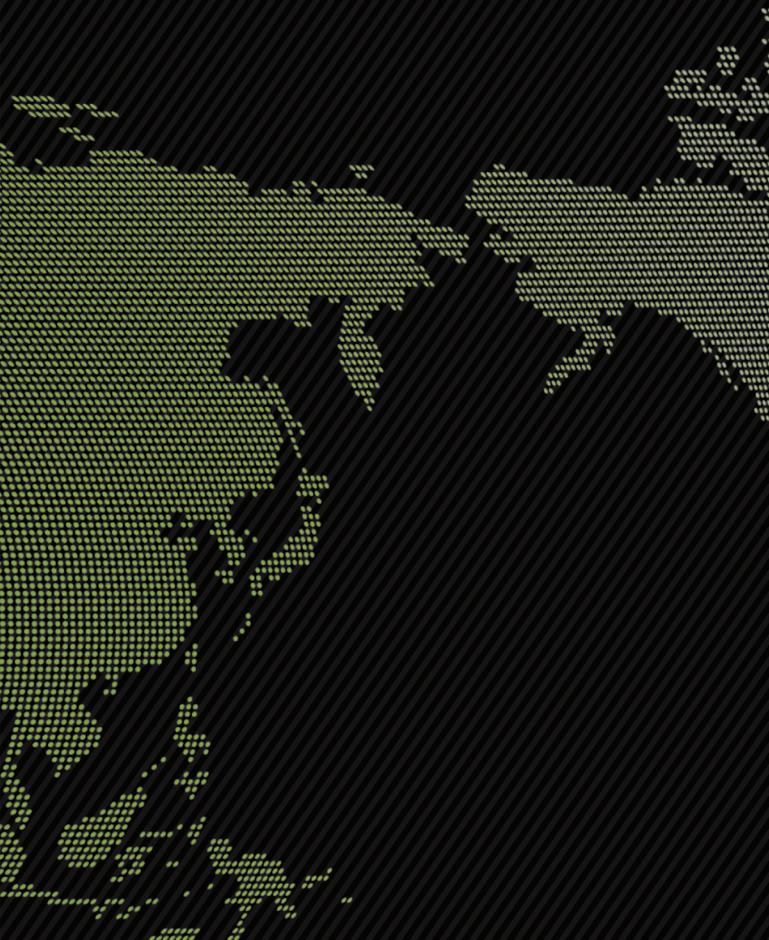


Study on North Korean Defectors' Perception about Democracy and the Market Economy

Kim, Soo-Am *et al.*



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Korea Institute for National Unification

1. Introduction



1. Introduction

The social conflicts and costs associated with inter-Korean institutional integration can only become minimized when the perception of North Korean residents can be reflected in the integration progress in a mutually interactive way. However, since North Koreans have experienced very different political and economic systems under the three-generational monolithic leadership and a deformed socialist planned economy, they are more likely to get confused and face challenges in the process of accepting liberal democracy and the market economy when institutional integration between the two Koreas is pursued. So it is necessary to get a grasp with how and to what extent North Korean residents understand the political and economic systems and to which level they accept such systems. The author attempted to carry out an indirect survey on the perception of North Korean defectors due to the practical limitation of not being able to conduct a direct survey on North Korean residents. Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU) primarily launched a survey on how North Korean defectors perceived the liberal democracy and the market economy in 2015 as part of a research called “the New Grand Plan for Korean Unification.”¹⁾ Into the second year of the research in 2016, the author set out to conduct a more in-depth

1) Kim, Soo-Am and others, 『South and North Korean Integration and North Korea's Adaptability: From the Perceptive Point of View』.

study on North Korean perception, building on the 2015 analysis about the overall perception of North Korean defectors.

This study utilizes corresponding survey methods to examine the perception of North Korean defectors on the liberal democracy and the market economy. The survey consists of a total of 111 questions with 22 survey questions in the category of social awareness, 14 in economic awareness, 20 in inequality awareness, 24 in political awareness, and 31 in unification awareness. Aside from this, there are 19 questions on personal information, including demographical variables (gender, age, region, and educational background), class variables (political status and economic class), occupational variables, relocation variables (motive behind defection, types of relocation, etc.), and other variables, such as income and occupation in South Korea. Defectors were then divided into three groups based on the year they entered South Korea (period of settlement) to grasp how the year of entry into South Korea has affected North Korean defectors' perception and its change on democracy and the market economy.

First: A group (entered South Korea before 2004): group of 10 years or more

Second: B group (entered South Korea from 2005 to 2010): group of over 5 years of protection period

Third: C group (entered South Korea from 2011 to 2015): group under protection period

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2. North Korean Defectors' Perception on Integration



2. North Korean Defectors' Perception on Integration

A. Value of Necessity for Unification

To a question of necessity for unification, 97.3% of North Korean defectors responded that unification is necessary (very agreed: 77.0% + somewhat agreed: 20.3%). Only 2.7% of respondents said that unification is not necessary (very disagreed: 0.7% + somewhat disagreed: 2.0%).

Regarding a question on the permanent state of peaceful division, such as “unification is not necessary so long as South Korea and North Korea can peacefully coexist without a war,” 29.2% of respondents agreed to the permanent state of peaceful division (very agreed: 11.1% + somewhat agreed: 18.1%), 55.7% opposed it (very disagreed: 36.2% + somewhat disagreed: 19.5%), and 15.1% neither agreed nor disagreed.

