

Democratic Integration of Migrants from Autocracy: Lab-in-the-Field Evidence from North Korean Defectors

Michael J. Gilligan and Sangyong Son

March 1, 2026

Words: 9469

Abstract

Movement from autocracies to liberal democracies is a prominent pattern in contemporary international migration. Prior research suggests that migrants from authoritarian regimes may face barriers to democratic integration due to a lack of social capital, unfamiliarity with democratic norms and practices. We study North Korean defectors in South Korea—a population that shares with the host society a common language, history, and culture but diverges sharply in political upbringing due to life under a highly repressive regime. We show that, indeed, North Korean defectors participate less in democratic politics and deliberative discussions than South Koreans. We then examine which factors most critically impede democratic integration using a combination of lab-in-the-field experiments and surveys. We measure interpersonal social capital (including social-network membership and compliance with prosocial norms such as altruism, trust, and cooperation), political interest and knowledge, and attitudes toward democracy (including implicit bias toward North Korea and anti-democratic orientations). Contrary to common expectations, North Korean defectors possess social capital comparable to—or even higher than—that of native South Koreans. However, they demonstrate low political interest and knowledge, implicit bias against democratic institutions, and anti-democratic attitudes. These findings suggest that attitudinal and behavioral unfamiliarity with democracy—rather than a lack of social capital—poses the greater challenge to long-term democratic integration for migrants from authoritarian regimes.

1 Introduction

What factors hinder the integration¹ of migrants from autocracies into liberal democracies? Recent international migration patterns show a rising number of individuals crossing regime boundaries, especially from repressive autocracies to liberal democracies. A prominent component of this trend is survival migration: individuals who flee not primarily for economic reasons but in response to violence, repression, famine, or state failure in their countries of origin (Betts, 2013; Braithwaite, Salehyan and Savun, 2019).² Despite the distinctiveness of this population, prior research has devoted limited attention to the obstacles that constrain the democratic integration of migrants from repressive autocracies.³ This article addresses this gap by examining the factors that disrupt the democratic integration of migrants from repressive autocracies.

Political socialization research highlights the enduring effects of pre-migration environments (Bilodeau, 2008; Bilodeau, McAllister and Kanji, 2010; Ramakrishnan and Espenshade, 2001) Individuals raised under repressive autocracies experience systematic ideological indoctrination that affirms the regime’s legitimacy, reinforces its political institutions, and prescribes norms governing civic behavior and social interaction (Finkel, Humphries and Opp, 2001; Mishler and Rose, 2007; Neundorf, 2010; Pop-Eleches and Tucker, 2011). Building on early socialization shaped by authoritarian institutional legacies, we evaluate two pathways that may hinder migrants’ democratic integration: whether limited social capital or unfamiliarity with democracy constitutes the more consequential impediment to successful adaptation in liberal-democratic host contexts. To investigate this, we analyze the democratic integration of North Korean

¹We use the term integration because this study examines whether low social capital or weak democratic orientations impede defectors’ incorporation into South Korean society. Social capital and democratic attitudes are standard dimensions of social and civic integration rather than cultural markers of assimilation. Integration therefore provides a more suitable term for describing their adaptation.

²See also Holland and Peters (2020), who argue that although violence contributes to displacement, its greater significance lies in prompting potential migrants to seek political information, making them highly responsive to changes in policy environments.

³But see emerging work on how migration to autocracies shapes democratic attitudes and behaviors Gaikwad, Hanson and Tóth (2025); Gaikwad, Hanson and Tóth (2026).

defectors (NKs, N = 189) using lab-in-field experiments and surveys, comparing their political attitudes and behaviors to those of native-born South Koreans (SKs, N = 179).

We find that NKs' integration is hindered not by a deficit in social capital⁴ but by unfamiliarity with democratic attitudes⁵. In both surveys and behavioral activities in the lab, NKs display levels of social capital—including altruism, trust, and willingness to contribute to public goods—that do not meaningfully differ from those of SKs, and they report similar engagement in social and civic organizations. Yet despite this parity in pro-social norms and networks, NKs fall behind SKs in democratic attitudes: they express lower political interest, are less informed and less active, and are less willing to participate in deliberative policy discussions. Consistent with this pattern, NKs also hold more negative views of democracy and exhibit an implicit bias toward autocracy vis-à-vis democracy relative to native South Koreans.

To probe the mechanisms underlying this pattern, semi-structured interviews further examine why defectors lag in democratic orientations. NKs consistently traced their reluctance to participate in public discussion to authoritarian socialization—marked by ideological indoctrination, surveillance, and punitive “group criticism” practices—which left them without internalized deliberative attitudes or the behavioral repertoires needed for open dialogue. These qualitative insights clarify how authoritarian political socialization continues to shape defectors' democratic orientations, reinforcing that weak democratic attitudes represent the principal barrier to their democratic integration in liberal-democratic contexts.

Our findings make important contributions to theories of migrant integration and to policymaking. This article examines two explanations for the limited democratic integration of migrants from repressive autocracies: lack of social capital and unfamil-

⁴Social capital refers to social norms and the social networks that sustain them (Putnam, 2000a).

⁵Social psychologists define attitudes as ‘a relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies toward socially significant objects, groups, events, or symbols’ (Hogg and Vaghan, 2005, p. 150).

ilarity with democratic norms and attitudes. The results show that, despite originating from one of the world’s most closed autocracies, North Korean defectors exhibit levels of social capital comparable to those of native South Koreans. Yet they lag considerably in political interest, knowledge, participation, and democratic attitudes. This contrast suggests that the primary barrier to democratic integration lies not in weak social networks but rather in limited exposure to, and internalization of, democratic practices. At the same time, these findings highlight an important policy implication: while social networks remain relevant, durable integration depends more critically on fostering democratic learning. Governments and NGOs could therefore devote greater effort to democracy education and civic training, rather than focusing narrowly on strengthening social capital.

2 Relation to the Literature

This research speaks to the democratic integration of migrants from autocracies into liberal democracies. Migration from autocracy to democracy has emerged as a prominent trend in recent international migration. As shown in Figure 1, the stock of migrants residing in democratic regimes after originating from autocratic regimes increased substantially between 2015 and 2024, making it the second-largest global migration pattern after stocks between autocracies.⁶

Unlike primarily economic migration, these movements often take the form of survival migration: individuals fleeing their countries of origin in response to grave threats from inter- or intrastate conflicts, state fragility, or repressive state authorities (Betts, 2013). UNHCR data⁷ underscore this pattern, with the top countries of refugee origin—including Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Sudan, Myanmar, the Democratic

⁶We use the UN DESA International Migrant Stock dataset (2024), merged with V-Dem to classify origin and destination regimes. The analysis is restricted to dyads covered by V-Dem, and regime-to-regime shares are calculated as the proportion of total migrant stocks in the matched sample.

⁷UNHCR Data, Refugee population by country or territory of origin, available at: <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/refugee-population-by-country-or-territory-of-origin>

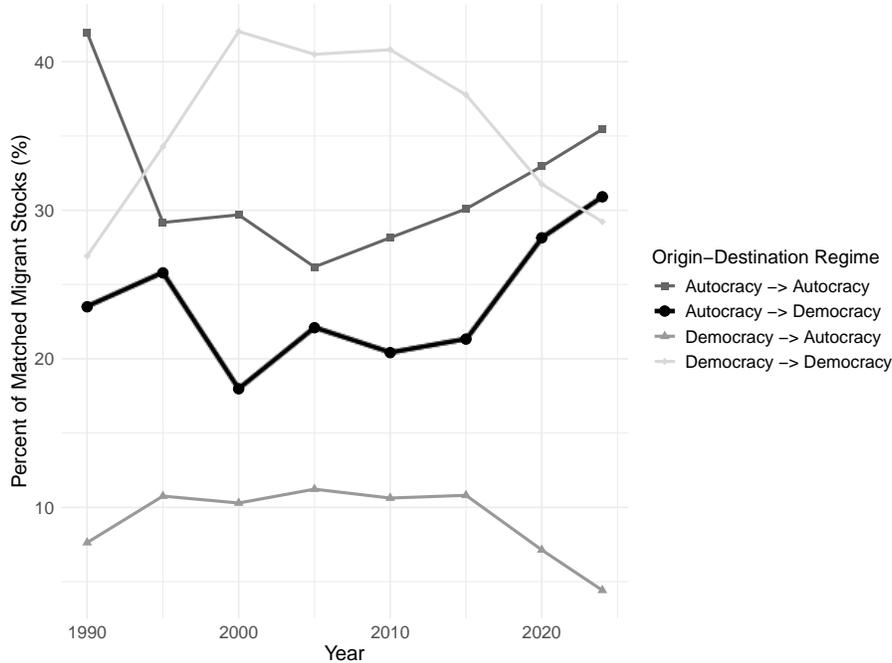


Figure 1: International migrant stocks by regime type

Republic of Congo, Somalia, and the Central African Republic—exemplifying contexts marked by violent conflict, authoritarian repression, or outright state collapse. Against this backdrop, the scope condition of this study is migrants who move from repressive autocracies to liberal democracies as a response to systemic violence, repression, or state collapse. For analytical clarity, we use the terms *migrants* and *refugees* interchangeably to capture this population, while referring to their countries of origin as *autocracies*, *dictatorships*, or *repressive regimes*.⁸

Building on prior research on political socialization and the legacy of political institutions, we assume that institutions in migrants’ countries of origin shape their integration into host liberal democracies (Alesina and Fuchs-Schündeln, 2007; Simpser, Slater and Wittenberg, 2018; Neundorf and Pop-Eleches, 2020). Migrants examined here were socialized in repressive authoritarian contexts where coercion, surveillance, and curtailed civic life dominated (Mishler and Rose, 2007). Their trajectories of inte-

⁸We will often refer to North Korean migrants/refugees in specific as *defectors*.

gration are therefore expected to be shaped not only by conditions in host states but also by the institutional legacies of the regimes they fled. From this perspective, we identify two factors that systematically hinder the democratic integration of migrants from autocracies into liberal democracies.

One important factor is the erosion of social capital among refugees from autocratic regimes. Research on the legacies of repressive regimes consistently underscores the fragility of civil society in these contexts (Jowitt, 2023; Ekiert, 1996).⁹ Repressive regimes eroded interpersonal trust and dismantled autonomous civic organizations by embedding surveillance and coercion into everyday life, socializing citizens into suspicion and compulsory, state-controlled associations rather than generalized trust and voluntary networks. This legacy weakened the foundations of interpersonal trust, produced deep mistrust of collective organizations, and entrenched reliance on private, kin-based networks that constrained the growth of voluntary civic associations (Howard, 2002; Xu and Jin, 2018). Comparative evidence further shows that citizens who lived under repressive regimes display consistently lower levels of both trust and participation in voluntary organizations than their counterparts elsewhere (Bernhard and Karakoç, 2007; Pop-Eleches and Tucker, 2013; Xu and Jin, 2018).

