

4.3. Findings and Discussion

The fluctuations between individualism ("I/me") and solidarity ("We") in Squid Game can be explained through Bourdieu's concept of capital and Bauman's theory of liquid modernity. Bourdieu's understanding of social and cultural capital serves as a foundational factor shaping the players' strategies. For instance, in games like tug-of-war that require group solidarity, players transcend their individual capabilities by leveraging their social capital to form teams and consolidate their strength. This is evident in episodes where solidarity peaks. On the other hand, individualism aligns with Bauman's theory of liquid modernity, where players, faced with constantly changing and uncertain conditions, prioritize their own interests to survive. The impact of liquid modernity becomes particularly evident in games where players must make independent decisions and devise strategies alone. These fluctuations illustrate how individuals navigate not only group dynamics but also the evolving conditions by utilizing their capital. Players sometimes manipulate

groups for their own benefit, while at other times, they collaborate within groups to ensure survival.

The fluctuations in "money", "lose" and "win" keywords throughout the series align with sociological theories while also challenging or enriching them in certain contexts. The peak of the "money" theme in S1E2 directly corresponds to Bourdieu's concept of economic capital, as participants recognize the transformative potential of wealth. Their decision to return to the game illustrates how economic capital shapes individual actions. However, the absence of "money" in S1E3 reveals that economic motivations may not always dominate, especially when survival depends on individual strategies and skills. The rise of "lose" in S2E1 supports Bauman's theory of liquid modernity, highlighting the participants' experiences of economic and social instability and their desperate attempts to adapt. Yet, because these losses occur outside the game, the emphasis shifts from the structure of the game to the broader societal pressures on individuals. Regarding "win," its peak in S1E6 aligns with Giddens' structuration theory, where players actively navigate and reproduce the game's structures through intelligence and manipulation. However, the near absence of "win" in S2E1 supports Bauman's argument that uncertainty and loss in modern society often overshadow individual triumphs. In this context, the drive to win is replaced by an emphasis on coping with loss and instability. These thematic fluctuations demonstrate that while certain events align with specific theories, no single theory can entirely encapsulate the complexity of the series, which simultaneously explores and critiques multiple sociological frameworks.

Similarly, the fluctuations in the keywords of "trust," "help," and "death" can be meaningfully linked to sociological theories. These themes, particularly when analyzed through the lenses of group solidarity, individual struggle, and systemic pressures, provide a framework in which various theories are both supported and tested. The "trust", which peaks notably in episodes S1E5 and S2E5, aligns directly with Bourdieu's concept of social capital. In team-based games such as tug-of-war, players must strengthen intra-group trust to survive, highlighting the critical role of social capital. According to Bourdieu's social capital theory, individuals strategically utilize their social relationships to gain advantages. However, in episodes like S1E3, where the "trust"

theme is minimal, this capital becomes ineffective. This demonstrates that social capital is only impactful in specific contexts and that individual struggles can overshadow the need for collective trust.

The "help" theme, which peaks in S1E2 and S2E4, can be linked to Bauman's theory of liquid modernity. Within this framework, individuals turn to collaboration and solidarity to adapt to constantly shifting circumstances. In S1E2, players' motivations to help their families amid economic hardship underscore the fragility of the modern individual and the burden of responsibilities. Similarly, in S2E4, the help theme becomes prominent as players are compelled to collaborate during group-based games. However, in episodes like S1E3, the "help" declines; this mirrors Bauman's assertion that modernity often isolates individuals, emphasizing their self-reliance over collective support.

The "death" peaks in episodes S1E4, S1E6, and S2E6 and can be explained through Giddens' structuration theory. Players are forced to act within the rules imposed by the system, and these rules often lead to deadly consequences. According to Giddens, while individuals are active agents within structures, the rigidity of these structures constrains their actions. For instance, the marble game in S1E6 demonstrates how players are compelled to conform to the system's rules, experiencing both physical and emotional devastation. Additionally, the nighttime violence in S1E4 reveals how the organizers systematically manipulate the players, destroying trust and solidarity among them. This aligns with Foucault's theories of power and surveillance, where constant control by the organizers shapes players' actions and compels them to operate under relentless systemic pressure.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, the study contributes to the sociological discourse on Squid Game by addressing underexplored aspects within existing literature. While prior research has predominantly focused on the series' critiques of economic inequality and capitalist dynamics, this study uniquely incorporates a detailed thematic analysis of keywords across episodes, linking their fluctuations to sociological theories such as Bourdieu's concepts of capital, Bauman's liquid modernity, and Giddens' structuration theory. Specifically, the application of Bourdieu's

social and cultural capital to explain trust dynamics in team-based games and Bauman's theory to explore individual survival strategies under uncertainty provides an innovative lens for understanding relational and systemic pressures in *Squid Game*. Furthermore, this research's method of combining keyword frequency analysis with theoretical interpretations bridges a gap in media studies by presenting a replicable framework for sociological analysis of narrative structures.