A question on unification-related tax raise was addressed to defectors in order to examine behavioral factors involving unification, and 59.4% of North Korean defectors surveyed agreed to a tax raise for funding the unification costs (very agreed: 30.2% + somewhat agreed: 29.2%). On the contrary, 12.8% of

respondents disagreed to raising taxes for unification costs (very disagreed: 4.7% + somewhat disagreed: 8.1%) and 27.9% responded neither agreed nor disagreed.

On a question of their view on situation after unification, only 12.7% respondents agreed to the negative projection after unification (very agreed: 2.0% + somewhat agreed: 10.7%) and 59.8% of respondents did not agree to the prospect of negative situation after unification (very disagreed: 30.9% + somewhat disagreed: 28.9%).

83.3% North Korean defectors agreed to a question of “North Korean residents would have wanted unification had they known how North Korean defectors are living in South Korea” (very agreed: 64.8% + somewhat agreed: 18.5%). Only 6.7% of respondents disagreed to this question (very disagreed: 1.0% + somewhat disagreed: 5.7%) and 10.1% people responded neither agreed nor disagreed.

B. Reason for Unification

Of those surveyed, “because we are the same ethnic group” was cited as the biggest reason for unification (35.2%), followed by “so that North Korean residents can have a better life” (31.2%), “to put an end to the suffering of separated families” (15.8%), “to make Korea a more advanced country” (10.7%), and “to remove a threat of war between the two Koreas” (7.0%).

C. Benefits and Costs of Unification

While 93.6% of North Korean defectors responded that unification is in the national interests (very beneficial: 68.2% + somewhat beneficial: 25.4%), 6.4% defectors said that unification is not beneficial to national interests (not at all beneficial: 1.0% + somewhat non-beneficial: 5.4%).

On a question of personal benefits and costs of unification, 91.3% of North Korean defectors said that unification will be personally beneficial to them (very beneficial: 61.2% + somewhat beneficial: 30.1%) and 8.7% responded that unification will not bring any personal benefits (not at all beneficial: 1.7% + somewhat non-beneficial: 7.0%).

Regarding a question of whether unification could bring about benefits to North Korean residents, the vast majority (96.0%) responded that unification will be beneficial to North Koreans (very beneficial: 78.7% + somewhat beneficial: 17.3%) and merely 4.0% said that unification will not be beneficial to North Koreans (not at all beneficial: 1.0% + somewhat non-beneficial: 3.0%).

D. Method, Conditions, and Future Landscape of Unification

As to a question of whether unification will be realized gradually through negotiation or radically by an unexpected event, 62.3% of respondents predicted gradually-realized unification through negotiation and 37.7% predicted radically-achieved unification by

unforeseen events.

On a question of what are the conditions for achieving unification, the top three answers were peaceful relations between nations at 26.7%, economic development in North Korea at 25.0%, and the democratization of North Korea at 24.7%. In other words, roughly 50% choose North Korea's change, including its economic development and democratization, and 15.7% choose South Korea's capacity building as a prerequisite for unification.

Regarding a question of which system a unified Korea should adopt, 41.3% favored South Korean system, 33.0% wanted co-existence of South and North Korean systems, and 25.0% chose neither South Korean nor North Korean system but a third system.

E. Sub-conclusion

The research showed that the vast majority of North Korean defectors were positive toward unification. The overwhelming majority agreed on the necessity of unification, expressed positive sentiment, recognized unification as an imminent task to be resolved facing our society, and did not have a negative projection after unification. North Korean defectors also seemed to be willing to actively engage in unification-related activities. The followings suggest that a positive attitude toward unification is shared by the overall North Korean defectors population living in South Korea; a large number of them responded that unification will be beneficial to the state, respondents themselves, and North Korean residents;

and that answer was shared by almost all groups regardless of major demographic indexes, such as gender and age.

However, a relatively high percentage of respondents in support of permanent state of peaceful division is a somewhat unexpected result when considering the overwhelming support among North Korean defectors for the necessity of unification. Of those 287, who agreed to the necessity of unification, 28.6% showed their support for the permanent state of division with very agreed and somewhat agreed combined. When accounting for the percentage of people who responded “neither agreed nor disagreed” on the permanent state of division, 42.5% of those in support of unification was not opposed to the permanent state of division. This somewhat antinomical result could be interpreted as the combination of necessity for unification and its realistic aspect playing out simultaneously. What deserves our attention is that this division of concept is being witnessed not only among South Korean residents but also North Korean defectors. Therefore, sophisticated and in-depth follow-up research should be carried out on a realistic concept of unification that our society aims to come up with.

Reasons for unification cited by North Korean defectors are also interesting. Aside from a reason based on ethnic identity, an improved living standard for North Korean residents was the number one answer selected by North Korean defectors. It is an understandable result considering the particular situation facing North Korean defectors.

Defectors want unification achieved through a gradual approach

rather than a radical one. On a question of the preferred political system after unification, more defectors favored the coexistence of the two systems – a third system – over the South Korean political system. It would be fair to be analyzed that the North Korean defectors, after having experienced the pros and cons of the South Korean system, want a political system that could make up for the flaws of South Korean system.

Defectors selected North Korean economic development and democratization as the number one pre-requisite for setting the positive environment for unification, which indicates that they see North Korea's political and economic changes as the most important variable in bringing about unification. On the contrary, very low percentage of people choose North Korea's own development through their own effort. Judging by North Korean defectors' own personal experiences, they appeared to think that North Korea's own drive alone will not create a change even though North Korea's change is necessary.