The resulting deficit of social capital poses major obstacles to refugees' democratic integration. In particular, refugees face two distinct challenges. First, authoritarian surveillance and repression corroded interpersonal trust and dismantled autonomous associations, leaving refugees without the habits of cooperation, generalized trust, and civic skills needed for democratic participation. This deficit of social capital significantly hampers their democratic integration, because social networks are otherwise known to facilitate migrants' integration into democratic politics (Jacobs and Tillie, 2004; Berger, Galonska and Koopmans, 2004). Second, voluntary associations provide,

⁹Following Linz (2000), authoritarian regimes are generally characterized by limited pluralism, low mobilization, and the absence of a comprehensive ideology. Yet the most repressive forms of authoritarianism approximate totalitarian regimes—as exemplified by communism—which combined monopolistic control, pervasive mobilization, and an all-encompassing ideology.

as Skocpol notes, “a source of considerable popular leverage” over the political process (Skocpol and Fiorina, 2004), enabling citizens to aggregate preferences, protect themselves from unjust policies, and press for legislative change (Howard, 2002). Refugees from authoritarian regimes thus suffer a compounded disadvantage: they lack opportunities to acquire civic skills, and their voices and interests are scarcely represented in political decision-making.

Another important factor is attitudinal and behavioral unfamiliarity with democratic norms and practices. Political socialization under authoritarian rule has enduring negative effects on the political integration of migrants. Individuals raised in non-democratic contexts are not only less exposed to democratic norms and civic responsibilities but also acquire fewer skills and less knowledge necessary for effective engagement in liberal democracies (Black, Niemi and Powell, 1987; Ramakrishnan, 2005; White et al., 2008). This deficit of both civic capacities and democratic norms may not only reduce refugees’ political participation but also undermine the quality and desirability of their engagement in democratic politics.

Policies in host democracies that seek to instill democratic attitudes and encourage compliance with democratic norms often encounter resistance rooted in prior authoritarian socialization (Joppke, 2007, 2017; Gebhardt, 2016; Barreto et al., 2022). Such resistance arises because orientations and learning acquired under non-democratic regimes hinder migrants’ ability to internalize democratic norms in host societies (White et al., 2008). A large body of empirical evidence shows that migrants from authoritarian regimes are systematically less likely to endorse democracy (Bilodeau, McAllister and Kanji, 2010; Pop-Eleches and Tucker, 2020), participate in politics (Bueker, 2005, 2006; Bilodeau, 2008; Just and Anderson, 2012; Lazarova, Saalfeld and Seifert, 2024), and trust political institutions (Voicu and Tufiş, 2017).¹⁰

We study which of two factors—the erosion of social capital or the absence of

¹⁰Unlike other studies in this line of research, Bilodeau, McAllister and Kanji (2010) report that “there is little evidence that pre-migration experience of authoritarianism influences immigrants’ participation in electoral activities in the host country,” a finding that contradicts the research cited above.

democratic experience—constitutes the more consequential obstacle to democratic integration among refugees from authoritarian regimes. As a case study, we focus on North Korean defectors in South Korea. North Korea represents a paradigmatic closed autocracy, where coercion, surveillance, and ideological indoctrination permeate all dimensions of social life. Defectors typically leave not for economic opportunity but to escape famine, surveillance, coercion, or threats to personal safety—motivations reflected in South Korea’s settlement survey, where many cite “avoiding the regime’s surveillance and control” or “perceived risks to personal safety” as reasons for fleeing (Korea Hana Foundation, 2025). Their resettlement in South Korea—a liberal democracy—thus places them squarely within our scope condition: migrants emerging from repressive autocracy who must adapt to the norms and institutions of democratic host societies.

3 North Korean Defectors in South Korea

There are approximately 35,000 North Korean defectors currently residing in South Korea. Figure 2 shows annual entry patterns since 2000. Arrivals peaked in 2009, but following Kim Jong Un’s ascension in 2011, intensified border control measures reduced defections from roughly 2,700 in 2011 to about 1,500 in 2012. Numbers continued to fall to around 1,000 in the last pre-pandemic year. The COVID-19 pandemic then drove arrivals to a near standstill, with only 63 and 67 defectors entering in 2021 and 2022, respectively. Although inflows have increased modestly since then, they remain far below pre-pandemic levels.

The number of defectors in South Korea is small by developed-country standards, and South Korea receives few refugees from other countries overall.¹¹ Yet despite hosting far fewer refugees, South Korea has developed robust and unusually comprehensive

¹¹Italy, for comparison—with a GDP 13 percent larger and a population roughly 5.5 percent greater—hosts nearly 300,000 individuals with refugee status.

North Korean Defectors by Year 2001 - 24

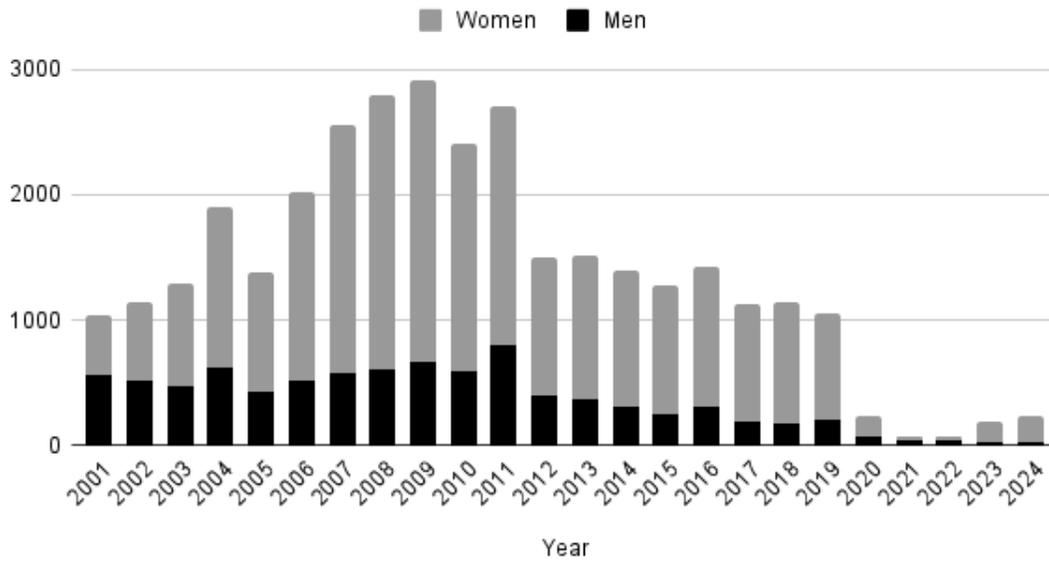


Figure 2: The number of North Korean defectors in the 21st century, by year

programs to support the integration of North Korean defectors. South Korea’s integration infrastructure is more expansive than that of many Western European or North American countries—making it unclear whether defectors constitute a relatively “easy” or “hard” case for democratic integration.¹²

On the plus side, the South Korean government welcomes defectors and provides substantial resources for their integration. All defectors complete a 12-week (400-hour) residential program at Hanawon, which offers instruction on South Korean society, career counseling, and basic vocational training. The government further assists with housing, family reunification, and financial stabilization.¹³ Upon arrival, defectors are automatically granted South Korean citizenship, a factor widely recognized as facilitating political incorporation (Just and Anderson, 2012; Hainmueller, Hangartner

¹²See also migration policies in non-Western countries and international organizations: Zhou, Grossman and Ge (2023); Rojas et al. (2025)

¹³After completing Hanawon, defectors receive continued support for up to five years, including subsidies, job-placement aid, certifications, educational assistance, and caseworker assignments.

and Pietrantuono, 2015, 2017). They also receive resettlement support from NGOs (Williams, 2019; Ministry of Unification, 2024) and face no meaningful language barrier.¹⁴ Taken together, these features create an institutional environment that is unusually favorable for democratic integration.¹⁵

Yet these advantages are offset by serious disadvantages rooted in the North Korean context. North Korea is one of the world’s most closed autocracies: unmonitored social interactions are punished, autonomous civic life is virtually absent, and political surveillance is pervasive. Although conditions have modestly improved with the rise of the *jangmadang*—quasi-illegal grassroots markets tolerated but not formally sanctioned by the state (Haggard and Noland, 2010)—most citizens continue to live under dense systems of control. Decades of ideological indoctrination have fostered habitual self-censorship, deference to authority, and limited exposure to open disagreement or deliberation (Lee, 2003, 2024).

As Haggard and Noland observe in their analysis of North Koreans’ difficulty adjusting to democratic life in South Korea:

“Educated in a highly authoritarian and economically decaying state socialist system, North Koreans clearly have remarkable survival skills. Nonetheless, they may or may not possess the skills required to navigate an advanced industrial democracy even where the language barrier is (at least partially) neutralized, as in South Korea.”

Previous research provides two main explanations for why North Korean defectors struggle to integrate fully into South Korea. The first highlights deficits in social capital. According to this view, defectors lack both bonding ties within their own community and bridging ties to South Koreans. Bidet (2009), for example, argues that

¹⁴Accent and terminology differences exist but rarely impede communication (BBC Monitoring, 2019).

¹⁵While much of the literature emphasizes host-state policies or institutional design, recent work also highlights the role of migrants’ own beliefs about national belonging in shaping integration outcomes. Using the case of North Korean defectors in South Korea, Hur (2023) shows that migrants’ conceptions of belonging condition their receptivity to integration efforts.

“North Korean defectors have an especially low social capital due to a weakness of their ties both to persons belonging to the same community and to persons belonging to different communities,” a deficit he suggests undermines their employment prospects. Public discourse frequently echoes this perspective, portraying defectors as isolated and lonely.¹⁶ Survey evidence further shows that South Koreans rarely think about defectors in their daily lives and that only seven percent personally know a defector. This pattern suggests that weak or underdeveloped bridging ties between the two groups may help account for limited integration.

Another view points to unfamiliarity with democracy resulting from authoritarian socialization. From this perspective, defectors carry norms formed under North Korea’s political institutions that impede adaptation to democratic life in the South. Studies find that early socialization through schooling or party membership correlates with anti-democratic attitudes (Oh and Park, 2019) and support for strong, unconstrained leadership (Ishiyama and Kim, 2024). Similarly, Choi et al. (2024) show that ideological indoctrination negatively affects defectors’ economic integration. Some research highlights exceptions: Hur (2018, 2019) argue that co-national identification with South Koreans extends a “communal script of duty to the nation,” encouraging defectors to view democratic acts such as voting as civic obligations. But the broader evidence indicates that decades of political socialization under North Korea leave many defectors unfamiliar with democratic norms and hesitant to participate politically after resettlement.

4 Norms versus Attitudes

Norms and attitudes are important to concepts in the migrant-integration literature.

