



PHD

**Democratization, autocratization, and coups: Assessing the impact of regime changes on forced migration  
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**Democratization, autocratization, and coups:  
Assessing the impact of regime changes on forced  
migration**

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Bath

Department of Politics, Languages & International Studies

July 2020

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## II Thesis abstract

Human displacement occurs when people are motivated to leave their home country and when those who are eager to escape are given the opportunity to do so. In this regard, regime transition in the country of origin can be a key to understanding the phenomenon of forced migration: people's motivations and opportunities for fleeing can be increased or limited by such a process. However, relatively few studies have systematically addressed how regime transition in the country of origin of forced migration affects the exodus of people, although studies on the causes of forced migration are extensive. This thesis aims to investigate how various forms of regime transition affect forced migration. The types of regime transition on which this study focuses are democratization, autocratization, and a radical replacement of the regime by a coup d'état.

The first paper analyzes the impact of regime change through a coup d'état on the volume of refugee outflow generated. Much research points to the relevance of political instability and violent armed conflict in explaining refugee flows, yet we still know little about whether and how other forms of political instability such as coups d'état create incentives for forced migration. We, therefore, develop a theory to describe the influence of coups on individuals' decisions to flee, highlighting the fact that coup events exacerbate individuals' physical and economic insecurity and thus increase incentives to flee. We consider successful and failed coups and assess our claims using data for all countries between 1980 and 2015. Our most conservative estimates suggest that successful coups have a substantive effect on the number of refugees: forced migration from countries that have experienced a successful coup is 40 percent larger than in countries that have not experienced a coup. We illustrate the theoretical



mechanisms by analyzing four coups in two countries: Uruguay in 1973 and 1976 and Egypt in 2011 and 2013.

The second paper determines whether regime shifts play a role in creating or constraining willingness and opportunities to flee and if they cause an increase in the number of people in the country of origin with the intention of seeking asylum elsewhere. Specifically, regime shifts refer to changes in political regimes: such regimes can vary qualitatively, as some regimes move toward democracy (democratization), whereas others shift along the spectrum in the opposite direction toward autocracy (autocratization). Using panel data covering the period from 2000 to 2016 across 118 countries, my results show that the number of asylum seekers tends to increase when a country experiences either sudden democratization or autocratization. Nevertheless, the level of increase is dependent on the political regime of the time. Specifically, for democratized countries, the increase in asylum seekers tends to be smaller if the countries experience a further democratic regime shift. Such a diminishing marginal effect is explained by the decrease in willingness to escape gradually outweighing the effects of greater opportunity to escape, which occurs in more democratic countries. In other words, as democratic countries become more democratic, the outward flow of the population becomes less prominent because people are less motivated to escape, even if the opportunity to escape is greater. On the other hand, during autocratization, the increase in asylum seekers is larger if the countries were more democratic (or less autocratic) prior to the regime shift. There is an increasingly marginal effect because in more democratic milieus, opportunities to escape still exist that accommodate the increase in willingness to escape as a result of autocratization. In other words, if an already autocratic country further autocratizes, the population outflow is mitigated, as the citizen's opportunities to escape the country are marginal to start with and limited further, even if their motivation to escape increases.

This study not only analyzes countries that have already experienced refugee outflows but also focuses on an area that has not experienced a mass outflow of forced migrants. The third paper examines different paths of regime development that the North Korean regime can follow, including 1) regime collapse, 2) status quo, and 3) democratic transition, and analyzes the possible impacts of each regime development path on forced migrations from North Korea. A statistical model is developed to examine the effects of the three regime variants on population outflow across autocratic milieus. The study employs a panel dataset covering 138 countries from 2000 to 2016. My findings show that the collapse of the regime and democratic transition in autocratic countries can increase the magnitude of the outflow of forced migrants, while the maintenance of the regime's status quo has no significant impact on it. In other words, the findings imply, on the one hand, that if North Korea follows a path of regime collapse or democratic transition, the volume of forced migration generated may increase. On the other hand, if the current regime continues to maintain power in a manner resembling its current state, population outflow from North Korea will be deterred. The key conceptual framework of this study explains the relationship between a regime transition and population outflows, as well as distinguishing the motivation and opportunities for people to flee by controlling for the presence in a country of an autocratic military regime. In particular, the motivation and opportunities for North Koreans to flee may be increased or restricted depending on the path the regime transition follows.

### **III Introductory remarks**

In 2019, it was estimated that there were over 70 million people worldwide who had been forcibly displaced. Alongside this increase in the volume of displaced populations, the areas affected by the outflow and inflow of displaced populations across borders have gradually expanded, and large-scale forced migration raises a variety of issues across socioeconomic, political, and security areas, becoming a global issue that cannot be overlooked. To understand and tackle the phenomenon of forced migration, a considerable literature has developed on the theme of the causes of human displacement.

Some studies focus on economic motives by pointing out that poor economic conditions in the countries of origin of displacement are the leading cause of mass exoduses (Akopari 1998; Breunig et al. 2012; Damm 2009; Neumayer 2005). The majority of studies of forced migration conclude that the occurrence of violence in general is a major determinant of displacement (Davenport et al., 2003; Melander and Öberg, 2007; Moore and Shellman, 2004; Schmeidl, 1997; Weiner, 1996). Since forced migration has tended to originate in areas in which violent conflicts exist, the approach that connects a rise in security threats due to generalized violence with increases in forced migration has gained wide support from scholars. Although it is true that conflict-induced displacement accounts for a high proportion of total human displacement, the possibility that human displacement that is not due to violent conflict is still occurring worldwide should not be overlooked. More importantly, given that human displacement is a complex phenomenon caused by a combination of various factors, further analysis of the non-violent factors that cause displacement is necessary, as is an assessment of the structural conditions that enable people to leave or otherwise prevent them from doing so. While many studies pay attention to what drives people to leave their homes, some scholars are concerned

about what makes people unable to leave (Carling, 2002; de Haas, 2014). Forced migration becomes visible when people who are motivated to leave their homes are given the opportunity to leave. Therefore, in studying forced migration, it is necessary to analyze both what motivates people to escape and whether they are given the opportunity to flee.

In this respect, the issue of regime transitions in the country of origin of displacement is worth visiting. Political instability caused by a transition in the ruling regime can either motivate or demotivate people to leave the country. Furthermore, to the extent that the regime of the country of origin of displacement is the driver that creates a structural environment that provides opportunities for people to escape or limits those opportunities, transitions in the regime can be key to explaining an increase in human displacement (Chiswick and Hatton 2003; Howard, 2010; Miller and Peters 2018). However, very few studies have systematically addressed how transitions in political regimes affect the volume of human displacement. The primary purpose of this thesis is to investigate how various forms of regime developments affect human displacement. This study presents three independent papers after a brief literature review of the research on forced migration.

With reference to the fact that a regime transition can occur when the holder of the ruling power is replaced, the first paper pays attention to the impacts of coups on refugee outflows in autocratic countries. The term “coup d’état” refers to “illegal and overt attempts by the military or other elites within the state apparatus to unseat the sitting executive” (Powell and Thyne, 2011, p. 252). A coup is the defining type of regime transition that leads to political instability, which in turn causes various political and security threats. Given that, in a coup, the replacement of the existing regime occurs through non-constitutional and largely coercive means, the analysis of its impact on forced migration has been underdeveloped in previous

studies (Bodea et al., 2016). We hypothesize that the intensified political and economic insecurity and uncertainty from the onset of a coup attempt are likely to increase people's motivation to flee and to lead to a population outflow. In addition, we hypothesize that a successful coup attempt would create greater threats to people than a failed coup attempt, and thus an increase in forced migration is more likely to be observed when a coup attempt is successful than when it fails. The results of a statistical analysis based on cross-national samples from 1980 to 2015 show that the occurrence of a successful coup plays a crucial role in triggering refugee flows. The cases of coups in 1973 and 1976 in Uruguay and in 2011 and 2013 in Egypt further provide a causal mechanism showing how political and economic instability was initiated and escalated by coups and further contributed to the increase in forced migration.

In the second paper, my aim is to explain the growth in the volume of asylum seekers in connection with the transition in the political system of the country of origin. In the existing studies on forced migration, the type and maturity of the political system have been used as criteria to measure satisfaction with the regime, and these factors tend to be analyzed as influencing people's motivation to leave the country. However, in terms of their impact on forced migration, the established political system and the transition in the regime need to be discussed separately. A regime transition toward democracy or autocracy may be closely linked to the increase or decrease in opportunities for people to leave the country, as it reflects the degree of change in the level of regime control over the country's citizens. To test this theory, I set out two different directions in which the regime can move. A shift in regime can vary qualitatively, as some autocracies move toward democracy (democratization), whereas others shift even further along the spectrum toward absolutism (autocratization). Using time-series cross-sectional data, I evaluate how two phenomena, democratization and autocratization,

affect people's motivation to flee and how they structurally limit people's ability to escape to other countries. The results show, on the one hand, that a regime shift toward democracy can provide asylum seekers with greater opportunities to escape by easing state control of population outflow. On the other hand, autocratic regime transitions can also cause population outflows by increasing the motivation to flee. Furthermore, the impact of democratization on the volume of forced migration generated in an autocratic country is greater than in a democratic country, while the impact of autocratization on the volume of forced migration generated in a democratic country is greater than that in an autocratic country. These findings suggest that the effect of a transition in the regime on the motivation and opportunity of those who want to leave a state depends on the political system of the country at the time of the regime transition and that the extent of its influence on the volume of forced migration generated may vary.

The first and second papers explain how the different types of regime transition can affect the growth of forced migration differently by using both large-n quantitative analysis and case studies. While the first and second papers attempt to identify the correlation between the regime transition and forced displacement by looking at past cases, the third paper focuses on an area in which political uncertainty exists, but that has not yet experienced mass exodus. It evaluates how the various forms of regime transition discussed in the first and second papers will affect the volume of forced migration generated in the future if they occur in North Korea. I set out the paths of regime development that the North Korean regime can follow in the future as 1) regime collapse, 2) status quo, and 3) democratic transition and analyzed the possible impacts of each regime transition on population outflow from North Korea. Consistently with the previous two papers, the key conceptual framework of the third article, which explains the relationship between regime transition and population outflows, is the motivation to escape and

the availability of opportunities for people to emigrate or flee. Regime transition in an extremely autocratic state such as North Korea can be interpreted as a change in the level of structural control exercised by the regime on its people. The motivation and opportunity for North Koreans to flee may be increased or reduced depending on the path the regime transition follows. The study employs a panel dataset covering 138 countries from 2000 to 2016. The findings suggest that regime collapse and democratic transition in autocratic countries can increase the magnitude of the outflow of forced migrants. The findings imply that sudden regime collapse in North Korea is likely to increase the volume of asylum seekers originating in North Korea by intensifying the political and security uncertainty and paralyzing governmental control over the people. An increase in the degree of people's motivation and opportunity for fleeing is expected with the onset of regime collapse. On the one hand, if the North Korean regime maintains its current tight ruling system, population outflow from North Korea will be deterred because the regime's firm control over its people will continue. On the other hand, a democratic transition in the North Korean regime could also increase the volume of population outflow. In such circumstances, people's desire to enjoy a previously unknown life free from famine and political oppression is likely to manifest itself in the form of a mass exodus, which can provide people with greater opportunities to flee. A sudden regime collapse and a democratic transition may have something in common, in that both phenomena can lead to a weakening or loss of regime control over the people in that country. Thus, these types of regime transitions would potentially cause mass outflows from North Korea. The international community needs to prepare for a transition in the North Korean regime, which has the potential to develop in various ways, in connection with the possibility of population outflow.

## **IV Literature review**

In this section, an overview of the existing literature on forced migration is provided to identify under-explored research areas that have scope for further development. The overall structure of the review takes the form of six parts. The first part reviews existing studies of the causes of forced migration. In the second part, research gaps are identified, highlighting the importance of regime transition in analyzing forced migration. As the section pertaining to theory, the third part reviews some core studies that provided inspiration for establishing the theoretical framework. The linkages between regime transition and forced migration are mainly discussed in this part. The method of analysis used in the thesis is presented in the fourth part. In the fifth part, some of the key terms in the field of forced migration are presented and the groups of forced migrants, which are the subjects of this paper, are introduced. In the final part, the areas in which this paper can contribute to knowledge are presented.

### **1 The causes of forced migration**

#### **1.1 Socioeconomic insecurity and forced migration**

A worsened economic situation has long been recognized as an important cause closely related to the phenomenon of international migrant flows. Most migration theories view economic security as both a determinant of the outflow of immigrants and a key factor in attracting an influx of immigrants. Functionalist theories take the view that the desire to pursue a better economic life is a major factor in determining the migration of individuals (Borjas, 1989; Lee, 1966; Todaro, 1969). Structural theories, however, stress that the economic situation is part of a structural environment that causes migration with specific and recognizable patterns. The



core argument that ties these theories together is that the flow of capital formed by development or investment leads to the creation, overflow, or shortage of jobs in a given area and that ultimately causes migration flows and forms a pattern of international migration (Castles and Kosack, 1973; Massey, 1998; Piore, 1979; Polanyi, 2001). A similar approach with an emphasis on economic factors can also be found in studies attempting to understand forced migration, and economic insecurity is often considered one of the leading causes of forced migration. Scholars such as Castles (2007) and Richmond (1995) point out that the legal and conceptual framework for distinguishing between genuine refugees from political persecution and bogus asylum seekers with a socioeconomic motivation is problematic; they do so by emphasizing that the migration of refugees, like most migrants, is caused by a combination of various factors. In a similar vein, Zimmermann (2011) points out that many refugees did not flee political violence itself but a situation in which their socioeconomic assets were collapsed by political violence, which threatened their survival. Economic marginalization and poverty and unstable employment conditions have been pointed out as major determinants of refugee outbreaks in a study by Lindstrøm (2005).

Weiner (1996) points out in his paper, “Bad Neighbors, Bad Neighborhood: An Inquiry into the Causes of Refugee Flows,” that poor economic conditions in the country of origin of refugees can push people to leave. He reaffirms that widespread unemployment, along with the oppression that the authoritarian regime exerts on the people, has made Haiti the epicenter of mass refugees. He also argues that the massive outflow of population from Eastern European countries that emerged after the collapse of the Communist regime in 1989 could be seen as a migration by those looking to escape economic insecurity and seek better economic conditions. A similar claim is found in a study by Shellman and Stewart (2007), which shows that, based on an analysis of the pattern of migration from Haiti to the United States in the late 1990s, both

the political repression exercised by the despotic regime and economic hardship forced Haitians to move to the United States. Ogata (1995) asserts that poverty, economic aggravation, climate change, and demographic factors are the main issues driving people to find and move to a better environment. More importantly, he points out that these factors play a role in deepening political instability, which has a direct or indirect impact on refugee outflows. For this reason, he argues that it is problematic to distinguish between the factors that create general migrants and refugees. Based on an analysis of the influx of asylum seekers from countries in Asia and Africa to Europe, Vogler and Rotte (2000) argue that the wage gap in sending countries is positively correlated with the amount of population outflow.

Akokpari (1998) claims that refugee flows from sub-Saharan African countries in the 1990s were driven by economic deterioration and famine. He explains that post-colonial African countries did not have efficient political and economic systems for economic reconstruction and that the prevailing political corruption and opaque and unfair economic environment deepened the fragility of those nations, resulting in mass refugee outflows. In a similar vein, Raleigh (2011) argues that poverty, along with conflict in the developing world, especially in Asia and Africa, is a significant factor pushing people away from their home countries. Many studies have found that food depletion and famine are closely linked to forced population movement (Dirks et al., 1980; Hugo, 1984; Maharatna, 2014). Chakraborty (2011) gives a historical example of extreme famine in South India at the end of the 19th century, leading to massive forced migration, showing that famine and insufficient cultivation are also strongly correlated with massive population displacement.

While many studies attempt to analyze the socioeconomic insecurity of countries producing forced migration as a push factor, some scholars argue that better economic security in migrant

host countries is a pull factor that induces population migration. Hatton (2004), in his study, shows that relative incomes and a stable employment environment in the destination country have a significant impact on the volume of asylum seekers. Also, in his subsequent study (2009), he shows that 95% of asylum applications during the periods 1987–1991 and 2002–2006 were concentrated in industrialized countries. This trend reflects how poor economic conditions in the home country and a better economic environment in the destination country are factors driving the migration of asylum seekers. In their analysis, Breunig et al. (2012) show that the GDP of the refugee's country of origin has no significant effect on population outflow, while the GDP of the receiving countries has a positive and significant effect on the volume of migration generated. Damm (2009) shows that economic factors such as a stable employment and welfare environment are a major consideration for refugees in choosing their first destination as well as their subsequent destination. In a study by Havinga and Böcker (1999), the existence of a labor market is considered a decisive factor for asylum seekers in determining their destination. Even if the host country takes restrictive legal measures against the formal employment of asylum seekers, if an informal labor market exists in the host country, it can be considered to represent an economic opportunity for asylum seekers and thus affects their destination decision.

## **1.2 Conflict-induced forced migration**

It is evident that when people are exposed directly or indirectly to violent conflict, the most common option for unarmed citizens is to escape (Lischer, 2014). Political violence is considered one of the most significant factors that have forced people to move in the past, do so in the present, and will probably continue to do so in the future (Donato and Massey, 2016).

There are a large number of published studies that attempt to demonstrate the causal impact of political conflict on forced migration in both quantitative and qualitative studies.

Schmeidl's (1997) study is one of the most cited in the field of conflict-induced displacement. In her seminal work, the types of conflict which can increase forced migration are identified based on a cross-national analysis. According to that analysis, international warfare, civil warfare, and genocide/politicide can significantly affect forced migration. One well-known early study that is also often cited in the field of forced migration is that of Weiner (1996), who gives an overview of the major violent conflicts that have occurred since the Second World War, and of the global situation of refugees. He classifies four types of conflict as having caused an increase in the number of refugees. These were interstate wars, anti-colonial wars, non-ethnic conflicts, and civil conflicts. He also categorizes countries that are vulnerable to the outbreak of conflicts and refugee flows as "Bad Neighborhoods." He argues that the presence of bad neighborhoods can hamper the security of an entire region.

One of the most influential accounts of the determinants of forced migration comes from Davenport et al. (2003). In their study, based on a cross-national analysis of the period from 1964 to 1989, civil war and genocide/politicide also show positive and robust statistical significance as predictors of increases in forced migration. Given the period covered by their analysis, it suggests that particular types of generalized violence such as civil war and genocide/politicide appear to have had a strong influence on forced migration in the periods both before and after the Cold War. What stands out in their findings is that while the degree of conflict accumulation has no significant effect on forced migration, the variety of conflicts is shown to increase the security threat and to lead to an increase in forced migration. Crawley et al. (2003) also identify violent conflict as the leading cause of forced migration. They list

eight driving determinants of the inflow of asylum seekers into Europe and point out that three of them are related to political violence in the origin countries. The intensified lack of security and the human rights violations caused by warfare and persecution are found to be the driving causes of the inflow of asylum seekers to Europe. In the same vein, they point out that well-established democratic institutions and the rule of law in European countries are the significant pull factors attracting asylum seekers. It is because of the belief that a democratic political system and long-standing peace would provide shelter that asylum seekers fleeing persecution chose European countries. A significant analysis and discussion of the causes of forced migration are presented by Neumayer (2005). In his cross-national analysis, he finds that intra-group warfare and dissident violence, such as civil war and ethnic war, can lead to population outflows, based on a statistical analysis of asylum seekers entering Europe from 1982 to 1999. This finding is contrary to that of Schmeidl (1997), who has suggested that the occurrence of genocide is strongly associated with forced migration.

In Melander and Öberg's study (2006), both the presence of intrastate violence (wars and minor armed conflicts) and the geographical scope of violence (ethnic and revolutionary fighting) have a statistically significant effect on and show a linear relationship with the outbreak of forced migration. Also, their analysis shows that existing accumulated refugee networks do not have the effect of inducing additional refugee outflows. On the other hand, based on the analysis of the pattern of forced migration to 28 European countries, Brück et al. (2018) argue that the existing network of those settled in Europe as a result of forced migration significantly induces subsequent refugee inflow. They report that escalating violence, not accumulated violence, significantly affects the increase in forced migration. Moore and Shellman's series of analyses (2004; 2007) gives some reliable methods for calculating the geopolitical, political, economic, cultural, and historical factors in identifying the causes of

forced migration. Their main findings, that international and civil wars and genocide are the types of political violence that can cause displacement, support previous research linking generalized violence and forced migration. Notably, their study adopts a geographic approach to the impact of conflict on forced migration by arguing that the size of the geographic area that violence affects is proportional to the amount of forced migration. Schon (2015) also suggests, based on a case analysis on Somalia, that the expansion of the geopolitical scope of a conflict can increase the size of forced migration outflows. This result implies that more people are affected by the conflict due to the increased scope of the fighting. A similar result is also found in Melander and Öberg's study (2007), a cross-national analysis covering 151 countries from 1981 to 1999. Consistent with the literature, they find that armed conflict is an important determinant of forced migration. Also, they highlight that it is not the intensity of the armed conflict but the geopolitical range of the conflict's effects that has a significant impact on forced displacement.

Many previous studies use cross-national analysis to identify the determinants of forced migration at the macro-level. In contrast, another group of studies focuses on individual patterns of outmigration with the onset of political violence and analyzes the determining factors for the decision to flee at the micro-level. For example, Adhikari (2013) identifies various factors that can determine the individual decision to escape in a civilian conflict situation, based on a public opinion survey conducted in Nepal. Interestingly, his research draws fine distinctions between actual violence and the threat of violence and analyzes the influence of each on forced migration. He argues that both exposure to direct violence and the threat from indirect exposure can increase forced migration. Then, he highlights the finding that the incidence of displacement caused by direct violence is much higher than that caused by indirect threats.

Czaika and Kis-Katos (2009) analyze the push and pull factors of migration under a civil conflict that lasted from 1999 to 2002 in Aceh, Indonesia. According to their analysis, displacement tends to be prominent in areas where violent conflict is concentrated. In other words, the increase in security threats pushes individuals to flee. On the other hand, the presence of the police in the village appears to reduce displacement, indicating that the stable public safety provided by government authorities reduces the outflow of migration while increasing the inflow. Even in a conflict situation, rural–urban migration patterns appear to continue. Czaika and Kis-Katos (2009) interpret socioeconomic factors as being still important in selecting destinations for individuals, even under extreme circumstances. What is striking in the findings of this study is that the factors that cause internally displaced people to become displaced are not much different from the causes of people becoming refugees. Similar research was conducted by Lozano-Gracia et al. (2010) based on the case of Colombia. Their study statistically analyzes the impact of violence on the migration of displaced individuals between cities. The results show that the presence of violence in a city increases outmigration while suppressing population influx. Furthermore, the higher the degree of violence, the more people tend to migrate farther from the area where violence occurred.

A household-level analysis of Colombia's IDP migration patterns was also conducted by Engel and Ibáñez (2007). They provide some insightful findings through surveys of people displaced in 2000. As with the study by Lozano-Gracia et al. (2010), it was found that security considerations play an important role in the migration decision-making process. The presence of paramilitary and guerrilla groups in the region tends to increase the incidence of outmigration. Also, the finding that the presence of police can reduce displacement by reducing security threats to people is consistent with a study by Czaika and Kis-Katos (2009). On the

other hand, their findings show that a high level of satisfaction with basic needs, such as access to social services, education, and public utilities, reduces people's willingness to move. Based on a survey conducted in Baghdad, Iraq, in 2015, Ozaltin et al. (2019) analyzed the factors leading Iraqis facing violent conflict to choose to flee. It is of note that only 60% of respondents who had been exposed to direct violence considered immigrating within the next three years. What is interesting about their findings is that many of the respondents who predicted that the conflict would end in the near future still wanted to move. They conclude that apart from violence, the existence of various demographic factors, such as respondents' employment patterns, income levels, and education levels, appears to influence migration decisions.

Cantor (2016) pays attention to the trend of increased forced migration in the countries comprising the Northern Triangle of Central America, where the homicide rate is exceptionally high. He argues that the impact of organized criminal violence on forced displacement is as significant as that of armed conflict at the national level. He identifies violence by various types of organized criminal groups, such as gangs, as a major cause of forced migration in these countries. While many studies pay attention to international and intrastate warfare, this study offers a fresh perspective on the importance of domestic-level violence on displacement in that some regions may experience forced displacement due to new security threats. Similarly, Ibáñez and Vélez (2008) also find that forced displacement from Colombia is greatly affected by violence against civilians by illegal armed groups.

Refugee crises have been concentrated in particular regions of the world. Hence, many studies attempting to uncover the causes and effects of refugee crises include an area study (McCull, 1993). Several good examples are presented below. Osborne (1980) focuses on the refugee crises that occurred in the Indochinese region during the 1970s. His paper compares



the leading causes of mass flows of refugees that were generated in three different countries: Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. According to his paper, intensified ideological conflicts between democratic and communist regimes, inter-ethnic conflicts, and natural disasters are assumed as the root causes of the refugee crisis in Vietnam, while the causes of refugee crises in Cambodia and Laos were deeply associated with, respectively, the outbreak of the Second Indochina war and with Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia. He assumes that the local ideological conflicts in those countries were deeply affected by the international political environment, which was formed by the then-ongoing Sino-Soviet dispute. An interesting feature of his work is that it attempts to address how the refugee-hosting countries' policies toward refugees were altered by the international politics of the region. Lui's research (2007) attempts to analyze the causes of refugee crises in Asia and suggests that human rights abuses, armed conflicts, and political insecurity are the general causes of people becoming refugees in the region. However, the main focal point of the study is on identifying the reasons for the prolonged and settled situations of refugees in the host countries rather than on addressing the specific causes of the refugee crisis. The paper argues that refugees in Asia have been in a state of total neglect due to the lack of peacebuilding efforts and political will from both refugee-generating and receiving countries to improve the refugee situation. Monsutti and Balci (2014) analyze the mass exodus from Central Asia from a historical perspective. They show that the political, social, and ethnic tensions arising from the state-building process of independent republics that were formerly part of the Soviet Union have resulted in violence such as civil wars, riots, and genocide, which have driven the mass outflow. They also give the example of the mass stateless population that emerged with the collapse of the former Soviet Union and explain how involuntary displacement, although not directly induced by the conflict, can be caused by the collapse of the state and the emergence of new countries. While many studies focus on analyzing the immediate impact of warfare on forced migration, Kurtenbach et al. (2016) focus

on the trend of forced migration after the conclusion of civil war, by analyzing the cases of Nepal and El Salvador. They highlight the fact that forced migration tends not to cease immediately after the end of a war in a region. They point out that the ongoing outflow of forced migration after a war is due to the unstable peace established after the hostilities, the continued outbreak of domestic-level violence, the government's oppression, and the low quality of the economy.