3. Perception on Capitalist System and South Korea's Inequality



3. Perception on Capitalist System and South Korea's Inequality

A. Perception on Capitalist System

1) Image of Capitalism

When North Korean defectors were living in the North, the first image that came to their minds upon hearing the word capitalism was corruption and gap between the rich and the poor. In fact, 29.3% of defectors responded that corruption represents the image of capitalism, followed by the gap between the haves and the have-nots at 26.7% and exploitation of labor at 19.0%. As those figures suggest, defectors' perception on capitalism during their time in North Korea was mostly negative. Only a handful of them associated capitalism with positive images, such as material affluence at 12.3%, competition 7.3%, efficiency 1.3%, and abundant opportunity at 2.0%.

It is only after defectors came to Korea and experienced capitalism that they started to associate competition and material abundance with the image of capitalism. The most frequently-projected image

of capitalism in the eyes of North Korean defectors after coming into South Korea was material affluence at 35.7%, and competition at 33.7%. And the number of negative images perceived by defectors decreased, such as the gap between the rich and the poor at 10.7%, and corruption at 7.7% as the table below suggests.

[Table 3-1] Image of Capitalism Perceived by Defectors in South Korea and North Korea

	Number of Cases	Material Affluence	Corruption	Competition	Efficiency	Gap between Rich and Poor	Abundant Opportunity	Exploitation of Labor	Have No Idea	Total
North Korea	300	12.3	29.3	7.3	1.3	26.7	2.0	19.0	2.0	100
South Korea	300	35.7	7.7	33.7	4.0	10.7	8.3	-	-	100

2) *Reward and Competition*

Three questions on reward and competition were asked to North Korean defectors. First, reward should be followed depending on one's performance and when it is necessary. Second, CEOs should be given the best reward or reward as equal as that of labor workers. Third, competition makes the world and people better or worse.

[Table 3-2] Reward and Competition

	Number of Cases (person)	Positive	Neither Positive Nor Negative	Negative
Principle of Reward	300	71.9	10.4	17.7
Reward for CEOs	300	36.7	22.7	40.7
Effect of Competition	300	74.0	11.3	14.7

On a question of principle of reward, the overwhelming majority of North Korean defectors responded that a reward should be given not according to the needs of people but to the performance of the work that gets done (71.9%) - a result that runs counter to the initial expectation that North Koreans might be opposed to the distribution of rewards depending on the performance.

However, their attitude becomes different when it comes to a reward for CEOs - 40.7% of defectors said that CEOs should receive the reward as equal as that of labor workers. This is indicative of their long-held perception - although they agreed on the principle of capitalism that distribution should be proportionate to performance, their deep-rooted view of egalitarianism stands in the way of coming to the terms with the reality of CEOs having more wealth distributed than laborers. Their egalitarian view is also dominantly found in the economic sector.

What should be noted in this research is that 74.0% of respondents showed a positive attitude that competition makes the world a better place to live in. This result is contrary to the widespread notion that North Korean defectors are reportedly under a lot of stress due to the competition that prevails in South Korean society.

3) Major Determinant of Income: Ability and Effort

On a question of how much one's ability matters in determining an income, 78.4% people responded that ability is an important factor in determining income and 80.1% said that effort is an important

income determinant. Only 2.0% said that ability is not important and 4.0% answered that effort is not an important factor. As this result suggests, North Korean defectors are aware that ability or effort is a crucial income determinant.

[Table 3-3] Income Determinant

	Number of Cases (Person)	Important	Neutral	Not Important	Difference	Average
Ability	300	78.4	19.6	2.0	76.4	1.89
Effort	300	80.1	15.8	4.0	76.1	1.86

4) *Individualism and Collectivism*

This research also analyzed the opinions of North Korean defectors on who should be held accountable for poverty and the limits on freedom of individuals. When expanding on a question of the cause behind the difficulty in someone’s livelihood – effort or ability of individuals, 55.2% defectors said that individuals should be responsible for poverty. And 47.3% people answered that individual freedom or happiness should not be limited for the sake of public interests, showing strong favor for individualism than collectivism.

Regarding a question of responsibility for livelihood, 55.0% defectors pointed out that individuals should be responsible for their own livelihood, for 19.0% it was the state, for 25.7% it was half-and-half. Overall, the majority of people thought that individuals should assume the responsibility for their own livelihood.

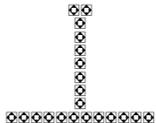
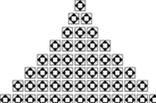
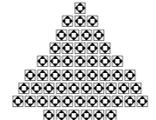
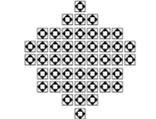
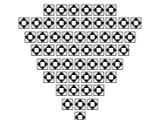
On a question of whether individual freedom or happiness can or

cannot be limited for the sake of common interests, respondents leaned toward the latter with the average point of 6 out of 10, running counter to the conventional wisdom that North Korean defectors would be highly dependent upon the collective spirit or the state.

5) Structure of Hierarchy

This research presented five types of society that were used in ISSP 2009 Social Inequality. First is a column-type society with a handful of the rich on the top, large numbers of the poor at the bottom, and barely any people in the middle. Second is a pyramid-type society with the very few rich people. Third is a tower-type society with the very few rich on the top and the number of the poor less than the one in the middle. Fourth is a diamond-type society with the majority of people in the middle. Fifth is an inverted triangle-type society with the large number of rich people and the very few poor as a result of dwindling population over time. Defectors were asked a question of which type of society that South Korea and North Korea fall into and which type a unified Korea would look like in the future.