Norms are informal behavioral rules based on shared expectations about what others

¹⁶In contrast, Choi, Lee and Lee (2020) find that defectors behave more altruistically than South Koreans in dictator games—even when allocations are based on individually earned income—suggesting prosocial orientations that do not map neatly onto a simple social-capital-deficit narrative.

will do and about what people believe others think they ought to do (Helmke and Rath, 2025). Norms involve preferences that are conditional on mutual expectations and inherently social (Bicchieri, 2016). Democratic *attitudes* are a person’s innate ranking of policy or regime options without regard to others’ perceived expectations or behavior. Both democratic attitudes and democratic norms uphold democratic principles such as voting, voluntary public deliberation and tolerance. People who engage in these behaviors unconditionally and without regard to what society requires because they enjoy them or obtain utility from doing them are motivated by democratic attitudes. The defining feature of democratic norms, like all norms, by contrast, is their conditionality: individuals comply only if (1) they expect others to comply and (2) they believe others expect them to comply.

The difference between democratic norms and democratic attitudes is important for measurement. Previous studies on migrant integration often rely on survey-based indicators like voter registration and turnout rates (Bratsberg et al., 2021; Ferwerda and Finseraas, 2025) and composite indices that incorporate formal and informal political participation, political efficacy, and factual political knowledge (Berger, Galonska and Koopmans, 2004; Jacobs and Tillie, 2004; Harder et al., 2018).¹⁷ These measures are essential to any study of political and social integration, but they cannot distinguish between norm-complaint surface-level behavior and democratic attitudes, the deeper internalized commitments that sustain stable democratic citizenship.

This distinction between norms and attitudes is especially important in understanding the democratic integration of migrants from dictatorships. Having undergone political socialization under autocratic rule, such individuals may formally participate in democratic processes—for example by voting when social norms require it—without

¹⁷Harder et al. (2018) define integration as the degree to which immigrants have the knowledge and capacity to build a successful, fulfilling life in the host society. Knowledge entails aspects such as fluency in the national language and ability to navigate the host country’s labor market, political system, and social institutions. Capacity refers to the mental, social, and economic resources immigrants have to invest in their futures.

fully embracing and internalizing underlying democratic attitudes. This implication for measurement is particularly acute with our sample, defectors from North Korea where voter turnout is routinely 99 percent (Choi, 2023) and political rallies are large and well-coordinated (Kim, 2023). Practices like voluntary engagement in public deliberation, solidarity with vulnerable minorities, and respect for political pluralism require a deeper commitment to democratic ideals and may actually require occasionally bucking social norms and dissenting rather than complying with them. These internalized democratic attitudes or preferences, rather than observable compliance with widely held norms, are essential for meaningful and durable integration into democratic society. As we describe on the next section, we rely on a combination of survey responses and behavioral observation to distinguish attitudes from behavior that may be driven mainly to comply with norms.

5 Hypotheses and Measurement

We define a bit of notation to clarify the discussion of our understanding of various claims about the democratic integration of migrants from autocratic regimes and about our measurement of key concepts. We assume a person i will participate in a democratic process (*e.g.* vote, attend a rally, publicly discuss policy) if

$$U_i = v_i + s(n_i) - c_i > 0$$

where:

- $v_i \in \mathbb{R}$ is i 's net intrinsic utility from engaging in political action for their preferred cause. As such it is determined by i 's *democratic attitudes*.
- $s(n_i) \in \mathbb{R}$ is the social benefits that i obtains and the social costs that are avoided for complying with social norms. $s(n_i)$ is assumed to be increasing in the size of i 's social network, n_i . It is determined by *democratic norms*.

- e_i is random variable with cumulative distribution function $F(e)$.

Person i will participate politically if $U_i = v_i + s(n_i) > e_i$ which can be estimated in various ways depending on assumptions about the distribution of e_i .

Two further remarks on v_i : Political participation may be costly (time lost from waiting in line to vote, the stress one feels from expressing one's political views publicly). As stated above v_i is the net utility for participation after subtracting these costs and v_i may be less than zero. Second, we can safely assume that none of the people in our sample will have an appreciable effect on the adoption of policy so we dispense with concerns about participating instrumentally to effect the policy outcome.

From our reading of the literature each of these parameters (with the exception of e_i obviously) are hypothesized to differ between NKs and SKs in ways that can explain NKs lesser democratic integration. We discussed the difference between norms and attitudes above. The parameter v_i captures i 's democratic *attitudes*. Because SKs were well-socialized into a vibrant democratic polity they are hypothesized to gain greater intrinsic utility from democratic institutions and political participation than NKs are who were actively punished for expressing themselves politically in ways that were not encouraged by the state. By this hypothesis, a preference for political participation was nurtured in SKs but subdued in NKs. For the same reason SKs are assumed to be more interested in and better informed about politics and policy than their NK counterparts. On average then v_i is hypothesized to be greater for SKs than NKs. Similarly due to their socialization from a young age in a democratic country SKs should bear fewer costs of participation than NKs. It may be easier for them to gather the information necessary to participate. They will be more accustomed to voting their conscience and engaging in deliberative discussion and therefore find those activities less stressful. NKs, by contrast, learned from their youth that such activities were shameful and dangerous. This indoctrination may be deeply rooted in the two populations, thus v_i should be lower on average for NKs than SKs.

Putnam (2000b) defined social capital as social norms and the social networks that support them. The argument that social capital fosters democratic political participation and that a shortage of social capital erodes it is most famously associated with Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti (1993). Others have corroborated the claim empirically since that time (Krishna, 2002; Nyqvist et al., 2024). However, the claim was met with skepticism almost immediately. Studies showed that the link was weak or non-existent (Booth and Bayer Richard, 1998; Teney and Hanquinet, 2012) or that social capital might even be pernicious to democratic political participation (Berman, 1997; Portes, 1998; Satyanath, Voigtländer and Voth, 2017).¹⁸ Some sources, mentioned above, claim that NKs’ social networks are woefully sparse. If Putnam’s hypothesis is correct this relative lack of social capital may explain NKs non-compliance with social norms, including democratic norms.

For all of these reasons NKs are hypothesized to have a relatively low value of U_i like $\underline{\underline{U}}$ and SKs are hypothesized to have a relatively high like \underline{U} shown in Figure 3. A person with $U_i = \underline{\underline{U}}$ will participate only if they draw an e_i in the dark gray region, while a person with $U_i = \underline{U}$ will participate with a draw of e_i in the union of the dark gray and light gray regions. The former occurs with probability \underline{F} while the latter occurs with probability $\underline{F} > \underline{\underline{F}}$.

The forgoing discussion generates hypotheses that we tested with surveys and behavioral observation in the lab in Seoul South Korea in the summer of 2024. We summarize the measures that we use for each of the concepts in Table 1

The first set of hypotheses—indeed the ones that motivated this research—is the concern that NKs are not fully integrating into South Korean society and that their political participation is less than that of the SK counterparts.

Hypothesis 1 *NKs participate less in political activities than SKs.*

For our first measure of willingness to participate we asked subjects if they would

¹⁸While our results do not go as far as that last claim they do raise questions about the strength of the link between social capital and political participation, at least for NKs.

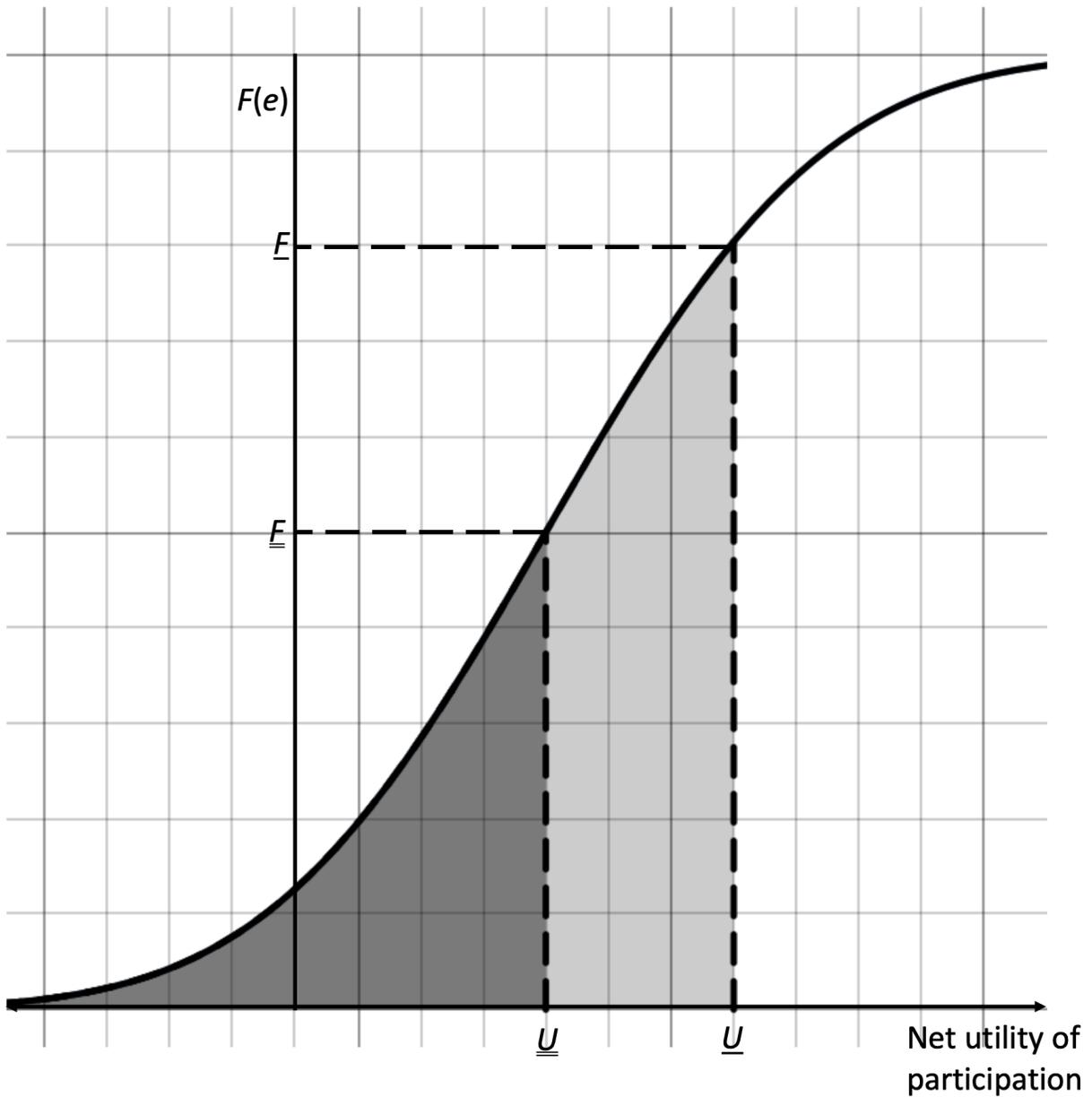


Figure 3: $F(e)$ is a hypothetical cumulative distribution function for the error term e_i . NKs are hypothesized to have a relatively low value of U_i like \underline{U} and SKs are hypothesized to have a relatively high like \bar{U} . A person with $U_i = \underline{U}$ will participate only if they draw an e_i in the dark gray region, while a person with $U_i = \bar{U}$ will participate with a draw of e_i in the union of the dark gray and light gray regions. The former occurs with probability \underline{F} while the latter occurs with probability $\bar{F} > \underline{F}$.