Ibeanu (1990) views class struggle as the fundamental cause of the refugee crisis in Southern Africa. The study reports that the apartheid system that strengthened ethnic disharmony has continuously created various forms of violence, such as wars and coups d'état, and aggravated social divisions, resulting in serious famine, inequality, and a mass volume of displacement in the region. In his papers analyzing the determinants of forced migration in the region of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), Naudé (2009, 2010) highlights how violent conflict is the single most critical cause of forced migration. He predicts that conflict-induced outmigration is likely to decrease because violent conflicts in the region are diminishing compared to the past. However, he warns that environmental deterioration in this region could have further adverse impacts on the socioeconomic and security sectors and, consequently, lead to another wave of forced migration. Iqbal (2007) conducted a statistical analysis of the impacts of geopolitical influences on refugee flows during times of violent conflict, focusing on cases in post-Cold War era Africa. The results of this study demonstrate that the distance between a country that is experiencing conflict and a host country is negatively correlated with the volume of refugees generated, suggesting that geographical proximity plays a key role in forced migration. Also, the presence of violent conflict in a host country has a significant deterrent effect on forced migration. In this analysis, the size of the population, both in the country of origin and the host country, has positive correlations with refugee flows. By comparing the cases of Burundi,

Uganda, Rwanda, and Tanzania, Tom (2014) claims that common factors causing mass displacement found in countries in the Great Lakes Region of Africa are the prevalent poor governance and political conflicts that arise in the post-colonial period. Also, he points to Tanzania as an outlier in the region. He explains that the reason Tanzania has not experienced either a major-scale conflict or mass forced displacement is the political and economic stability that has been achieved through democratic political institutions. Purdeková (2017) identifies the fundamental causes of large-scale re-displacement of returned refugees and IDPs that have emerged in Burundi in 2015, based on interviews with Burundians from 2013 to 2015 across the region. She finds that the returned refugees and IDPs in Burundi decide to leave the country again not only when faced with direct harassment by the state, but also when witnessing that the home country does not have enough willingness and ability to protect them and that they are granted only partial rights as citizens. In other words, when the political promise presented by the state is broken, people express their distrust of the government through re-displacement as a “voice in exit”.

## **2 Research gaps**

The field of forced migration studies is growing. After reviewing previous research, I find a number of unresolved questions remain about the causes and conditions that trigger forced migration.

First, in analyzing trends and patterns of forced migration outbreaks, a great deal of previous research has focused on the push (motivation) factors that make people leave their homes. Up to now, however, little attention has been paid to the question of the conditions under which people can leave, and theoretical or empirical analysis on the issue is inconclusive. We witness

that there are areas that do not experience a population outflow despite the presence of the socioeconomic, political, economic, and environmental motivating factors that have been pointed out in past studies. Conversely, in the absence of these factors, some areas still experience a population outflow. This suggests that in order to understand the outbreak of forced migration, factors that cause people to leave, and factors that determine the conditions in which people can leave must be considered together.

In light of this, the second thing that remains unclear in the previous studies is what factors create the structural conditions that determine whether people can or cannot leave. Despite the high degree of its importance, there remains a paucity of evidence on the influence of regime change in the state of origin on the occurrence of forced migration. In other words, exactly how regime change encourages people to flee or inhibits them from doing so is still not fully understood. Several studies have focused on the relationship between the types of regime and the patterns of migration. However, in most of these studies, regime transition has not been applied as a predictor of forced migration. Studies that do use regime transition as a predictor of forced migration in their statistical analysis still suffer from a lack of well-grounded theoretical considerations.

### **3 The possible impact of regime transition on forced migration**

The majority of existing studies have the commonality that they acknowledge that political and economic insecurity and the presence of violence are driving forces of the outbreak of human displacement. Changes and transitions in a political regime, which can take various forms, can inevitably cause a profound political, economic, and security impact on society. In this respect, this paper raises the need to visit the possible effects of regime transition on forced migration.

This part briefly reviews the potential political, economic, and security implications of regime transition.

Regime transition can proceed either toward democracy or toward autocracy. Many studies believe that a regime transition toward democracy can positively contribute to political stability because the introduction of a democratic institution serves to moderate internal and international disputes (e.g. Cervellati et al., 2011; Pastor and Sung, 1995; Cervellati and Sunde, 2014). Also, many scholars agree that democratization prevents interstate aggression and contributes to regional and international peace (e.g. Hermann and Kegley, 1996; Kegley and Hermann, 1997; Maoz and Abdolali, 2016). On the other hand, there is also an opinion that regime transition toward democracy causes political and security instability (e.g. Cederman et al., 2010; Mansfield and Snyder, 1995; Powell, 1982). For example, Mansfield and Snyder's study (1995) shows that a newly democratizing state is more likely than a full democracy to engage in international war due to its institutional weakness. In their follow-up studies, they find that the vulnerability of democratizing states to engagement in international wars is more pronounced in transitional states proceeding from the autocratic regime to the partly democratic (anocratic) regime (Mansfield and Snyder, 2002).

Scholars such as Cassani and Tomini (2018) viewed autocratization as a phenomenon in which individual political freedom and rights decrease and the autonomy and power of the regime increase. Besides, many previous studies argue that autocratization is conflict-prone (Francisco, 1995; Mansfield and Snyder, 1995; Muller and Weede, 1990). Enterline (1998) argues that autocratization is positively correlated with dispute initiation through his statistical analysis of 171 countries from 1816 to 1992.

Several studies argue that countries that do not belong to full democracy or full autocracy are more susceptible to violent conflict when undergoing regime transition (e.g. Cederman et al.,

2010; Petersen, 2002). Scholars such as Esty et al. (1998) and Rotberg (2004) also conclude that partial democracies are more vulnerable to state collapse than full democracies or autocracies. Zanger (2016) argues that autocratization can hamper political stability by pointing out that state repression without a developed political institution tends to cause violence. Some studies focus on the political and security implications of adverse regime change and conclude that adverse regime change, particularly regime change through a coup d'état, increases state-sponsored violence (Barros, 2002; Finer, 1962.; Lachapelle, 2020).

Research on the economic impact of regime transition has also accumulated considerably. There is an opinion that democratization is helpful in economic growth, productivity, and foreign investment attraction (e.g. Broz, 2002; Carbone et al., 2014; Hollyer et al., 2011; Rodrik and Wacziarg, 2005). This view is supported by quantitative analyses such as Rode and Gwartney's study (2012) which examines the impact of democratization on economic freedom. Based on cross-national analysis, the study shows that political transition toward democracy helps encourage economic liberalization. On the other hand, there is also a skeptical view of the positive economic effects of democratization (e.g. Haggard and Kaufman 1995). Steinberg et al. (2015) argue, based on a time-series cross-sectional analysis covering 178 countries from 1973 to 2009, that autocratic states taking the form of monarchies are less vulnerable to currency crisis than democratic countries. Jong-A-Pin and De Haan (2010), in their statistical analysis using the Polity IV dataset, find that regime shift toward democracy decreases the likelihood of economic growth accelerations. It is widely viewed that adverse regime change also plays a role in slowing economic growth and deterring the inflow of foreign investment (Alesina et al., 1996; Barro, 1991). Gökçe (2017) focuses on the collapse of the regime and explains that the loss of the regime's control over its entire territory leads to outbreaks of conflicts within the groups in society and so it can raise the level of political and economic threats.

Studies on the economic, political, and security consequences that can be brought to society by the transition of a regime, a shift which can take various forms, have accumulated in a prolific manner. What is striking, however, is that relatively few studies have been conducted explaining the direct and indirect links between regime change/transition and forced migration, even though regime transition is precisely the type of phenomenon that can lead to political, economic, and security insecurity which can in turn initiate the outbreak of human displacement.

Some existing studies analyze the relationship between regime type and forced migration. Martin-Shields (2017) finds state fragility to be the root cause of forced migration. He argues that the extent of human displacement caused by fragile security, an unstable political and economic situation, environmental changes, and development ultimately depends on whether state authorities have the ability to deal with these crises. He therefore argues that in nations with high state fragility, people are more likely to leave the country in search of a better life. This study deserves attention in that it analyzes various factors that cause forced migration through a conceptual framework called state fragility, measured by national authority, capacity, and legitimacy. In finding the causes of population displacement, Otunnu (2002) pays particular attention to the form of government. He points out that forced migration is concentrated in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East, and notes that countries that produce forced migration are generally under a dictatorship, which hinders democratic pluralism and cuts off the route of peaceful regime change, which then increases socio-political conflict and tension, often leading to violence. Also, in order for the dictator to maintain power, political oppression through coercive means is often exerted — all of this causes displacements.

Several studies attempting to identify the determinants of forced migration are concerned with the transition of the political regime of the countries where forced migration occurs. Howard (2012), for example, pays particular attention to the outbreak of forced migration in weak and fragile states. In his cross-sectional analysis, he finds that both failing and failed states significantly influence the increase in forced migration. Martin (2012) argues that the fragile peace and democratization process established in many countries during the post-Cold War period created a new wave of forced migration. A study by Rubin and Moore (2007) pays attention to the regime transition in the country of origin of forced migration. They include the regime transition variable in their analysis and find that a democratic regime transition is likely to trigger a forced migration. They suggest that there is a need for further research on these unexpected results. A study by Davenport et al. (2003) and Moore and Shellman (2007) also notes the effect of the democratic shift of the regime on the increase in forced migration. Their research also suggests that the transition to a democratic regime is positively correlated with forced migration. Neumayer (2005) finds that the collapse of the regime is positively correlated with an increase in the number of refugees. Lischer (2007) suggests that a collapsed state tends to be more vulnerable to forced migration. Melander and Öberg (2007) also included in their analysis the variables representing the change in the regime of the country that produced forced migration. According to their study, regime transition significantly reduces forced migration, and regime collapse, on the contrary, increases forced migration. A study by Shellman and Stewart (2007) is notable in that it especially pays attention to the impact of the coup d'état in Haiti in 2004 on forced migration, which saw political uncertainty and threats created by adverse regime changes as motivating people to move. Larrabee (1992) also points out that the collapse of an autocratic regime and the resultant political liberalization could lead to the relaxation of the state's control over population outflows, leading these to increase.



Although these studies have contributed to highlighting the role of regime types in analyzing forced migration, there is still a lack of a comprehensive theoretical explanation on the mechanism of how the transition of the regime, which unfolds in various forms, affects forced migration. This thesis not only empirically tests the effects of various types of regime transitions on forced migration but also explains how different types of regime transitions affect forced migration differently, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Another important reason why regime transition is important in the analysis of population outflows is that it not only motivates people to leave the country but also determines whether people's opportunities to do so will increase or decrease. Previous studies, however, tended to focus on identifying the factors that motivate people to leave. This thesis assumes that population outflows occur when people are motivated to leave and opportunities to exit the country are also available to them. Some existing literature does shed light on the circumstances that make possible the realization of people's desire to leave or that prohibit them from carrying out those aspirations. Some papers have seen those opportunities manifest as an individual's capacity or ability to put that aspiration to move away into practice. In some studies, the opportunity to escape is approached as a structured external environment that limits people's capability to put into action the desire to move. A study by Carling (2002) defines the condition of those who want to leave their country, but who cannot, as involuntary immobility. In his study, it is suggested that, in analyzing migration outflows, there is a need to discuss the aspiration to migrate and the ability to migrate separately. He points to a restrictive immigration policy as a major structural cause that limits people's ability to migrate. Even if people can leave their home country, if they are not given the opportunity to settle in the destination country of their choice, it will cause involuntary immobility. Jónsson (2008) also focuses on the young men of the Soninke tribe in Mali who are eager to migrate but are in a situation of

involuntary immobility because they cannot leave for political reasons or due to other external circumstances. Lubkemann (2008) highlights a group of involuntarily immobilized people during the civil war that took place in Mozambique from 1977 to 1992. He argues that the most devastating effects brought about by the civil war have made it impossible for people in the area where the war took place to migrate for economic survival or to avoid ecological pressure. He adds that those who suffered most from the war are not the refugees or IDPs who have already left to avoid sociological threats but those who are forced to remain in place due to external pressure. He suggests that this involuntary immobilization is caused by complex factors, such as militarization and border closures exercised by the government and by rebels that mean that people are unable to move. Schon (2019) sees that with the onset of conflicts, those who are motivated to escape must be given opportunities to realize those intentions. In his study, this opportunity was considered to be defined by an individual's financial ability and his or her possession of the social connections needed to overcome obstacles to being relocated to other countries. Although the theoretical approaches are somewhat different, these studies commonly pay attention to involuntary immobility, the condition experienced by those who are willing to leave but who are staying because they are not given the opportunity to do so. The existing studies suggest that it is necessary in studying population outflows to consider whether opportunities to leave voluntarily have been created to allow those who are motivated to escape to actually do so. In this thesis, the regime transition in the country of origin is viewed as a structural factor that either increases or decreases the people's chances to leave the country.

A study by Miller and Peters (2018) calls our attention to the subject of individual freedom of movement in analyzing human migration. They offer an explanatory theory for the association between the types of political regimes and the degree of individual freedom of movement. The study suggests that the maturity of democracy and the level of freedom of

movement are positively related. Their research provides new insight into the "opportunity" of people to leave, while many of the studies of forced migration have been linked to the motivating factors that cause forced migration. Scholars such as Niskanen (1997) and Mirilovic (2010) point out that countries under autocratic rule exercise stronger control over population outflows than democratic countries, suggesting that the opportunity for people to leave the country may be limited or increased depending on the type of regime. In other words, it can be viewed that a regime transition can be seen as a proxy measure for changes in the level of a regime's border control and in overall border closure, where borders that were previously closed become open or vice versa (Larrbee, 1992).

In sum, a political regime in the country of origin is an important subject that can directly influence the outflow of the population. It's also significant in that a transition in the regime can create a structured environment that determines the motivation and opportunities of those who want to leave. In other words, the transition of the regime can create circumstances and conditions under which either people can leave or can't leave the country. The fundamental aim of this thesis is to provide a conceptual, theoretical framework that explains what drives people to make their decisions about leaving their home country and what structural conditions enable or limit people to realize those decisions to leave. To fill in the research gaps stated above, this thesis has been divided into three papers.

The first paper's aim is to determine whether a sudden change of regime by means of a coup d'état affects forced migration. The rapid replacement of the ruling leadership by a coup can be seen as a type of regime shift that can increase political, economic, and security uncertainty for the people. Although the outbreak of a coup can be expected to have a significant impact on the public, to date there has been very little detailed theoretical investigation of the impact

of coups d'état on the displacement of people, not only in the field of forced migration but also in political science. Also, there has been little quantitative analysis of this topic. In this paper, both qualitative and quantitative methods are used to identify a general association between the occurrence of a coup d'état and the generation of forced migration and to contribute, via case studies, to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of coup-caused population outflows.

Regime shifts refer to transitions in political regimes, which can vary qualitatively, as some regimes move toward democracy (democratization), whereas others shift along the spectrum toward autocracy (autocratization). The second paper attempts to identify whether the two types of regime transition, democratization and autocratization, play a role in the creation or limitation of people's willingness and opportunity to flee and in the growth of asylum seekers. My attempt to draw up a theoretical framework that illustrates how regime transition can determine forced migration using quantitative analysis will generate fresh insight into the role of the regime of the country of displacement in analyzing the phenomenon of forced migration.

The third paper analyzes the likelihood of a population outflow from North Korea following the various paths of transition along which the North Korean regime can travel. Up to now, far too little attention has been paid to the refugee flows from North Korea. Therefore, not surprisingly, there is a general paucity of empirical research focusing specifically on the effects on forced migration of the various forms of transition the North Korean regime can take. In the paper, the following paths the regime could take and their respective influence on forced migration will be addressed: 1. Regime collapse, 2. Status quo, and 3. Democratic transition. This paper attempts to demonstrate the general trend of whether the level of individuals' motivation and opportunities to flee can be determined by the transition of the regime in an autocratic state based on statistical analysis, and it conducts a detailed analysis of the North

Korean case. The importance and originality of this paper are that it explores the issue of the outflow of forced migration from North Korea in connection with its possible regime transition paths by employing a mixed-methods approach.

## **4 Methodology**

As for the statistical method underpinning the research, this thesis conducts a time-series, cross-country analysis to identify general associations between the occurrence of forced migration and the transition of the regime of the country of origin. The subject of research in this thesis is the flow of asylum seekers and refugees in analyzing the impact of the regime transition on forced migration. In selecting the forced migration group to be analyzed and in establishing a method of analysis, the works of various scholars served as a cornerstone for my choices. These would include Schmeidl (1997), Davenport et al. (2003), Davenport and Armstrong (2004), Moore and Shellman (2007), Rubin and Moore (2007), Neumayer (2005), Melander and Öberg (2007), Howard (2010), Adhikari (2013), Choi and Salehyan (2013), and Schon (2015, 2019).

The number of generated refugees and asylum seekers from the country of origin are utilized as dependent variables in the papers presented in this thesis. Both variables are count data in that their variance highly exceeds their mean. Thus, in this thesis, negative binomial regression, which can be applied to over-dispersed count data, is applied (O'Hara and Kotze, 2010). In addition, a zero-inflated negative binomial model is additionally conducted in order to take account of excess zero in count data. A negative binomial regression model can overcome some of the weaknesses arising from applying OLS regression, which has been frequently used in cross-sectional analysis in the field of forced migration, for example, with respect to lack of capacity to model the dispersion and the loss of data caused by log conversion of count data

(Bruin, 2006). It is encouraging that newly introduced statistical estimates used across the papers in the thesis yield consistent results.

This thesis proposes an alternative dependent variable in the quantitative analysis of forced migration. The refugee stock and refugee flow measures are widely utilized as dependent variables in the area of forced migration studies, identifying the causes of displacement using cross-sectional statistical analysis (e.g. Kurtenbach and Strasheim, 2016; Moore and Shellman, 2007; Schmeidl, 1997). In this thesis, I raise numerous problems stemming from using a refugee flow measure that has been widely used in studies in analyzing the factors of increasing forced migration. Then, I propose an alternative proxy measure that can be used in place of the refugee flow measure to compensate for the emerging limitations of using that refugee flow measure. This study has a methodological contribution in that it produces results in line with the findings of the existing studies using alternative data.

This paper conducts various case studies showing the relationship between the dynamics of the regime and forced migration. Existing quantitative studies in the area of forced migration have often aimed at revealing universal factors that induce out-migration. However, these studies have often failed to provide empirical and theoretical implications applicable to specific regions. This study, however, shows statistical findings which are accompanied by case studies to present a theoretical mechanism for how regime transitions in the different areas induce or deter forced migration.

Also, this study focuses on the possibility of regime shift and population outflow in an area that previous studies have failed to pay attention to, the Northeast Asia region. Case studies on the outflow of displaced populations have tended to be carried out on particular areas of the

world where political violence is visibly concentrated and mass exoduses are active (e.g., countries in Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and South America.). However, the region of Northeast Asia has attracted very little attention from the scholarly community in connection with forced migration. We have several reasons to observe this area carefully. The political and military tensions in Northeast Asia continue to persist around North Korea. The current North Korean regime could be gone under a transition that can develop in various forms. Persistent refugee outflows from Northeast Asia are currently detected, although they are not large-scale population outflows. We cannot exclude the possibility of a mass exodus from the region in the future, given the existence of various root causes that can lead to forced migration in the region and the possibility of regime transition, which can develop along a variety of pathways.

The specific method used throughout the thesis will once again be presented in detail in each paper.

## **5 Key terms in forced migration and research subjects**

The term “forced migration” is often used interchangeably with the term “displacement.” The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines “forced migration (displacement)” as follows:

The movement of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters. (International Organization for Migration, 2019)

According to the European Commission, a “forced migrant” refers to:

A person subject to a migratory movement in which an element of coercion exists, including threats to life and livelihood, whether arising from natural or man-made causes (e.g., movements of refugees and internally displaced persons as well as people displaced by natural or environmental disasters, chemical or nuclear disasters, famine or development projects). (European Commission, 2019)

“Forced migrant” is the generic term for those who are forcibly displaced. Forced migrants come in various categories. Forcibly displaced people are categorized using the labels of refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced people (IDPs), depending on the geographic, legal, and political context they face.

The definition of each group is as follows.

“Refugee” refers to:

Someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. (UNHCR, 2019)

“Asylum seekers” refers to:



Individuals who have sought international protection and whose claims for refugee status have not yet been determined, irrespective of when they may have been lodged. (UNHCR, 2019)

“Internally displaced persons” (IDPs) are:

People or groups of individuals who have been forced to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of, or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or man-made disasters, and who have not crossed an international border. (UNHCR, 2019)

There are similarities and differences between the groups of forced migrants listed above. Refugees, asylum seekers, and IDPs are similar in terms of the causes of occurrence. Many studies suggest that the group consisting of refugees and IDPs was generated from similar root causes, such as physical and political persecution and repression by the state, and coercive/violent behavior including civil and international wars (e.g. Melander and Öberg, 2007; Weiss, 1999). In other words, from a humanitarian point of view, it is not necessary to distinguish between different groups of displaced people in that they are all victimized by conflict and one-sided violence, regardless of the label attached to them. Also, they are comparable in that they all belong to the group of forced migrants uprooted from their homes, all of which need international protection to ensure basic human rights (Cohen and Deng, 2010; 2012).

Despite the fact that refugees, asylum seekers, and IDPs share considerable similarities in the causes of their occurrence and the circumstances they face, they reveal distinct differences

in several respects. The most crucial difference is their influence on neighboring and host countries. As reviewed earlier, the terms asylum seekers and refugees refer to a group of people who have left their home country to seek international protection to avoid persecution. In contrast, IDPs are those who are forced to leave and are relocated within the country of origin. Under the 1951 Refugee Convention, those who cross borders and attain refugee status in the host country are subject to the legal application of the fundamental principle of non-refoulement that states that they cannot be forcibly returned to their country of origin. In other words, the subject of legal responsibility for refugees is shifted from the country of origin they left to the host country in which they later reside. On the other hand, IDPs are still under the legal protection of their home country. In this respect, the differences in international legal status between refugees (asylum seekers) and IDPs and with regard to the subject of who has legal responsibility for protecting each group of forced migrants create a distinction in the influence that the existence of each has on the host countries (Barutciski, 1998).

The implications for host countries of the existence of refugees and IDPs is not limited to legal status. A mass inflow of refugees can have profound impacts not only on the country of origin but also on the host countries. It has been pointed out that mass flows of refugees can have adverse economic effects on the labor market and the public finances of the host countries (Constant and Zimmermann, 2013). It is believed that migration means not only an increase in population but also a change in volumes of economic and fiscal imports (Cully, 2012). Sudden population influxes from outside will affect the economies of the host countries in various ways. In other words, the host country has to endure the economic strain of providing refugees with financial support until they successfully put down roots in the host country or return to their country of origin. It is highly likely that the host countries, especially developing countries, could face an unfortunate situation in which their economies are severely damaged while the

volume of public spending is increased to satisfy the essential needs of refugees (Hugo, 1997). It has been argued that the job market in the host countries tends to become competitive due to the mass influx of refugees (Dadush and Niebuhr, 2016). In particular, the economic security of low-income groups, including women, the young, and the unskilled, is severely threatened. The heightened competition for jobs in the host countries due to the inflow of refugees can create social tensions between refugees and local people (Akopari, 1998). Also, it is assumed that the quality of public services tends to be lowered due to increased demographic pressures (Damoc, 2016; Rother et al., 2016).

From a political and security perspective, much of the available literature on forced migration highlights refugee outflows as a contributing factor to the spread of conflict in the region. An international population movement can affect security in international relations by increasing tensions and strains between sending and receiving countries, thereby inhibiting regional and international stability (Lohrmann 2000). Scholars such as Salehyan and Gleditsch (2006) and Whitaker (2003) conclude that countries experiencing a massive influx of refugees are more vulnerable to the outbreak of civil war. They point out that the influx of refugees can alter the local demographic and ethnic balance of host countries and intensify economic competition between refugees and local groups. All of this could trigger the outbreak of conflict. Based on a study of Kosovar refugees who entered Albania and Macedonia in 1999, Krcmaric (2014) illustrates that refugee inflows tend to cause armed conflict in host countries. The influx of refugees can upset the balance of power between mainstream ethnic groups in the host country, and this can lead to civil war. Zolberg et al. (1989) express concern about the dangers of the refugee community transforming into combatants. They argue that the areas where populations of refugees are concentrated are likely to be the primary source of combatant recruitment by armed groups. They refer to combatants submerged in the refugee community

as "refugee warriors," and illustrate the existence of armed refugee groups that reorganize in the host country, thus constituting a security risk that can lead to conflict. Likewise, Milner (2009) argues that the existence of armed rebel groups, called refugee spoilers or refugee warriors, and their potential for infiltrating refugee communities is likely to delay and to inhibit the peacebuilding process in host countries. Mills and Norton (2002) argue that the refugee-hosting countries can be exposed to various security risks at all stages, from the time the refugee influx is first initiated until such time as the refugees settle down in a new place. The countries that absorb refugees inevitably take security risks in that they are unable to confirm the identities of the newcomers who are smuggled across the border region, as the majority of refugees are forced to leave their country and enter the host country via a non-official route to avoid immediate life-threatening situations. In their study, the presence of Rwandan refugee warriors in the refugee camps in Uganda in the 1990s is highlighted to show the possible security threat from accepting untraceable groups of people. They illustrate that the refugee communities provided a hideout for those militants, resulting in the continuous outbreak of armed conflicts at the border area between the two countries. A similar argument was made by Choi and Salehyan (2013), who suggest that a mass influx of refugees is positively related to the likelihood of terrorist attacks in the host countries, a phenomenon that is called the "neighborhood effect." This is because refugees have often been targeted for political revenge or punishment by their country of origin; therefore, the national security of the host countries becomes vulnerable (Bove and Böhmelt, 2019).