[Picture 3-1] Five Types of Society

A		Society with the very few rich on the top, almost void in the middle, and the large number of poor at the bottom	Column-type Society
B		Society with the very few rich	Pyramid-type Society
C		Society with the number of poor less than the one in the middle and the very few rich	Tower-type Society
D		Society with the majority of people in the middle and the very few rich and poor	Diamond-type Society
E		Society with the large number of rich on the top and the very fewer poor at the bottom due to dwindling population toward the bottom	Inverted Triangle-type Society

The result showed that 62% of defectors said that a column-type A society resembles the North Korean society the most, which mostly consists of the poor population with the very little rich and the middle class. And 19% people responded that a pyramid-type B society is similar to the North Korean society with the very little rich and the poor population larger than the middle class. These answers indicate that most of them view North Korea as a society making up of very little rich class and the majority of poor population.

When defectors were asked a question of which type of society

they conceive of South Korea, 37.3% said that South Korea is a diamond-type D society, which is a relatively desirable form of society centering around the middle class. And 24.3% answered that South Korea is a tower-type C society with the very few rich class and the number of poor less than the middle class. As this results illustrate, more than half of respondents recognize South Korea to be a society centered around the middle class. While North Korean defectors viewed North Korea as an extremely polarized society, they acknowledged South Korea to be a desired form of society with the majority of middle class population.

When addressed a question of which type of society a united Korea would look like, the number one answer was (44.7%) that a unified Korea would resemble a diamond-type society with the majority of middle class and the very few poor and rich populations. This prospect is indicative of North Korean defectors' preference toward the middle class-centered society, like South Korea, China, and Japan.

B. Perception on Inequality of South Korean Society

1) Income Inequality

On a question of whether income gap is wide in South Korean society, 74.7% perceived it to be wide and only 11.7% responded that the gap is narrow. People who recognized the income gap to be large was 74.7% - as much as 63.9% more than those on the

opposite end.

People who believed that the government should be responsible for the income disparity are at 61.0% - 47% higher than those on the other end of the spectrum at 14.0%. Regarding a question asking whether given to the poor people should be reduced, those who are opposed are at 80.0% - 72.0% higher than those who think otherwise at 8.0%.

2) *Opportunity Inequality*

The level of inequality in South Korean society felt by North Korean defectors was surveyed in each sector, including opportunities for education, job, and promotion, execution of law, treatment for women, income and wealth, and the country of origin between the South and the North. Answer was recorded on a scale of five - for one it is very unequal, two somewhat unequal, three neutral, four somewhat equal, and five very equal. Difference was calculated after subtracted “equal” from “unequal.”

[Table 3-4] Opportunity Inequality in Each Sector

	Unequal	Neutral	Equal	Difference	Average
Education Opportunity	21.7	32.0	45.0	23.3	3.35
Job Opportunity	41.0	30.3	27.3	-13.7	2.82
Opportunity for Promotion	39.3	37.7	21.3	-18.0	2.76
Execution of Law	32.0	30.0	37.0	5.0	3.07
Treatment for Women	19.7	30.3	49.3	29.6	3.43
Income	32.7	42.3	24.0	-8.7	2.86
Discrimination between South and North	54.7	19.0	21.3	-33.4	2.49

3) *Discrimination in Labor: Situation of Discrimination, Treatment for Workers, Fair Payment, and Harassment at Work*

This section addresses three issues: 1) unfair treatment for workers felt by respondents; 2) discrimination they experienced; and 3) harassment at work. Aside from the broader category of unfair treatment, as much as roughly 30% people experienced some kind of discrimination when accounting for labor discrimination questions such as treatment for workers, salary, and harassment at work. Considering the fact that respondents also include the non-working population, such as the elderly, students, and housewives, the majority of North Korean defectors working in South Korea seems to have difficulties at work.

[Table 3-5] Labor Discrimination

Item	Unjust	Neutral	Just	Difference
Treatment for Workers: Unjust/Just	33.1	32.8	34.1	-1.1
Appropriateness of Salary	33.0	48.7	5.3	-27.7
Harassment at Work	28.2	-	66.8	38.6

When asked a question concerning appropriateness of their salary, whether they think they deserve more than what they get paid in South Korean society or not, 48.7% said that their salary is enough ('neutral' in Table above), 27.3% responded that they receive slightly less than they deserve, and 5.7% said that they get paid much less than they deserve ('unjust' with a combined figure at 33.0%). Only 3.3% people said that they get paid a little more than they deserve and 13.0% said that this question is not relevant to them – an answer that appears to stem from them having no work experience in South Korean society.

4) Social Mobility

Social mobility holds the key to addressing inequality in society. People will work harder with a hope if they can climb up the social ladder regardless of their low social status and wealth. Two questions were addressed to North Korean defectors to see their view on social mobility. First question was asked on a scale of 1 to 10 that whether they think individual ability or parents' background determines the accumulation of wealth in South Korean society. There are more North Koreans who think that South Korean society allows individuals to gain wealth through their own efforts, with 4.74 points on average out of 10. In more detail, 45.7% said that an individual ability determines wealth in South Korean society and 32.0% responded that the parents' background is a major determinant in the accumulation of wealth.

[Table 3-6] Social Mobility

	Individual	Neutral	Parents	Difference	Average
Individual Ability vs Parents' Background	45.7	22.3	32.0	13.7	4.74
	Possible	Neutral	Impossible	Difference	Average
Social Mobility is Possible vs Impossible	60.0	23.3	16.7	43.3	3.92

On a question of whether they think social mobility is possible through higher education, defectors showed a very positive attitude toward social mobility with the average point at 3.92 out of 10²⁾ and 60.0% answered that social mobility was possible through

2) From 1 to 4: social mobility is possible through college education, from 5 to 6: neutral, from 7 to 10: social mobility is impossible

education. Only 16.7% said that it was not possible and 23.3% took a neutral stance.