Table 1: Summary of measures of concepts

Concept	Measures
Total utility from participation, U_i	Survey: Self-reported voting in elections Survey: Other political participation Survey: frequency of political discussion Lab: Signing petition Lab: Public deliberation
Social capital, $s(n_i)$	Survey: prosocial behavior Survey: network size from survey Lab: prosocial behavior in lab
Democratic attitudes, v_i	Survey: Political interest Survey: Anti-democratic opinions Survey: Political knowledge Lab: Implicit Association Test (IAT)

sign a petition criticizing China’s policy of forced repatriation of North Korean refugees living in China. To examine how social costs shape political participation among North Korean defectors and native South Koreans, we designed a petition experiment concerning the forced repatriation of North Korean escapees from China. Building on insights from [Paler, Marshall and Atallah \(2018\)](#), who demonstrate that the visibility of political action imposes substantial social costs that deter participation, we implemented a public-only condition in which participants were explicitly informed that their signatures might be publicly disclosed online. This design choice was deliberate: our goal was not merely to measure abstract willingness to support a cause, but to assess whether individuals would accept potential social exposure and stigma to express a politically sensitive opinion. A non-public (private) condition would have diminished the social cost component of participation, making it difficult to identify meaningful variation in political engagement across groups. Among North Korean defectors in South Korea, past experiences under authoritarian rule—and continued exposure to informal surveillance within the defector community—may continue to shape how in-

dividuals perceive the risks of political participation. Thus, our design offers a more stringent and behaviorally valid measure of costly political participation, capturing not just preferences but also willingness to act under potential social pressure. The variable is coded one if they signed the petition and zero if they did not.

We also collected several survey based measures of political participation. We asked subjects if they voted in the last national and last local elections, coded one if they did and zero if they did not. We also asked subjects a series of nine questions about other forms of political participation.¹⁹ Again we coded these one if they answered yes and zero if they answered no.

Hypothesis 2 *NKs participate in political discussions less than SKs do.*

In addition to those three variables, we collected measures on a specific form of political participation—public discussion of policy preferences. We anticipate that NKs, who were taught from an early age to keep their personal political opinions to themselves, should be less willing to engage in political discussions. We asked a survey question about how often they participated in a political discussion with other Koreans over the past year using a five point scale from one (never) to 5 (almost every day).

To address concerns about possible self-reporting bias, we also conducted two discussions under observation in the lab: one about the South Korean government’s use of personal data for pandemic control without explicit individual consent, and another about the legality of sending propaganda balloons containing anti-regime messages into North Korea. The first discussion focused on government-enforced COVID-19 measures, specifically the tension between protecting individual privacy and enabling effective public health surveillance. The second explored whether the right to free

¹⁹These were: attended a rally or campaign event related to elections, joined a political party, donated money to a political party or candidate, persuaded others to vote for a specific party or candidate during an election, volunteered for a party or candidate during an election, joined an online community related to politics or current affairs, posted or commented on a political or current affairs topic on an online forum, posted online in support of or opposition to a party or candidate during an election, participated in a protest or demonstration, either online or offline.

expression—exemplified by activists sending leaflets across the border—should be curtailed to avoid heightening inter-Korean tensions and anxiety among residents near the DMZ. Both discussions were designed to foreground value trade-offs central to democratic politics.

Prior to each discussion, we showed participants a short news clip introducing the topic and presenting both supporting and opposing views. This was intended to enhance participants’ understanding of the issue and ensure a minimum level of shared information before the deliberation began. We then opened the floor to a discussion among the subjects about their thoughts on the two policies.²⁰ We recorded the number of times each subject spoke in the discussion. This outcome variable was coded using a two-step process to ensure accuracy. First, during the sessions, research assistants were assigned to monitor specific participants and tally their speech acts in real time. Second, after the sessions, these tallies were verified using audio recordings to cross-check and confirm the number of utterances for each participant. This dual-coding procedure provides a reliable measure of variation in verbal political engagement.

None of measures provide data on the individual parameters v_i and $s(n_i)$. By hypothesis people participate when $v_i + s(n_i) \geq e_i$ so we only retrieve a reduced form. To get more fine-tuned measures of v_i and $s(n_i)$, we gathered other measures. First we gathered measures about their social networks and compliance with non-political social norms. These hypotheses claim that NKs lack of political participation is a symptom, and perhaps an effect, of a broader lack of social integration and social capital, which brings us to the hypotheses about social capital.

Hypothesis 3 *NKs will be less compliant with social norms than SKs.*

Hypothesis 4 *NKs will have smaller social networks than SKs.*

²⁰To minimize demand effects and ensure that speech acts reflected genuine willingness to engage in political discussion, the discussion moderator emphasized three times—immediately before, at the outset of, and midway through the discussion—that participation was entirely voluntary.

Using Putnam’s (2000a) well-known definition of social capital as “... social networks and the norms ... that arise from them” we measured social capital in three ways. First we used behavioral games in the lab to measure compliance with the the social norms of altruism, trust and willingness to contribute to the public good. Second we measured compliance with social norms with the subjects’ own self-reported public good activities by asking about their participation in a variety of civic activities.²¹ Third we measured the subjects’ social networking with their self-reported membership in a variety of social organizations.²²

We also used three behavioral activities in the lab to measure compliance with social norms, each designed to capture a distinct component: the dictator game (altruism), the trust game (trust), and the public goods game (cooperation). While these norms may be supportive of democracy we do not regard them as democratic norms themselves. These norms are required for any well-functioning society and exist even in non-democracies. Thus we treat these more general pro-social norms separately from democratic norms.

All games were administered individually using laptop computers equipped with privacy screens to ensure decision privacy. One of the authors provided detailed instructions before each session and explicitly clarified whether the upcoming game would be played with an in-group or out-group member. To ensure participants understood the group identity of their game partner in each session, a manipulation check was embedded in the computer interface prior to each game. Participants were also given

²¹These activities are: joined a civic organization to solve public issues, collective action with other citizens to address public problems, participated in a public hearing or meeting hosted by a government agency, visited a government office to address a public issue and contacted a government agency or official via letter, email, or phone to address a public issue.

²²We developed this list after focus group discussions to determine what are the most important types of groups in South Korean society. The types of groups we asked about were: civic organization, labor union, political organization, neighborhood association, volunteer club, religious group, alumni association, hobbies/sports group and occupational organization. We also asked about membership in a North Korean defector organization but do not include it in the estimates above because it is perfectly collinear with our main independent variables, defector status. About 39 percent of the defectors are members of such an organization.

a trial round to familiarize themselves with the rules and payment structure. Local research assistants remained nearby to answer procedural questions if needed, while safeguarding participant privacy.

To distinguish between bonding and bridging social capital, each participant was sequentially matched with both an in-group and an out-group member across games. For example, North Korean defectors played one game with another defector (in-group) and another game with a native South Korean (out-group). In all games, participants were endowed with KRW 2,000 and asked to make allocation or contribution decisions based on the specific rules of each game.

Once we have addressed NKs stock of social capital and compliance with social norms we will turn to a second explanation for their lack of political participation—their attitude toward democracy, which we discussed above as a net intrinsic utility for democratic participation, v_i .

Hypothesis 5 *NKs will express less political interest than SKs do.*

Assuming people spends less effort learning about things they are less interested leads to:

Hypothesis 6 *NKs will possess less political knowledge than SKs do.*

Assuming people feel less efficacious about things they know less about leads to:

Hypothesis 7 *NKs will express less political efficacy than SKs do.*

To test hypothesis 5 we use a survey question that asks respondents how interested they are in politics. This variable takes on values from one (no interest) to five (very interested). For hypothesis 6 we tested respondents' political knowledge with a battery of nine questions.²³ We measured feelings of political efficacy for hypothesis 7 with

²³The questions cover a range of topics, including: the name of the current president, the president's party affiliation, the length of the presidential term, how the legislature is elected, the length of the legislative term, the minimum age requirement for presidential candidacy, the total number of seats in the National Assembly, the distribution of party seats in the legislature, and the name of the main opposition party leader.

respondents' level of agreement with four statements, each on a four-point scale from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree).²⁴

Hypothesis 8 *NKs will express more implicit bias in favor of North Korea's political institutions than SKs do.*

Hypothesis 9 *NKs will express more anti-democratic attitudes than SKs do.*

We collected two more direct variables of subjects' attitudes toward a democratic political system with an Implicit Association Test (IAT) (Schimmack, 2021) and anti-democratic responses to a series of questions about the features of autocracy and democracy. IATs are a reaction-time-based measure designed to capture automatic associations between concepts and evaluative attributes. We asked participants to rapidly categorize stimuli composed of political symbols—such as the South Korean national flag, a ballot box icon, the North Korean flag, and the emblem of the Workers' Party of Korea—and valenced adjectives. The evaluative dimension included positively valenced words (“smart,” “trustworthy,” “competent,” “honorable”) and negatively valenced words (“foolish,” “untrustworthy,” “incompetent,” “shameful”). The minute reaction time differences caused by tension between the image label and their implicit biases are used to measure implicit bias. The more negative a subject's score the more implicit bias they showed for North Korea.

The IAT consisted of blocks pairing political symbols with evaluative terms, either in a congruent (South Korea + positive, North Korea + negative) or incongruent (South Korea + negative, North Korea + positive) fashion. We calculated a standardized D-score for each participant, which ranges from -2 to $+2$. Higher positive values indicate a stronger implicit preference for South Korea's political institutions (i.e., greater negativity toward North Korea), while more negative values reflect a stronger

²⁴The statements are: I believe I could perform well in a public office, just like most other people; I believe I have enough ability to participate in politics; I believe I understand important political issues and current policies well; I believe I can express my opinion about what the government should do; and Citizens can change wrong policies if they join forces.

implicit preference for North Korea’s political institutions (i.e., greater negativity toward South Korea). This measure allows us to assess unconscious political biases in a way that complements subjects’ explicit attitudes. To crosscheck the IAT measure we also asked subjects a set of eight questions about their support for democracy. Six of the questions expressed an anti-democratic sentiment and two expressed a pro-democratic sentiment, which we reverse coded prior to estimation.²⁵

We collected all of the data for this study in Seoul in the summer of 2024 with the aid of staff from a well-known non-governmental service organization for North Korean defectors. To recruit North Korean defector participants, we employed a multi-pronged outreach strategy targeting established defector networks and support organizations. Specifically, we disseminated study invitations through (1) the Association of North Korean Defectors, a nationwide voluntary organization; (2) non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that assist defectors with resettlement and welfare; and (3) small-scale community gatherings and online forums maintained by defectors. From these channels, we constructed a sample designed to approximate the age and gender distribution of the broader defector population residing in South Korea.