There are also previous studies suggesting that the inflow of IDPs can also have similar results in host provinces. For example, in a study by Duncan (2005) that analyzes the consequences of the large influx of IDPs from North Maluku to North Sulawesi in Indonesia, he finds that the mass inflow of IDPs brings about negative economic impacts, such as a

decrease in wages and an increase in housing costs, and also increases the social tension between the IDP communities and the host communities. A study by Ferris (2007), which analyzed the influence of displaced populations within the country generated after the 2003 invasion of Iraq, also suggests that internal displacement is a result of sectarian violence, but the large volume of inflow and outflow of IDPs within a country can cause another conflict by altering the existing sectarian geography. The influence of the occurrence of IDPs in the country of origin is inevitable. Nevertheless, the degree of impact of IDPs on foreign countries across their borders is not comparable to the level of impact of asylum seekers and refugees on the host countries. Unlike refugees or asylum seekers, access to host countries is not available for IDPs. Hence, from the standpoint of host countries, they do not need preparation for the influx of IDPs in the same way as for refugees and asylum seekers.

To sum up, from a humanitarian point of view, it is clear that refugees, asylum seekers, and IDPs are indistinguishable in that they are all a type of forced migrants, those who are forcibly displaced and relocated. Also, they are alike in that they are subject to international protection. However, refugees, asylum seekers, and IDPs differ in the degree of their impact on foreign countries. Also, analyzing the movement of refugees and IDPs can be a very different task. Refugees, in selecting their relocation destination, choose to flee to a foreign nation, while IDPs are a group that chooses (or are forced to choose) their relocation destination within the country. In other words, IDPs are driven by the motivation/need to leave, while analyzing the movement of refugees and asylum seekers needs to also take into account people's opportunities to cross borders. On the theory side, this study focuses on identifying the mechanism of how people's motivation and opportunities to leave their home increase or decrease in the course of the regime transition. Given that the opportunity for people to cross borders can be directly linked to changes in the regime's level of control over borders and

population flow during the course of regime transition, in this thesis, it would be appropriate to focus on the explanation of the movement of forced migrant groups who cross borders. This thesis, from a policy perspective, aims to identify international security risk factors that are likely to inform contingency planning for human crises related to forced migration across borders. Therefore, this study exclusively selects refugees and asylum seekers among the various categories of forced migrants as subjects of the study.

## **6 Expected contributions to knowledge**

This study highlights the role of regime change/transition taking various forms in the country of origin in the discussion of the causes of forced migration. Although the existing studies have been rich in discussions on specific factors that cause forced migration, the regime in the country of origin, which has a profound influence in generating those factors, has not gained much attention from academia. This study makes an essential contribution to the existing literature by providing an empirical and theoretical explanation of how different types of regime transition can affect the occurrence of forced migration differently. The understanding of the link between regime transitions and the outflow of forced migration proposed in this study enables the prediction and analysis of regions that have the potential for regime transition but that have not yet experienced a mass population outflow. Bridging the research discipline of regime transition and forced migration by providing a theoretical framework that people's motivation and opportunity to leave the country will determine the outflow of forced migration is academically novel. It broadens the existing partial understanding of the influence of particular types of regimes on forced migration and provides a comprehensive theory that connects the two research disciplines. Taking it a step further, this study does not just identify

the quantitative impact of a regime transition on the outflow of the population but attempts to discuss the differences in the groups of displaced people produced by a qualitatively heterogeneous regime transition. This discussion could be a stepping stone for future studies in forced migration.

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V

**Paper 1:**  
**Coups D'état and Refugee Flows**



## Statement of Authorship

<b>This declaration concerns the article entitled:</b>				
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<b>Copyright status (tick the appropriate statement)</b>				
I hold the copyright for this material <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Copyright is retained by the publisher, but I have been given permission to replicate the material here <input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>Candidate's contribution to the paper (provide details, and also indicate as a percentage)</b>	<p>The candidate contributed to / considerably contributed to / predominantly executed the...</p> <p>Formulation of ideas: 70%</p> <p>The idea that an attempt to execute a coup d'état would affect the volume of refugees generated and the premise that a successful coup would have greater impact on the refugee outflow than a failed coup are both mainly introduced and developed by the candidate from 2016. The theory explaining the mechanism of how the onset of a coup motivates people to flee is further developed and refined by co-authors.</p> <p>Design of methodology: 70%</p> <p>The data set is established and the method of analysis is selected by the candidate. The candidate conducts a substantial portion of the primary analyses.</p> <p>Experimental work: 70%</p> <p>The data collection is mainly carried out by the candidate. Also, the initial literature review, data analyses, and case studies are conducted by the candidate.</p> <p>Presentation of data in journal format: 70%</p> <p>The candidate produces the initial draft of the paper. Several revisions to the article were made to fit journal formatting style, based on discussions among co-authors.</p>			
<b>Statement from Candidate</b>	This paper reports on original research I conducted during the period of my Higher Degree by Research candidature.			
<b>Signed</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Sungwon Lee</td> <td><b>Date</b></td> <td>04.07.2020</td> </tr> </table>	Sungwon Lee	<b>Date</b>	04.07.2020
Sungwon Lee	<b>Date</b>	04.07.2020		

# Coups D'état and Refugee Flows

## Abstract

Much research points to the relevance of political instability and violent armed conflict in explaining refugee flows, yet we still know little about whether and how other forms of political instability such as coups d'état create incentives for forced migration. We, therefore, develop a theory to describe the influence of coups on individuals' decisions to flee, highlighting the fact that coup events exacerbate individuals' physical and economic insecurity and thus increase incentives to flee. We consider successful and failed coups and assess our claims using data for all countries between 1980 and 2015. Our most conservative estimates suggest that successful coups have a substantive effect on the number of refugees: forced migration from countries that have experienced a successful coup is 40 percent larger than in countries that have not experienced a coup. We illustrate the theoretical mechanisms by analyzing four coups in two countries: Uruguay in 1973 and 1976 and Egypt in 2011 and 2013.

# 1 Introduction

Do coups d'état affect forced migration flows? This question commands great interest because coups are the most common type of irregular leader changes and the global number of refugees has reached a historical record, growing from 42.7 to 68.5 million between 2007 and 2017 (UNHCR, 2017). The large increase of refugees has led many policy makers to consider forced migration as one of the most important problems in international and human security. Indeed, large waves of refugees are often seen as a cause of conflict and as a “new” security challenge in the post-Cold War period, fundamentally different from “old” security challenges in international security (see Adamson, 2006). These views are well founded, as refugee flows embody human suffering and can engender detrimental effects for peace and human rights: the risk of civil wars is higher in countries hosting refugees from neighboring countries, returning refugees can increase the risk of civil wars in post-conflict societies, and refugees face a higher risk of being victims of violence by state and non-state actors (Böhmelt et al., 2019; Choi and Salehyan, 2013; Lischer, 2008; Milton et al., 2013; Rügger, 2019; Salehyan, 2007; Salehyan and Gleditsch, 2006; Schwartz, 2019; Wright and Moorthy, 2018).

Leading explanations suggest that individuals' decisions to abandon their countries are shaped by the threat of and the use of violence by state and non-state armed actors (Moore and Shellman, 2004; Weiner, 1996). Consistent with this, empirical studies show that the presence and nature of internal and interstate armed conflicts can create environments that lead to greater flows of forced migration (Adhikari, 2013; Cohen and Deng, 2010, 2012; Davenport et al., 2003; Melander and Öberg, 2007; Moore and Shellman, 2004; Schmeidl, 1997; Schon, 2015). This literature identifies specific events of political instability that cause large refugee flows,

and in so doing it sheds light on risk factors that can inform contingency planning for human crises (see Rubin and Moore, 2007).

Despite significant progress, most existing research is focused on episodes of internal and international armed conflict, without considering that other forms of political instability such as coups can also affect refugee flows. A few studies stress the role of coups, but do not elaborate on the mechanisms through which coups affect forced migration. Moreover, these studies only look at cases where forced migration followed a coup, with no comparisons to cases where coups did not bring large refugee flows, raising the perils of causal inference under selection on the dependent variable (Kyle and Scarcelli, 2009; Shellman and Stewart, 2007). The lack of systematic attention to coup-induced forced migration is puzzling because coups tend to create environments that entail the threat of or direct use of state violence against civilians (Derpanopoulos et al., 2016; Finer, 1962; Lachapelle, 2020), and thus are likely to motivate large flows of refugees. To take one high-profile example, the 1973 coup in Chile triggered thousands people to flee and escape from state coercive behavior under the military dictatorship.

We build upon motive-based explanations and develop a theoretical framework where physical and economic insecurity shapes individuals' decisions to leave their countries. We highlight that individuals flee in response to state-sponsored violence, or in anticipation to physical and economic insecurity that results from political instability, and then we propose mechanisms through which failed and successful coups affect individuals' physical and economic insecurity. Failed coups have limited effects on large-scale repression and are less likely to threaten physical security of large segments from society. Failed coups, however, can increase uncertainty of economic agents and societal actors that raise economic insecurity and

hinder economic prospects. On the other hand, successful coups have significant effects on individuals' physical and economic insecurity due to its effects on increasing repression and economic decline. Our theory predicts that refugee flow will be higher in countries that experience a failed coup attempt than in countries with no coup and forced migration will be higher in countries that experience a successful coup than in countries that experience a failed coup or no coup.

We use a panel data set for all independent states between 1980 and 2015 to assess our theory. The empirical results point to a strong and positive relationship between successful coups and refugee flows, while we find limited evidence that failed coups influence forced migration. Our most conservative estimates suggest that forced displacement in countries that experience a successful coup is about 40 per cent larger than in countries with no coup. These findings hold after controlling for other relevant determinants of coups, country and year-fixed that account for unit heterogeneity. We illustrate the theoretical mechanisms analyzing four coups in two countries: Uruguay in 1973 and 1976, and Egypt in 2011 and 2013. The qualitative analysis reveals that thousands of people escaped in the first two years after each coup in Uruguay and Egypt. Moreover, the case studies show that the threat of or the use of repression and economic uncertainty in the post-coup period are the most important factors increasing the number of forced migrants.

This study has important implications for the policy community and existing research on refugee flows and coups. First, our findings suggest that domestic political instability in the form of successful coups can help to understand patterns of forced migration. As such, successful coups can be an indirect source of political instability at the international level. Our results also have meaningful implications for identifying risk factors that are likely to inform

contingency planning for human crisis related to refugee flows (Dowty and Loescher, 1996). As Apodaca (1998, p.81) puts it, “in order to anticipate, assist, or prevent refugee flight, we need to identify and monitor those causes triggering events of flight”. This study contributes to this noble purpose by identify that irregular leader changes via coups trigger waves of forced migrants. Second, while many studies examine the determinants of military involvement in politics and coups (Bell and Sudduth, 2017; Bove et al., 2020; De Bruin, 2019; Finer, 1962; Kim, 2016; Powell, 2012; Roessler, 2011; Svolik, 2013), this literature falls short in exploring coup outcomes, beyond traditional attention to military spending (Leon, 2014), repression (Derpanopoulos et al., 2016; Lachapelle, 2020), and leaders or regime change (Aksoy et al., 2015; Marinov and Goemans, 2014; Thyne and Powell, 2016). We contribute to this literature by showing a significant and large effect of successful coups on forced migration flows.

## **2 Previous Research**

There is a wide consensus that violent armed conflict influences forced migration flows. Canonical accounts in political science and international relations aim to explain why people abandon their countries and underline that individuals’ decisions to flee are largely motivated by the threat of or the use of violence by state and non-state actors (Davenport et al., 2003; Schmeidl, 1997; Weiner, 1996). Moore and Shellman (2004, p.725) summarize such explanations: “people abandon their homes when they fear for their liberty, physical person, or lives.” More formally stated: “one will leave one’s home when the probability of being a victim of persecution becomes sufficiently high that the expected utility of leaving exceeds the expected utility of staying” (Ibid: pp.726-27).

There are two general approaches about the relationship between violence and refugee flows.

One strand of the literature focuses on observed levels of state repression and highlights that systematic violations of human rights affect individuals' decisions to flee their homes and increase the aggregate supply of forced migrants (Zolberg et al., 1989). In line with this, virtually all cross-country studies show that there is a strong positive effect of repression on different measures of forced migration (Apodaca, 1998; Davenport et al., 2003; Gibney et al., 1996; Moore and Shellman, 2004; Schmeidl, 1997).

An alternative approach identifies events of violence that affect refugee flows, instead of exploring observed levels of repression. Some argue that civil and international wars create environments that prompt forced migration. Considering different time periods and countries, every cross-country statistical study shows that the number of forced migrants is higher in states that experience a civil war than in states that do not<sup>1</sup> (Davenport et al., 2003; Moore and Shellman, 2004). Qualitative studies yield similar conclusions about the effect of civil wars on forced displacement (Cohen and Deng, 2010; 2012). In turn, empirical research reaches different conclusions about the impact of international wars on forced migration: some find no relationship<sup>2</sup> (Davenport et al., 2003; Melander and Öberg, 2006); some find that forced migration increases in the presence of conflicts between states (Schmeidl, 1997); and some find that states disputing international wars in their territory produce larger forced migration (Moore and Shellman, 2004).

Related studies stress events of mass killing like genocide and politicide (Harff, 2003; Harff and Gurr, 1988; Jonassohn, 1998; Rummel, 1997). The results of cross-country studies are

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<sup>1</sup> Melander and Öberg (2007) find that the severity of civil wars does not influence the number of refugees and stress that the threat perceived by potential forced migrants tends to be related to the location of the conflict and the nature of the fighting area, and not with the intensity of violence.

<sup>2</sup> Davenport, Moore and Poe (2003) acknowledge that this non-finding may be an artifact of their temporal sample.

somewhat mixed, however. Some find no association between genocide/politicide and forced migration (Melander and Öberg, 2006, 2007; Neumayer, 2005); some find that genocide/politicide increase refugee flows (Davenport et al., 2003; Moore and Shellman, 2004; Schmeidl, 1997); and others find the opposite (Rubin and Moore, 2007). Theoretical explanations regarding these differences are worth noting. Rubin and Moore (2007) argue that genocide/politicide and forced migration are contemporaneously correlated, but the former does not precede forced migration. Since genocide/politicide is likely to anticipate mass killings, annual data do not capture the effect of large-scale violence against civilians. Uzonyi (2014) claims that genocide targets specific groups, while politicide threatens larger groups and thus only politicide should affect forced migration.

Several aspects seem important against this background. On the one hand, there is a consensus that the threat of or the use of violence by armed actors motivate people to flee their homes in search of refuge. This approach is indeed informative from a policy perspective since it helps to identify risk factors that can inform contingency planning for human crises. On the other hand, however, the existing literature has not analyzed systematically how coups affect forced migration. A handful of studies focus on specific countries where we see refugee flows following coups (Oucho, 1997; Kyle and Scarcelli, 2009; Shellman and Stewart, 2007), raising the perils of causal inference under selection on the dependent variable. Moreover, these studies tend to highlight single-country idiosyncrasies, without detailing the mechanisms through which coups affect forced migration. The remainder of this study contributes to this debate by exploring theoretically and empirically the relationship between coups and forced migration.



## **3 Theoretical Framework**

### **3.1 Motives of forced migration**

We develop a theory about the relationship between attempted coups and forced migration. Our argument builds upon existing theories of refugee flows, where individuals value their freedom, personal security, and economic opportunities, and they compare the expected costs and the expected benefits of leaving their countries, considering those parameters. These theories suggest that individuals are motivated to leave their countries in environments that decrease or threaten individuals' freedom, security, and income (e.g., Moore and Shellman, 2004; Davenport et al., 2003; Neumayer, 2005; Weiner, 1996). Following this perspective, we regard coup attempts as focal points of forced migrants flows, either because coup-born regimes are associated with a higher threat of or use of repression and individuals are forced to escape from state-sponsored repression, or because these regimes can create political instability that hinders a country's economic performance and individuals' well-being.

Individuals value a set of tangible and intangible goods, and their decisions to leave their countries and search for shelter and better prospects in other countries are shaped by a number of factors affecting the presence and quality of those goods. Specifically, motives-based explanations of forced migration point to the relevance of freedom, individual security, and income or economic opportunities (e.g., wages, jobs). We summarize these motives briefly, before detailing how irregular leader changes via coups can affect individuals' decisions to flee.

A first set of motives stems from environments that hinder or threaten individuals' freedom and physical security.<sup>3</sup> The emphasis on freedom and physical security in many academic and journalistic accounts is intuitive and straightforward: the routine use of repression threatens liberty and physical security, creating incentives to leave and escape from violence. Importantly, individuals' decisions to flee do not only depend on observed repression, but on individuals' beliefs about future state coercive behavior and the perceived physical threat from violent sanctions (Davenport et al., 2003; Moore and Shellman, 2004). According to this view, individuals' expectations on further state coercive behavior are key to understand contemporaneous decisions, as individuals decide to leave based on the perception that the risk of repression in the future is high. In short, the greater an individual's sense of threat to her/his freedom and personal security, the higher the probability she/he will abandon the country.

A second set of motives is associated with a substantive deterioration of individuals' income and economic opportunities. Building on economic models of migration (see Massey et al., 1993), many studies stress the impact of worsening economic opportunities and living standards, arguing that poverty, low supply of labor, and low or falling wages affect individuals' decisions to leave (Moore and Shellman, 2004; Morrison and May, 1994; Neumayer, 2005; Schon, 2019). Put differently, observed and perceived economic insecurity can shape decisions to flee, which parallels the above explanation about the role of freedom and personal integrity: individuals sometimes are forced to leave their countries when they have experienced severe economic hardship, or when they perceive that economic opportunities and living conditions will be significantly low in the future.

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<sup>3</sup> Personal integrity rights are those concerned with individual survival and security, such as freedom from torture, disappearance, imprisonment, and extrajudicial execution.

### 3.2 Coup attempts and forced migration

In their Archigos Dataset of Political Leaders, Goemans et al. (2009) highlight three manners through which political leaders obtain power, distinguishing between regular or institutionalized processes (i.e., elections), irregular actions in infringement of established rules (i.e., coups), or through direct intervention by other states. Two findings stand out from their analysis. First, while regular leadership transitions are the most common type of leader's entry in modern history, irregular transitions –most notably coups– have played a prominent role too, particularly in middle- and low-income countries (see Goemans et al., 2009; Svobik, 2009, 2013). Second, there is evidence that the manner political leaders entry has strong effects on different policies, including internal and international conflict, economic growth, and institutional reforms. Following the footsteps of Goemans et al. (2009), we highlight that the manner through which political leaders and ruling elites take power influences state coercive behavior and economic policy.

We distinguish between events during and after attempted coups. Events during coup attempts take place when power is actively contested by coup plotters, whereas events after coup attempts occur after a failed attempt (i.e., failed coups), or after coup plotters obtain power (i.e., successful coups) (see De Bruin, 2019). This distinction is critical because repression greatly varies during and after attempted coups. Indeed, the threat of violence is intrinsic to all coup attempts; yet it is well established in the theoretical literature that coup plotters have incentives to avoid high levels of violence to keep cohesion and prevent the loss of legitimacy (e.g., Finer, 1962; Rouquié, 1987; Singh, 2014). As Finer (1962) puts it, “the whole point of a coup is to carry out the displacement of the supplantment [of the current regime] with the minimum bloodshed” (cited in De Bruin, 2019, p.154). Consistent with this claim, De Bruin

(2019) shows that nearly 55 per cent of all the attempted coups between 1950 and 2017 were bloodless.

Despite a large proportion of coup attempts are bloodless, however, there is strong evidence that the threat of and the use of repression are a defining feature of coup-born regimes. Post-coup environments unfold under conditions of uncertainty and struggle between regime and opposition actors, especially when coup plotters succeed in gaining power. Successful coups tend to bring significant changes in state institutions and relations between state and society, motivating opposition actors to organize politically and mobilize around demands against the new ruling coalition. Under these environments, coup-born regimes have incentives to repress opposition actors and other members from within society, either to thwart popular dissent or to signal resolve and prevent the opposition from mobilizing in the future. This contention is supported by qualitative and quantitative research on coups, which shows that state-sponsored violence increases substantively after successful coups (e.g. Barros, 2002; Derpanopoulos et al., 2016; Finer, 1962; Sudduth, 2017; Lachapelle, 2020; Licht and Allen, 2018; Stepan, 1971).

While coup-born regimes use repression either to quash or prevent mass dissent and build a reputation of a strong and resolved regime, ruling elites after failed coups may also have incentives to repress (Curtice and Arnon, 2019). Importantly, however, political leaders who survive an attempted coup are more likely to use targeted repression to mitigate threats from actors within the ruling coalition and reduce the risk of a coup attempt in the future,<sup>4</sup> which

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<sup>4</sup> Our case studies illustrate this logic. In Egypt, the Morsi regime failed to deter rival elites from attempting another coup, and as a result another coup removed President Mohamed Morsi from power. In Uruguay after the coup of 1973, the coup-born military regime systematically controlled the loyalty of alternative elites, most notably the police, and used repression against any group that did not express their full loyalty towards the new government.

contrasts with the use of repression against non-elite opposition actors and broader members of society after successful coups. Recent empirical studies support this claim, showing that state-sponsored violence is significantly higher after successful coups, compared to the intensity of repression after failed coups (Lachapelle, 2020; Derpanopoulos et al., 2016).

A second pathway through which coup attempts affect forced migration has to do with its effects on a country's economic performance and individuals' well-being. Coup-born regimes tend to be related to a decline in economic performance due to the negative impact of political instability on economic agents' decisions about production and investment (Barro, 1991). Political instability stemmed from successful coups creates uncertainty about governments' capacity to manage the economy and the type of economic policies that will be implemented in the future, preventing domestic and foreign economic agents to invest. To quote Alesina et al. (1996, p.189), "risk-averse economic agents may hesitate to take economic initiatives or may exit the economy, by investing abroad. Conversely, foreign investors prefer a stable political environment, with less policy uncertainty and less uncertainty about property rights". A wealth of research in economics shows that successful coups cause lower rates of economic growth and investment, even after accounting for a potential endogenous relationship between coups and economic performance (Alesina et al., 1996; Barro, 1991; Blomberg, 1996; Fosu, 2002; Easterly and Rebelo, 1993). In a similar manner, failed coup attempts can hinder the economy and economic prospects, since economic agents likewise may hesitate to invest or exit the economy amid political instability and observed attempts to replace political leaders through violent means, although we expect this effect to be lower compared to successful coups. Drawing on our theoretical approach, we claim that a real and perceived decline of economic performance and individuals' opportunities after successful and failed coup attempts is likely to induce many to leave.

### **3.3 Observable implications**

To summarize, individuals have incentives to leave their countries when they face significant threats to their physical and economic security. Our theory underlines that failed coup attempts influence targeted repression against elite members but have limited effects on broader repression against civilians. Accordingly, failed attempts are unlikely to threaten the physical security of large members from society. Failed coups, however, can have negative effects on a country's economic performance, increasing economic insecurity. On the other hand, successful coup attempts have strong negative effects on both individuals' physical and economic insecurity due to its effects on state coercive behavior and economic performance. The conceptual mechanisms linking coup attempts and refugee flows are complements and cannot be separated empirically. Therefore, we limit the empirical assessment on two main observable implications of the theory: (1) refugee flows will be higher in countries that experience a failed coup attempt than in countries with no coup; (2) refugee flows will be higher in countries that experience a successful coup than in countries that experience a failed coup or no coup. In the next section we evaluate these hypotheses quantitatively, and then provide examples of the theoretical mechanisms.

## **4 Statistical Analysis**

In the empirical analysis we contrast the effect of successful and failed coups on forced migration flows, using a panel data set of all independent states annually between 1980 and 2015. In the analysis we distinguish between nondemocratic and democratic regimes and

consider states as non-democracies if they have a Polity score below 6. Conversely, we identify democracies if a state has a score above 5 in the Polity scale.

## 4.1 Data and measurement

Our dependent variable is forced migration flows. We use data from the Population Data Unit of the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), in line with previous research (e.g., Davenport et al., 2003; Moore and Shellman, 2004; Salehyan and Gleditsch, 2006). According to the 1951 United Nations (UN) Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, a refugee is an individual that owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to fear, unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it.<sup>5</sup> The UNHCR reports annual data on the cumulative number of refugees or forced displaced people living in a state other than their own, regardless of when they entered. We operationalize forced migration flows by taking the first difference of the refugee stock and truncated the negative values at zero (see Moore and Shellman, 2004).

The key independent variables are successful coups and failed coups, coded 1 if a state experiences an event and 0 otherwise, using the Coup D'état Dataset (Powell and Thyne, 2011). Coup attempts are defined as “illegal and overt attempts by the military or other elites within the state apparatus to unseat the sitting head of government using unconstitutional means”. In

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/4ae57b489.pdf>

contrast, successful coups are events where “perpetrators seize and hold power for at least seven days” (Powell and Thyne, 2011, p.252). Failed coups are therefore attempts in which coup plotters do not succeed in ousting incumbent political leaders and taking power. We see 132 attempts between 1980 and 2015, although our sample includes 103 events due to missing values on the outcome (52 failed coups and 51 successful coups).<sup>6</sup>

We include several controls that are plausible associated with refugee flows (see Davenport et al., 2003; Melander and Öberg, 2006; Moore and Shellman, 2004; Schon, 2015; Schmeidl, 1997): civil wars and international wars, human rights scores, regime durability, gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (logged), economic growth, population size (logged), land area (logged), refugees abroad, and direct contiguities (logged). There is evidence that civil and international wars increase the number of refugees (Moore and Shellman, 2004; Schon, 2015; Schmeidl, 1997). We thus include two dichotomous variables for civil and international wars from the Major Episodes of Political Violence Data Set.<sup>7</sup> Specifically, we use a binary measure for civil wars coded 1 in all state-years in which there is a civil war and 0 otherwise. Similarly, we incorporate a binary indicator for international wars coded 1 in all-state years in which there is an international armed conflict and 0 otherwise.

State repression and physical integrity rights violations tend to motivate people to abandon their countries (Davenport et al., 2003; Moore and Shellman, 2004). Thus, we control for state-sponsored repression by including human rights protection scores from Fariss (2014).<sup>8</sup> Higher

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<sup>6</sup> In sensitivity analyses we consider a shorter time frame (from 1990 to 2015), which reduces the number of missing values due to improvements on refugee flows data. This set of analysis accounts for 90 per cent of the observed coup attempts between 1990 and 2015, and we obtain almost identical results.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html>

<sup>8</sup> These scores are based on a Bayesian measurement model that incorporates information from multiple sources, including measures of repression from the Political Terror Scale (PTS) (Wood and Gibney,



human rights protection scores indicate lower repression; thus, higher values on this item should be negatively associated with forced migration.