5) Prejudice in South Korean Society, Second-class Citizen, and Intention to Leave South Korea

63.3% of defectors said yes to a question of whether they face societal prejudice in South Korea and 35.7% said no. More than half of the respondents said that they face societal prejudice in South Korea.

<Table 3-7> Prejudice in South Korean Society and Intention to Leave South Korea

Item	No	Yes	No answer	Difference	Average
I face societal prejudice	35.7	63.3	1	-29.4	2.7
I am a second-class citizen	51.3	48.3	0.3	3.0	2.43
I want to leave South Korea	82.7	16.7	0.7	66.0	1.69

On a scale of 1 to 4

1: No, 2: Not really, 3: Somewhat yes, 4: Very much so

48.3% defectors answered yes to a question of “North Korean defectors are second-class citizens” while 51.3% said no. And 14.0% out of this 48.3% said “very much so,” indicating that they face a severe discrimination in South Korean society.

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4. Embracing Democratic Institution for North Korean Defectors



4. Embracing Democratic Institution for North Korean Defectors

Political socialization built throughout an individual's life cycle, knowledge in politics, and attitude toward policy are factors known to affect the formation of one's political party identity. In this section, characteristics of knowledge in politics and attitude toward policy are analyzed as factors shaping the identity of political party of North Korean defectors.

A. Party Identification of North Korean Defectors

According to a survey by the National Election Commission (NEC) in 2012, roughly 47.0% of voters said that they identified themselves with a certain political party. And about 46.0% voters gave the same answer according to a survey of the Korean Association of Electoral Studies in 2014. This survey, however, suggests that 154 (52.0%) out of 299 respondents felt close to a certain political party. On the contrary, 145 people (48.0%) answered that they did not identify themselves with any political party. Overall, North Korean defectors, compared to the entire South Korean electorate, carry a fairly high rate of party identification.

When analyzing 153 people out of 154 respondents, who said to

have a certain party identification, the majority of them are analyzed to have supported a conservative party. For example, 119 (78.0%) were in support of Saenuri Party, 20 (13.1%) out of the rest 34 people supported the Minjoo Party of Korea, for 2 people (1.3%) other parties, and for 1 (0.65%) Justice Party.

A question of political leaning toward a certain party was asked to 145 people who do not have a party identification. Out of 120 respondents who answered the question, the vast number of them favored Saenuri Party. Those who reported not to have a particular political leaning got asked a more detail question of “even that, which political party do you prefer even just a little bit more?” and 59 people (49.0%) said that they preferred Saenuri Party. That figure is fairly low given the fact that roughly 80.0% of respondents with the party identification supported Saenuri Party. In the meantime, 29 defectors (24.0%) responded that they preferred the Minjoo Party. What is interesting is that as much as 16 people (13.0%) preferred other political parties, except for Justice Party. It could be interpreted that 16 respondents combined with the rest 25 people, who did not give an answer to this question, did not prefer any major political parties.

A question of the reason behind the support for a certain party was asked to 154 respondents who have a party identification (except those who have a leaning toward a certain political party). More specifically, a question of “what is the reason behind your support for that party?” was asked and 79 people (52.0%) out of 153 said that because they support the policy of that party. In other words, more than half of defectors surveyed are in support of a political

party because of its policy. Meanwhile, 16 people (10.0%) support a certain party because of its leadership and 13 people (8.5%) said that their positive evaluation of politicians affiliated with a certain party led to their support for that party. On the other hand, as much as 32 defectors (21.0%) are analyzed to have supported a certain political party for no specific reason. And 13 people (8.5%) said that they do not know why. In short, as much as roughly 30% defectors with the party identification could not explain why they felt affectionate to a particular party.

B. North Korean Defectors' Knowledge in Politics

In this section, a total of 6 questions were addressed to North Korean defectors to measure the level of their knowledge on politics. The questions in this section consist of organizations and people involving the legislature, the judicial branch, and the executive branch, - questions measuring their knowledge of politics, traditionally surveyed by opinion poll. The results suggest that quite a large number of people either did not say anything or say "I do not know" to all the questions about knowledge in politics. In more detail, a question of "how the members of the parliament get elected in South Korea" was asked to evaluate the level of their knowledge about the legislature.

156 people (52%) out of 300 respondents answered "I do not know" to this question. On the other hand, 56 people (19.0%) gave the right answer (proportional representation system and district election), which means that 88 people (29.0%) out of the

entire 300 failed to give the right answer. When looking into the proportion of 144 defectors, who gave the right answer and who did not, the former (56 people, 39.0%) was much lower than the latter (61.0%).

80 people (27.0%) out of 300 respondents gave the right answer to a legislature-related question measuring their knowledge in politics - what is the total number of members of the parliament in South Korea. That figure is about 8.0% higher than those who gave the right answer to how parliamentary members are selected. 15.0% people gave the wrong answer and 58.0% answered “I do not know.” And out of 127 people who answered this question, 63.0% (80 people) gave the correct answer.

A question on the administrative branch consists of asking questions on heads of administrative branch and major ministries. To a question of the terms of the president, who is the head asking about the administrative branch, 154 people (52.0%) - more than half of a total of 300 - gave the right answer. This is the highest rate of correct answer among questions on knowledge in politics in this survey. Only a small number of people at 17.0% responded “I do not know” to a question of the presidential term. This figure is about 35.0% lower than 52.0% of people who gave the same answer to the question of how parliamentary members are selected. It is analyzed to have attributed to high visibility of the president under the current presidential system.