For the South Korean comparison group, we recruited participants through an online survey platform using quota sampling to mirror the national population distribution in terms of age and gender. We did not attempt to balance the two groups on socio-economic characteristics. Balancing on those characteristics would obscure meaningful structural differences between North Korean defectors and native South Koreans—differences that are likely to condition the ways in which post-migration socio-economic environments affect political attitudes and behaviors. The survey instrument and the protocols for the behavioral activities are available in the online

²⁵The statements were: the country needs a strong leader who does not have to be elected or controlled by the legislature; experts, not the government, should decide what they think is best for the country; the country should be governed by the military, the country should be governed through a democratic political system; democracy does not function well in promoting economic development; democracy is inefficient because there are too many conflicting opinions; democracy is not effective at maintaining national security; democracy has many problems, but it is still better than other political systems.

appendix.

6 Findings

In all of the tables that follow we present three estimates of interest. The first which we call $\hat{\beta}_1$, is the estimated coefficient on the variable that equals one for NKs and zero for SKs. Second, is the estimated coefficient $\hat{\beta}_2$ which is an interactive term between the NK indicator and the number of years the NK had spent in South Korea at the time of our survey. We expect difference with SKs to be greatest for NKs who have not lived in South Korea very long and as time passes for NKs increasingly to resemble the attitudes and behaviors of SKs. Third we are interested in some overall measure of NK's different behaviors and attitudes. To that end we present an estimate of the linear combination of $\hat{\beta}_1 + 12 \times \hat{\beta}_2$. Twelve is the median number of years NKs in our sample had spent in South Korea, so this linear combination provides a kind of overall average estimated difference between NKs and SKs.

In several cases we used multiple measures for the underlying latent variables of interest. In those cases, we estimated average effects using all measures of each latent variable, as recommended by [Kling, Liebman and Katz \(2007\)](#) and [Clingsmith, Khwaja and Kremer \(2009\)](#). We label the head of columns with these estimates “Avg. Effects” to distinguish these estimates from regular regressions. Furthermore, as mentioned above, we used both behavioral and survey measures for this research. We use “Lab” to label the head of columns where the estimates are based on behavioral observation in the lab and “Survey” when the estimates are based on survey responses. We estimate models of dichotomous dependent variables with the linear probability model. All models include sex, age, personal income household income, marital status, education, religion and employment status as controls

We tested hypothesis 1 by examining NKs political participation compared to SKs. Consistent with hypothesis 1:

Finding 1 *NKs engage in less democratic participation than SKs.*

Table 2 contains the relevant estimates. We use four different measures of political participation, one by observed behavior in the lab and the other three with self-reported behavior in our survey.

As shown in the first column of Table 2, we found no significant differences in linear probability estimates of NK's and SK's willingness to sign the petition in the lab, contrary to our expectations. North Korean defectors were only about three percent less likely to sign the petition on average and this difference dissipated by about one-half of a percent per year the defector lived in South Korea as shown by the estimate $\hat{\beta}_2$ in table 2. All of these estimates suffer from high p -values.

Our first two survey measures of political participation use responses to questions about whether the subjects claimed to have voted in the latest national and local elections. These variables are coded one if they did and zero if they did not vote. Both coefficients $\hat{\beta}_1$ are negative indicating that North Korean defectors are less likely to self-report voting in either election. For the national election the estimate is significant at the two-percent level and for the local election is significant at the 6.7-percent level. These effects dissipate over time for national elections but not for local elections. North Korean defectors appear to be less likely to vote in local elections no matter how long they have been in South Korea. Even after twelve years NKs are almost 18 percentage points less likely to vote in a local elections although they do appear to vote similarly to SKs in national elections.

The fourth column of Table 2 presents average effects estimates based on subjects' answers to nine questions about their political participation. For each of these activities they were given a score of one if they reported participating and zero otherwise creating nine different dichotomous measures of political participation. Across these nine indicators, defectors were about 0.12 standard deviations less likely to self-report participating in the activities on average, but this effect is not significantly different

Table 2: Political participation of North Korean defectors

	Lab: Signed Petition	Survey: Voted National	Survey: Voted Local	Avg. Effect	
				Survey: Political Participation	All Four Measures
DPRK ($\hat{\beta}_1$)	-0.0332 (0.775)	-0.211* (0.020)	-0.174+ (0.067)	-0.119 (0.322)	-0.220+ (0.053)
Years since arrival ($\hat{\beta}_2$)	0.00520 (0.429)	0.0156* (0.005)	-0.000265 (0.962)	0.00179 (0.811)	0.00756 (0.274)
$\hat{\beta}_1 + 12 \times \hat{\beta}_2$	0.0291 (0.682)	-0.0239 (0.550)	-0.177* (0.002)	-0.0975 (0.193)	-0.129* (0.049)
N	368	368	368	368	368
adj. R^2	-0.003	0.103	0.068		

p -values in parentheses

+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$

from zero and it dissipates slightly over time. A defector who had spent twelve years in South Korea was almost ten percent of a standard deviation less likely to participate with a p -value of 19 percent.

Finally in the fifth column we estimated the average effect across all four of these measures. NKs were about 22 percent of a standard deviation less likely to participate than native SKs and this effect is significant at the 5.3-percent level. It dissipates over time but even after twelve years NKs were almost 13 percent of a standard deviation less likely to participate in these ways than SKs were, an that is significantly different from zero at the 4.9-percent level. Overall, then, the conventional wisdom is supported by these results—NKs are less participatory in politics than SKs are. These results were particularly pronounced in (self-reported) voting.

Another important element of democratic political participation that we study is policy discussion and deliberation (Manin, 1987; Myers and Mendelberg, 2013). In Table 3 we turn to the topic of NKs participation in political discussions. We used both self-reported behavior from a survey and observed behavior in our two discussion topics in the lab. The results show notable reticence of NKs to engage in political

discussions.

Finding 2 *NKs engage in less public democratic deliberation than SKs.*

This finding supports hypothesis 2.

The first column reports coefficients from responses to the question about how often subjects participated in a political discussion with other Koreans over the past year. We used five point scale from one (never) to five (very frequently). On average North Korean defectors' responses were almost one full point on that five-point scale below their South Korean counterparts. This difference was less pronounced for defectors who had spent more time in South Korea as shown by the coefficient in the second row of the table, but even this coefficient indicates that a defector would have to spend some 30 years in South Korea before their responses would be equivalent to the average South Korean's. The linear combination in the third row shows that even a defector who had spent the median number of years in South Korea (twelve) still scored a half point less on this scale than SKs did and this difference is highly significant.

Table 3: Participation in political discussion

	Survey: Political Discussion	Lab: COVID Discussion	Lab: Balloon Discussion	Avg. Effect All Three Measures
DPRK ($\hat{\beta}_1$)	-0.963* (0.000)	-0.224+ (0.071)	-0.0157 (0.901)	-0.498* (0.003)
Years since arrival ($\hat{\beta}_2$)	0.0351* (0.013)	0.00636 (0.353)	-0.00793 (0.251)	0.0110 (0.231)
$\hat{\beta}_1 + 12 \times \hat{\beta}_2$	-0.542* (0.000)	-0.148* (0.044)	-0.111 (0.143)	-0.366* (0.000)
N	368	368	368	368
adj. R^2	0.072	0.111	0.061	

p -values in parentheses

+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$

The next two sets of estimates use our observations during the subjects' discussion in the lab. The second column in 3 present results using the data on the COVID discussion. and the third column presents results using the data from the balloon discussion. The dependent variable in these results takes on a value of one if the subject talked at all during the discussion and zero if they did not. We estimates the coefficients with a linear probability model. The results in the second column, which are significant at about the seven percent level, show that the probability that a defector would talk in these sessions was about 22 percentage points lower than it was for South Koreans. This difference was reduced for each additional year a NK spent in South Korea but even after twelve year NKs were almost 15 percentage points less likely to speak at all as shown by the linear combination in the third row. The results for the balloon discussion, listed in the third column, do not show any significant differences between the propensity for NKs and SKs to speak. The estimated difference is only about 1.6 percent for a newly arrived NK. Unlike the other estimates in this table the coefficient on the interaction term was negative, but one should not read too much into these results. The p -values are on all of the coefficients in this specification are high, so the results are statistically zero.

Finally, the fourth column present the average effect across all three of these measures. It shows that North Koreans were almost half of a standard deviation less likely to participate in a discussion (either in the lab or self-reported) than South Koreans were. This effect does not appear to change much with the North Koreans time in South Korea. As indicated in the linear combination in the last row and column of the table NKs were sill over 36 percent of a standard deviation less participatory even after being in the country for twelve years. North Koreans willingness to engage in political discussions does not seem to improve with time in South Korea. Even after a fair amount of time in South Korea NKs are finding it difficult to participate in democratic deliberation compared to their SK counterparts. Again, the conventional wisdom is supported. NKs are unwilling to engage political discussions than SKs are.

We have established that NKs are less politically engaged in SKs according to our measures of political participation. We next turn to the question of diagnosis with an eye toward developing a cure. There are two kinds of diagnoses in the literature. The first is that NKs lack social capital (have low $s(n_i)$ in our terminology. Lacking social capital—norms and the social networks that support them—NKs do not comply with democratic participatory norms, or so the argument goes.

Recall that we measure compliance with social norms of altruism, trust and contribution to the public good with three behavioral activities in the lab and with with survey questions about the subjects' participation in other public goods activities in their communities.

Finding 3 *NKs are similarly compliant with the social norms of altruism, trust and contribution to public goods as SKs.*

Thus we can reject hypothesis 3

We measured subjects' networks with survey questions about the groups they belong to. The results indicate that NKs are not significantly lacking in social capital compared to SKs.

Finding 4 *NKs are similarly sized social networks as SKs.*

This finding is inconsistent with hypothesis 4

None of the the three coefficients on the defector indicator are remotely significantly different from zero. Furthermore the coefficient on the defectors' years since arrival in South Korean show that their social capital improves with time spent in South Korea. The combined effects of these two coefficients for a defector who had spent 12 years in South Korea are presented in Table 4. The median number of years since arrival is 12. In short, even North Korean who recently defected are statistically indistinguishable from native South Korean in terms of social capital and, for the median defector belong to significantly *more* groups than our South Korean subjects.