Related research stresses the role of contingency and threat perceptions by arguing that uncertainty about a state's structure may make individuals more likely to flee (Davenport et al., 2003). Following Davenport et al. (2003), we operationalize uncertainty about a state's future by controlling for regime durability, measured as the log of time in years a regime coalition has remained in power, based on data from the Polity IV project.

Economic insecurity and poverty can influence individuals' decisions to abandon their countries and raise the number of refugees. Accordingly, we include the natural log of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita. We also include the growth rate of GDP since a country's poor economic performance may also force individuals to flee their homeland in searching for better economic prospects in other states. These measures come from the World Bank Development Indicators.

There is evidence that demographic factors also affect flows of forced migration. Melander and Öberg (2006) claim that the costs and benefits of migration vary among individuals and highlight a selection effect in the segment of the population that remains behind in episodes of forced migration. We thus control for the number of refugees abroad (logged), based on annual data from the UNHCR. We also include population size (logged) using data from the World

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2010) and the Physical Integrity Rights Index from Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) (Cingranelli and Richards, 2010), torture (from Hathaway, 2002; Conrad, Haglund and Moore, 2013), negative sanctions (from Judice and Taylor, 1988), government one-sided killings (adapted from Eck and Hultman, 2007), mass killing (Ulfelder and Valentino, 2008), genocide/politicide (Harff and Gurr, 1988; Rummel, 1995), and political executions (adapted from Judice and Taylor, 1988).

Development Indicators, as there is evidence that population size is related to a higher probability of forced migration (Moore and Shellman, 2004).

Finally, there is also evidence that geography and physical infrastructure can facilitate/inhibit displacement (Adhikari, 2013; Uzonyi, 2014). We thus include a measure of land size (logged) from the World Development Indicators, as individuals are likely to experience higher costs to flee in larger countries. We also control for the total number of direct contiguities for each state at time  $t$  (land or sea), using Direct Contiguity Data from the COW Project (Douglas et al., 2002).

## **4.2 Method and results**

We estimate negative binomial models because our dependent variable is a count one with a variance exceeding the mean, and thus it is over-dispersed. Our estimates include year-fixed effects and country-fixed effects to account for unit heterogeneity, since we are primarily interested in how refugee flows change in response to the onset of coup episodes (i.e. within-country variation), as opposed to variation in refugee flows between treated and non-treated units (i.e. between-country variation). This strategy allows us to control for the potential omission of country-specific determinants of coups and forced migration, as well as for unobserved common trends. Our estimates are rather conservative since the use of year-fixed effects and country-fixed effects likely absorbs much of the effect of the independent variables.

In Table 1, Models 1-2 present negative binomial estimates of forced migration in non-democracies between 1980 and 2015, whereas Models 3-4 report results for a full sample of democratic and non-democratic regimes. In Model 1 we estimate a parsimonious specification

including only our key independent variables, i.e. successful and failed coups –no coup is the reference category. Model 2 replicates Model 1, adding the control variables listed above.<sup>9</sup> The coefficient for successful coups in the two models are positively signed and statistically significant at the .10 level. In turn, the coefficient for failed coups is positively signed but it fails to reach statistical significance by conventional criteria. Models 3-4 show that the relationship between successful and failed coups and forced migration flows holds if we consider autocratic and democratic regimes. These results support our expectations that successful coups increase the number of forced migrants, although we do not find evidence that failed coups influence forced migration flows. Importantly, Models 1 and 3 suggest that the results for successful coups are not an artifact of model specification and the inclusion of control covariates. Moreover, the robustness of the results to the inclusion of other confounders, as well as year-fixed effects and country-fixed effects suggests that successful coups have an important effect on forced migration.

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<sup>9</sup> Data availability on several controls reduces the number of observations in Models 2 and 4, compared to Models 1 and 3

Table 1: Negative binomial estimates of forced migration

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Successful coups	0.337 <sup>+</sup> (1.83)	0.335 <sup>+</sup> (1.70)	0.420 <sup>*</sup> (2.41)	0.498 <sup>**</sup> (2.73)
Failed coups	0.131 (0.68)	0.0788 (0.39)	0.0928 (0.57)	0.1000 (0.59)
Civil war		0.118 <sup>***</sup> (4.22)		0.121 <sup>***</sup> (4.98)
International war		0.0919 <sup>*</sup> (2.09)		0.158 <sup>***</sup> (4.02)
Human rights scores		-0.301 <sup>***</sup> (-5.61)		-0.319 <sup>***</sup> (-10.64)
Ln regime duration		0.0173 (0.60)		0.0751 <sup>**</sup> (3.26)
Ln GDP per capita		0.0697 <sup>*</sup> (2.10)		0.0291 (1.28)
Ln GDP growth		-0.0180 <sup>***</sup> (-4.01)		-0.0137 <sup>***</sup> (-3.49)
Ln refugees abroad		-0.135 <sup>***</sup> (-11.25)		-0.164 <sup>***</sup> (-18.05)
Ln population		0.00176 (0.05)		-0.0204 (-0.80)
Ln land size		-1.486 <sup>***</sup> (-4.25)		-0.650 <sup>**</sup> (-2.65)
Ln contiguities		0.233 <sup>*</sup> (2.07)		-0.0602 (-0.93)
_cons	-2.555 <sup>***</sup> (-10.72)	0.803 (0.86)	-2.571 <sup>***</sup> (-10.92)	-0.198 (-0.32)
Year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	2369	2063	4499	4183
Years	1980-2015	1980-2015	1980-2015	1980-2015

Standard errors clustered on country in parentheses.

Fixed effects not shown. +  $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Table 2 reports the incidence rate ratios (IRRs) to show substantive quantities of interest. IRRs reflect the change in forced migrants given a one-unit increase in an independent variable, holding all other variables constant. The second and third columns display IRRs based on Models 2 and 4 from Table 2. The IRRs indicate that forced migration flows in autocracies that experience a successful coup are 40% (IRR = 1.40) larger than in countries with no coup, and this quantity is considerably larger (65%) if we consider the full sample of democratic and nondemocratic regimes (IRR = 1.65). The substantive effect of successful coups is worth noting

if we consider that the IRRs of this item is larger than the IRRs of the civil war binary variable (IRRs = 1.13), although it should be noted that the accumulated impact of civil wars on forced migration should be larger.

Table 2: Incidence rate ratios

	Autocracies	Autocracies and democracies
Successful coups	1.40	1.65
Failed coups	–	–
Civil war	1.13	1.13
International war	1.10	1.20
Human rights scores	0.74	.73
Regime durability	–	1.10
Ln GDP per capita	1.07	–
Economic growth	0.98	.98
Refugees abroad	0.87	.90
Population size	–	–
Land size	.23	.52
Ln contiguities	1.30	–

IRRs in columns 2-3 based on Models 2 and 4 from Table 2, respectively  
 “–” indicates that the variable’s coefficient is not significant in Table 2

IRRs in columns 2-3 based on Models 2 and 4 from Table 2, respectively.  
 “–” indicates that the variable’s coefficient is not significant in Table 2

The results for the control variables are consistent with previous studies (e.g., Davenport et al., 2003; Melander and Öberg, 2006; Moore and Shellman, 2004). We briefly discuss the results from Model 2, yet note that the coefficients of the control variables are almost the same in Model 4, when we consider autocracies and democracies.<sup>10</sup> First, the positive and significant coefficients for civil wars and international wars suggest that the presence of armed conflicts increases forced migration flows. Second, the coefficient for the human rights protection scores corroborates previous findings indicating that state repression force people to flee. Third, the coefficient for GDP per capita (logged) suggests that, on average, refugee flows are larger in

<sup>10</sup> The only difference between Models 2 and 4 in terms of statistical significance is that the coefficient for contiguities is positive and significant in Model 2, whereas it turns non-significant in Model 4. In contrast, the coefficient for regime duration is insignificant in Model 2, but significant in Model 4.

wealthier autocracies. This is somewhat striking but it can be interpreted from the perspective of opportunity theories suggesting that wealthier actors have more resources and capacity to abandon their countries (see Schon, 2019). Fourth, we see that economic growth tends to be related to lower number of forced migrants, in line with other studies showing that worsening economic conditions increases displacement (e.g., Adhikari, 2013). Fifth, the estimates for land area and direct contiguities are consistent with previous studies showing that individuals in larger countries experience more difficulties to abandon their countries, whereas a higher number of direct contiguities facilitates forced migration. Finally, the coefficient estimates for regime durability and population size are statistically insignificant.

#### **4.2. 1 Regime dynamics after a coup**

Our analysis shows that an outbreak of a coup could trigger a population outflow. However, what we should not overlook is that not all coups are qualitatively homogenous, and not all coups lead the political regime to one unified development path. The regime dynamics during and in the post-coup period may differ from case to case. Hence, it is likely that the degree of impact of a coup on the outflow of refugees may also vary depending on the direction and extent of the regime dynamics during and after the coup.

From a broad perspective, the path along which a successful coup leading the regime can be divided into three categories. One widely accepted argument is that the outbreak of the coup undermines the existing democracy and leads to autocratization (Onwumechili and Carle, 1998; Agbese and Kieh, 2004). As discussed earlier, coercive and violent repression functions to solidify the coup-born regime by suppressing the collective resistance of its opponents against the regime (Escribà-Folch, 2013; Muller, 1985). Particularly, military interventions foster the process of autocratization of the state in terms of impeding political participation and public

contestation because force is used to remove the existing elected government or the initiative of the civilian chief executive (Cassani and Tomini, 2019). Bermeo (2016) argues that the coup leads to autocratization. He pointed out that although many coup leaders justify their coups in the name of democracy and set out a plan for a return to democracy based on democratic elections, in practice, those elections tend to not be implemented or are manipulated in the post-coup period, which in turn leads to the commencement of an autocratization process (ibid.). The violent 1973 coup in Chile, which through unprecedented repression reduced the scope of the people's political participation to a minimum level, can be regarded as an example of a coup that led to autocratization (Oxhorn, 1991). Thailand's coup in 2014, which suspended the Constitution of 2007 and suppressed the political freedom and rights of the people, can be represented as another case that led to autocratization after the coup outbreak (Cassani and Tomini, 2018).

There is an opinion that the coup can open a path for democratization. For example, the studies of Thyne and Powell (2016) and Collier (2008) take the view that a coup outbreak especially in nondemocracies, could be a starting point for democratization. Based on a cross-country analysis of all authoritarian states from 1950 to 2008, Thyne and Powell (2016) show that a junta regime is expected to meet two requirements for the survival of said regime after the coup, which are economic prosperity and legitimacy of the regime, the latter of which entails international support. The most effective way to meet these requirements would be to introduce a democratic system. In many cases, therefore, coups in undemocratic countries tend to lead to democratization (pp. 195-198). Also, their analysis suggests that if authoritarian leaders have long been in power, it's more likely that the outbreak of the coup will be the starting point for democratization. Hoyle (2019) analyzes the factors that lead military leaders in coups to accept to the transition to civilian rule. In his study, public support for democracy,

a strong civil society, strong opposition parties, and a weak solidarity between military officers are pointed out as major factors in getting the military to accept civilian rule.

On the other hand, some views that the influence of the coup on regime transition can be insignificant in that a coup is often just the typical means of replacing the chief executive in nondemocratic countries. For example, Geddes (2003) views that in certain types of autocracy, such as the collegial military regime, coups tend to function as a method of replacing leaders while maintaining the rules of the regime. A statistical analysis from Kim and Kroeger (2018) on authoritarian regimes from 1952 to 2009 also shows that most junta regimes tend to experience reshuffling coups rather than regime-altering coups.

Our paper conducts further analysis to identify how the regime dynamics elicited by coups as discussed above affect refugee outflows. To this end, we create a variable called the Coup\_Regime in our analysis capturing the coup regime paths. For this variable, if there is no change in the polity2 index of the year in which the coup takes place compared to the previous year's polity2 index, then the coup is coded 1 and classified as a coup that maintains the status quo. On the other hand, the variable is classified as a successful coup that leads to democratization and is coded 2 if there is an increase in the polity2 index of the year in which the coup occurs compared to the previous year. If there is a decrease in the polity2 index of the year in which the coup takes place compared to the polity2 index of the previous year, it is classified as a coup that leads to autocratization and coded 3. In addition, another variable (Coup\_Regime Paths 1) is created to capture the impact of the coup on the regime dynamics in the year following the coup (i.e. post-coup period). If the polity2 index remains the same in the following year compared to the year in which the coup occurs, it is classified as a coup that leads to status quo and coded 1. If there is an increase in the polity2 index in the following year



compared to the year in which the coup occurs, it is categorized as a coup that induces democratization and coded 2. If there is a decrease in the polity2 index in the following year compared to the year in which the coup occurs, it is classified as a coup that leads to autocratization and coded 3.

In our data based on successful coup cases from 1980 to 2015, in about 40% of successful coup cases, the regime becomes more autocratic in the year of the coup compared to the year before the coup. In 26% of all successful coup cases, the government becomes more democratic in the year of the coup compared to the previous year. In the rest of the cases, which account for 36% of all successful coups, the regime does not experience a major change in the year of the coup compared to the previous year. On the other hand, cases in which the regime becomes more autocratic in the year following the year in which the coup takes place accounted for 5.4% of all successful cases. In 24% of successful coups, the regime becomes democratic in the year following the coup compared to the year in which the coup took place. Among the successful coups, 71% of cases do not cause a change in the regime in the year after the coup took place.

Our analyses presented in Table 3 show the regime dynamics during and after a coup and its impact on the population outflow (Model 1 and Model 2, respectively). The results in Model 1 in Table 3 show that a coup that leads to autocratization has a statistically significant positive effect on the refugee outflows. In other words, if the polity2 score of the year in which the coup takes place falls compared to the previous year, meaning that the regime becomes more autocratic in the year the coup occurred compared to the previous year, the outflow of refugees increases. On the other hand, a coup that leads to democratization or to status quo appears to be positively associated with the increase in refugees in the year of the coup. In other words, when the polity2 score of the year in which the coup takes place is unchanged or increases

compared to the previous year, it is found to be positively associated with the increase in refugees, although statistical significance is not detected. These results may represent that the intensified political instability and violent repression associated with the onset of the coup could play a role in pushing people to leave the country during the coup outbreak.

The results of Model 2 in Table 3 show the dynamics of the regime and its impact on outmigration in the year following the coup (the post-coup period). The results are slightly different from Model 1. The coup cases in which the regime becomes more democratic in the year following the coup compared to the year in which the coup occurs appear to be statistically significant and positively correlated with the increase in refugees. This aftermath effect takes place may be because those who have experienced a period of time under the coup government's reign have a higher tendency to leave the country during a period of loosened control as the regime becomes democratic in the year following the coup. The effects are unlikely to take place promptly following the change. For the situation of the coup cases that do not bring about much change in the regime in the year following the coup compared to the year in which the coup occurs, these appear to be positively correlated with the increase in refugees, but the statistical significance is marginal. Lastly, if the regime becomes more autocratic in the year following the coup than it was in the year in which the coup took place, its effect on the outflow of the population becomes less significant. These results can be explained by the consequences of the autocratic regime's further tightening of its control over its people, namely, a reduction in the chances of people's escape from the country, leading to a suppression in the increase of refugees.

Table 3. Negative Binomial Estimates of Refugee Outflows

	Model 1	Model 2
	During-coup	Post-coup
<b>Regime dynamics after successful coups</b>		
Status quo	0.655 (0.451)	0.408 <sup>+</sup> (0.226)
Democratization	0.093 (0.412)	0.832* (0.323)
Autocratization	0.649** (0.222)	0.079 (0.714)
<b>Control variables</b>		
Civil war	0.125*** (0.024)	0.122*** (0.024)
International war	0.107** (0.037)	0.158*** (0.039)
Human rights scores	-0.320*** (0.030)	-0.320*** (0.030)
Ln regime duration	0.090*** (0.023)	0.075** (0.023)
Ln GDP per capita	0.023 (0.023)	0.029 (0.023)
GDP growth	-0.011** (0.004)	-0.014*** (0.004)
Ln refugees abroad	-0.168*** (0.009)	-0.164*** (0.009)
Ln population	-0.021 (0.026)	-0.020 (0.026)
Ln land size	-0.650** (0.245)	-0.652** (0.246)
Ln contiguities	-0.045 (0.065)	-0.062 (0.065)
Constant	-0.186 (0.625)	-0.188 (0.625)
Year fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Observations	4238	4183
Years	1980-2015	1980-2015

Note: Status quo is a dummy variable that denotes unity where the Coup\_regime = 1, and zero otherwise; Democratization is a dummy variable that denotes unity where Coup\_regime = 2, and zero otherwise; and Autocratization is a dummy variable that denotes unity where Coup\_regime = 3, and zero otherwise.

Standard errors clustered on country in parentheses.

Fixed effects not shown. + p < .10, \* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

### 4.3 Additional analyses

We further explore the relationship between coups and forced migration flows by conducting three additional sets of analyses.

It is well established that anocracies tend to experience more conflict and instability due to their institutional inconsistencies (Gates et al., 2006). We run additional models including a binary variable for anocracy –from the Polity IV project– to assure that our main findings not only reflect institutional inconsistencies and broader process of political instability. The coefficient for successful coups remains positive and statistically significant after controlling for inconsistent regimes or anocracies.

In a second set of analyses we ensure that potential influential observations do not drive our main results. There is evidence that civil wars and international wars often influence leaders' tenure and trigger coups (Bell and Sudduth, 2017; Chiozza and Goemans, 2003). Thus, to assure that our results do not purely reflect the presence of episodes of internal- and interstate-armed conflicts, we run additional estimates excluding country-year observations with civil or international wars. These estimates do not alter the substance of our main findings.

The third set of analyses shows that our results are robust to using zero-inflated negative binomial models (ZINB). We estimate a zero-inflated negative binomial model that allows us to differentiate meaningful zeros from others, which we interpret as the difference between states at risk of facing refugee flows and those with negligible risk. The first stage estimates the probability that a zero in the second stage is the outcome of a different data generating process than that assumed by the model. This helps distinguish between states that are at risk

of experiencing refugee outflows but have not experienced these in that year compared to those which have a negligible risk of forced displacement. The second stage estimates the effect of the explanatory variables on forced migration outflows after the excess zeros have been controlled for in the first stage. Consistent with our results in Table 1, we see in Table 4 that successful coups raise the number for forced migrants (see Models 1.1 and 2.1). The coefficient for failed coups in the ZINB estimates is also positive and statistically significant at the  $p > 0.05$  level in Model 1.1; yet it loses its statistical significance when we consider the full sample of autocracies and democracies (see Model 2.1). Finally, we find no evidence that neither successful coups nor failed coups reduce the probability that a state produces zero forced migrants at a given year.

Table 4: ZINB estimates of forced migration

	Model 1.1	Model 1.2	Model 2.1	Model 2.2
	NBRM	Inflate equation	NBRM	Inflate equation
Successful coups	2.032*** (0.615)	0.707 (0.530)	1.966** (0.650)	-0.940 (0.603)
Failed coups	1.346* (0.665)	-0.177 (0.380)	0.889 (0.720)	-0.173 (0.415)
Civil war	0.299*** (0.090)	-0.135 (0.092)	0.357*** (0.094)	-0.089 (0.090)
International war	0.153* (0.067)	-19.176*** (0.949)	0.436** (0.155)	-19.806*** (0.685)
Human rights scores	-0.627*** (0.131)	0.323* (0.132)	-0.338*** (0.082)	0.426*** (0.096)
Ln regime duration	-0.078 (0.066)	-0.081 (0.080)	-0.252*** (0.061)	-0.182** (0.065)
Ln GDP per capita	-0.334** (0.111)	0.067 (0.101)	-0.228* (0.090)	0.205* (0.082)
GDP growth	-0.018*** (0.004)	0.011 (0.008)	-0.024*** (0.005)	0.008 (0.006)
Ln refugees abroad	0.556*** (0.044)	0.282*** (0.084)	0.591*** (0.040)	0.362*** (0.058)
Ln population	-0.087 (0.103)	-0.105 (0.126)	-0.020 (0.084)	-0.056 (0.099)
Ln land size	0.295 (1.130)	2.591+ (1.428)	0.858 (0.753)	1.248 (0.882)
Ln contiguities	0.088 (0.326)	-0.437+ (0.249)	-0.019 (0.178)	-0.197 (0.177)
Constant	6.369* (2.795)	-7.285* (3.104)	3.498* (1.661)	-6.483*** (1.861)
Observations	2063		4183	
Years	1980-2016		1980-2016	

Standard errors clustered on country in parentheses. Fixed effects not shown.  
+  $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

## 5 Case Studies

The statistical analysis provides systematic support for the effect of successful coups on forced migration flows. We now turn to qualitative evidence by analyzing four coups in two autocracies: Uruguay in 1973 and 1976, and Egypt in 2011 and 2013. In these cases, we observe a substantive increase in the number of forced migrants soon after each coup, and most relevant confounders were either absent or played a limited role.<sup>11</sup> These cases vary, however, in the levels of repression and economic conditions after the coups. Given the time frame of the statistical analysis, the coups in Uruguay are out of sample whereas the coups in Egypt fall within our sample. While these cases do not in themselves represent a definitive test, they help to illustrate the causal mechanisms through which successful coups increase forced migration.

### 5.1 Uruguay

Uruguay experienced two military coups in the 1970s, first in 1973 and then in 1976. Under military pressure, President Juan Maria Bordaberry created the National Security Council (COSENA) in February 1973, an advisory board including the commanders of three branches of the military, an additional officer, the Ministers of Defense, Interior, Economy, Foreign Affairs, and the head of the executive. The armed forces took power over many of the powers of government, but Bordaberry remained president. Despite Bordaberry stayed in office,

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<sup>11</sup> None of these countries experienced an open armed conflict before the coups. In Uruguay, the left-wing Tupamaro rebel movement ceased its operations in 1972, a year before the first coup. The coups in Egypt took place during predominantly nonviolent mass protests, yet in absence of civil war. The latter coup provoked some non-state violence between supporters and opponents of the ousted president Muhamed Morsi. The government took some anti-terror measures against supporters of Morsi, but this did not result in civil war

however, the Junta hold effective power. The coup was formally accomplished on June, when the two houses of the congress were dissolved, and appointed Council of State was established (Kaufman, 1979). To quote Rouquié (1987, p.250), “the power of the military was thus institutionalized” after the coup.

Left political parties and the National Workers Convention mobilized and went to a general strike, while the police and the U.S. Chief safety advisor in Uruguay stressed that the new regime faced violent contention strategies, including riots, violent demonstrations and armed attacks against the military and the police.<sup>12</sup> Given the military nature of the regime and its lack of popular legitimacy, it is not surprising that the government resorted to repressive tactics to appease dissent and impose order after seizing power. The government targeted left-wing opposition groups, including labor unions, students and independent media outlets that supported democratic institutions (Kaufman, 1993). To quote Rouquié (1987, p.252), “the militarization of the state was accompanied by the destruction of representative organizations. The parties of the left that were opposed to the coup d’état were proscribed, their leaders arrested, and their press forbidden”.

Torture, disappearances, and extra-judicial killings occurred, but illegal imprisonment was the main repressive strategy after the 1973 coup (Rico, 2013; Busquets and Delbono, 2016; Kaufman, 1993). Some estimates suggest that at least 6,000 people were illegally imprisoned because of their political views, and many of them suffered from torture at hands of the police and the military (Echegoyen, 1975; Bendfeldt-Zachrisson, 1988). Moreover, political struggle between government and opposition actors contributed to increase the fear of violence escalation and the intensification of repression by the military.

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<sup>12</sup> See <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB309/19730725.pdf>

Systematic repression after the coup triggered a wave of forced migrants. Although forced displacement had increased before 1973, the largest exodus of forced migrants took place right after the military took power, reaching its peak when nearly 65,000 people abandoned the country in 1974 (Pellegrino, 1996). The 1981 census indicates that nearly 170,000 Uruguayans left the country between 1963 and 1975, yet almost 106,000 (62 per cent) fled in 1974 and 1975 (Ibid.). Country experts explaining these trends highlight that many people who were targets of post-coup repression or felt threatened by state coercive behavior left the country to neighboring countries. In particular, the coup forced thousands of political activists and members of the traditional parties to flee to Argentina to avoid political prosecution and repression (Markarian, 2006).

Other scholars also argue that economic worsening and perceived economic insecurity due to the coup played a role in the population exodus (Sznajder and Roniger, 2007). Over 30,000 civil servants lost their jobs almost immediately after the coup, increasing uncertainty about their economic prospects (Mallinder, 2009). Moreover, changes in economic policy by the military regime very soon provoked a significant decline in real wages, forcing many semi-skilled workers to leave the country (Skaar et al., 2015). Both increasing unemployment and reduction in real wages have been pointed out as key triggers of forced displacement in the post-coup period in Uruguay (Pellegrino and Vigorito, 2005).

In 1976, internal divisions within the ruling elite as a result of policy differences ended in another coup. The military forced Bordaberry to resign, however, the structure of the regime remained intact (Kaufman, 1979). The coup provided momentum in the military's attempt to consolidate their power, as the armed forces were formally in full control of executive power



and decision-making.<sup>13</sup> The armed forces thus became more powerful and resolved to use harsher sanctions against the opposition. Unsurprisingly, the 1976 coup generated the perception that the military regime deepened and signaled the intensification of repression, despite the coup itself was bloodless.

Political persecution continued after the coup and repression reached its peak. Kaufman (1993, p.29) describes how “Uruguayan citizens were classified in three categories, A, B, and C, according to their degree of dangerousness ... By 1976, Uruguay had the highest per capita level of political prisoners in the world: “one in every five hundred citizens was confined to prison; at the same time, it was claimed that one in every fifty Uruguayans had been interrogated and one in every five was living abroad”. Repression after 1976 not only targeted opposition actors, but also people who had fled before to neighboring countries<sup>14</sup> (Rico, 2013). On the other hand, the 1976 coup was associated with a strong economic decline, and economic policies of the military government tended to benefit members of the upper class dedicated to the financial export sector, with high costs for the middle and working classes (Rouquié, 1987). As a result, 133,000 Uruguayans left the country between 1976 and 1981, although a large proportion fled right after the coup (Sznajder and Roniger, 2007).