By systematically connecting themes such as individualism, solidarity, and systemic control to sociological theories, the study not only validates but also expands the theoretical scope applied to the series. It demonstrates that the series serves as a microcosm for exploring broader societal dynamics, such as the instrumentalization of trust and cooperation in capitalist contexts, the moral dilemmas of systemic constraints, and the fragility of social bonds in environments dominated by competition and survival. These findings emphasize the series' value as a cultural artifact that transcends entertainment, offering critical reflections on the structures shaping contemporary societies.

Ultimately, the research enriches the academic conversation on media analysis by illustrating how *Squid Game* embodies complex sociological themes and provides a methodological framework for future studies to further interrogate the intersections of culture, power, and social dynamics in popular media.

REFERENCES:

1. Adryan, A. G. W., Louis, A., Taruli, J. A., & Sari, N. (2021). *Representation of Hobbesian theory in the film series Squid Game in the view of Generation Z*. *Jurnal Kewarganegaraan*, 5(2), 621–632.
2. Ağkaya, O. (2023). *Bir dispozitif formu olarak borçlandırma: Dövüş Kulübü, Mr. Robot ve Squid Game'i distopya olarak okumak*. *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi*, 78(1), 29–48. <https://doi.org/10.33630/ausbf.1172815>
3. Akyıldız, Y., & Şeşen, E. (2022). *The brutal face of the violent game of the capitalist competition: Squid Game*. *SineFilozofi Dergisi*, 7(14).
4. Avcı, P., Bayrakdar, A., & Kılınçarslan, G. (2022). *Reflections of Squid Game on children's games and viewers: An example of Twitter sentiment analysis and qualitative research*. *Akdeniz Spor Bilimleri Dergisi (Mediterranean Journal of Sport Science)*, 5(2), 122–135. <https://doi.org/10.38021/asbid.1212297>
5. Baudrillard, J. (1981). *Simulacra and simulation*. Editions Galilee. Retrieved from <https://0ducks.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/simulacra-and-simulation-by-jean-baudrillard.pdf> (accessed 12.12.2024)
6. Bauman, Z. (2006). *Liquid modernity*. Polity Press.
7. Beaunoyer, E. (2024). *Commodified Death as the Ultimate Outcome of Social Inequalities: An Analysis of the Squid Game Discourse*. *Leisure Sciences*, 46:6, 883-899, DOI: 10.1080/01490400.2023.2273387.
8. Boikova, A. V. (2021). *Analiz mezhdunarodnoy dolgovoy nagruzki naseleniya: Dinamika i prichiny [Analysis of international debt burden on the population: Dynamics and causes]*. *Industrialnaya Ekonomika: Nauchno-Prakticheskiy Zhurnal [Industrial Economics: Scientific and Practical Journal]*, 12(5), 1110–1112. https://doi.org/10.47576/2712-7559_2021_5_12_1110
9. Bourdieu, P. (2021). *Forms of capital: General sociology, volume 3: Lectures at the Collège de France 1983-84 (Translated by P. Collier)*. Polity Press.
10. Chowdhury, M. (2022, July 5). *The Squid Game TV series and the economics of debt*. SSRN. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4154715>
11. Connolly, T. F. (2022). *Breaking Bad, Dosto-*