Table 4: Social capital of North Korean defectors compared to native South Koreans

	Average Effects Estimates		
	Lab: Social Norms	Survey: Civic Particip.	Survey: Member- ships
DPRK ($\hat{\beta}_1$)	-0.0440 (0.738)	-0.108 (0.446)	0.00952 (0.926)
Years since arrival ($\hat{\beta}_2$)	0.0110 (0.125)	0.0171 ⁺ (0.058)	0.0107 ⁺ (0.082)
$\hat{\beta}_1 + 12 \times \hat{\beta}_2$	0.0879 (0.312)	0.0979 (0.308)	0.138* (0.047)
N	368	368	368
p -values in parentheses		⁺ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$	

Together, **Findings 3** and **4** indicate that NKs do not lack social capital compared to SK and suggest NKs lack of political participation may be due to other reasons.

The second possible reason for NKs relative lack of political participation is weaker innate preferences for democracy/ democratic attitudes, u_i in our terminology. We measure u_i in four distinct ways: a survey question about respondents' interest in politics, respondents' performance on a quiz to test their political knowledge, their performance on an implicit association test (IAT) to measure their innate bias for North Korea and against South Korea and respondents' answers to survey questions about the the pros and cons of democracy.

One way a lack of democratic attitudes may present is through a lack of interest in democratic politics. We turn to this explanation in first column of Table 5. The estimates show that North Korean defectors are significantly less interested in politics. The political-interest dependent variable in this regression takes on values from one (no interest) to five (very interested). The estimates suggest that a defector who just arrived will express political interest over half a point less on this five-point scale than a native South Korean. This effect dissipates over time spent in the country so at the median number of years since arrival (twelve) a defector is about 0.26 points on that

five-point scale less interested in politics than a native South Korean in our sample. To summarize:

Finding 5 *NKs have lower levels of political interest than SKs do.*

This finding supports hypothesis 5.

Citizens with weak pro-democratic attitudes would be expected to spend less of their scarce time learning about their democratic government, thus another way that lack of pro-democratic attitudes may show up is as a low level of political knowledge. We asked each subject nine questions. This variable is their number of correct responses. “Don’t know” responses were counted as incorrect. A newly arrived NK answered about one extra question incorrectly on this nine-question test. After twelve years in the country NKs still answered over one-half of a question incorrectly on average than SKs do.

Finding 6 *NKs possess less political knowledge than SKs do.*

This finding is consistent with hypothesis 6.

Table 5: Political interest, knowledge and efficacy of North Korean defectors

	Political interest	Political knowledge	Avg. Effect: Political efficacy
DPRK ($\hat{\beta}_1$)	-0.560* (0.005)	-0.986* (0.014)	0.181 (0.264)
Years since arrival ($\hat{\beta}_2$)	0.0250* (0.024)	0.0330 (0.163)	-0.0057 (0.554)
$\hat{\beta}_1 + 12 \times \hat{\beta}_2$	-0.260* (0.030)	-0.589* (0.004)	0.113 (0.241)
N	368	368	368
adj. R^2	0.046	0.110	

p -values in parentheses + $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$

Surprisingly, and contrary to our expectations, NKs do not feel particularly inefficacious. Coefficients on average effects can be interpreted as a percentage of a standard deviation of the dependent variables. The coefficients on both the zero-one DPRK variable and its interaction with years in South Korean are substantively small and they are statistically close to zero. This result is somewhat unexpected given NKs' relative lack of political knowledge but some of it may be explained by their lack of political interest—it is possible that they do not feel inefficacious about activities in which they have little interest. An alternative explanation is NKs frame of comparison. Even though they may have less political efficacy compared to SKs they have a great deal more political efficacy than they did in North Korea.²⁶ These interpretations are speculative, and we must reject Hypothesis 7:

Finding 7 *NKs have express similar levels of political efficacy as SKs.*

Finally we turn to more direct measures of democratic attitudes: the IAT and survey of anti-democratic opinions. The densities of the IAT scores for North Korean defectors and native South Koreans are shown in Figure 4. One can observe from visual inspection that the density for native South Koreans is more negatively skewed than is the one for defectors. The results in the first column of table 6 corroborate this first impression. North Korean defectors exhibited a significant implicit bias against South Korea. Their score was 0.552 lower, a very large difference comprising about one third of the total span of the measure. This bias dissipates over time as shown by the estimate $\hat{\beta}_2$ in the second row but it apparently does so quite slowly. Even after 12 years defectors still show a significant implicit bias of almost 0.4 in favor of North Korea. In summary:

²⁶This explanation is consistent with previous studies showing that migration experience increases individuals' knowledge and confidence in dealing with complex situations (Pantoja and Segura, 2003; Williams and Baláz, 2005). See also Johns, Langer and Peters (2022), who show that migrants can act as agents of transnational justice.

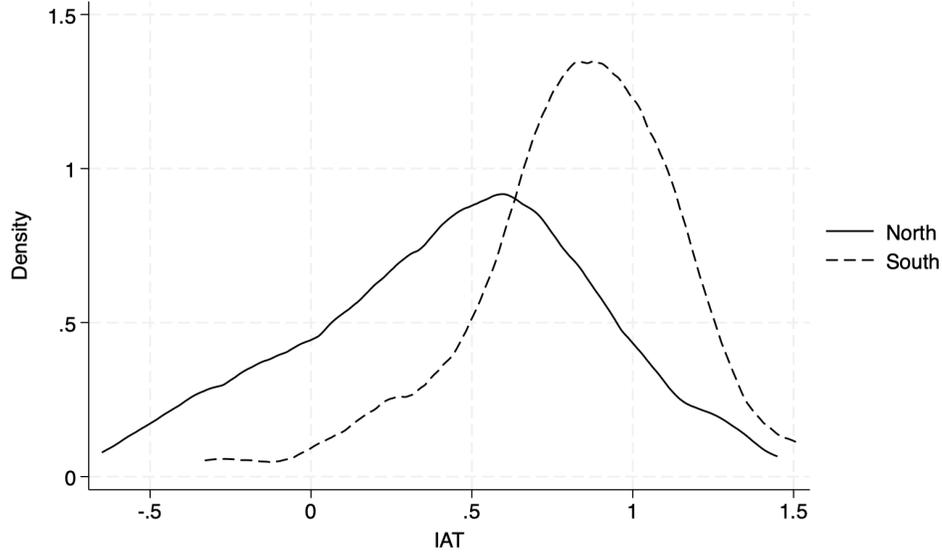


Figure 4: Kernel density plots of IAT scores for North and South Koreans

Finding 8 *NKs have significantly less implicit bias in favor of South Korea than SKs do.*

This finding supports hypothesis 8.

Table 6: Implicit bias for North Korea and anti-democratic opinions

	Lab: IAT	Avg. Effect Survey: Anti-democratic Opinions
DPRK ($\hat{\beta}_1$)	-0.552* (0.000)	0.469* (0.002)
Years since arrival ($\hat{\beta}_2$)	0.0130* (0.019)	-0.0151+ (0.066)
$\hat{\beta}_1 + 12 \times \hat{\beta}_2$	-0.395* (0.000)	0.288* (0.001)
N	368	368
adj. R^2	0.188	

p -values in parentheses, + $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$

For the estimates in the second column of Table 6 we used subjects' responses to the eight questions about their level of agreement with statements about democracy from one (strongly agree) to four (strongly disagree). The responses were coded so that anti-democratic responses were always higher. The results indicate that NKs' agreement with anti-democratic statements (or disagreement with pro-democratic ones) were almost fifty percent of a standard deviation higher than that of native South Koreans. This effect is substantively large, at the high end of a "medium" effect by Coen's d and it is highly significant statistically. As in other estimates in this study these differences dissipated over the course of the defectors' time in South Korea but as shown by linear combination in the final row even after twelve years defectors agreed with anti-democratic sentiments almost 29 percentage points of a standard deviation more than SKs did and this difference has a p -value of 0.001. These results clearly indicate:

Finding 9 *NKs have greater implicit bias toward North Korea than SKs do.*

This finding is consistent with hypothesis 9.

7 Semi-structured interviews

Our empirical results show that North Korean defectors do not lack social capital: they display prosocial norms, trust, and cooperative behavior comparable to those of native South Koreans. Instead, the central barrier to their democratic integration lies in limited familiarity with democratic attitudes, as reflected in their low political interest, weak political knowledge, and stronger anti-democratic orientations. Building on this pattern, we conducted semi-structured interviews to understand why many defectors remained silent during the discussion games, which were designed to measure a core democratic attitude and behavior: deliberative participation. Deliberative participation—expressing and sharing one's political views in public—is a foundational democratic competency that supports meaningful civic engagement. The interviews

therefore allow us to identify the factors that underpin defectors’ reluctance to speak in these democratic discussion settings.

Age group	Silent participants	Active participants
20-39 years	N=3 (A1, A2, A3)	N=2 (B1, B2)
40-59 years	N=3 (A4, A5, A6)	N=2 (B3, B4)
60 years +	N=3 (A7, A8, A9)	N=2 (B5, B6)
Total	N=9	N=6

Table 7: Summary of interviewees by age group and discussion participation: Interviewees were selected on the basis of their age group and their level of participation during the discussions. Silent participants did not speak at any point, whereas active participants contributed at least twice during the discussion.

Silent participants frequently cited their experiences in North Korea as a primary reason for their reluctance to speak during the discussions. Interviewees (A1, A2, A7) referred to Saenghwal Chonghwa (group criticism) sessions, where individuals were required to confess personal failings or denounce others, followed by collective criticism. For instance, one interviewee (A2) explained: “The ‘discussions’ we had in North Korea were completely different. If someone said something, you had to criticize it. Even if you didn’t want to speak, they’d call your name, drag you up front, and make you insult your friends. There was always a ‘correct’ answer, and if you didn’t say it, you’d be criticized no matter what. There was no need for my own opinion, and if I said something different, I’d get pulled into ideological ‘re-education.’ Those experiences made me feel an almost physical fear of speaking up.”

Other interviewees also mentioned ideological indoctrination (A3, A7) and surveillance (A5, A6, A7) as reasons for their reluctance to actively engage in group discussion. One interviewee (A3) emphasized that years of ideological indoctrination in North Korea impaired individuals’ capacity for critical thinking and habituated them to passive compliance, ultimately discouraging voluntary participation in open discussion: “After undergoing years of indoctrination, people don’t really think critically about their soci-

ety. Instead, they're used to simply following whatever is dictated to them, so they're not accustomed to voluntarily expressing personal opinions." Other interviewees (A5, A6, A7) cited past and ongoing surveillance by the North Korean regime as a reason for their reluctance to speak in public settings.