A question of “what is the name of the Minister of Unification?” was asked in order to evaluate the level of knowledge on the administrative branch – a question deemed to be of relatively keen

interests to North Korean defectors. While 126 people (42.0%) out of 300 respondents gave a right answer to this question, 140 people (47.0%) said “I do not know,” - a slightly higher rate than those who answered it correctly. When accounting for 34 people (11.0%), who gave the wrong answer, 174 people (58.0%) did not know the name of current Minister of Unification. However, it should be noted that 47.0% is a fairly higher rate given the proportion of people who provided a correct answer to a question of citizens’ knowledge in politics in democratic society. These figures and the results of survey question on the presidential term indicate that the significant number of defectors have a higher level of knowledge on the administrative branch. When questions about the judicial institutions that defectors may feel relatively unfamiliar compared to other governmental organizations were asked, 34.0% provided the right answer. A more specific question of “do you know which organization judges the constitutionality of specific act?” was addressed to defectors and 104 people (34.0%) out of 300 respondents came up with “constitutional court“ offering the correct answer. And 121 people (41.0%) gave the wrong answer and 75 people (25.0%) said that they do not know.

A fairly low percentage of people, 43 people (14.0%) out of the entire 298 respondents, said “I do not know,” to a question of the voting age in South Korea – the lowest rate among 6 questions on knowledge in politics. Meanwhile, 133 people (44.0%) out of 298 chose the right answer of “aged 19” and that is about 52.0% out of 255 people when excluding those who answered the question but said, “I do not know.” In short, 122 people (48.0%) out of 255 provided the wrong answer.

In summary, defectors have a relatively higher degree of knowledge on the administrative branch and a relatively lower level of knowledge on the legislature compared to other governmental institutions and organizations. In more detail, the majority of people responded “I do not know” to a question on the legislature. And the legislature-related questions have the lowest rate of the correct answer compared to other questions.

C. North Korean Policy Viewed by North Korean Defectors and Their Attitude toward Policy on Defectors

A significant number of North Korean defectors are analyzed to have a negative attitude toward humanitarian aid to North Korea. Roughly half of 295 respondents - 47.0% (138 people) - responded that humanitarian aid should be stopped, to a question of “what do you think of humanitarian aid to North Korea?” While 27.0% (79 people) said that the humanitarian aid should be reduced, 26.0% (78 people) responded that it should be expanded.

And majority of defectors expressed a radical view on North Korean policy. Especially, a significantly higher number of people showed a support for radical stance on North Korean policy. To a question of “do you think a more radical policy on North Korea is needed?,” 43.0% (128 people) out of 295 responded with “very agreed” and 30.0% (88 people) answered, “somewhat agreed.” In summary, more than 70.0% of respondents were in support of the radical North Korean policy. In the meantime, less than 30.0% (79 people) gave a negative answer with 12.0% of “very disagreed” and

15.0% “somewhat disagreed.”

Defectors offered mostly a positive evaluation on policy for the settlement of North Korean defectors in South Korean society. The result suggests that 170 people out of 291 – close to 60.0% - answered positively to a question of “do you think various assistances currently provided for the settlement in South Korean society are enough?” More specifically, 105 people (36.0%) said “somewhat yes,” 65 people (22.0%) said “very much yes,” 29 people (10.0%) “very much no,” and 92 people (31.0%) “somewhat no.”

D. Participation in Politics of North Korean Defectors

This research had two questions to examine how North Korean defectors have participated in the voting process. First question is about the selection of candidates for districts and the other one is about the selection of proportional representative member.

Out of 296 respondents, who answered a question about participation in voting, 70.0% (206 people) said that they cast a vote in South Korea’s 20th legislative elections. Only 30.0% (90 people) reported that they did not vote. This figure is significantly higher than the average voter turnout - 58.0% in the 20th legislative elections. The result shows that the so-called over-reporting, in which voting rate appears higher in an opinion pool, is also applied to North Korean defectors. When breaking down the candidates per party, Saenuri Party received the highest support at 72.0% (148 people) out of 206, who cast a vote in the elections.

Respondents, who selected candidates of the Minjoo Party, were 38 people (roughly 18%) and 13 people (6.0%) chose candidates from the People's Party - a figure one-third of those who chose the Minjoo Party candidates.

Meanwhile, 199 people (67.0%) out of 296 voted in the proportional representation election. In other words, 97 people (33.0%) did not participate in the election of proportional representative member – a number 3.0% higher than those who did not participate in the vote for legislative elections at 30.0%. The highest number of people choose the Saenuri Party in their vote for proportional representative member – same as their voting for legislative elections. In detail, 135 people, 68.0% of those participated in the voting, choose the Saenuri Party. And 38 people, 19.0% of 199 who actually voted, selected the Minjoo party and 19 people (10.0%) choose the Peoples' Party. What is interesting is that the number of people who chose the Peoples' Party candidates in their voting for the proportionate representative members had increased more than the legislative elections. In short, those who selected the Peoples' Party candidates in the proportional representative election had increased to as much as half of those that choose the Minjoo Party. In the 20th legislative election, the Peoples' Party got 26.7% and the Minjoo Party received 25.3% out of the entire voter turnout in the proportional representative election. Although the level of support for the Peoples' Party is low compared to such voter turnout, the support for the Peoples' Party in the proportionate representation election is higher than that of the legislative elections.