- evsky, *Nihilism, and Marketplace Morality. The European Legacy*, 28(2), 173–185. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10848770.2022.2129361>
12. Çelik, R., & Nezir Köse, N. (2022). *Squid Game dizisinde yer alan mekân ve semboller üzerine inceleme. Meriç Uluslararası Sosyal ve Stratejik Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 6(15), 43–59. <https://doi.org/10.xxxxx/mericosoyal.1234567>
13. *Easy Sociology*. (2024, April 19). *The sociology of film: An overview*. Retrieved from <https://easysociology.com/sociology-of-media/sociology-of-film/the-sociology-of-film-an-overview/> (accessed 18.12.2024)
14. Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (Translated by A. Sheridan). New York: Vintage Books.
15. Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977* (C. Gordon, Ed.). New York: Pantheon Books.
16. Gabriel', A. A. (2022). *Material'nye problemy zhiteley Yuzhnoy Korei na osnove seriala «Ojingeo Geim» [Material problems of South Korean residents based on the series Squid Game]. Koreevedenie v Rossii: Napravlenie i Razvitie [Korean Studies in Russia: Direction and Development]*, 3(2), 104–107.
17. Geçimli, G. (2022), *Eşitsizliği Yeniden Üreten Gösteri: The Platform ve Squid Game*, ARHUSS, 5(1): 40-72.
18. Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration*. University of California Press.
19. Goffman, E. (1956). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. University of Edinburgh, Social Sciences Research Centre.
20. Huntington, Y. P. (2024, November 12). *The social commentary of Squid Game: Reflections on Korean art, space and inequality*. *World Art*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21500894.2024.2407302>
21. Johnson, P. E. (2016). *Walter White(ness) lashes out: Breaking Bad and male victimage*. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 34(1), 14–28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15295036.2016.1238101>
22. Joy, S. (2017). *Sexual violence in serial form: Breaking Bad habits on TV*. *Feminist Media Studies*, 19(1), 118–129. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2017.1396484>
23. Kaçar, F. (2024). *Homo Ludens: The changing meaning and function of game from traditional life to culture industry: Squid Game example*. *Sakarya İletişim*, 4(2), 107-128. <https://doi.org/10.70684/silet.1539478>
24. Kim, M. (2021). *Parables about biopolitics and survival games in the neoliberal era: Parasite (2019) and Squid Game (2021)*. *The Midwest Quarterly*, 63(1), 20–35.
25. Kim, S. Y., & Park, S. (2023). *What's in a game? A dialectic of competition and cooperation in Squid Game*. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 58(3), 455–468. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10126902221107468>
26. Kotan, S., & Arslan, T. (2023). *An analysis on game theory as a culture builder at Johan Huizinga: Squid Game*. *Anemon Muş Alparslan Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 11(1), 73–95. <https://doi.org/10.18506/anemon.1234567>
27. Kotancı, G. (2024). *Mitik anlatıların modern yapımlara yansımaları: Squid Game*. *Kafkas Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 33, 87–98. <https://doi.org/10.56597/kausbed.1402521>
28. Kurtuluş, G., & İnci, M. (2022). *Neoliberalizmin borçlu insanına dair eleştirel bir çözümlemenin çözümü: Squid Game*. *Marmara Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Dergisi*, 44(2), 303–315. <https://doi.org/10.14780/muiibd.1225246>
29. McCullagh, C. (2002). *Media power: A sociological introduction*. New York: Palgrave.
30. Moghimi, H.A. (2023). *Sociological Film: A Medium to Promote Sociological Imagination*. *Am Soc* 54, 466–484. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12108-023-09586-z>
31. Nim, E., & Tarasova, A. (2022). *Peering into the other: Preface to the special issue on East Asian media culture*. *The Art and Science of Television*, 18(3), 13–18.
32. Parker, S. (2010). *From soft eyes to street lives: The Wire and jargons of authenticity*. *City*, 14(5), 545–557. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2010.512443>
33. Payzın, S. & İcil Tuncer, A. (2022). *Popüler kültürün anlattıkları: Squid Game dizisi üzerine bir inceleme*. *MEDIAJ*, 5(1), 108-127.
34. Plotnikova, M. V. (2022). *Fandom v massovoy kulture i politicheskoy kommunikatsii: Vozdeystvuyushchiy potentsial transmediatoritellinga [Fandom in mass culture and political communication: The influencing poten-*