However, a more fundamental issue is that not only do many defectors hold negative perceptions of discussion itself, but there appears to be little to no normative foundation for democratic deliberation and public discourse within the defector community. Silent participants commonly believe that discussion in a democracy is symbolic, performative, and a source of conflict (A1 to A9). Defectors frequently describe discussion using terms like "fights" or "conflicts" and exhibit little respect for pluralism or tolerance of divergent viewpoints. As one participant (A5) explained, "I feel particularly uneasy when I hear views that don't match mine. I believe that everyone from North Korea should hate North Korea, so when I encounter people who don't feel that way, I can't understand them and feel uncomfortable hearing those opinions." Another participant (A6) remarked, "I don't think debates can really change someone else's opinion. Instead, people just keep pushing their own thoughts, and you never know where it's going to end—it feels like it has to be cut off at some point... Different views don't really change." These statements reflect a broader belief that discussion rarely leads to meaningful change and reveal a lack of normative commitment to pluralism or democratic tolerance in deliberation.

Critical evidence for the absence of deliberative norms among North Korean defectors emerges from participants' reflections on the prospect of engaging in discussion with South Koreans. When asked whether they would be more or less likely to participate actively in a discussion with South Koreans rather than with fellow defectors, all but one interviewee (A8) stated that they would be more willing to do so. Participants commonly justified their answers by emphasizing what they perceived as South Koreans' democratic education, civic competence, and ability to engage in reasoned debate. This perception reflects a broader absence of shared deliberative norms that support

mutual respect, open dialogue, and collective reasoning among defectors themselves.

Notably, multiple interviewees echoed a common perception that South Koreans are better equipped for discussion than fellow defectors. This view reinforces the earlier finding that many defectors see themselves as lacking the deliberative norms and civic competencies necessary for meaningful engagement. One interviewee (A1) explained, “South Koreans naturally engage in conversations and listen well. They’ve also had many opportunities to present their views and are familiar with these kinds of discussions, so I think they have a sense of leadership. If South Koreans lead and guide the discussions, I think I could participate more comfortably than when only defectors are having discussions.” Another interviewee (A2) noted, “South Koreans already have the basic groundwork for doing discussions — they’ve learned a lot and tend to listen to whatever someone says, so conversations go smoothly. But North Koreans aren’t like that — if they don’t agree with what you’re saying, they immediately criticize, and when they talk, they just state their opinions without listening to the other side.”

In fact, although active participants (B1 to B6) expressed generally positive views on discussion and demonstrated some internalization of democratic deliberation norms, they also indicated that they would be more likely to participate actively in discussions with native SKs than with fellow defectors. The NKs we interviewed reasoned that SKs, having grown up under democratic institutions, are more adept at respectful and constructive dialogue than defectors, who remain shaped by more rigid and confrontational discussion norms. One interviewee (B2) noted, “South Koreans, even when their opinions are different, at least try to listen to what others have to say. Maybe this is because South Koreans receive democratic education from a young age, so they’re capable of having their own thoughts and also of listening to others’ views.” Another interviewee (B3) contrasted this with defectors, explaining, “Defectors have a very rigid way of thinking. On the other hand, South Koreans grew up with democracy and have experienced it, so they tend to respect ‘diversity.’ But defectors are often used to a very critical mindset, always pointing out faults or criticizing, and they struggle to

accept diversity.”

The interview results indicate that democratic deliberation–related attitudes and behaviors have not been internalized within the defector community, largely due to the enduring effects of authoritarian socialization. Years of ideological indoctrination, compulsory “group criticism” sessions, and pervasive surveillance conditioned defectors to associate political expression with risk and disagreement with deviance, fostering avoidance and rigid conformity rather than voluntary expression, reciprocal discussion, or tolerance for divergent views. As a consequence, defectors continue to rely on pre-defection political interaction norms—viewing discussion as conflictual, performative, or futile and perceiving themselves as less competent than South Koreans in democratic dialogue—leaving them without the attitudinal foundations or behavioral repertoires required for intragroup deliberation, collective interest articulation, and meaningful democratic integration.

8 Conclusion

We have presented a comparison of political participation of 189 North Korean defectors (NKs) compared to 179 native South Koreans (SKs). NKs participate significantly less in democratic politics than SKs do.

While we obviously cannot experimentally control subjects’ stocks of social capital, it would be hard to explain NKs’ relative dearth of political participation with a shortage of social capital defined as pro-social norms and the social networks that support them. NKs comply with civic norms like contributing to public goods, trust and altruism similarly to SKs and they are as socially networked, by our measures, as SKs are. While we do not know if NKs political participation would have been even lower had they not possessed the level of social capital that they did, these results at least raise questions about the famously hypothesized link (Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti, 1993) between social capital and political participation as a possible explanation for

NKs lack of democratic political integration.

Instead NKs lack democratic political attitudes, which we measured through both survey questions and behavioral laboratory measurements. They are neither interested in nor informed about politics to the same extent as SK, and they express greater agreement with anti-democratic statements in survey. An implicit association test revealed a significant bias in favor of North Korea and against South Korea, even many years after their defection. While fostering democratic norms among the North Korean defector community may help improve their democratic participation, those norms will have to work harder than they do for their South Korean counterparts in order to overcome the enduring ambivalence to politics instilled by their upbringing in North Korea.

Although our analysis examines only those defectors who successfully resettled in South Korea, they represent a politically selected subset of the North Korean population—individuals who left primarily to escape repression and threats to personal safety. Such migrants might reasonably be expected to show greater openness to political engagement than individuals who remain in North Korea, making their limited democratic participation especially noteworthy. Ongoing follow-up research comparing defectors with those who remain inside North Korea will further clarify how political selection shapes democratic integration. For the present study, however, the patterns we document already illustrate how strongly authoritarian socialization can continue to influence democratic attitudes and behavior long after resettlement.

One is reminded of the words of the Soviet poet, musician and reform activist Bulat Okudzhava who remarked in 1989

During the past 70 years, a new man has been created who is obedient and easily frightened. What has been created over decades cannot be undone in a day (quoted in Isaacson 1989).

It would seem that there is some truth to this statement even for the dauntless North

Korean defectors in our sample.

Funding statement

This research was funded by the UniKorea Foundation and by a faculty research account provided by New York University.

Competing Interests Declaration

The authors declare that they have no known competing interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Data availability statement

Data and replication code are available on the Harvard Dataverse <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/XXXXXXXX>

References

- Alesina, Alberto and Nicola Fuchs-Schündeln. 2007. “Good-bye Lenin (or not?): The effect of communism on people’s preferences.” *American Economic Review* 97(4):1507–1528.
- Barreto, César, Paul Berbée, Katia Gallegos Torres Martin Lange and Katrin Sommerfeld. 2022. “The Civic Engagement and Social Integration of Refugees in Germany.” *Nonprofit Policy Forum* 13(2):161–74.
URL: <https://www.degruyterbrill.com/document/doi/10.1515/npf-2022-0015/html>
- BBC Monitoring. 2019. “Crossing Divides: Two Koreas divided by a fractured language.” *BBC* .
URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-47440041>
- Berger, Maria, Christian Galonska and Ruud Koopmans. 2004. “Political integration by a detour? Ethnic communities and social capital of migrants in Berlin.” *Journal of ethnic and Migration Studies* 30(3):491–507.
- Berman, Sherri. 1997. “Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic.” *World Politics* 49(3):401–29.
- Bernhard, Michael and Ekrem Karakoç. 2007. “Civil society and the legacies of dictatorship.” *World Politics* 59(4):539–567.
- Betts, Alexander. 2013. *Survival migration: Failed governance and the crisis of displacement*. Cornell University Press.
- Bicchieri, Cristina. 2016. *Norms in the wild: How to diagnose, measure, and change social norms*. Oxford University Press.
- Bidet, Eric. 2009. “Social Capital and Work Integrtion on Migrants: The Case of North Korean Defectors in South Korea.” *Asian Perspective* 31(2):151–79.

- Bilodeau, Antoine. 2008. "Immigrants' Voice through Protest Politics in Canada and Australia: Assessing the Impact of Pre-Migration Political Repression." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 34(6):975–1002.
URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830802211281>
- Bilodeau, Antoine, Ian McAllister and Mebs Kanji. 2010. "Adaptation to Democracy among Immigrants in Australia." *International Political Science Review* 31(1):141–65.
URL: <https://australianelectionstudy.org/wp-content/uploads/Bilodeau-McAllister-Adaptation-to-Democracy-2010.pdf>
- Black, Jerome H, Richard G Niemi and G Bingham Powell. 1987. "Age, resistance, and political learning in a new environment: The case of Canadian immigrants." *Comparative Politics* 20(1):73–84.
- Booth, John A. and Patricia Bayer Richard. 1998. "Civil Society, Political Capital, and Democratization in Central America." *Journal of Politics* 60(3):780–800.
- Braithwaite, Alex, Idean Salehyan and Burcu Savun. 2019. "Refugees, forced migration, and conflict: Introduction to the special issue."
- Bratsberg, Bernt, Jeremy Ferwerda, Henning Finseraas and Andreas Kotsadam. 2021. "How settlement locations and local networks influence immigrant political integration." *American Journal of Political Science* 65(3):551–565.
- Bueker, Catherine Simpson. 2005. "Political Incorporation among Immigrants from Ten Areas of Origin: The Persistence of Source Country Effects." *International Migration Review* 39(1):103–40.
URL: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2005.tb00257.x>

- Bueker, Catherine Simpson. 2006. *From Immigrant to Naturalized Citizen: Political Incorporation in the United States*. El Paso, Texas: LFB Scholarly Publishing LLC.
- Choi, Soo-Hyang. 2023. “North Korea cites rare dissent in elections even as 99
URL: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/north-korea-cites-rare-dissent-elections-even-99-back-candidates-2023-11-28/>
- Choi, Syngjoo, Byung-Yeon Kim Jungmin Lee and Sokbae Lee. 2020. “A tale of two Koreas: Property rights and fairness.” *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 170:112–30.
URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jebo.2019.11.030>
- Choi, Syngjoo, Kyu Sup Hahn, Byung-Yeon Kim, Eungik Lee, Jungmin Lee and Sokbae Lee. 2024. “North Korean refugees’ implicit bias against South Korea predicts market earnings.” *Journal of Development Economics* 169:103276.
- Clingingsmith, David, Asim Ijaz Khwaja and Michael Kremer. 2009. “Estimating the Impact of The Hajj: Religion and Tolerance in Islam’s Global Gathering.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 124(3):1133–1170.
- Ekiert, Grzegorz. 1996. *The state against society: Political crises and their aftermath in East Central Europe*. Princeton University Press.
- Ferwerda, Jeremy and Henning Finseraas. 2025. “Do integration courses influence refugees’ integration trajectories? evidence from Norway.” *The Journal of Politics* 87(4):000–000.
- Finkel, Steven E, Stan Humphries and Karl-Dieter Opp. 2001. “Socialist values and the development of democratic support in the former East Germany.” *International Political Science Review* 22(4):339–361.