5. Conclusion



5. Conclusion

So far South Korea has had a strong tendency to approach unification issue with a focus on the necessity and appropriateness of unification. The expression of “unification is a bonanza” has practical and realistic aspects. With the unification preparation being materialized, the perception on unification is being diversified in a complex manner in reality. In other words, the concept of necessity of unification is being diversified. Even among North Korean defectors who have an overwhelming support and willingness for unification, those in support of unification and those not opposed to the permanent state of peaceful division overlap in almost equal measure. The number of people who were not opposed to the permanent state of peaceful division was, for South Korean residents, 47.10% and for North Korean defectors, 42.5% when accounting for those who said “neither agreed nor disagreed” to this question. In other words, about half the respondents who said that unification is necessary, including South Korean residents and North Korean defectors, did not express a clear opposition to the permanent state of peaceful division. This result indicates that there has been a change in the perception of necessity for unification and that this phenomenon is being witnessed in every corner of our society, not only among South Korean people but also North Korean defectors, who have simultaneously shown an overwhelming support for unification.

Therefore, South Korea needs to more closely and consistently keep track of diversifying perceptions on unification from the perspective of realistic interests given the importance of changing perceptions on unification.

Unification costs and benefits should also be meticulously calculated based on the subjects on the receiving end, such as the state (South Korean society), South Korean residents, and North Korean residents. There should be more proactive promotions of which benefits will be given not only to the state but also to the residents of both Koreans from unification. What is worth noticing is that while North Korean defectors who said that unification will benefit them outnumber those that said otherwise, South Korean people were the complete opposite. Therefore, from now on, one needs to more actively shape the discourse on unification that could bring benefits both to individuals and the state. Both North Korean defectors and South Korean residents all agreed to the prospects that unification will benefit North Korean residents, albeit with the varying degree of intensity. However, this research identified a certain degree of difference of reasons for unification between South Korean residents and North Korean defectors. Therefore, efforts should be put forth to bridge the gap between the two groups based on analysis of their similarities and differences so that unification can be pursued based on the support and consensus of residents of the two Koreas.

North Korean defectors expressed their opinion that capacity building is a major element for unification preparation. Regarding the view of North Korean defectors on unification preparation,

South Korean people also have a negative take on the current status of our unification preparation. Therefore, more efforts are needed to enhance the capacity for unification preparation so that South Korea can minimize the side effects of unification and seek unification without major obstacles. The perception of North Korean defectors could become important assets utilized for crafting policy in the capacity building process for unification preparation. In particular, their views could become essential assets for formulating policy in the process of pursuing institutional integration between the two Koreas in the future given that their perception on democracy and the market economy could provide an indirect hint of the perception of North Korean residents.

In this research, majority of defectors chose building the North Korean economy and democracy as a way to create the positive environment for unification. It indicates that they recognized changes in the North Korea's political and economic sectors to be the most important variables for unification. Therefore, more detailed strategies and methods should be sought for building the North Korean economy and its democracy so that there could be an enhanced linkage between engagement policy centered around exchanges and cooperation toward North Korea and unification. More measures for various exchanges and cooperation should be put in place, not for the sake of mere exchanges and cooperation, but for an improvement in awareness of North Korean residents and their empowerment. And there also should be various channels that can disseminate information to North Korean residents, thereby leading to an enhancement of perception on their own citizens' rights and democratic awareness.

This research on perception of North Korean defectors revealed that social inequality in South Korean society should be addressed to improve the acceptability of both North Korean defectors and residents in the integration process into South Korean capitalist system. In the future, the ROK should also improve its internal acceptability to eventually achieve a practical social integration going beyond the institutional integration.

Moreover, efforts to improve the soundness of institution are required in its operation while pursuing the inter-Korean institutional integration based on the basic liberal-democratic order. As the result of research suggests, while North Korean defectors prefer to have a political system in the form of the current South Korean system for the state after unification the most, those in support of co-existence of South and North Korean systems and those in support of a third system combined outweigh those who favor the South Korean-style system only. This result indicates that South Korea should thoroughly examine what is lacking in the current institution and make detailed preparations to improve the effectiveness of institutional integration so that complaints of North Korean residents on the institutional integration could be minimized after unification.

North Korean defectors' successful settlement into South Korean society as a democratic citizen is also part of unification. Their understanding of the political process is essential considering that defectors could serve a bridging role connecting South Koreans and North Korean residents in the process of unification preparation and thereafter. Policy that allows the adaptation of

North Korean residents as a democratic citizen should be formulated at the preparation stage of unification for the sake of social integration of a unified Korea. However, an understanding of how North Korean residents can become democratic citizens should come first in order to formulate such policy.

This year, a survey was conducted on the party identification of North Korean defectors in an attempt to address such concerns. Understanding the party identification of North Korean defectors is important in getting a grip on how they will adapt in South Korean society and become a democratic citizen and what political choices they would make in the future. Such understanding is crucial in making a projection on their political activities under a unified Korea and correspondingly making the proper preparations. Understanding their party identification can also contribute to finding ways to stably build a democratic society after unification. North Korean residents, who have never once experienced a free political participation, should learn the role as a citizen and make themselves familiarized with it. Therefore, it would be very important to understand the process of how North Korean defectors have settled in society and become a democratic citizen.

It is generally known that the older the people get, the more likely they are to develop a party identity. It is because older people tend to have an increased level of knowledge, experience, and trust or interests in politics. North Korean defectors are no exception. The longer they have stayed in South Korea, the more people claim to have the party identification. This can be attributed to the result of their political socialization as their time in South Korean society

gets prolonged. People who were affiliated with a certain political party in North Korea are more likely to have the party identification in South Korea when associating the political identification of North Korean defectors with whether they used to be a party member in North Korea. It could be interpreted that their political experiences in North Korea could become transferred into political experiences in South Korea. In short, defectors who have the party identification usually have stayed for a while in South Korea and are more likely to have been a member of the party in North Korea as well. However, more precise examination is required through empirical analysis to evaluate whether a period of stay in South Korea and political experiences from North Korea are still relevant when factoring in other variables that affect the formation of party identity.