- tial of transmedia storytelling]. *Politicheskaya Lingvistika [Political Linguistics]*, 2(92), 138–150. <https://doi.org/10.xxxxx/political.linguistics.2022.92.138150>
35. Reiland, I. (2022). *Squid games and the lusory attitude*. *Analysis*, 82(4), 638–646. <https://doi.org/10.1093/analys/anac025>
36. Rybalskaya, V. V., & Suslov, A. A. (2022). *Kritika kapitalisticheskoy sistemy v seriale "Igra v Kal'mara" [Critique of the capitalist system in the series "Squid Game"]*. *The Journal of Direction and Development of Korean Studies in Russia*, 3(1), 59–64.
37. Sabin, R. (2010). *THE WIRE : Dramatising the crisis in journalism*. *Journalism Studies*, 12(2), 139–155. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2010.493741>
38. Schaub, J. C. (2010). *The Wire: Big Brother Is Not Watching You in Body-more, Murdaland*. *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 38(3), 122–132. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01956051003623456>
39. Shayakhmetova, L. A., & Grinchuk, M. S. (2022). *Serial «Igra v kal'mara»: Filosofskiy analiz [The series Squid Game: A philosophical analysis]*. *Herald of Vyatka State University*, 4(146), 57–64. <https://doi.org/10.25730/VSU.7606.22.055>
40. Simmel, G. (2005). *The philosophy of money* (D. Frisby, Ed.). London: Routledge.
41. So, S., Garcia, D., Lee, J., Kim, J. H., Han, S. Y., Lee, S. J., & Chae, H. (2024). *Analyses of physical and psychological characteristics of Squid Game characters using East Asian biopsychosocial personality theories and body mass index*. *Behavioral Sciences*, 14(10), 907. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14100907>
42. Solomeina, E. A. (2022). *Situativnyy marketing v sotsial'nykh setyakh: Rezentatsiya fenomena «Igra v kal'mara» [Situational marketing in social networks: Representation of the phenomenon Squid Game]*. *Znak: Problemnoe Pole Mediaobrazovaniya [Znak: Problem Field of Media Education]*, 4(46), 92–97. <https://doi.org/10.47475/2070-0695-2022-10412>
43. Soydaş, E., & Dirimeşe, E. (2023). *Simmel'in para felsefesini Squid Game dizisi ile örneklendirmek*. *Journal of Sustainable Educational Studies (JSES)*, 4(1), 1–12.
44. Stekl, M. (2022). *The global village and its others: 'Squid Game' and subaltern mediality*. *Galactica Media: Journal of Media Studies*, 4, 17–29. <https://doi.org/10.46539/gmd.v4i4.26>
45. Storey, J. (2024). *Cultural theory and popular culture: An introduction (5th ed.)*. London: Routledge.
46. Strandvad, S.M. (2023). *Sociologies of Cultural Productions in Production Studies*. In: Udelhofen, S., Göttel, D., Riffi, A. (eds) *Produktionskulturen audiovisueller Medien. Produktionskulturen der Medien*. Springer VS, Wiesbaden. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-38412-8_4
47. Syahriyani, A., Fahri, A., Putratama, M. R., & Amaliyah, M. (2022). *Squid Game series as social phenomenon on Twitter: A study of participatory culture*. *International Journal of Media and Information Literacy*, 7(2), 578–588. <https://doi.org/10.13187/ijmil.2022.2.578>
48. Tilly, C., & Wood, L. J. (2009). *Social movements, 1768-2008*. London: Paradigm Publishers.
49. Tingır, M., Tarlakazan, B.E. (2022). *“Artistic Reflections in The Global Sensational Squid Game Series”*, *Turkish Journal of Fashion Design and Management (TJFMD)*, 2022, 4 (2): 73-88.
50. Tuna, S., & Akgün, C. (2022). *Squid Game dizisinin korku ve şiddet temaları bağlamında ruhsal çözümleme yöntemiyle incelenmesi*. *IGUSABDER*, 17, 636–647.
51. Tutar, H. (2022). *Can Squid Game series be watched through Social Darwinism? A semiotic review*. *Turkish Review of Communication Studies*, (41), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.17829/turcom.1048464>
52. Yıldız, E. (2024). *Squid Game 1 dizisinin (2021) neoliberalizmin karakter aşınması ve distopik unsurlar çerçevesinde incelenmesi*. *İletişim, Kuram ve Araştırma Dergisi*, 68, 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.47998/ikad.1554744>

Джахандар Джабаров

**Преподаватель кафедры общественных наук
Бакинского Славянского Университета,
докторант Института Философии и
Социологии НАН Азербайджана
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0075-2398>;
c.cabarov@bsu-uni.edu.az**