## 5.2 Egypt

Egypt experienced two coups d'état in the last decade, in 2011 and 2013. The Arab Spring hit

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<sup>13</sup><https://www.icj.org/wp-content/uploads/1983/01/states-of-emergency-thematic-report-1983-eng.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> At least 20 refugees who fled to Buenos Aires, including a Uruguayan senator, Zelmar Michelini, and his daughter, were kidnapped or shot. This type of operations outside the country were facilitated by the Operacion Condor, a network of South American military regimes which cooperated in hunting down subversives in the Southern Cone. See <https://www.nytimes.com/1976/08/15/archives/political-exiles-are-living-in-fear-in-argentina-appeal-to.html>

Egypt when the masses mobilized against the Hosni Mubarak regime in 25 January 2011. The armed forces did not support mass mobilization during the first two weeks after the protest onset, although they “never actually fired on the people”; “nor did the army prevent demonstrators from filling Cairo’s Tahrir Square” (Barany, 2011, p.28). The turning point came when state security agents and loyalists of Mubarak resorted to repression against protesters, provoking backlash and increasing popular discontent. The military elite concluded that the government response was ineffective and hurt their legitimacy, deciding to back protests and seized power. On February 10, Mubarak resigned and the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) took control of executive power.

Three days later Mohamed Hussein Tantawi –head of the junta– announced the suspension of the constitution and the legislative assembly and vowed that the military would govern for six months, until new elections were held. Even though the armed forces signaled their commitment of organizing democratic elections, a wave of refugees followed the 2011 coup. Figure 1 reports changes in the number of forced migrants from Egypt between 2005 and 2015, and it clearly illustrates how the refugee stock was very stable from 2005 to 2010 and then increased sharply after the coup. Country specialists suggest that the increase in forced migration immediately after the coup on February can be explained by the uncertainty about the economic situation in Egypt, as well as increasing violence against Christians by non-state armed actors belonging to Islamist groups (Dunne and Hamzawy, 2019; Tabaar, 2013). However, as we detail below, the refugee outflow in 2012 was related to Morsi’s election and the subsequent rise of Islamist violence.

The transitional period ended when Mohamed Morsi –candidate of the Muslim Brotherhood’s Freedom and Justice Party (FJP)– was elected president in June 2012, being the

first democratically elected president in Egypt.<sup>15</sup> Importantly, the armed forces assured their power under the newly elected Islamist government. As Bou Nassif (2017, p.162) describes, “the Brothers were not going to dismantle the Egyptian military’s economic empire, nor pursue any officer for corruption or human rights abuse. The officers were to remain above the state under the Brothers, just like they were under Mubarak.” In exchange, “the Brothers hoped that the military elite would remain henceforth politically neutral.”

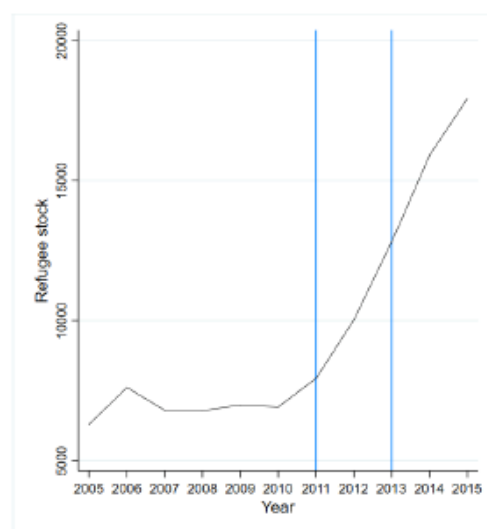


Figure 1: Trends in forced migration and coups in Egypt, 2005-2015

Morsi and his coalition shifted their campaign position, moving “from a commitment to participation not domination to a strategy of controlling the legislature and the presidency” (Tabaar, 2013, p.727). Morsi’s election did not solve political struggle about the post-Mubarak era, and the new government started to try to concentrate power soon. In November 2012, President Morsi issued a temporary constitutional declaration that allowed him to make

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/25/world/middleeast/mohamed-morsi-of-muslim-brotherhood-declared-asegypt-president.html>

presidential decrees without judicial oversight and review<sup>16</sup> The new legislation was accompanied by the use of repression against opposition actors, falling foreign currency reserves and raising poverty and unemployment, which motivated widespread popular discontent and ultimately a new mass uprising in June 2013, in Tahrir Square (Housden, 2013). On July 1, the armed forces urged Morsi to solve the crisis and restore political stability, but his rejection to this ultimatum motivated the military –led by General Abdulfatah al Sisi– to take power on July 3 2013 (Tabaar, 2013). In the words of General al Sisi, the military intervened to “end the state of conflict and division” and to “ensure the construction of a strong and coherent Egyptian society which does not exclude any of its members”.<sup>17</sup>

In contrast to the 2011 coup, the military quickly consolidated its power by means of ruthless repression (Letourneau, 2019). By framing the actions of their opponents as a threat or as behavior harmful to society, the regime legitimated repression against opposition groups (Hamzawy, 2017). Through the enactment of new laws such as the protest law and anti-terror legislation, the military successfully removed the legal obstacle to repress opposition groups, particularly students and the Muslim Brotherhood. Estimates suggest that, in the six months after the coup between July 2013 and January 2014, 3,143 Egyptians were killed, and of these 2,528 were killed in anti-government demonstrations (Dunne and Williamson, 2014). In addition, other 41,000 people were detained, charged, or sentenced by the government between July 2013 and April 2014 (Human Rights Watch, 2015).

Perhaps the hallmark of post-coup repression is the Rab’a massacre in August 14, when the military forces brutally repressed a protest at Rabaa al-Adawiya Square in El Cairo. Around

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<sup>16</sup> However, Morsi cancelled his decree later to appease opposition actors and the military. See <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/dec/09/egypt-mohamed-morsi-cancels-decree>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-23175529>

85,000 protestors gathered at the sit-in at Rabaa al-Adawiya Square (Human Rights Watch, 2014), and the army claimed that pro-Morsi sit-in protests undermined state stability and terrorized citizens by creating clashes between pro-government and anti-government groups (Fahim and Gladstone, 2013). The military deployed bulldozers, ground troops and snipers, and state armed actors fired indiscriminately against demonstrators. At least 817 were killed during the Rab'a massacre, and some witnesses reported that more than 800 protestors were detained and tortured by the police<sup>18</sup> (Human Rights Watch, 2014). Moreover, after the massacre the targets of repression were no longer limited to Islamists but expanded to various categories of liberal and ideological activists who oppose military rule, including young activists, writers, artists, and journalists (O'Dowd, 2013).

State repression and prosecution against the opposition provoked a large wave of forced migrants soon after the 2013 coup (Hamzawy, 2017). Figure 1 portrays the significant increase refugees after the coup, in 2013 and 2014, and qualitative accounts underline that this trend was closely related to increasing repression under the rule of Abdulfatah al Sisi (Hamzawy, 2017; Dunne and Hamzawy, 2019). Members of the Muslim Brotherhood fled to Asia, Europe and North America (De Bel-Air, 2016; Dunne and Hamzawy, 2019). In particular, given their geographic proximity, Turkey and Qatar turned an important destination for many members of the Muslim Brotherhood escaping from government's persecution.<sup>19</sup> The increase in the number of Egyptians seeking asylum in the United States is also noticeable. In 2011, 1,028

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<sup>18</sup> The Rab'a massacre has described as "one of the world's largest killings of demonstrators in a single day in recent history" (HRW 2014).

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/egypt-migration-and-diaspora-politics-emerging-transit-country>

Egyptians were granted an asylum title and these figures increased to 3,407, in 2013, accounting for 13.5 per cent of asylum applications accepted in the United States.<sup>20</sup>

## **6 Discussion**

### *The issue of endogeneity*

Our statistical analysis and case studies suggest that the outbreak of coups d'état can be seen as a risk factor that can influence refugee outflows. Our findings are highly encouraging in terms of contributing to providing a systemic explanation for the potential impact of coups on forced migration. Nevertheless, we should not overlook a potential statistical issue, i.e. endogeneity.

Countries experiencing coups are generally in a state of political, economic, and security instability, and many of these countries experience mass refugee outflows simultaneously. Our database contains samples of coups (both successful and failed coups) between 1980 and 2015 in 155 countries. Most of our samples indicate that the outbreak of the coup initiates or boosts the increase in refugee outflows. However, about 25% of our samples, especially cases in African countries, show that a series of coups and refugee outflows occur simultaneously for a long period of time, and several cases show that there was already an increase in refugees before the coup.<sup>21</sup> Figure 1 reveals the trend of coups and the increase in refugee outflows in Sudan, Burundi, and Uganda. These figures illustrate that there was a continuing outflow of

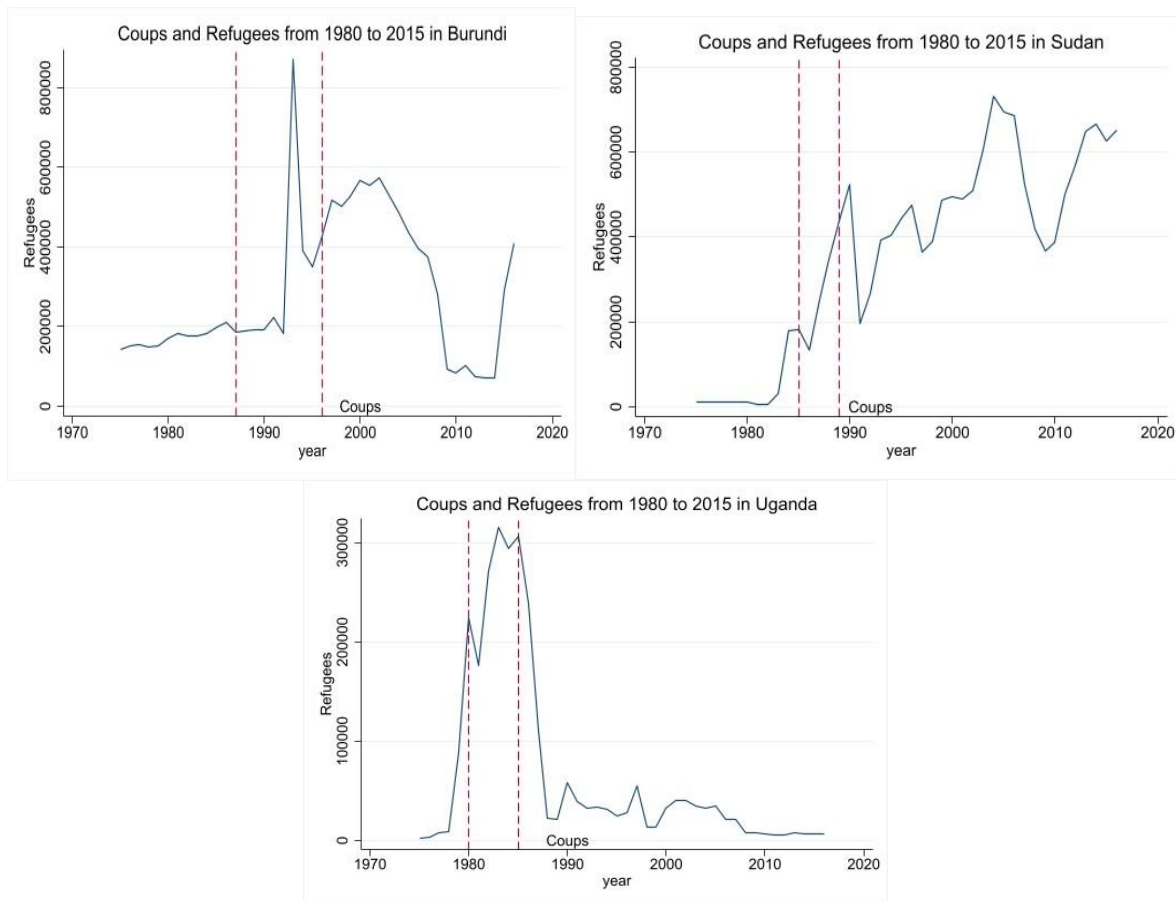
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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/21/nyregion/after-egyptian-revolution-an-influx-of-copts-at-a-queenschurch.html>

<sup>21</sup> We identified if there was an increase of more than 500 refugees during the three years prior to the coup.

refugees before a coup, and the coup was boosting that outmigration, and that outflow was again followed by another coup. The trend found in three different countries in Africa suggests that in some regions, we cannot easily determine the directional causality between the outbreak of a coup and refugee outflows.

Figure 1. Coups and Refugees from 1980 to 2015 in Sudan, Burundi and Uganda



(UNHCR, 2019)

Therefore, although the argument that a coup could have a direct impact on the refugee outflows is highly convincing and largely applicable to many regions in the world, we still have to consider the possibility that the increase in refugee flows could reversely affect the outbreak of the coup (i.e. reversal causality). That is, at this point, we cannot completely rule out the possibility of endogeneity between the occurrence of a coup and the increase in refugees. In other words, the `coup_regime` paths variables (i.e. status quo, democratization, and

autocratization) may not be exogenous variables as required to achieve robust, consistent and unbiased estimators (Ketokivi and McIntosh, 2017). The sources of endogeneity for the current study is the simultaneity. As explained above, the outbreak of the coup and refugees may “simultaneously affect/cause each other” (Ullah et al., 2018, pp.71). Particularly, existing studies have suggested that an increase in refugees may affect the regime dynamics of the country of origin. Representatively, Betts and Jones (2016) point out that a diaspora group of refugees mobilized abroad can exert a significant influence that can lead to a change in the political landscape of the country of origin. Besides, a group of scholars believe that mass refugee outflows can undermine the legitimacy of the ruling regime, as it can heighten the political insecurity not just within the country of origin and but also in host countries. (e.g. Salehyan and Gleditsch, 2006; Lischer, 2007; Whitaker, 2003; Adamson, 2006). For example, Krcmaric (2014) analyses the inflow and outflow of refugees from a country and finds that these can have a profound impact on the power dynamics among political ruling elites because it alters the demographic balance, specifically the distribution of ethnic groups. Greene (1990), in his book “Comparative Revolutionary Movements: Search for Theory and Justice,” provides concise descriptions of accelerators of revolutionary movements. Military defeat, economic crisis, government violence, reform and political change, elite fragmentation, and the demonstration effect are considered to be accelerators. Given that coups tend to occur when the political and economic instability of the country increases and the durability of the ruling regime is weakened, we cannot rule out the possibility that an increase in refugees can create an environment that increases the likelihood of a coup.

From the perspective of statistical analysis, this suggests that the possibility that the error terms of our dependent variable (refugee flow) in the main models can be correlated with our independent variable (coup d'état) cannot be excluded entirely. The existing literature has



recommended the two-stage least squares (2SLS) as an effective statistical technique that takes into account the reverse causality (or simultaneity) of the dependent variable and the independent variables (Maydeu-Olivares et al., 2019). To implement this analyses, instrumental variables, which are correlated with a potentially endogenous variable but is not directly associated with the dependent variable, are required to uncover the unobserved potential influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable (Tyvimaa et al., 2019). However, as discussed above, studies on the effect of coups on forced migration have not sufficiently accumulated. Similarly, analyses which review the impact of refugee outflows on the political regime of the country of origin, more specifically on the power dynamics among political elite groups, are also scarce in the extant literature. It means appropriate instrumental variables have not been determined or suggested. The choice of instrumental variables is critical which can tremendously impact the robustness of the whole analysis. Hence, it is challenging to choose a variable that can meet the requirements of being an instrumental variable and is available to collect. Hence, the feasibility of its collection at this stage is also in doubt. Therefore, applying two-stage least squares (2SLS) in the thesis is also challenging at this stage. We hope that this study, which uncovers the possible effects of a coup on refugee outflows, can be the basis for future studies that attempt to identify the existence of bidirectional interaction between the occurrence of a coup and refugee outflows.

## **7 Conclusion**

Forced migration has become one the most important challenges for global governance and human rights over the last decades. Even though much research examines how political instability affects refugee flows, coups d'état have received very little attention in the existing

literature. This study has examined theoretically and empirically the effect of coups on refugee flows. We argued that coups are focal points that trigger refugee flows, largely because post-coup repression motivates people to escape from the threat of or the use of state violence and because coups signal future policies that raise perceived threats to personal and economic security.

This study provides quantitative and qualitative evidence for a positive relationship between successful coups and forced migration flows. Our statistical analysis shows that successful coups have a positive and significant effect on forced migration flows. The estimated magnitude of this effect is large: forced migration in countries that experience a successful coup is between 40 and 65 percent larger than in countries with no coups. These results are robust to the inclusion of a battery of controls, the use of fixed-effects and country-fixed effects that account for unit heterogeneity, and different model specifications.

The case studies complement the statistical analysis and offer nuanced insight into how coups function as focal points and are followed by large refugee outflows. The analysis corroborates that people react quickly to episodes of political instability and coups increase forced migration in their immediate aftermath. In the four episodes we see that thousands of people escaped in the first two years after each coup in Uruguay and Egypt. In addition, the case studies yield support for our theoretical mechanisms, revealing that the threat of or the use of repression and economic uncertainty in the post-coup period are crucial factors to understand the link between military takeovers and forced migration, although repression seems to play the most important role.

The 1973 coup in Uruguay and the 2013 coup in Egypt were followed by systematic abuses of civil rights and open repression against opposition actors and broader segments of society, motivating thousands of people to flee. Regardless of variation in the intensity and types of repression—repression in the 2013 coup in Egypt tended to be more brutal compared to the 1973 coup in Uruguay, where repression took the form of political imprisonment—, post-coup repression was the main trigger of forced migration in the two countries. Notwithstanding the prominent role of repression, however, we also see that the two coups in Uruguay affected economic conditions and people’s views about future economic opportunities, motivating many to flee to neighboring countries.

Like in Uruguay, the 2011 coup in Egypt highlights the relevance of economic motives of forced migration after coups. However, it is important to note that the 2011 coup also created a window of opportunity for non-state armed actors to resort to sectarian violence that forced many Christians to escape from Islamist violence. This highlights another mechanism in action, where coups are associated with violence by non-state armed actors that threaten specific groups and ultimately forced them to leave to avoid the risk of repression. Whereas we found in our cases systematic evidence that repression and economic worsening after the coup played a prominent role in motivating forced displacement and these experiences mirror those from many other countries, further research could expand on how systematic is that coups are related to non-state armed violence induced forced migration and under what conditions this is most likely to occur.

Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative evidence points to the relevance of coups in explaining refugee flows, beyond episodes of armed conflict that have received the most attention in previous research. This makes us better able to identify the contexts in which

countries experience a high risk of generating large number of forced migrants. As such, this study has relevant policy implications, showing how important it can be for international actors to realize the overall benefits on human rights and regional political stability that can be achieved if they develop contingency planning in those contexts where coup onsets are more likely. This goal is certainly possible considering recent advances in the forecasting of coups<sup>22</sup> (Ward and Beger, 2017).

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<sup>22</sup> See, e.g., <https://oefresearch.org/activities/coup-cast>

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## **Supplementary Appendix**

### **Coups d'état and Refugee Flows**

#### **Overview**

This supplementary appendix to “Coups d'état and Refugee Flows” reports additional analyses discussed in the main manuscript, but not reported. In particular, we present empirical estimates considering a shorter time period, controlling for other confounders (i.e. anocracies), and excluding potential influential observations.

#### **1 Estimates for the period 1990-2015**

Our main explanatory variables in the analyses are successful coups and failed coups from the Coup d'états Dataset (Powell and Thyne, 2011). Coup attempts are “illegal and overt attempts by the military or other elites within the state apparatus to unseat the sitting head of government using unconstitutional means”. Successful coups are events where “perpetrators seize and hold power for at least seven days” (Powell and Thyne, 2011, p.252). We see 132 attempts between 1980 and 2015, although our analysis includes 103 events due to missing values on the outcome (52 failed coups and 51 successful coups). We consider here a shorter time period (1990 to 2015), which reduces the number of missing values due to improvements on refugee flows data. This analysis now accounts for 90 per cent of the observed coup attempts between 1990 and 2015. Following this approach, empirical estimates reported in Table 1 replicate Models 2 and 4 reported in Table 2 in the manuscript, considering the period between 1990 and 2015. Consistent with the results reported in the manuscript, we see that successful coups positively affect the number of forced migrants, while the coefficient for failed coups remains positive but insignificant.

Table 1: Negative binomial estimates of forced migration, post-Cold War period

	Model 1	Model 2
Successful coups	0.352 <sup>+</sup> (0.213)	0.469 <sup>*</sup> (0.198)
Failed coups	0.006 (0.226)	0.017 (0.185)
Civil war	0.116 <sup>***</sup> (0.035)	0.124 <sup>***</sup> (0.030)
International war	0.218 <sup>*</sup> (0.091)	0.298 <sup>***</sup> (0.067)
Human rights scores	-0.357 <sup>***</sup> (0.060)	-0.350 <sup>***</sup> (0.032)
Ln regime duration	0.020 (0.032)	0.077 <sup>**</sup> (0.025)
Ln GDP per capita	0.081 <sup>*</sup> (0.036)	0.013 (0.024)
GDP growth	-0.017 <sup>***</sup> (0.005)	-0.011 <sup>**</sup> (0.004)
Ln refugees abroad	-0.184 <sup>***</sup> (0.014)	-0.202 <sup>***</sup> (0.010)
Ln population	0.053 (0.043)	-0.005 (0.027)
Ln land size	-1.307 <sup>***</sup> (0.377)	-0.647 <sup>*</sup> (0.254)
Ln contiguities	0.138 (0.121)	-0.036 (0.067)
Constant	0.098 (0.953)	0.011 (0.554)
Year fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Observations	1708	3746
Years	1990-2015	1990-2015

Standard errors clustered on country in parentheses.

Fixed effects not shown. +  $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

## **2 Controlling for anocracies**

We know that anocracies tend to experience more conflict and instability due to their inherent institutional inconsistencies (e.g., Gates et al., 2006). From this perspective, it is certainly plausible to argue that the main results may reflect such institutional inconsistencies and broader process of political instability. We estimate additional models including a binary variable for anocracy, based on data from the Polity IV project. The results in Table 2 are consistent with those reported in the manuscript: the coefficient for successful coups is positively signed and statistically significant in Models 1 and 2, while the coefficient for failed coups is positive but does not reach statistical significance at conventional levels. Finally, we fail to find evidence that anocracies or inconsistent regimes have an effect on forced migration flows.

Table 2: Negative Binomial estimates of forced migration, controlling for anocracies

	Model 1	Model 2
Successful coups	0.337 <sup>+</sup> (0.195)	0.498 <sup>**</sup> (0.183)
Failed coups	0.093 (0.202)	0.099 (0.169)
Civil war	0.111 <sup>***</sup> (0.028)	0.121 <sup>***</sup> (0.024)
International war	0.091 <sup>*</sup> (0.043)	0.158 <sup>***</sup> (0.039)
Human rights scores	-0.330 <sup>***</sup> (0.053)	-0.319 <sup>***</sup> (0.030)
Ln regime duration	0.009 (0.032)	0.076 <sup>**</sup> (0.024)
Ln GDP per capita	0.051 (0.033)	0.030 (0.023)
GDP growth	-0.019 <sup>***</sup> (0.004)	-0.014 <sup>***</sup> (0.004)
Ln refugees abroad	-0.129 <sup>***</sup> (0.012)	-0.164 <sup>***</sup> (0.009)
Ln population	0.012 (0.037)	-0.020 (0.026)
Ln land size	-1.335 <sup>***</sup> (0.335)	-0.652 <sup>**</sup> (0.246)
Ln contiguities	0.199 <sup>+</sup> (0.109)	-0.060 (0.065)
Anocracy	-0.075 (0.084)	0.008 (0.058)
Constant	0.446 (0.907)	-0.206 (0.627)
Year fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Observations	2080	4183
Year	1980-2015	1980-2015

Standard errors clustered on country in parentheses.

Fixed effects not shown. +  $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

### **3 Excluding influential observations**

We also ensure that potential influential observations do not drive our estimates about the impact of coups on forced migration flows. Some studies have shown that civil wars and international wars influence leaders' tenure and trigger coups (e.g., Bell and Sudduth, 2017; Chiozza and Goemans, 2003). In order to assure that our empirical estimates do not reflect the presence of ongoing episodes of internal- and interstate- armed conflicts, we run additional estimates excluding countryyear observations with civil or international wars. Respectively, Models 1-2 in Table 3 replicate Models 2 and 4 in Table 2 in the manuscript, excluding country-year observations with civil wars. In Table 4, we follow the same approach but exclude observations either with civil or international wars. The estimates reported in Tables 3 and 4 do not alter the main results, indicating that there are not significant differences when exclude ongoing episodes of civil and international wars.

Table 3: Negative binomial estimates of forced migration, excluding civil war observations

	(Model 1)	(Model 2)
Successful coups	0.567** (0.214)	0.695*** (0.194)
Failed coups	-0.017 (0.243)	0.066 (0.192)
International war	0.173*** (0.052)	0.225*** (0.044)
Human rights scores	-0.280*** (0.056)	-0.318*** (0.031)
Ln regime duration	-0.002 (0.031)	0.082*** (0.024)
Ln GDP per capita	0.053 (0.037)	-0.013 (0.024)
GDP growth	-0.007 (0.006)	-0.004 (0.005)
Ln refugees abroad	-0.146*** (0.014)	-0.173*** (0.010)
Ln population	0.025 (0.041)	-0.008 (0.026)
Ln land size	-1.154** (0.364)	-0.670** (0.251)
Ln contiguities	0.172 (0.124)	-0.041 (0.068)
Constant	0.020 (1.010)	-0.073 (0.659)
Year fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Observations	1831	3922
Years	1980-2015	1980-2015

Standard errors clustered on country in parentheses.

Fixed effects not shown. +  $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$



Table 4: Negative binomial estimates of forced migration, excluding civil war and international war observations

	(Model 1)	(Model 2)
Successful coups	0.561** (0.214)	0.695*** (0.195)
Failed coups	0.106 (0.250)	0.117 (0.195)
Human rights scores	-0.291*** (0.057)	-0.325*** (0.031)
Ln regime duration	-0.005 (0.031)	0.074** (0.024)
Ln GDP per capita	0.061 (0.038)	-0.008 (0.025)
GDP growth	-0.009 (0.006)	-0.001 (0.005)
Ln refugees abroad	-0.145*** (0.014)	-0.174*** (0.010)
Ln population	0.028 (0.041)	-0.013 (0.026)
Ln land size	-1.163** (0.364)	-0.706** (0.252)
Ln contiguities	0.161 (0.123)	-0.030 (0.068)
Constant	-0.005 (1.023)	0.119 (0.677)
Year fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Observations	1803	3880
Year	1980-2015	1980-2015

Standard errors clustered on country in parentheses.