This study also revealed that aging does not necessarily mean more accumulated knowledge on South Korea. Nor does a prolonged stay in South Korean society mean a higher level of knowledge in politics. This result could be interpreted that a longer period of stay in South Korea does not necessarily lead to obtaining more information in politics. It indicates that education on nurturing democratic citizens should be strengthened in the process of helping North Korean defectors in their settlement into South Korean society.

It is analyzed that defectors' policy preferences do not play a meaningful role in developing their party identity. The result suggests that knowledge in politics is a more important factor shaping the party identity than their direct stance on policy. It

indicates that enhancing their level of knowledge on the political system and its operation is important in order to make North Korean defectors become more interested in the party – a major actor in governing the democratic system. Therefore, the role of social and political organizations should be strengthened so that North Korean defectors can easily settle into South Korean society. In particular, a set of policy should be formulated, under which various political and social organizations can actively communicate with North Korean defectors.

In fact, it was revealed that the party identification positively affects participation in elections. In other words, North Korean defectors with the party identification are more likely to participate in the voting. One noteworthy result is that having received education in South Korea has a positive effect on participation in voting, which means that defectors who studied in South Korea are more likely to cast a vote. This analysis illustrates the importance of education in helping defectors assimilate themselves as a genuine democratic citizen into South Korean society. It also indicates that a policy aimed at raising the overall knowledge on South Korean politics is required to shape their party identity and that a policy should be formulated to help enhance their overall knowledge in politics and democracy so that North Korean residents could one day become a democratic citizen after unification.

Defectors' perception on capitalism will become an important asset for crafting policy in the process of integrating the system into the market economy. Given the change of widespread marketization inside North Korea, there arises a need to closely keep track of how

changing situation in North Korea influences people's perception on capitalism. This study divided defectors into three groups based on their date of defection and identified differences of their perception. The result suggests that only "the effect of competition" shows a statistically meaningful difference. A meaningful level of difference on whether competition makes the world for the better or for the worse was found between the generation who had entered Korea after the Kim Jong-un regime and the rest who had come either during a transitional period or the period of food shortages. What is worth the attention is that the generation of the Kim Jong-un regime is analyzed to have some differentiating factors from the previous generations.

In particular, defectors, who had entered South Korea under the Kim Jong-un regime, are highly in favor of capitalism compared to those that came to the South in the early 2000s before the marketization swept the North and have lived in South Korea's capitalist society thereafter. Although the attitude on competition was positive in all three groups, the numbers of people with the positive attitude, who defected the North and came to the South after Kim Jong-un took power, were relatively high at 82%. The generation who recently came to South Korea has a stronger favor for competition than the previous generations, who have lived in this capitalist society for a few dozen decades, which could be interpreted that the awareness of North Korean residents, too, is rapidly changing in tandem with a radically changing North Korean society after marketization. Such result suggests that a more sophisticated generation-based analysis on their attitude about capitalism should be reflected in policy aimed to help the

settlement of defectors into South Korean society.

Defectors also show a strong emotional orientation for egalitarianism just as the last year's research. One should take a note of the result of 2016 study that although defectors demonstrated a positive tendency toward performance-oriented rewards or competition – a basic principle of the capitalist system, orientation for economic egalitarianism is becoming even more pronounced. There is also a need to conduct a review on how to adjust some training courses of Hanawon (the Settlement Support Center for North Korean Refugees) in a way that strengthens the education on the market economy with a focus on the concept of competition and performance.

One of the most important factors predicting the possible psychological conflicts after unification is the transitional process, under which North Korean residents adapt themselves to a new culture represented by liberal democracy and the market economy. The most realistic and only remaining option to measure and predict the behavior and psychology of North Korean residents is to get a hint from North Korean defectors. Of course, one cannot generalize the results of this research to the general population of North Korea, given that the research only concerned North Korean defectors. However, the study on defectors still holds significance given their roles and implications on the Korean Peninsula in the unification process and the post-unification era. Defectors could serve as a bridge in delivering South Korea's institutions, culture, and people's way of living and value to their remaining families in the North. North Korean defectors could also come as advisors in

helping the cultural and institutional settlement of North Korean residents after unification thanks to their prior experiences. More efforts are needed to utilize their experience with settlement and their perception as assets in formulating a more detailed policy in unification preparation, going beyond the simple pursuit of successful settlement.

First, defectors are more willing to support unification than South Korean residents. Defectors were positive in every unification-related question of this research. Their strong resolve for unification can be utilized as useful assets in promoting the unification discourse and the preparation process.

Second, defectors gave an account in the research that they felt as though they were treated unfairly based on where they came from (2.49), opportunity for promotion (2.76), and opportunity for jobs (2.82). Those who experienced discrimination in the labor sector amounted to as high as about 30.0%, as illustrated by questions on discrimination in labor in categories of treatment for workers, payment, and harrassments at work. The result suggests that the biggest hinderance facing defectors is when they enter the labor market. In the meantime, respondents showed a very positive attitude to a question of “is social mobility possible through higher education?” with the average point of 3.92 out of 10. And 60.0% of respondents said that social mobility is possible through education. This answer demonstrates that defectors’ perception on inequality and opportunity in South Korean society should be continuously recorded with the use of more professional methods in their settlement into South Korean society. Their perception will become

important policy assets later not just for the institutional integration but also for the social integration.