Социология Squid Game: анализ малоизученных аспектов

РЕЗЮМЕ

Будучи одним из продуктов современной массовой культуры, сериал Squid Game привлёк внимание своими глобальными социально-социологическими эффектами. В этом контексте наше исследование показывает, что сериал не ограничивается критикой экономического неравенства и капиталистических отношений, но также охватывает менее изученные темы, такие как коллективное сопротивление, механизмы контроля в повседневной жизни, доверие, солидарность и нормализация насилия. В качестве основного метода использовался контент-анализ, при котором сценарий сериала изучался по эпизодам на основе частотного анализа ключевых слов. Результаты показывают, что использование слов «я», «мы» и «они» отражает колебания между индивидуализмом и солидарностью, тогда как слова «деньги», «победить» и «проиграть» подчёркивают доминирующую роль экономической мотивации в капиталистических отношениях. С другой стороны, такие понятия, как «доверие», «помощь» и «смерть», объясняются через призму социального капитала, неопределённости в условиях современности и структурных ограничений. В исследовании использованы теоретические подходы Бурдье (концепция капитала), Баумана («жидкая современность»), Гидденса (теория структуризации) и Бодрийяра (концепция симулякров). Анализ показал, что сериал является не просто развлекательным продуктом, но также своеобразной лабораторией для объяснения социальных структур, властных отношений и культурных трансформаций современного общества. Это, в свою очередь, позволяет глубже понять резонанс, созданный сериалом в глобальной популярной культуре и его вклад в социологический дискурс.

Ключевые слова: *Squid Game*, социологический анализ, капитализм, социальное неравенство, солидарность, культурная трансформация.

Рәйси: Fəlsəfə üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru, dosent Telman Niftaliyev
Məqalə redaksiyaya daxil olub: 09.09.2025
Çapa qəbul olunub: 03.10.2025

Cahandar Cabarov

BSU-nun "İctimai elmlər" kafedrasının müəllimi.
AMEA-nın Fəlsəfə və Sosiologiya İnstitutunun
doktorantı

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0075-2398>;
E-mail: c.cabarov@bsu-uni.edu.az

Squid Game-in sosiologiyası: az tədqiq olunmuş aspektlərin təhlili

XÜLASƏ

Müasir kütləvi mədəniyyət məhsullarından biri olan Squid Game serialı qlobal miqyasda sosial-sosioloji təsirləri ilə diqqət çəkmişdir. Tədqiqatımız bu çərçivədə serialın yalnız iqtisadi bərabərsizlik və kapitalist münasibətlərin tənqidi ilə məhdudlaşmadığını, həm də kollektiv müqavimət, gündəlik həyatın nəzarət mexanizmləri, etimad, həmrəylik və zorakılığın normallaşdırılması kimi daha az işlənmiş mövzuları əhatə etdiyini ortaya qoyur. Əsas metod olaraq контент-analizdən istifadə olunmuş, serialın ssenarisi epizodlar üzrə açar sözlərin tezlik təhlili ilə araşdırılmışdır. Nəticələr göstərir ki, "mən", "biz" və "onlar" kimi sözlərin istifadəsi fərdiyyətçiliklə həmrəyliyin dalğalanmasını, "pul", "qalib gəlmək" və "məğlub olmaq" sözləri isə kapitalist münasibətlərdə iqtisadi motivasiyanın dominant rolunu üzə çıxarır. Digər tərəfdən, "etibar", "yardım" və "ölüm" anlayışları sosial kapital, müasirlikdə qeyri-müəyyənlik və struktur məhdudiyyətlər çərçivəsində izah olunur. Tədqiqatda Burdyenin kapital konsepsiyası, Baumanın "maye modernlik" nəzəriyyəsi, Giddensin strukturlaşma yanaşması və Bodriyarın simulyakr anlayışı kimi nəzəri çərçivələrdən istifadə edilmişdir. Təhlil nəticəsində məlum olmuşdur ki, serial sadəcə əyləncə məhsulu deyil, həm də müasir cəmiyyətlərin sosial strukturlarını, güc münasibətlərini və mədəni transformasiyalarını izah edən bir laboratoriya rolunu oynayır. Bu isə öz növbəsində serialın qlobal populyar mədəniyyətdə yaratdığı rezonansı və sosioloji diskursa verdiyi töhfəni daha dərindən anlamağa imkan verir.

Açar sözlər: *Squid Game*, sosioloji təhlil, kapitalizm, sosial bərabərsizlik, həmrəylik, mədəni transformasiya.

The date of the admission of the article
to the editorial office: 09.09.2025
Accepted for publication: 03.10.2025