Fixed effects not shown. +  $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

# VI

## **Paper 2:**

**How democratization and autocratization affect the increase in the number of asylum seekers**

## Statement of Authorship

<b>This declaration concerns the article entitled:</b>			
How democratization and autocratization affect the increase in number of asylum seekers			
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Draft manuscript <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Submitted <input type="checkbox"/>	
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<b>Candidate's contribution to the paper (provide details, and also indicate as a percentage)</b>	<p>The candidate contributed to / considerably contributed to / predominantly executed the...</p> <p>Formulation of ideas: 100%</p> <p>Design of methodology: 100%</p> <p>Experimental work: 100%</p> <p>Presentation of data in journal format: 100%</p>		
<b>Statement from Candidate</b>	This paper reports on original research I conducted during the period of my Higher Degree by Research candidature.		
<b>Signed</b>	Sungwon Lee	<b>Date</b>	04.07.2020

# *How democratization and autocratization affect the increase in the number of asylum seekers*

## **Abstract**

Despite the extensive research on the causes and consequences of forced migration, only a limited number of studies has systematically addressed how changes in political regimes affect the growth in the numbers of asylum seekers. Thus far, the focus of the extant literature tends to be exclusively on the motives that have caused individuals to leave their countries, while the opportunity to escape remains insufficiently investigated. Given the important roles of both willingness to escape and opportunity to escape, this study aims to examine potential circumstances in which these two conditions are created or limited. Overall, this study determines whether regime shift plays a role in the creation or limitation of willingness and opportunity to flee and an increase in people in the country of origin with the intention to seek asylum elsewhere. Specifically, “regime shifts” refers to changes in political regimes: such regimes can vary qualitatively, as some regimes move toward democracy (democratization), whereas others shift along the spectrum in the opposite direction toward autocracy (autocratization). Using panel data covering the period from 2000 to 2016 across 118 countries, our results show that the number of asylum seekers tends to increase when a country experiences either sudden democratization or autocratization. It is common sense that democracies produce less forced migration than autocracies and that autocratization increases refugee flows. What this paper offers by also focusing on the opportunity aspect of forced migration is the observation that democratization is also capable of increasing the numbers of

forced migrants, especially if the starting point of democratization is very autocratic. The level of increase is dependent on the current political regime. For democratized countries, the increase in asylum seekers tends to be smaller if the countries experience a further democratizing regime shift. Such a diminishing marginal effect is explained as the decrease in willingness to escape gradually outweighing the effects of higher opportunity to escape, which occurs in more democratic countries. In other words, as democratic countries become more democratic, the outward flow of the population becomes less prominent because people are less motivated to escape, even if the opportunity to escape is greater. While democratization may reduce the motive to leave, it may not change the fact that migrants from countries that are still very autocratic are forced to leave. On the other hand, during autocratization, the increase in asylum seekers is larger if the countries are more democratic (or less autocratic). There is an increasing marginal effect because in more democratic milieus, opportunities to escape still exist that accommodate the increase in willingness to escape as a result of autocratization. In other words, if an already autocratic country further autocratizes, population outflow is mitigated as the citizen's opportunities to escape the country are diminished, even if their motivation to escape increases.

# 1 Introduction

In 2019, there were more than 70 million people who had lost their homes in various parts of the world; 30 percent of them were estimated to be refugees, and still, dozens of people continue to be displaced every minute (UNHCR, 2019). Unlike other forms of migration, the causes and consequences of the ongoing refugee phenomenon seem to be more closely linked to international security. Large-scale involuntary migration was classified as the most likely and most serious risk threatening the world, and its influences were evaluated as the fourth greatest risk in 2016 (World Economic Forum, 2016). It is clear that mass refugee exoduses have become an item on the global agenda that cannot be overlooked, and a systemic understanding of the fundamental sources of the phenomenon is essential for sustaining peace in the future. The modern experience of a large-scale population exodus is driven by very complicated reasons, and any form of immigration cannot be independent of the changes in the political regimes of the origin countries. A nation-state is an entity whose regime exhibits exclusive control over a geographic area and border access (Chiswick and Hatton, 2003; Joppke 1998). Thus, changes in the regime may, in some way, affect the outflow of refugees abroad. However, very few attempts have been made to understand the effects of such changes on population outflows.

Some historical evidence revealed a relationship between sudden regime changes and refugee outflows. For example, many Eastern European countries, such as Hungary, Albania, Bulgaria, and Romania, simultaneously experienced massive population outflows and democratic political transitions during the period of the fall of communism. The demolition of communism, including the collapse of the Soviet Union, triggered a wave of radical democratic political change that broke away from the communist rule (Strayer, 2001). This phenomenon

might imply that mitigated border control, caused by a sudden political transformation, can have created an environment suitable for mass population outflows. However, the outflow of asylum seekers has not been sufficiently examined within the context of internal changes in the regime of the country of origin. A general election which was held in 2002 in Kenya ended the 40 year-long dominance of the Kenya African National Union, and a democratic regime was established. Ironically, the number of asylum applications filed from Kenya reached 10,923 cases in the same year (Anderson, 2003; Ndegwa, 2003; UNHCR, 2018). This is ten times higher than the previous year's asylum applications of 969 cases. It is important to note that there was no significant state-sponsored generalized violence in Kenya at this time, although there was some communal violence, and the number of asylum seekers surged despite the establishment of a democratic regime. This may suggest that democratic change in a non-democratic regime can be seen as a crucial change to the structural environment that creates people's opportunities to escape. North Korea, for example, has maintained a full autocracy over the past decades. Despite the evident factors motivating people to escape, such as economic poverty, violation of human rights, and political oppression, the volume of asylum seekers generated from North Korea has consistently remained at a low level. This case also suggests that state control can serve as a key to deter population outflows by limiting people's opportunities to escape.

Conversely, cases in which rapid autocratization has resulted in increased forced migration are also found in many countries. Mali, which maintained a democratic political system based on multi-party elections for 20 years from 1992, experienced rapid democratic backsliding due to a coup initiated by rebels in 2012 (Arieff and Johnson, 2012). This transition led to broader political and security instability, which in turn increased threats to those nations' populations and intensified their motivation to escape (Thurston and Lebovich, 2013). Burundi's case in

2015 also clearly shows how a regression of democracy can induce population outflows. Pierre Nkurunziza, who had served as President of Burundi since 2005, announced his commitment to running in his third presidential election in 2015. His announcement faced strong criticism due to its unconstitutionality, resulting in massive protests by opponents. In addition, military personnel who resisted President Nkurunziza staged a coup in May 2015, although it ended in failure (Amnesty International, 2015). The opposition rally, which took place before and after the presidential election in July 2015, was mostly suppressed by government forces, and universities and several radio stations were also closed by the government (Jobbins and Ahitungiye, 2015; Mross, 2015; Schlein, 2015). During this period, political instability caused by the autocratic shift of the ruling regime generated hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers and refugees in a short period of time. Mauritania also experienced a sharp regime shift toward autocracy in 2008. Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi, who was elected Mauritania's president in the 2007 democratic election, was overthrown by a coup led by military personnel, including General Abdel Aziz, which put Mauritania under the control of the High Council of State (United States Department of State, 2009). Although the military coup was relatively less violent, the number of asylum seekers from Mauritania continued to increase over the subsequent few years due to damaged democratic values and increased political instability. As can be seen in history, the shift in the political system of the country of origin plays a very important part in understanding the causes of the occurrence of forced migration and the structural environments that affect increases and decreases in forced migration. Nevertheless, transitions and changes in the regime of the country of origin on forced migration remain overlooked in the literature.

The majority of previous studies have tended to pay particular attention to generalized violence in discussing the determinants of refugee outflows. While it is difficult to criticize the



widely accepted argument and the perceived “orthodox viewpoint” that “the occurrence of violence causes diaspora,” this “conflict-induced” approach has revealed certain limitations in explaining the *non-violent* determinants of displacement. In particular, this approach precludes discussion of the government’s role in the refugee phenomenon amid the growth of forced migration. In analyzing forced migration, there is a consensus among social scientists (e.g., Carling, 2002; de Haas, 2014; Schon, 2019) that a willingness to leave the country does not always create a population outflow and that a population outflow can occur only if the opportunity or capability to realize that will to leave exists. In other words, the willingness and opportunity to leave have a combined influence on the outflow of population. In this regard, this study examines the impact of regime changes on the increase in the number of asylum seekers. By analyzing the contrasting phenomena of democratization and autocratization, the relevance of sudden regime change can be highlighted and explained through its effects on the opportunity and willingness to escape.

The article is structured as follows. Section 2 presents a literature review on the determinants of forced migration. Section 3 outlines the argument that regime shifts in different directions can result in different consequences for refugee outflows; also, in section 3, a discussion will follow about how regime changes can limit or create motivations and opportunities for people to escape. Section 4 outlines the structure of the analysis and describes both the methodology and the data. The main findings are presented in section 4. Then, I will conclude with a discussion of the contributions of this study.

## **2 Previous research**

### **2.1 Determinants of forced migration**

In discussing the determinants of refugee outflows, economic factors have been central to the debate. Breunig et al. (2012) argue that economic aspects are the most important consideration in determining migration for both economic immigrants and refugees while denying the relevance of political motivation in the matter. Their justification is based on the observation that the final destination for a significant number of refugees is often not a democratic country. They argue that the migration of refugees can also be analyzed in line with the phenomenon of general migration and that it is likely to arise from economic motivation. When identifying the determinants of the influx of refugees into Western Europe, Neumayer (2005) specifically focuses on economic factors that influence refugee flows. He underlines the premise that refugees entering Europe do so for economic purposes by showing that economic factors such as GDP per capita, average annual growth rate, and economic discrimination influence refugee inflows. Akokpari (1998) also claims that economic deterioration and famine, along with civil war, were a major cause of the increase in refugees in Africa in the 1990s. Similarly, Damm (2009) argues that refugees decide to flee in an attempt to ensure their own economic welfare by pointing out that refugees generally escape to areas with low levels of unemployment. Adhikari (2013) analyzes how people's motivations to flee vary depending on their level of income and assets owned. He explains that people who are guaranteed stable employment hesitate to flee even in the face of threats, suggesting that economic security is a decisive factor in determining migration.

In addition to economic factors, many previous studies of conflict-induced displacement tend to emphasize political and security threats in analyzing the occurrence of refugees. For example, the analytical model proposed by Schmeidl (1997) points out that the occurrence of violence (civil war and genocide/politicide) is a major cause of increases in the number of refugees. Moore and Shellman (2004) conclude that physical threats arising from government

violence are the most crucial determinant of forced migration. They list the specific physical threats that create fear, forcing people to abandon their homes. In their study, government terror, genocide, and dissident violence are shown to be positively associated with a higher volume of forced migrations. Adhikari (2013) also argues that the presence of physical threats is positively correlated with the probability of displacement. Similarly, Davenport et al. (2003) show that the presence of physical threats such as genocide and civil war affects forced migrations, while economic and demographic threats appear not to be closely linked with the volume of forced migrations. Melander and Öberg (2007) provide a new perspective on migration research by analyzing the relationship between violence and immigration from a geographical point of view, arguing that the outflow of forced migration is increased mainly by the geographic extent of violence, the low level of democracy, and the accumulated number of forced migrants. Their empirical findings suggest that it is the geographic extent of violence rather than its intensity that is significantly associated with the occurrence of refugees.

Weiner (1996) pays attention to the outbreak of violence in neighboring countries by categorizing countries that are vulnerable to the outbreak of conflicts and refugee flows as “Bad Neighborhoods.” Weiner argues that the presence of Bad Neighborhoods affects not only the internal security of the country of origin but also the security of neighboring countries and international society, suggesting that conflicts often spill across borders for various reasons and refugee flows frequently cause the outbreak of other conflicts in neighboring countries. Weiner’s argument is supported by Iqbal (2007), who shows that the distance between a country that is experiencing conflict and a host country is negatively correlated with the volume of generated refugees, suggesting that geographical proximity plays a key role in forced migration. Contrary to prevailing claims, Salehyan and Gleditsch (2006) conclude that an outbreak of refugees increases the possibility of civil war in neighboring countries. The

theoretical basis underpinning their argument is that the influx of refugees from neighboring countries implies the possibility of an influx of people directly involved in the civil war; thus, it can be viewed as a geographic expansion of civil war. Based on the results obtained after conducting a case study in Somalia using a Bayesian change-point model, Schon (2015) argues that structural changes in conflicts, particularly changes in the geographic scope of the conflict and in the balance of power, would heighten the intensity of fear and force people to flee.

A number of authors have considered the effect of the availability of information about upcoming persecution on individuals' decisions to flee abroad. For example, Schon (2015) argues that groups of people who are aware of information about upcoming punishment tend to run away to avoid it. In a similar context, information on destination countries has also been frequently discussed. Moore and Shellman (2004) argue that the size of the refugee community at asylum destinations affects the refugee outflow from the country of origin. The existence of a network composed of accumulated refugees outside the country of origin could be a factor that affects subsequent asylum seekers by reducing the risks incurred in the process of fleeing and settling into the destination country.

Although the amount of research on the determinants of refugee outflows over the past several decades has grown considerably, the existing studies have tended to emphasize the economic and security aspects that cause increases in the number of refugees. As a result, the impact of changes in political systems on the outflow of refugees has received relatively little attention. However, the importance of the politics of the country of origin of refugees should not be overlooked. Betts (2014) points out the limits of the analytical approaches in existing refugee studies, arguing that many of the social science studies on forced migration have been based on a "bottom-up" approach that largely emphasizes the migrant experience as the

research focus. However, a “top-down” level approach is also necessary, as decisions made by the state or other political actors have a profound impact on refugees. Although there have been attempts to include the impact of regime transition on refugees in the analysis, there has been insufficient explanation of the different impacts of democratization on refugees compared to the phenomenon of autocratization.

### **3 Regime transition and population flows**

#### **3.1 Attitudes toward entry and exit**

The key premise of this study is that transitions in the regime, either toward democracy or autocracy, will affect the motivation and opportunity of people to flee, ultimately determining the scope of the outflow of asylum seekers. Hence, the theoretical discussion explaining the link between regime types and population outflow is material.

The type of political system and the level of state control over the entry and exit of the population are deeply related. Therefore, changes in regimes are likely to influence asylum outflows. In general, existing studies have discussed the relationship between regime types and immigration policies across democratic and autocratic countries. According to the extant literature, democracies and non-democracies respond differently to the entry and exit of the population. Regarding entry, a common argument that can be found in many studies is that democracies tend to have relatively more restrictive policies on the influx of a foreign population than autocratic states. For example, Breunig et al. (2012) argue that the more rigid immigration policies typically found in a democracy but lacking in an autocracy are caused by the existence in the former of periodic elections. Because national leaders in democratic regimes are not free from the public’s preferences, democratic countries tend to have restrictive

immigration policies that satisfy their own citizens' needs and interests. Niskanen (1997) explains that immigration is limited in democratic states because the goal of the democratic state is to maximize the income of the median voter, and the inflow of low-income immigrants can lead to an increase in tax rates and a decrease in the income of the average constituent. On the other hand, it has been argued that the leaders of autocratic countries have more autonomy in decision making because they feel less pressure to consider the public's preferences than do the leaders of democratic countries, and so they tend to show a flexible attitude toward the entry of migrants. Mirilovic (2010) explains two reasons why an autocratic regime takes a more open stance on the entry of immigrants than a democratic one. First, the inflow of immigrants lowers wages, and, as an employer, an autocratic state based on a centrally controlled economic system reaps the benefits. Second, the increase in immigrants indicates an increase in the number of people who can pay taxes, which contributes to the national capital.

The emigration policy of the country of origin is also an important factor in determining the size and composition of international migration flows (Massey, 1999). Niskanen (1997) claims that in modern society, countries that restrict emigration are all characterized as autocratic countries. Miller and Peter state that "control over the movement of citizens has long been central to autocratic power," and they argue that one of the ways this power manifests itself is through the strong control over emigration that autocratic regimes exert (Miller and Peters, 2018, p. 403). The reason for a restrictive emigration policy is that the ongoing population drain into democratic countries is considered a threat to the survival of the autocratic regime (ibid.). Hirschman (1978) argues that a large population outflow from an autocratic country could be the starting point of the collapse of the regime. As Mirilovic's study (2015) shows, the propensity of autocratic states to take a tough stance on allowing their citizens to hold dual citizenship, an attitude meant to prevent the spread of democracy in their home countries,

proves this claim. It has been recognized that historical events such as the opening of China, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the end of the Cold War are phenomena that initiated a new era, breaking the artificial restrictions on migration in non-democratic countries (Frejka 1997; Roberts 1997).

In democracies, the opposite tendency is observed. It has been argued that democratic countries lean toward exercising a weaker control over the outflow of the population than non-democratic states because they follow the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and pursue the protection of the international norms and human rights agreements adopted by democratic nations (Breunig et al., 2012; Miller and Peters, 2018). In a study conducted by Miller and Peters (2018), the level of democracy is found to be proportional to freedom to emigrate, suggesting that a transition to democracy can increase the level of freedom to emigrate. Larrabee (1992) also views political liberalization as having the capacity to trigger population outflows. Given that democratization refers to a transition of the political system toward democracy and autocratization to a transition toward autocracy, these changes can lead to a change of control over entry into and exit out of the country. Consequently, changes in the level of control over immigration are likely to have structural impacts on the volume of asylum seekers (*ibid.*).

Together, existing studies indicate that democratic countries tend to take a generous stance on emigration but are disposed to taking a hard stance on the influx of a foreign population. On the other hand, non-democratic countries tend to exert tough control over the outflow of the populace, while they take a generous stance on the influx of a foreign population. Based on the discussion of the types of regimes and their corresponding immigration policies, this study anticipates that a regime change can be interpreted in terms of changes in the level of state

control over population outflows, which in turn creates and limits opportunities for people to escape. In the following section, possible impacts of two different forms of regime transition on asylum outflows will be addressed.

### **3.2 The impacts of democratization on asylum flows**

In many studies of conflict, political democracy has been regarded as inherent to the resolution of conflicts based on the expectation that negotiations and mediation through democratic institutions can alleviate domestic and international disputes. There has been a belief that democracy prevents the government from exercising violent oppression against individuals, instead preserving the value of human rights and promoting peace (e.g., Davenport, 1995; Dixon, 1994; Goldstein, 1978; Inglehart et al., 2008; Kinsella and David, 2008; Rummel, 1995, 2002). A group of scholars, among them Sunde and Cervellati (2014), argue that democratization contributes to political stability by reducing internal civil conflicts. Przeworski defines democracy as “a particular system of processing and terminating intergroup conflicts” (1986, p. 56). He believes that democracy forms an institutional framework in which conflicts among diverse groups within society can be reconciled peacefully in a particular way. Cervellati et al. (2011) also suggest that peaceful democratization can enhance the quality of a political system by allowing political and economic liberties to mature. The impacts of democratization on society are not limited to the political and security sphere and can be extended to the economic sphere. Pastor and Sung (1995) point out that the necessity for the rule of law and transparency of government agencies that can be settled via democratization can reduce political instability and uncertainty, thereby attracting capital investment and laying the foundation for economic growth. Carbone et al. (2014) argue that democratization can increase productivity and growth, as the introduction of democratic institutions and



competition allows the public to replace leaders who have previously hampered economic growth, by showing that democratization served as a catalyst for economic development in the majority of the sub-Saharan African countries that experienced democratization between 1995 and 2004. Similarly, Rodrik and Wacziarg (2005) argue that the introduction of democracy in areas with poor political and economic stability does not negatively affect economic growth, but rather activates the economy. Given the positive effects of democratization on political and economic stability, it can be predicted that democratization will create a structural environment that reduces the willingness of the people to escape. In a similar vein, many studies of forced migration have found that the existence of a mature democracy is inversely related to numbers of refugees, suggesting that a well-established democracy can lower people's desire to leave the country (e.g., Moore and Shellman, 2007). In Neumayer's model (2005), the opposite tendency is found in an autocratic regime, suggesting that the motivation to flee increases for those living under that type of system.

The maturity of the democratic system can contribute to political stability and lower levels of forced migration. However, the impacts of an established, mature democracy and of the democratization process need to be considered separately. Davenport and Armstrong (2004) argue that democracy and state oppression are not always in a nonlinear relationship. Their research shows that only when democracy reaches a certain threshold does state oppression weaken, and human rights improve. In other words, democratization in non-democratic countries, which can be a lengthy process, does not necessarily mean that the level of oppression felt by the people has decreased. Furthermore, it has been argued that the process of democratization in non-democratic countries can create a variety of political, economic, and security uncertainties. Democratization and peacebuilding are expected to be mutually inclusive. In reality, however, it has been pointed out that the process of democratization is

often conflict-ridden. In particular, Jarstad and Sisk (2008) argue that democratization as a post-war transition can hamper peace, and peace processes can also hamper democratization; furthermore, failure to address the dilemma of the coexistence of democratization and peace settlements can result in violence and a return to authoritarianism (ibid.).

Cederman et al. (2010) hold the view that democratization does not guarantee political stability but can rather cause confusion and violence unless a country reaches a high level of democracy. It has been pointed out that the democratization of autocratic states hardly ever results in complete democracy, while a number of regimes experiencing democratization remain as anocracies that simultaneously embody the characteristics of both democracy and dictatorship. In a regime with a low level of democracy, elected governments find it hard to obtain full legitimacy and credibility, often resulting in political instability. This viewpoint is supported by Gleditsch and Ward (2000), who argue that although generally, a high-level democracy is unlikely to engage in wars, an unstable anocracy, which has both autocratic and democratic features, can be vulnerable to violence on a level similar to an autocratic regime. Similar arguments have been raised by Mansfield and Snyder (1995), who contend that the process of democratization can cause political instability and often leads to civil wars. Powell (1982) also highlights the political risks of democratization by pointing out that in the process of introducing democracy into non-democratic countries, political systems that have not yet been fully institutionalized tend to be eroded by extremist political groups, which can damage the legitimacy of elected regimes and cause political confusion. Perotti and Alesina (1996) posit that democratization is likely to deepen the income gap between social classes and can thus hinder social stability. In view of all that has been mentioned so far about the potential negative influence of democratization on the economy and society, one may suppose that while

a mature democracy can lower the motivation of the people to migrate, as consistently found in the literature, the same conclusion cannot be drawn for the process of democratization.

As discussed in the previous section, democratic regimes tend to exercise limited or loosened control over the individual's decision to move abroad compared to autocratic regimes. Hence, in an autocracy, a regime shift toward democracy can be interpreted in terms of a weakening of state control over the ability of that nation's people to flee abroad (Miller and Peters, 2014). At the same time, it is suggested that the democratization process takes time to reach the desirable threshold (mature democracy) or complete-democratic stage (Cederman et al., 2010). Hence, although the introduction of a democratic political system can partially guarantee the rights of the people, public confidence in a democratic government created in a short period of time may not be sufficient to transcend the grievances people have accumulated over a long period of time due to the suppression exercised by the formerly autocratic regime. The perception alone that the state's control over emigration has been newly mitigated by democratization can act as a catalyst for asylum seekers to realize their long-held desire to escape. Therefore, the possible reduction in motivation to escape during this democratization transition may be trivial comparing to the increased opportunities to escape for the oppressed people. Given the impact of a regime shift toward democracy on the opportunities as well as the motivation of people to escape, it is expected that sudden democratization can increase the number of asylum seekers, particularly in non-democratic countries. As a result, the following hypothesis will be tested:

*Hypothesis 1. Democratization is significantly positively associated with the outflow of asylum seekers.*

Nevertheless, what remains unclear at this stage is whether the effects of democratization on the outflow of asylum seekers change according to the countries' current political regime. As previously discussed, democratization, particularly in non-democratic countries, may lead to higher levels of opportunity to escape while the willingness to escape can either decrease to a lesser extent compared to the increased opportunity to escape or remain constant. However, if the countries are currently close to the mature stage of democracy where the motivation to escape has been lowered, compared to non-democratic countries, and the opportunity for leave has also vividly existed, further democratization may not influence or even lower the outflow of asylum seekers. In other words, it is expected that the impacts of democratization tend to be weaker in more democratized countries and stronger in more autocratized countries. Consequently, the following hypothesis will be tested:

*Hypothesis 2. The political regime significantly negatively moderates the positive association between democratization and the outflow of asylum seekers.*

### **3. 3 The impacts of autocratization on asylum flows**

It is expected that an autocratic regime can influence, from various perspectives, the people's motivations to flee that regime. First, there has been a view that autocracies tend to exert intense repression compared to democratic regimes (Davenport, 1999; Poe et al., 1999). Scholars such as Escribà-Folch (2013) explain that repression is prominent in autocracies because restrictions on civil liberties actually help the autocratic regime. As the regime's oppression against individual civil rights intensifies, people living in an autocracy may be more willing to leave the country. In this regard, the process of autocratization can be interpreted as a situation in which the range of political participation and rights formerly exercised by the people is limited

or reduced, while the autonomy and control of the ruling regime are apt to expand (Cassani and Tomini, 2018; O'Donnell, 1998). Gurr (1970) points out that autocratic regimes tend to be vulnerable to a higher level of political instability than democratic countries, and the main reason for this instability is the constant suppression of the people; this increases public discontent against the regime and often provokes political resistance in violent forms.

Second, the vulnerability to violent conflict inherent in autocracy also can increase people's motivation to flee. Mansfield and Snyder (1995) argue that autocratization is a form of political transition that is conflict-prone, especially from a long-term perspective. Both the democratizing and autocratizing processes expose institutional deficiencies, making conflicts more likely (*ibid.*). Similarly, many studies conclude that countries that are experiencing regime transitions, identified as intermediate states, are more vulnerable to civil wars than fully democratic or autocratic countries (Francisco, 1995; Muller and Weede, 1990). The closure or reduction of individual political autonomy can trigger political violence by those citizens who have been deemed opponents of the regime. Violence may also be exercised by the existing regime as a tool of resistance to the opposition (Cederman et al. 2010; Petersen 2002). Political and security threats that are created in the process of autocratization can increase the level of threats to the population and motivate people to escape.