- Gaikwad, Nikhar, Kolby Hanson and Aliz Tóth. 2026. “Bringing Autocracy Home? How Migration to Autocracies Shapes Migrants’ Support for Democracy.” *World Politics* 78(1):1–47.
- Gaikwad, Nikhar, Kolby Hanson and Aliz Tóth. 2025. “How Migrating Overseas Shapes Political Preferences: Evidence from a Field Experiment.” *International Organization* 79(4):601–638.
- Gebhardt, Dirk. 2016. “When the state takes over: civic integration programmes and the role of cities in immigrant integration.” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 42(5):742–58.
URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2015.1111132>
- Haggard, Stephan and Marcus Noland. 2010. *Witness to Transformation: Refugee Insights into North Korea*. Columbia University Press.
- Hainmueller, Jens, Dominik Hangartner and Giuseppe Pietrantuono. 2015. “Naturalization fosters the long-term political integration of immigrants.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 112(41):12651–12656.
- Hainmueller, Jens, Dominik Hangartner and Giuseppe Pietrantuono. 2017. “Catalyst or crown: Does naturalization promote the long-term social integration of immigrants?” *American Political Science Review* 111(2):256–276.
- Harder, Niklas, Lucila Figueroa, Rachel M Gillum, Dominik Hangartner, David D Laitin and Jens Hainmueller. 2018. “Multidimensional measure of immigrant integration.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 115(45):11483–11488.
- Helmke, Gretchen and Josiah Rath. 2025. “Defining and Measuring Democratic Norms.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 28:233–51.
URL: <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-041322-040610>

- Hogg, Michael A. and Graham M Vaghan. 2005. *Social Psychology*. London: Pearson.
- Holland, Alisha C and Margaret E Peters. 2020. “Explaining migration timing: political information and opportunities.” *International Organization* 74(3):560–583.
- Howard, Marc Morjé. 2002. “The weakness of postcommunist civil society.” *Journal of democracy* 13(1):157–169.
- Hur, Aram. 2018. “Adapting to Democracy: Identity and the Political Development of North Korean Defectors.” *Journal of East Asian Studies* 18:97–115.
URL: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-east-asian-studies/article/adapting-to-democracy-identity-and-the-political-development-of-north-korean-defectors/3E80FFD0D5E36CB9E1CF09B09D00D744>
- Hur, Aram. 2019. “Refugee Perceptions toward Democratic Citizenship: A Narrative Analysis of North Koreans.” *Comparative Politics* 52(3):473–93.
URL: <https://doi.org/10.5129/001041520X15739563010287>
- Hur, Aram. 2023. “Migrant integration and the psychology of national belonging.” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 49(13):3245–3266.
- Isaacson, Walter. 1989. “The Union: A Long, Mighty Struggle.” *Time Magazine* .
URL: <https://time.com/archive/6702247/the-union-a-long-mighty-struggle/>
- Ishiyama, John and Taekbin Kim. 2024. “Attitudinal Legacies of Dictatorship: How Premigratory Experiences Affect North Korean Defectors’ Attitudes on Authority and Nationalism.” *Asian Survey* 64(4):605–34.
URL: <https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2024.2120042>.
- Jacobs, Dirk and Jean Tillie. 2004. “Introduction: social capital and political integration of migrants.” *Journal of ethnic and migration studies* 30(3):419–427.

- Johns, Leslie, Máximo Langer and Margaret E Peters. 2022. “Migration and the Demand for Transnational Justice.” *American Political Science Review* 116(4):1184–1207.
- Joppke, Christian. 2007. Immigrants and Civic Integration in Western Europe. In *Belonging? Diversity, Recognition and Shared Citizenship in Canada*. Montreal: Institute for research on Public Policy.
- URL:** <https://irpp.org/research/belonging-diversity-recognition-and-share-citizenship-in-canada/>
- Joppke, Christian. 2017. “Civic integration in Western Europe: three debates.” *West European Politics* 40(6):1153–1176.
- Jowitt, Ken. 2023. *New world disorder: The Leninist extinction*. Univ of California Press.
- Just, Aida and Christopher J Anderson. 2012. “Immigrants, citizenship and political action in Europe.” *British Journal of Political Science* 42(3):481–509.
- Kim, Tong-Hyung. 2023. “Thousands of North Koreans march in anti-US rallies as country marks Korean War anniversary.” *Associated Press* June 26.
- URL:** <https://apnews.com/article/north-korea-anti-us-rallies-leaflets-13d61a2ef5c3f2b9dca0b8b3216030d3>
- Kling, Jeffrey R., Jeffrey B. Liebman and Lawrence F. Katz. 2007. “Experimental Analysis of Neighborhood Effects.” *Econometrica* 75:83–119.
- Korea Hana Foundation. 2025. “Settlement Survey of North Korean Refugees in South Korea.”
- URL:** <https://www.koreahana.or.kr/home/kor/promotionData/information/researchData/index.do?ptSig>
- Krishna, Anirudh. 2002. “Enhancing Political Participation in Democracies: What is the Role of Social Capital?” *Comparative Political Studies* 35(4):437–60.

- Lazarova, Monika Bozhinoska, Thomas Saalfeld and Olaf Seifert. 2024. “What Does It Take for Immigrants to Join Political Parties?” *Politics and Governance* 12.
- Lee, Grace. 2003. “The political philosophy of Juche.” *Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs* 3(1):105–112.
- Lee, Myunghee. 2024. “Authoritarianism at school: Indoctrination education, political socialisation, and citizenship in North Korea.” *Asian Studies Review* 48(2):231–249.
- Linz, Juan José. 2000. *Totalitarian and authoritarian regimes*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Manin, Bernard. 1987. “On Legitimacy and Political Deliberation.” *International Journal of Political Science* 15(3):338–68.
URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/191208>
- Ministry of Unification. 2024. “Settlement Support for North Korean Defectors.”
URL: https://www.unikorea.go.kr/eng_unikorea/whatwedo/support/
- Mishler, William and Richard Rose. 2007. “Generation, age, and time: The dynamics of political learning during Russia’s transformation.” *American journal of political science* 51(4):822–834.
- Myers, C. Daniel and Tali Mendelberg. 2013. Political Deliberation. In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology 2nd edition*. New York: Oxford University Press pp. 699–734.
URL: <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199760107.001.0001>
- Neundorf, Anja. 2010. “Democracy in transition: A micro perspective on system change in post-socialist societies.” *The Journal of Politics* 72(4):1096–1108.

- Neundorf, Anja and Grigore Pop-Eleches. 2020. "Dictators and their subjects: Authoritarian attitudinal effects and legacies." *Comparative Political Studies* 53(12):1839–1860.
- Nyqvist, Fredrica, Rodrigo Serrat, Mikael Nygård and Marina Näsman. 2024. "Does social capital enhance political participation in older adults? Multilevel evidence from the European Quality of Life Survey." *European journal of Ageing* pp. 21–30. Social capital was positively linked to non-institutional political engagement in older adults.
- Oh, Hyunjin and Chong-Min Park. 2019. "A Study on Support for Democratic Systems and Norms among North Korean Defectors." *Korean Journal of Political Science* 53(2):129–154.
URL: <https://doi.org/10.18854/kpsr.2019.53.2.006>
- Paler, Laura, Leslie Marshall and Sami Atallah. 2018. "The Social Costs of Public Political Participation: Evidence from a Petition Experiment in Lebanon." *Journal of Politics* 80(4):1405–10.
URL: <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/698714>
- Pantoja, Adrian D and Gary M Segura. 2003. "Fear and loathing in California: Contextual threat and political sophistication among Latino voters." *Political Behavior* 25(3):265–286.
- Pop-Eleches, Grigore and Joshua A. Tucker. 2011. "Communism's Shadow: Postcommunist Legacies, Values, and Behavior." *Comparative Politics* 43(4):379–99.
- Pop-Eleches, Grigore and Joshua A Tucker. 2013. "Associated with the past? Communist legacies and civic participation in post-communist countries." *East European Politics and Societies* 27(1):45–68.

- Pop-Eleches, Grigore and Joshua A Tucker. 2020. "Communist legacies and left-authoritarianism." *Comparative Political Studies* 53(12):1861–1889.
- Portes, Alejandro. 1998. "Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology." *Annual Review of Sociology* 24:1–24.
- Putnam, Robert. 2000a. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Simon and Schuster.
- Putnam, Robert D. 2000b. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.
- Putnam, Robert D., Robert Leonardi and Raffaella Y. Nanetti. 1993. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Ramakrishnan, S. Karthick. 2005. *Democracy in Immigrant America Changing Demographics and Political Participation*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
- Ramakrishnan, S Karthick and Thomas J Espenshade. 2001. "Immigrant incorporation and political participation in the United States." *International Migration Review* 35(3):870–909.
- Rojas, Daniel, Alfredo Trejo III, Margaret Peters and Yang-Yang Zhou. 2025. "Protecting irregular migrants: Evidence from Colombia." *Migration Studies* 13(4):mnaf046.
- Satyanath, Shanker, Nico Voigtländer and Hans-Joachim Voth. 2017. "Bowling for Fascism: Social Capital and the Rise of the Nazi Party." *Journal of Political Economy* 125(2):478–526.
- Schimmack, Ulrich. 2021. "The Implicit Association Test: A method in search of a construct." *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 16(2):396–414.

- Simpser, Alberto, Dan Slater and Jason Wittenberg. 2018. "Dead but not gone: Contemporary legacies of communism, imperialism, and authoritarianism." *Annual Review of Political Science* 21(1):419–439.
- Skocpol, Theda and Morris P Fiorina. 2004. *Civic engagement in American democracy*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Teney, Celine and Laurie Hanquinet. 2012. "High political participation, high social capital? A relational analysis of youth social capital and political participation." *Social Science Research* 41(5):1213–26.
- Voicu, Bogdan and Claudiu D Tufiş. 2017. "Migrating trust: Contextual determinants of international migrants' confidence in political institutions." *European Political Science Review* 9(3):351–373.
- White, Stephen, Neil Nevitte, André Blais, Elisabeth Gidengil and Patrick Fournier. 2008. "The political resocialization of immigrants: Resistance or lifelong learning?" *Political Research Quarterly* 61(2):268–281.
- Williams, Allan M and Vladimir Baláž. 2005. "What human capital, which migrants? returned skilled migration to Slovakia from the UK 1." *International migration review* 39(2):439–468.
- Williams, Sophie. 2019. "North Korean defectors: What happens when they get to the South?" *BBC* .
URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-49346262>
- Xu, Xu and Xin Jin. 2018. "The autocratic roots of social distrust." *Journal of Comparative Economics* 46(1):362–380.
- Zhou, Yang-Yang, Guy Grossman and Shuning Ge. 2023. "Inclusive refugee-hosting can improve local development and prevent public backlash." *World Development* 166:106203.