Similar to democratization, the impacts of autocratization on forced migration should be approached from both directions: motivation and opportunities for people to flee. While autocratization can increase people's motivation to escape, it can also limit their chances of doing so successfully (lower opportunity for escape). Autocratization can be defined as a regime shift toward autocracy. Cassani and Tomini define autocratization "as a process of regime change toward autocracy that makes politics increasingly exclusive and monopolistic,

and political power increasingly repressive and arbitrary.” (2018, p. 6). Applying their definition of autocratization, the enhanced control of the regime over the people can be understood as a structural factor limiting any opportunities to flee. Again, autocratic regimes tend to take a more restrictive attitude toward demographic outflow than democracies (Miller and Peters, 2018; Mirilovic, 2015). It is likely that if the level of oppression a government previously exercised against its people is suddenly increased due to a regime shift, it might lead to the phenomenon of “involuntary stay” in which people are forced to remain in their home country even if they want to flee. In other words, when a regime is experiencing autocratization, that can indicate that the level of the state’s repression over its people is suddenly boosted with stronger means, and its control over population movement across borders is also strengthened. Autocratization is likely to cause physical or political threats to the inhabitants and increase their motivation to escape. However, the control of the state over its inhabitants is strengthened in proportion to the level of oppression felt by the people. Increased state control is likely to create greater risks for people leaving their home countries. Hence, I anticipate that the structural influence of autocratization, which restricts people’s opportunities to escape, will suppress the phenomenon of population outflows.

Putting the above discussion together, I anticipate that increased political instability and compromised human rights not only increase people’s dissatisfaction with the regime but also increase their motivation to leave home, resulting in the generation of more asylum seekers. However, the volume of the outflow of forced migration will depend on the existing national political system, as the existing political system can determine the opportunity for people to leave. It is likely that the stronger the autocratic regime, the tighter the government’s control over its people. Hence, the impact of autocratization on the volume of asylum seekers tends to be weaker in more autocratic countries and stronger in more democratic countries.

*Hypothesis 3. Autocratization is significantly positively associated with the outflow of asylum seekers.*

*Hypothesis 4. The political regime significantly positively moderates the positive association between autocratization and the outflow of asylum seekers.*

## **4 Statistical analysis**

### **4.1 Data**

#### **Dependent variable**

The volume of forced migration has been estimated in various ways in previous studies. Typically, refugee stock has been widely used in the literature as a proxy for refugee flows (Moore and Shellman, 2007; Schmeidl, 1997; Weiner, 1996). Another measure that uses differences between refugee outflows and inflows, including internally displaced persons (IPDs), has also been often utilized (Davenport et al., 2003; Uzonyi, 2014). Regarding the former, refugee stock data may still be deemed a reliable measurement in studies of the causes of forced migration. Nonetheless, the measure is exposed to some limitations. First, the term “*refugee*” refers to persons who are eligible for international legal protection. In other words, obtaining refugee status means that the asylum application has been accepted by the host country. Thus, this granted refugee status is determined entirely by the host countries. Hence, the number of refugees may not reflect the number of people attempting to escape a country.

Second, a flow measure using the refugee stock data takes the change in value from the total number of refugees in the previous year. If the change in value from the previous year is negative, it is generally converted to zero. The problem is that changes in the total refugee population are likely not to reflect the number of people who actually attempted to gain asylum in a given year. Changes in the total population of refugees can occur for various reasons. For instance, a decrease in the refugee population can occur if the number of refugees who have acquired the nationality of the host country increases. Alternatively, refugees residing in host countries for long periods of time may no longer be included in the refugee population; this also causes a decrease in refugee stock. More importantly, a model using refugee stock is unlikely to capture the number of people who actually spilled over the borders each year, and it is difficult to analyze the impact of determinants on refugees. For example, the refugee stock in Afghanistan in 2000 was 985,645. However, in the same year, 291,283 Afghans applied for asylum. The 700,000 Afghans counted in models using refugee stock are not those who applied for asylum in the same year and are likely to be people already living in host countries. Therefore, these individuals are irrelevant to the determinants included in the analysis. In addition, the model using refugee stock counts the number of Afghan refugees in 2002 as zero because the population of refugees compared to the previous year is negative. However, 31,781 Afghans applied for asylum in 2002. Again, one can conclude that there was no refugee stock in Guatemala from 2000 to 2005 by using this method. However, the average number of asylum seekers from Guatemala during this period was 3,150.

Considering these drawbacks of the refugee stock proxy, the current research employs the asylum applications during a year as the main proxy of refugee flow. This measure is suggested as an appropriate parameter for identifying whether changes in the regime have led people to



leave the country (Neumayer, 2005). The variable of asylum applications made during the year is obtained from the UNHCR (2018) covering the period from 2000 to 2016.

## **Main independent variables**

In order to capture the impact of changes in the political regime on asylum seekers, a revised combined polity score (Polity2) is used as baseline data in the analysis. This variable was collected from the Center for Systemic Peace (Marshall et al., 2017). Each country's Polity2 index is rated on a scale of -10 to 10, with -10 representing the highest level of Autocracy and 10 representing the highest level of Democracy. Since the study focuses on the state of democratization and autocratization of a country as the key independent variables, two dummy variables, namely *demo* and *auto*, respectively, were created based on the changes in the country's polity scores over time. Specifically, a country experiencing democratization (autocratization) is captured when its polity score increases (decreases) by at least 3 points against the previous year's figure. This indicates a significant transition of the regime, which breaks the durability of the existing regime in that country (Marshall et al., 2017). Although the methodological application is somewhat different, in a study by Fearon and Laitin (2003), the extension of the change in the Polity2 index with a rise or fall of three points is seen as the standard for defining regime transition. Cederman et al. (2010) also view a shift of three points in the Polity index as an appropriate standard to indicate a visible regime transition. Therefore, the democratization variable denotes unity when there is a minimum increase of 3 points in the Polity2 index and zero otherwise. Conversely, the autocratization variable denotes unity when there is a minimum fall of 3 points in the Polity2 index and zero otherwise.

In addition to democratization and autocratization, the study also employs two interaction terms to distinguish the effects of changes in willingness to escape and opportunity to escape (see Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 4). First, an interaction term between democratization and Polity2 (Demo\_polity2) is constructed to capture any conditional relationship between the two factors in determining the outflow of asylum seekers. The variable aims to examine whether the influence of the democratization process of a country on the outflow of asylum seekers is dependent on the current political regime of that country. In the same way, an interaction term between autocratization and Polity2 (Auto\_polity2) is constructed to examine if the effects of autocratization on the outflow of asylum seekers are moderated/influenced by the countries' political regime (i.e. levels of democracy/autocracy) in the year where the autocratization process takes place. This moderating effect of political regime represents the opportunity to flee for asylum seekers.

### ***Assessing the people's opportunity and motivation to flee***

Using the Polity2 index as a proxy measure to assess the impact of democratization and autocratization on the outflow of asylum seekers is suitable for this research, which is aimed at measuring the increase or decrease in willingness and opportunities of people to leave the country in the context of regime transition. The maturity of democracy in the Polity2 index is measured based on three criteria: first, the competitiveness of political participation, second, the openness and competitiveness of executive recruitment, and third, the constraints on the chief executive. The three components are aggregated and scored on a 0-10 scale (Marshall et al., 2017). This indicator represents the existence of institutions and procedures that allow citizens to express their preferences for policy and political leaders effectively. It also captures the presence of institutionalized constraints that may limit the arbitrary exercise of powers

imposed by senior officials. In other words, the level of political freedom and the rights enjoyed by citizens to express their preferences, as well as the extent to which the arbitrary use of power by chief executives can be inferred from the index.

On the other hand, the operational index score that composes autocracy is basically based on the same criteria as the one for democracy, and the openness and competitiveness of executive recruitment elements are additionally considered. This index assesses to what extent a country's political system allows the political freedom and political participation of its citizens, and also shows whether the selection of political leaders is left to the people or to those within a small number of political elite groups. In addition, this index takes into account the degree of legislative and institutionalized constraints on the use of power by political leadership groups. The four components are summed, and each country's autocracy is scored on a scale of 0-10. Polity2 is a unified index created by combining the democracy index and the autocracy index, and the score is calculated on a scale from -10 to 10 (Ibid.).

From a broader perspective, two factors can be inferred through this index. 1. Are there democratic institutions and procedures that protect the rights of the people and reflect their preferences? 2. Can the political system limit the abuse of power by those who run the country? Hence, democratization can be seen as the process in which the scope of individual political freedom and rights is expanded, and the arbitrary use of state power against its citizens becomes strictly constrained. On the other hand, autocratization can be seen as the process by which the level of individual rights and freedoms is reduced, and the arbitrary exercise of state power against a country's own citizens becomes permissible, with few institutional constraints. Therefore, the indicator of Polity2 can be used in this study, which focuses on the impact of regime shift on the opportunity and willingness of those seeking to leave the country. It is

logical to anticipate that in the process of autocratization, in which the expansion of state power is unrestricted, the chances of people leaving the state are likely to be limited. On the other hand, the motivation to leave the country in this process is expected to increase, because individual political freedoms and rights become limited. In the process of democratization, in which individual political freedom and rights are expanded, and the arbitrary use of state power becomes limited, the chances of people leaving the state are increased, while the people's motivation to leave the country is likely to decrease (Rubin and Moore, 2007).

However, since the decision of asylum seekers to leave the country is made at the individual level, there is a practical limitation in thoroughly verifying the increase or decrease of the individual's motivation to leave the country through the aggregate empirical analysis presented in this study. Nevertheless, many previous studies have demonstrated that the maturity of democracy is in a nonlinear relationship with the degree of refugee outflow (Moore and Shellman, 2007). It is also generally argued that the presence of an autocratic political system functions as a push factor that generates refugee outflows (Martin-Shields, 2017; Otunnu, 2002). In other words, the out-migration of asylum seekers/refugees can be analyzed as the reaction of people to anticipation of the negative consequences that regime transition in the country of origin can cause, consequences such as government repression, human rights violations, and violent behavior, which increase people's willingness to flee (Moore and Shellman, 2006).

Also, numerous qualitative studies based on interviews and case studies conclude that the desire of people to leave a country can increase or decrease depending on the type of political system of the country of origin. For example, Ozaltin et al. (2019), in their research examining, from a historical perspective, the causes of Iraqis' decisions to flee, argue that between the

1960s and 1970s, the authoritarian nature of the Iraqi government was a major factor in increasing motivation to leave the country. In a study analyzing the causes of asylum seekers entering Canada from South American countries in the 1980s, Simmons (1993) also draws a similar conclusion. He analyzes that the prevailing autocratic rule, coupled with political turmoil and economic insecurity, was the primary determinant that motivated asylum seekers to flee to Canada from Chile and El Salvador. Based on the findings of both quantitative and qualitative existing studies, the reasoning that the democratization process can create an environment in which the willingness to leave the country can be reduced, and that the autocratization process can create an environment in which the willingness to leave the country can be increased, is believed to be built on sufficient empirical and academic evidence.

### **Control variables**

The first evident controlling factor is “*democracy*.” Democracy has been considered an important condition in determining life satisfaction (Dorn et al., 2008; Owen et al., 2008). It has been argued that the maturity of democracy in the country of origin of asylum seekers plays a decisive role in the outbreak of forced migration (Levitsky and Way, 2005; Moore and Shellman, 2007). It reflects the notion that individual human rights are well protected under a democratic political system (Inglehart et al., 2008; Neumayer, 2005). The origin Polity2 score is controlled for to capture the general associations between the maturity of a political system and the outbreak of forced migration. If the influence of the regime change on asylum seekers can be analyzed as a factor of structural constraint, the maturity of the political system itself can be classified into the motivation category that determines the degree of life satisfaction of the people and the intensity of their desire to escape.

Furthermore, to see if violations of the physical integrity rights of individuals by the government lead to an increase in the number of asylum seekers, the variable for physical integrity rights that is part of the Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Dataset is utilized (Cingranelli et al., 2014). This variable is coded on a scale of 0 to 8, where 8 indicates that the government fully protects physical integrity rights, and 0 indicates that the government wholly violates these rights. The types of state repression counted in this data are torture, extrajudicial killing, political imprisonment, and disappearance.

A high level of democracy and stable national wealth in the potential destination country of asylum are seen as factors inducing population inflows, reflecting the expectation that democratic institutions and legal systems can guarantee physical integrity rights (Moore and Shellman, 2004). Previous studies also argue that the neighboring countries of refugee-producing countries tend to be tentative destination countries for asylum seekers compared to distant countries (Moore and Shellman, 2007). It is also predicted that the presence of democratic countries located in geographical proximity could play a role in inducing population outflows from the country of origin of asylum seekers (Uzonyi, 2014). A variable “*Democratic neighbors in the region*” is included in the analysis to determine whether the distribution of democracy in potential destinations in the region affects the outflow of asylum seekers.<sup>1</sup>

The outbreak of violence has been considered the most immediate threat to people because it can cause them direct physical harm. The presence of any form of generalized violence would

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<sup>1</sup> This paper accounts for this possibility by controlling for the proportion of democratic regimes in a region. The regions are: Asia; Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union; Western Europe; North America; the Caribbean; Central and South America; the Middle East and North Africa; Sub-Saharan Africa; and Australia and Oceania.

be a severe threat to citizens, increasing the number of asylum seekers (Deal, 2013; Zolberg, 1989). The degree to which it affects the people may vary according to the types and intensity of the violence. To clarify if the volume of asylum seekers differs depending on the types and intensity of violence, various types of violence are included in the analysis. These include (1) Genocide and Politicide, (2) Civil war, and (3) Ethnic war (Davenport et al., 2003; Schmeidl, 1997; Weiner, 1996), which are measured using dummy variables to capture their presence. Specifically, with the occurrence of genocide and politicide, civil war and ethnic war, their corresponding variables are coded as “1,” otherwise zero. These data have been obtained from the Center for Systemic Peace (Marshall, 2017).

It is believed that conflicts that exist in one country can bring about a domino effect in neighboring countries (Weiner, 1996). Therefore, it is likely that the presence of conflicts in one country would increase the security threats felt by the people of neighboring countries because it would affect the entire region where the country is located, and ultimately this would affect population outflows. Hence, another controlling factor is included in the model to capture the number of bordering states with violence (societal and major episodes of political violence). This original data is also part of the Armed Conflict and Intervention (ACI) data set provided by the Center for Systemic Peace (Marshall, 2017).

The role of economic security in migrant flows has received extra attention due to the fact that economic activities are crucial to one’s living standards and survival (Brettell and Hollifield, 2008, p. 20). A great deal of the previous research focused on economic security as a primary driver of refugee flows, as the economic situation is also a significant factor in determining the life satisfaction of individuals (Ager and Strang, 2008; Di Tella et al., 2001; Hagen-Zanker, 2008; Lendorfer et al., 2016). People seek to maximize their benefits and

minimize their risks in a given set of circumstances. The labels applied to migrants vary from economic migrants to asylum seekers, depending on their legal status and their motivations (Zetter, 2007). However, it can be argued that asylum seekers also evaluate possible options by analyzing the internal and external environments in order to maximize benefits and minimize risks when they decide to leave their country (Breunig et al., 2012). Therefore, two key economic indicators, i.e., logged GDP per capita and the unemployment rate, are employed to capture the impact of the economic situation on the increase in the number of asylum seekers. The original data can be obtained from the World Bank (2018). Food insecurity has been pointed out as a driving cause of displacement (Neumayer, 2005). The threat of survival from hunger is likely to force people to choose to move abroad. Hence, a variable for the net per capita food production is taken into account to capture the effect of food shortages on displacement. The data are provided by FAO (2018). I anticipate that a high level of food production reflects the fact that fewer people suffer from hunger. Therefore, it is likely that the variable is inversely proportional to the amount of outflow of asylum seekers.

A great number of previous studies have used the indicator of the total population in order to control for demographic influence on the volume of refugees. Because population density and population pressure are generally proportional and have been considered as chronic factors that increase the number of refugees from a long-term perspective (Davenport et al., 2003; Iqbal, 2007; Schmeidl, 1997), a variable for the total population, which comes from the World Bank (2018), is used as a demographic controlling factor. Also, the age proportion of a country's population is likely to be related to the amount of population outflow. In the context of regime transition, the economic, political, and social motivations and capabilities for moving abroad can vary by age group. For example, in Neumayer's study (2005), it is expected that people in the working-age group, from 16 to 64, are more likely to move abroad. Besides, given



that the cross-border routes available to asylum seekers are often physically demanding and risky, the journey of escape is likely to be limited to specific age groups. Thus, the study predicts that the higher the proportion of the aged population, the smaller the outflow of the population abroad. To test this, a variable for population aged 65 and over (% of the total population) collected from the World Bank (2018) is included. Some previous studies pay attention to the role of geographic conditions on the growth of forced migration. To control for the potential impact of geographic conditions on displacement, a variable for *land size*, which is provided by the World Bank (2018), is included in the analysis. Also, a variable for the number of borders (land/sea) is included to take into account the effects of borders serving as potential escape routes available to forced migrants. The original data comes from the Center for Systemic Peace as a part of Major Episodes of Political Violence (Marshall, 2017).

## 4.2 Methodology

The key dependent variable in this study is measured as the total number of asylum applications per year, which exhibits a variance that highly exceeds its mean ( $\sigma^2 = 5.51e+08 > \mu = 5271.28$ ). In other words, the dependent data is over-dispersed. Therefore, the study chooses the negative binomial regression, clustered by country, as the baseline estimation model. This method is suggested as a more robust analysis for over-dispersion data compared to Poisson regression models (Choi and Salehyan, 2013; Hadi et al., 1995). To essentially correct the over-dispersion, the negative binomial estimation model includes a dispersion parameter to tackle the unobserved heterogeneity across observations (Hilbe, 2011). The estimation model can be specified as follows:

The total number of asylum applications $s_{i,t} = \alpha_{i,t} + \beta_1 \text{Demo}_{i,t} + \beta_2 \text{Auto}_{i,t} + \beta_3 \text{Polity2}_{i,t} + \beta_4 \text{Demo\_Polity2}_{i,t} + \beta_5 \text{Auto\_Polity2}_{i,t} + \beta_{6-18} \text{Controlling}_{i,t} + i.\text{year} + \varepsilon$

The subscript (i,t) denotes the variables' values for each country i at a given year t. The model controls for the year and country fixed effects which aim to take into account unobserved factors influencing trends in asylum applications at the national level.  $\beta_1$  and  $\beta_2$  capture the overall impacts of democratization and autocratization on the number of applications for asylum. According to Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 3, the values of  $\beta_1$  and  $\beta_2$  should be positive, indicating that countries experiencing democratization and autocratization tend to be associated with more asylum applications. However, it is also expected in Hypotheses 2 and 4 that those influences are dependent on the countries' current political regime. In other words, the political regime (Polity2) is a potential moderating factor of the democratization and autocratization effects on the number of asylum seekers. More specifically, the marginal increase in the amount in asylum applications as a result of democratization is expected to *decrease* as the countries are more democratic, i.e., negative  $\beta_4$ . This coefficient also represents the reduction in *willingness to escape*. On the other hand, the marginal increase in asylum applications as a result of autocratization is expected to *increase* as the countries become more democratic. In particular, the coefficient  $\beta_5$  is expected to be positive to a statistically significant degree, representing a higher level of *opportunity to escape*.

### 4.3 Findings

The statistical results of the negative binomial regression are presented in Table 1 with three different model classifications. Model 1 is the base model, ruling out the generalized violence

variables (Genocide & Politicide, Civil war, and Ethnic war). Model 2 adds the Genocide & Politicide variable to Model 1, and Model 3 takes all types of generalized violence into account.

Overall, the empirical results are consistent across all model specifications and are in line with the expectations stated in the four hypotheses. In particular, the coefficient  $\beta_1$  is positive to a statistically significant degree at a 0.1% critical level across the three model specifications. This implies that sudden democratization is likely to increase the outflow of asylum seekers. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is supported. These results suggest that the degree of state control over the oppressed people is loosened due to the democratization, and these structural political changes can consequently create greater opportunities for people to escape. These results corroborate the ideas of Davenport et al. (2003). They found that the shift toward democracy is positively correlated with the volume of forced migration. This might suggest that democratization can be interpreted as a gradual relaxation of the policy on emigration, which had previously been very restrictive, giving greater opportunities for refugees to escape (Larrabee, 1992; Rubin and Moore, 2007; Zolberg, 1989). This finding is also in line with previous results that show that the maturity of democracy is proportional to displacement (Moore and Shellman, 2007).

However, it is expected that such increased numbers of asylum seekers are found to be dependent on the level of democracy in the country where democratization is taking place. As shown in Table 1, the coefficient of the interaction term Demo\_Polity2 (democratization \* Polity2) is significantly negative at a 95% confidence level across all model specifications. This indicates that the country's political regime significantly moderates the influence of democratization on asylum seekers. Specifically, in the event of democratization, the increased level of asylum seekers from a more democratic country is lower than that from a less

democratic country. This is because when a country is more democratic, the decreased willingness to escape gradually overtakes the increased opportunity for escape. On the other hand, for a country that is highly autocratic but in the process of democratization, oppressed individuals will take advantage of the higher levels of opportunity to escape away from the country, thus fulfilling their long-term willingness to escape. Overall, given the coefficient magnitudes of  $\beta_1$  and  $\beta_4$ , it is also revealed that the outflow of asylum seekers tends to *constantly increase* in democratized countries regardless of their political regimes; however, the increase is lower in more democratic and higher in more autocratic countries. Accordingly, Hypothesis 2 is supported.

Regarding autocratization, the coefficient  $\beta_2$  of the Auto variable is significantly positive at the marginal level in Models 1 and 2. This suggests that autocratization tends to increase the number of asylum seekers, as the political and security threats created in the process of autocratization can motivate people to flee (H3). Although the statistical significance level of autocratization is marginal, signaling a relatively weak effect of autocratization per se on population outflows, such a positive effect becomes significantly stronger to an at least 5% critical level if the country is more democratic, providing more pessimistic individuals with higher levels of opportunity to escape. This is shown through the significantly positive  $\beta_3$  coefficients of the interaction terms between autocratization and political regime (Auto\_Polity2). To be more detailed, taking the model with the weakest effect of autocratization, i.e., Model 3 with  $\beta_2 = 0.262$ , when considering the moderating effect of Auto\_polity2 with  $\beta_5 = 0.105$ , the net autocratization effect becomes higher, which is likely to be statistically significant at 5%. Therefore, the results generally suggest that the effect of autocratization is not evident without taking into account the country's political regime at that time. Specifically, in the process of autocratization, if the country is more democratic, more-

eager-to-leave people are provided with higher levels of opportunity to escape; hence, greater population outflows are recorded. Conversely, if the country is more autocratic, those more-eager-to-leave people are provided with lower levels of opportunity to escape; hence, the effect of autocratization on refugee flow in this case is not obvious. These results suggest when people's motivation to leave countries has been increased by the onset of autocratization, it tends to be more readily converted into action in environments with low risks from crossing borders. As expected, both Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 4 are supported.

Table 2 shows the result for our main independent variables in Column 1 in Table 1 by converting the results to the incidence rate ratio (IRR), i.e., the degree of change in the incidence rate of asylum seekers for every unit change in each independent variable, assuming that other variables are equal. An IRR with 1 indicates no change. If the value of an IRR is greater than 1, it represents the expected increase in the incidence of the dependent variable caused by a one-unit increase in the independent variable. Conversely, an IRR value between 0 and 1 indicates the degree of the incidence rate of the dependent variable that decreases with a one-unit increase in the independent variable. The democratic transition of a regime leads to an increase of roughly 68.8% in the incidence of asylum seekers compared to non-democratized countries. However, this increasing rate is reduced by 5.5% for every one-unit increase in the political regime of the country at that time. In other words, in a country with one Polity2 score higher, the influence of democratization on the incidence of asylum seekers falls by 5.5%. In the case of autocratization, the occurrence appears to increase the incidence of asylum seekers by 33.4%. Nevertheless, such increasing levels surge by 10.4% when the value of Polity2 is increased by one unit. Therefore, the result implies that more democratic countries tend to suffer a higher level of population outflow if they are experiencing an autocratization process.

Interpretation regarding the effects of controlling variables will be subsequently discussed. In order to capture the effects of the outbreak of violence on the increase in refugees, the three types of violence included in this study are genocide and politicide, civil war, ethnic war. In the case of genocide and politicide, its occurrence increases the incidence of asylum seekers in all model specifications to a statistically significant degree. This finding reflects that of Lischer (2007), who also found that the occurrence of genocide and politicide is the best predictor of changes in the number of asylum seekers. A positive association is found between the occurrence of civil war and the number of asylum seekers. This finding is also supported by previous studies (Lischer, 2007; Moore and Shellman, 2007). In the case of ethnic war, it is found to be in a positive relationship with the dependent variable, but statistical significance is not shown. The variable of the number of bordering states with conflict is positive and strongly significant at the 0.1% level in all models. Again, the results of this study do not conflict much with those of previous studies in so far as they again confirm that generalized violence is still the dominant driver of forced migration. The results of the study support the argument that not only internal violence but also conflict in neighboring countries will destabilize the security of the country of origin of asylum seekers and increase their numbers. This suggests that the occurrence of violence, which may affect civilian security, is not confined to the border and can be directly related to the outflow of asylum seekers.

In general, all of our control variables show expected signs which are consistent with the extant literature. As expected, a negative association is found between physical integrity rights and the number of asylum seekers. This result is consistent with earlier research by Rubin and Moore (2007), who find that human rights violations are a risk factor for forced migration. Our findings also suggest that population outflows tend to be low in areas where the government

protects the individual's physical integrity rights well. The result is significant at the 0.1% level in all models. In all models, the Polity2 variable has a significant negative effect on the number of asylum seekers at a 5% level, suggesting that the higher the level of existing democracy in a country, the lower the incidence of asylum seekers. This result indicates that the existence of a mature political system will reduce the number of people trying to flee because the inhabitants are less motivated to move to another country (Moore and Shellman, 2007). The size of the countries' territories is negatively related to the number of asylum seekers: the larger the territory, the smaller the outflow of population. The number of borders is also proportional to the number of asylum seekers. This result suggests that neighboring countries can be regarded as potential destinations of asylum to which asylum seekers can escape in case of emergency. The results table shows that the higher the proportion of democracy in the region, the higher the outflow of asylum seekers. This implies that people tend to move to areas where their safety can be protected in choosing their destinations.

The variable of the population is positively related to the number of asylum seekers. It has been suggested that population pressure has no significant influence on forced migration (Schmeidl, 1997). This does not appear to be the case in our analysis, which mainly focuses on the number of asylum seekers. The study predicts that population outflows will be relatively small in countries with a high percentage of the aged population, and the prediction is supported by the results. The result is negative and significant at the 0.1% level. As shown in Table 1, food shortages are also a major cause of increased population outflows. Interestingly, in all models, the variable of GDP per capita is statistically significant, showing a positive correlation to the number of asylum seekers, while the unemployment rate is inversely proportional to the number of asylum seekers. The findings suggest that an individual's economic capacity may be a necessary condition for leaving the country. A similar finding can

be found in a study by Schon (2019), which suggests that people with economic resources have more opportunities to leave the country than those who do not. Similarly, Van Hear (2006) claims that the level of financial assets and social class determine an individual's ability to escape when facing violence to avoid physical threats. On the other hand, it is likely that a high level of unemployment, which undermines the economic security of individuals, can boost population outflows. The results also imply that if a country experiences an economic downturn, this can force people to go abroad in search of better economic security.



**Table 1. Negative binomial regression results**

Dependent variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	Number of asylum applications		
Demo*	0.523*** (3.98)	0.523*** (3.97)	0.507*** (3.89)
Auto*	0.288+ (1.70)	0.283+ (1.67)	0.262 (1.53)
Polity2	-0.0155* (-2.19)	-0.0166* (-2.33)	-0.0163* (-2.31)
Demo_polity2	-0.0567* (-2.15)	-0.0561* (-2.12)	-0.0551* (-2.09)
Auto_polity2	0.0993** (2.68)	0.0999** (2.68)	0.105** (2.85)
GDP per capita+	0.225*** (6.05)	0.236*** (6.31)	0.234*** (6.26)
Unemployment+	0.101* (2.35)	0.0934* (2.19)	0.0963* (2.23)
Population+	0.289*** (6.36)	0.298*** (6.55)	0.281*** (6.11)
Population aged 65 and above (% of total population)	-0.0630*** (-5.56)	-0.0643*** (-5.65)	-0.0659*** (-5.79)
Physical integrity rights	-0.0866*** (-5.49)	-0.0837*** (-5.31)	-0.0748*** (-4.64)
Food security	-0.00634*** (-4.37)	-0.00586*** (-4.04)	-0.00542*** (-3.73)
Democratic neighbors in the region	0.0123*** (7.50)	0.0119*** (7.28)	0.0121*** (7.34)
Number of borders (land/sea) +	0.197* (2.04)	0.183+ (1.89)	0.210* (2.17)
Number of bordering states with violence	0.119*** (4.03)	0.0932** (3.13)	0.102*** (3.41)
Land size+	-0.176*** (-4.82)	-0.178*** (-4.88)	-0.166*** (-4.53)
Genocide & politicide*		0.790** (3.19)	0.629* (2.49)
Civil war*			0.324** (2.73)
Ethnic war*			0.106 (1.24)
_cons	-3.099*** (-4.79)	-3.270*** (-5.03)	-3.285*** (-5.06)
Number of observations	1395	1395	1395
Number of states	118	118	118

*t* statistics in parentheses +  $p < .1$  \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Note: 1) \* dummy variable 2) + log transformed variable for a normal distribution

**Table 2. The corresponding change in the incidence of asylum seekers**

Variable	% Increase
Democratization	68.8
Autocratization	33.4
Democratization x polity2	-5.5
Autocratization x polity2	10.4

#### **4.4 Additional Analysis**

##### **-Controlling gradual regime transition**

In the main analysis, the key measure of democratization and autocratization indicates a sudden transition in the regime. Specifically, the democratization (autocratization) variables take unity value when there is a minimum increase (decrease) of 3 points in the Polity2 index against the previous year's figure and zero otherwise. This method is intended to capture the trend of population outflows when a significant regime shift that breaks the regime's durability has occurred rapidly within a short period of time. The regime transition, however, may sometimes progress gradually overtime. As a robustness test, the study employs an alternative measure of democratization and autocratization, capturing gradual regime transition to test for its effects on the population outflow. The measure is constructed based on the criteria set by the Polity IV project (Marshall et al., 2017, p. 30), i.e., the variables of democratization (Demo2) and autocratization (Auto2) are coded 1 if there is a 3-point increase and decrease, respectively, in the Polity2 index, with each continuous, sequential change within three years or less, and zero otherwise. According to the results given in Table 3, the findings are generally consistent with those reported in the Table 2, suggesting that employing the alternative measures of democratization and autocratization does not alter our main results. Nevertheless, the Auto2 variable lost its marginal statistical significance, suggesting that gradual

autocratization has a less significant impact compared to sudden autocratization. However, the interaction terms between autocratization and Polity2 (Auto2\_Polity2) show its significant and positive effect on the number of asylum seekers generated. Therefore, the positive effect of autocratization is likely to be significant in the event of democratic countries, as individuals are exposed to higher chances to flee the countries given their increasing willingness to escape due to the autocratization situation.

**Table 3. Negative binomial regression results, including gradual regime transition**

Dependent variable	Number of asylum applications		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Demo2*	0.523*** (4.26)	0.522*** (4.25)	0.504*** (4.12)
Auto2*	0.253 (1.59)	0.245 (1.54)	0.239 (1.50)
Polity2	-0.0158* (-2.22)	-0.0169* (-2.35)	-0.0165* (-2.32)
Demo2_polity2	-0.0614* (-2.53)	-0.0611* (-2.52)	-0.0598* (-2.47)
Auto2_polity2	0.0920* (2.56)	0.0920* (2.55)	0.101** (2.83)
GDP per capita <sup>+</sup>	0.224*** (6.02)	0.235*** (6.28)	0.233*** (6.23)
Unemployment <sup>+</sup>	0.101* (2.36)	0.0936* (2.19)	0.0964* (2.24)
Population <sup>+</sup>	0.290*** (6.38)	0.299*** (6.56)	0.283*** (6.12)
Population aged 65 and above (% of total population)	-0.0632*** (-5.57)	-0.0646*** (-5.67)	-0.0660*** (-5.80)
Physical integrity rights	-0.0850*** (-5.43)	-0.0823*** (-5.25)	-0.0735*** (-4.59)
Food security	-0.00649*** (-4.48)	-0.00602*** (-4.15)	-0.00556*** (-3.83)
Democratic neighbors in the region	0.0125*** (7.58)	0.0121*** (7.36)	0.0122*** (7.41)
Number of borders <sup>+</sup>	0.205* (2.12)	0.191* (1.99)	0.217* (2.24)
Number of bordering states with violence	0.119*** (4.04)	0.0935** (3.14)	0.102*** (3.42)
Land size <sup>+</sup>	-0.176*** (-4.82)	-0.177*** (-4.87)	-0.166*** (-4.52)
Genocide & politicide*		0.785** (3.15)	0.620* (2.46)
Civil war*			0.329** (2.77)
Ethnic war*			0.104 (1.21)
_cons	-3.125*** (-4.82)	-3.294*** (-5.05)	-3.312*** (-5.09)
Number of observations	1395	1395	1395
Number of states	118	118	118

*t* statistics in parentheses +  $p < .1$  \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Note: 1) \* dummy variable 2) <sup>+</sup> log transformed variable for a normal distribution

## **Controlling for anocracy and democracy**

The model specifications in Table 4 replicate the baseline model of the main analysis with the exclusion of observations representing an autocratic regime. The results are reported in Table 1, and generally remained consistent with the main findings. In particular, democratization imposes a significant positive effect on the number of asylum seekers at a 1% critical level. Compared to the full sample, the significance level of the effect is reduced once autocratic regimes are excluded. This reveals that the impact of democratization on forced migration appears to be more pronounced in areas under autocratic rule. Hence, the exclusion of autocratic regime observations lowers its statistical significance. Regarding the effects of autocratization, the significance level increases from a marginal level (main findings) to 5%. This result is in line with our claim that autocratization, which emerges in a political environment where opportunities to leave are available to people, will have a more significant impact on population outflows. Intriguingly, the Polity2 variable maintains a negative effect on the asylum seekers generated but becomes statistically insignificant once the autocratic regimes are excluded. This result probably suggests that in areas not under extreme autocratic rule, the impact of political institutions on the desire of people to leave the country is reduced.

**Table 4. Negative binomial regression results, excluding the autocratic regime observations**

Dependent variable	Model 1 Number of asylum applications
Demo	0.526** (3.24)
Auto	0.384* (2.05)
Polity2	0.00295 (0.31)
Demo_polity2	-0.0672* (-2.10)
Auto_polity2	0.0844+ (1.82)
GDP per capita	0.172*** (3.38)
Unemployment	0.0106 (0.22)
Population	0.281*** (5.75)
Population aged 65 and above (% of total population)	-0.0612*** (-4.48)
Physical integrity rights	-0.100*** (-5.84)
Food security	-0.0101*** (-5.48)
Democratic neighbors in the region	0.0126*** (6.80)
Number of borders (land/sea)	0.200* (1.98)
Number of bordering states with violence	0.126*** (3.48)
Land size	-0.172*** (-4.37)
_cons	-2.151** (-3.08)
Number of observations	
	1199
Number of states	
	107

*t* statistics in parentheses +  $p < .1$  \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Note: 1) \* dummy variable 2) + log transformed variable for a normal distribution

## 5 Discussion

### *Types of democratization and autocratization and their impacts on the outflow of asylum seekers.*

Our findings show that a regime transition can induce population outflow regardless of the direction of the transition. Although our findings are meaningful in that they uncover the general association between regime transition and forced migration, there is one important thing to consider. A regime transition, even one which proceeds in the same direction, can be divided into various types of transformation depending on the extent of the change which takes place. As discussed in the previous sections, regime transitions may each have different starting or ending points in terms of the maturity of the existing political systems. Also, the range of regime transition varies depending on how radically the regime transforms. Therefore, each type of regime transition within the same spectrum can still have different consequences for the outflow of population. This section discusses in more detail the impact on population outflow of various types of regime shifts within the spectrums of democratization and autocratization.

As explained earlier, the Polity2 index, which is the basis of our dataset, is constructed based on, first, the components of the competitiveness of political participation, second, the openness and competitiveness of executive recruitment, and third, the constraints on the chief executive. Depending on the summed score, the regime is categorized into autocracies (-10 to -6), anocracies (-5 to 5), and democracies (6 to 10).

With regard to democratization, democratic regime transitions from anocracies to anocracies are the most common types of democratization in our dataset, and these account for 58% of all democratization cases. Anocracies include both partial democracies and weak autocracies. In this spectrum of democratization, the transition from weak autocracies to partial democracies accounts for 67% of instances. It can be found that 52% of these cases have led to an increase in the outflow of asylum seekers. On the other hand, the transition from weak autocracies to weak autocracies accounts for 10% of this type of democratization. All cases of transition from weak autocracies to weak autocracies are accompanied by an increase in asylum seekers. The transition from partial democracies to partial democracies accounted for 23% of cases, and 71% of these led to a rise in asylum seekers. What is remarkable is that within the spectrum of democratization from anocracies to anocracies, the transition from weak autocracies to weak autocracies is most likely to lead to an increase in population outflows.

Another path of democratization found in our dataset is the regime transition from anocracies to mature democracies, which accounts for 30% of all democratization cases. More specifically, 73% of the democratization in this spectrum is from partial democracies to full democracies. On the other hand, the transition from weak autocracies to mature democracies accounts for 27%. Fifty percent of the transition cases from partial democracies to mature democracies were accompanied by an increase in asylum seekers compared to the previous year, whereas 75% of the transitions from weak autocracies to mature democracies were accompanied by an increase in asylum seekers compared to the number of these asylum seekers in the previous year. These findings indicate that within the spectrum of democratization from anocracies to democracies, the larger the range of regime transition made, the greater the probability that population outflows will be affected and that these will become larger. In other words, it can be said that a sudden and radical regime shift is likely to induce a greater likelihood of an increase in



population outflows. Also, what we can infer from this trend is that the existence of a democratic political system, even if it is incoherent and flawed, can offset the impact of democratic regime transition on population outflows. In our dataset, a regime transition from full autocracies to weak autocracies accounted for 7% of cases, and 75% of this type of democratization led to an increase in the outflow of asylum seekers. On the other hand, a regime transition from mature democracies to mature democracies accounted for 3% of the total cases. In comparison, the transition from full autocracies to full democracies accounted for 2%, and no apparent increase in refugees is found in these cases. One more thing we need to consider is whether democratization is accompanied by violence. Our data set shows that 25% of democratization cases proceeded violently. In instances of democratization accompanied by violence, the extent of the increase in refugee outflow tends to go up. This trend illustrates that if a regime transition from full dictatorship to electoral autocracy or flawed democracy goes violent, it is highly likely to lead to a massive increase in forced migration.

As for the autocratization cases, the transition from partial democracies to partial democracies or weak autocracies accounts for 44% of the autocratization in our data set. All cases in this spectrum are found to be accompanied by an increase in asylum seekers. Four percent of autocratic regime transitions are from partial democracies to full autocracies. Forty percent of autocratization takes place from mature democracies to partial democracies or weak autocracies. Interestingly, 75% of the transitions from full democracies to partial democracies lead to an increase in population outflow, whereas 50% of the transitions from full democracies to weak autocracies were accompanied by an increase in population outflow. However, in our dataset, the effect that radical regime transition from partial democracies to full autocracies has on population outflow was not clearly detected. In our data, only 4% of cases show a regime shift from weak autocracies to full autocracies, and 8% of autocratization is a regime transition

from mature democracies to full autocracies. A common trend found in both types of autocratization is that although a rise in the population outflow is detected, the degree of the increase remains at a low level. This could be interpreted as the limited availability of opportunities to escape the country playing a role in deterring the population outflows, as discussed earlier. Another striking finding is in the case of the violent regime transition from weak autocracies to full autocracies; the increase in population outflow tends to be relatively small. In contrast, a regime transition from partial democracies to weak autocracies which is accompanied by violence tends to induce a greater outflow of population.

In this paper, it has not been sufficiently discussed whether the asylum seekers generated by democratization and autocratization are qualitatively identical or heterogeneous.

It can be challenging to clearly articulate the qualitative differences between groups of asylum seekers that are in different political and security environments. This is because the level of the perceived threat and the level of forcedness/voluntariness for relocation that led to the decision to apply for asylum outside the home country is a subjective and personal judgement made by each asylum seeker at the individual level (Carling, 2017; Erdal and Oeppen, 2018). Nevertheless, there may be a difference in the degree of voluntariness in relocation between the two groups that applied for asylum to other countries depending on whether the group was generated in the democratization or in the autocratization process. Also, there may be differences between the two groups in the degree of perceived political insecurity that led them to pursue asylum abroad. What can be inferred from this paper is that in the process of democratization of an autocratic country, the accumulated fear and dissatisfaction of the people due to the state repression that was previously exercised can be expressed as an exit from that home country. On the other hand, asylum seekers generated by autocratization

may have a qualitative difference from those who are induced by democratization in terms of detecting immediate and direct threats while experiencing a coercive and repressive exercise of power from the regime in a transition toward autocracy. For example, if a new autocratic regime which seized the existing democratic government exerts unprecedentedly strong political repression against its citizens, people will sense direct political and security threats, and they might choose to apply for asylum abroad to protect their personal safety. On the other hand, if a strong autocratic government's censorship over its citizens becomes loosened in the process of democratization, people might choose to seek asylum abroad to escape the existing insecure life they've known under authoritarian rule. The political and security threat felt by the first group of asylum seekers is likely to be immediate and direct. In contrast, the threat perceived by the second group of asylum seekers may be indirect and accumulated, not immediate.

However, these two groups still have a similarity in that they are asylum seekers, which are distinct from ordinary migrants. The fundamental element that sets them apart from ordinary migrants is that they apply for asylum in other countries with the personal judgement that they cannot receive full political and security protection from their home country; hence, they are seeking international protection. Both groups of asylum seekers discussed earlier applied for asylum abroad under the belief that they could no longer lead the secure life they had enjoyed in the past in their home country. Although there may be differences in the degree of their voluntariness to relocate and the degree of the immediacy of the perceived threat, both groups of asylum seekers can be regarded as forced migrants in a broader sense. It is hoped that a more systemic discussion about the qualitative differences between out-migration groups caused by different types of regime transition can be made in future studies.

## 6 Conclusion

Although this study reaffirmed that the occurrence of violence could be a very important determinant in the movement of refugees, this does not mean that the migration of refugees across countries can be attributed exclusively to outbreaks of violence. As the empirical findings of this study show, non-violent determinants are also found to be closely related to the phenomenon of refugee outflows. Consequently, this study contributes to the existing research on forced migration by bringing the dynamics of the politics back to the center of the debate on refugee outflows. It does so by highlighting the relevance of regime transition and explaining how these changes in government capacity to create or limit opportunities for asylum seekers to flee. In particular, the study explains how two phenomena, democratization and autocratization, affect people's motivation to migrate and how both these processes structurally limit people's ability to move to other countries.

My findings show that a shift in regime either toward democracy or autocracy can play a role in increasing the volume of asylum seekers. The focus of previous studies has been on autocratic transitions, probably because large-scale forced migrations mostly tend to occur in non-democratic regions. Our findings support the existing belief that the political, security, and economic threats caused by autocratization can lead to increased forced migration. It is surprising, however, that democratization can also increase forced migration, especially in non-democratic countries. These findings suggest several important things.

First, the empirical results suggest that autocratic countries that are undergoing rapid democratic transitions can create an environment vulnerable to population outflows, despite the lack of violent events. This structural change in the political system can be seen as an opportunity to escape for the people who have been oppressed by the more autocratic regime.

In this regard, the international community needs to consider that population outflows can occur when rapid democratization in autocratic countries proceeds. In addition, institutional measures should be sought to minimize the political and security risks that can result from rapid population outflows.

Second, as can be seen from our analysis, the influence of regime shifts toward democracy on outflows of asylum seekers tends to be greater in more autocratic countries than in more democratic countries. On the other hand, the effect of regime shifts to autocracy on the volume of forced migration tends to be greater in more democratic than in more autocratic countries. This trend reflects the fact that the condition identified as anocracy can be vulnerable to the outflow of forced migration, regardless of the direction of the regime transition. Either a democratic or autocratic regime shift can increase the volume of forced migration under this condition.

Finally, our analysis suggests that even if there are sufficient conditions for people to leave their home countries, individuals may experience an involuntary stay if they are not given the opportunity to escape. There may be areas of the globe whose inhabitants are experiencing involuntary stays, even as, on the surface, political and security stability is being maintained. A refugee crisis can become a reality at any time once there is a change in the political circumstances in these areas. In this regard, in future studies, we need to pay attention to regions that have met the conditions for refugee outflows but have not yet experienced them.

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## VII

### **Paper 3:**

**An analysis of potential regime transitions in North Korea and their possible impacts on the outflow of asylum seeker**

## Statement of Authorship

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<b>Statement from Candidate</b>	This paper reports on original research I conducted during the period of my Higher Degree by Research candidature.		
<b>Signed</b>	Sungwon Lee	<b>Date</b>	04.07.2020

# **An analysis of potential regime transitions in North Korea and their possible impacts on the outflow of asylum seekers**

## **Abstract**

This paper examines different paths of regime development that the North Korean regime can follow, including 1) regime collapse, 2) status quo, and 3) democratic transition, and analyzes the possible impacts of each path of regime development on forced migrations from North Korea. A statistical model is developed to examine the effects of the three regime variants on population outflow across autocratic milieus. The study employs a panel dataset covering 138 countries from 2000 to 2016. Our findings show that the collapse of the regime and democratic transition in autocratic countries can increase the magnitude of the outflow of forced migrants while the status quo of the regime has no significant impact thereon. In other words, the findings imply that if North Korea follows a path of regime collapse or democratic transition, the volume of forced migration generated is likely to increase. However, if the current regime continues to hold power in a manner resembling its current state, population outflow from North Korea will be deterred. The key conceptual framework of this study explains the relationship between a regime transition and population outflows, as well as distinguishing the motivation and opportunities for people to flee by controlling for the presence in a country of an autocratic military regime. In particular, the motivation and opportunities for North Koreans to flee may be increased or restricted depending on the path the regime transition follows.

# 1 Introduction

Sudden changes or transitions in the ruling regime of an autocratic state inevitably exert a profound impact on the country's society and its people in the areas of politics, economy, and security. These transformations are also deeply associated with population outflow in that they cause a structural change in the vertical relationship between the people and the regime (Esty et al., 1998; Geddes et al., 2014; Martin-Shields, 2017; Newland, 1993; Rotberg, 2003). Accordingly, much of the existing literature has focused on how the type of political regime (democracy/autocracy) is linked to population outflow (Breunig et al., 2012; Otunnu, 2002; Ozaltin et al., 2019). Other studies analyze the role of regime transition and the stability of the regime on outmigration (Kang, 2020; Martin, 2002; Moore and Shellman, 2007; Rubin and Moore, 2007). Also, research has been carried out on the impact of the failure of the autocratic regime on outmigration (Howard, 2010; Mazrui, 1995).

Although existing research recognizes the role played by changes in the political regime in the country of origin of asylum seekers on outmigration, a systematic and comprehensive understanding of how such regime transition contributes to the outflow of asylum seekers and why different paths of transition can have different consequences on population outflows is still lacking. To present an explanation of the mechanism of how different types of regime transition affect population outflow differently in autocratic countries, this paper sets up three regime development paths, namely 1) failure of state authority, 2) democratic transition, and 3) status quo, that the ruling regime in an autocratic country can take and tests the impact of each development path on refugee outflow. Based on the empirical findings, this paper narrows down the research focus to the North Korean case. The situation in North Korea is well worth

visiting in that the country is vulnerable to future political changes but has not yet experienced mass population outflow. This study analyzes in depth the possible impacts of each path of regime development on the increase in asylum seekers from North Korea.

Historically, empirical evidence of instances in which the collapse of the central authority led to an increased number of refugees can be found in many countries. Systemic Peace provides a list of adverse regime changes in the PITF — State Failure Problem Set dataset. This dataset measures state authority failure on a scale of 1 to 4, where 4 represents a status of complete collapse of the state authority, or a corresponding condition (Marshall et al. 2019). According to the dataset, between 1975 and 2017, 27 countries have experienced a complete collapse of state authority. Notably, 88% of these countries experienced an increase in the number of refugees during the period of regime collapse. According to PITF, the failure of state authority refers to a "situation in which the institutions of the central state are so weakened that they can no longer maintain authority or political order in significant parts of the country." In other words, the failure of state authority means that the government has lost the functions of security, welfare, legitimacy, and state of law. Scholars point out that the collapse of state power inevitably creates a security risk. Gökçe (2017), for example, argues that the collapse of the regime normalizes internal conflict and chaos, due to the loss of the regime's monopoly authority over the use of force and the lack of systemic operations. He then points out that internal violence such as arms smuggling, human trafficking, robbery, and sexual abuse becomes prevalent, and political and security instability inevitably causes economic collapse. Also, such a situation reflects the fact that the dominance of the governing power does not reach into every corner of the territory across the country. (Karacuka and Celik, 2017) argue that the loss of state control over the nation's entire territory can create a structural environment favorable to the outbreak of terrorists and gang activities. The collapse of the regime raises the

level of physical and economic threats to people, making it impossible for them to meet the basic needs of life. Hence, it pushes people to leave the state (Gökçe 2017). A recent case in which a country's authority being in a state of collapse has led to a mass refugee outflow can be found in Syria, resulting in 5.6 million refugees since 2011 (UNHCR, 2019). The case of Afghanistan, which has significantly lost stateness, is a case in which the failure of state authority, along with widespread war, is closely linked to the outbreak of 2.5 million refugees (UNHCR, 2019). In particular, many African countries experienced massive refugee outflows when they underwent both regime collapse and civil war simultaneously. In Burundi, there were in total 184,135 refugees in 1992, but with the collapse of the regime in 1993, the number increased to 871,382. In Central Africa, President Bozize was toppled by Islamic armed forces called Seleka, and the central state authority collapsed in 2013 (Arieff, 2014; Herbert et al., 2013; Lombard, 2016). The number of refugees, counted as 164,568 in the previous year, soared to 252,867 (UNHCR 2019). Similarly, in the case of Mali, the central authority was paralyzed in the course of a coup by government troops to regain control of the government, which was overthrown by Islamic militants (Arieff and Johnson, 2012; Bleck and Michelitch, 2015; Lendorfer et al., 2016; Thurston and Lebovich, 2013). The total number of refugees in Mali, which stood at 2,495 in 2011, rose significantly to 1,499,943 in 2012 (UNHCR 2019). South Sudan also experienced a collapse of the regime due to the civil war that broke out in 2013, resulting in massive refugee outflows (Johnson, 2014; O'Grady, 2018). The consequences of the loss of state control over outmigration in a situation where political turmoil is intensifying can be found in Ethiopia's case. From the mid-1970s to the late 1980s, large numbers of refugees fled from Ethiopia to neighboring countries, including Sudan and Kenya. Although the prolonged civil war and guerrilla warfare are considered to have caused those mass outflows of refugees, Dowty (1987) argues that the Ethiopian regime in this period had lost the physical control necessary to stop the outflow of refugees and that the breakdown of

government thus resulted in increased refugee flows. Bariagaber (1997) also points out that a new massive refugee flow began when communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe lost the ability to exercise strong control over emigration in the way they had in the past.

The close links between democratization in autocratic states and population outflows can also be found in our history. Over the past half-century, we have witnessed several distinct democratization processes. The collapse of communism and the resultant democratic transitions in Central and Eastern Europe since 1989, and the democratization movement in countries in the Middle East since 2010, called the Arab Spring, can be seen as representative democratization processes. Figures 1 and 2 below show how the two events affected the outflows of refugees in countries experiencing democratization. Figure 1 shows the change in the refugee stock from five specific countries to other European nations for a period of ten years, starting in 1985. Although it varies to different degrees across countries, the number of refugees tended to increase in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a period during which communism collapsed and democratization proceeded. Figure 2 shows the change in the number of asylum applicants in the Middle Eastern countries that experienced the Arab Spring from 2000 to 2016. Since 2010, when the democratization movement began, in most countries, the number of asylum applicants began to increase.



Figure 1. Fall of Communism and refugee flows

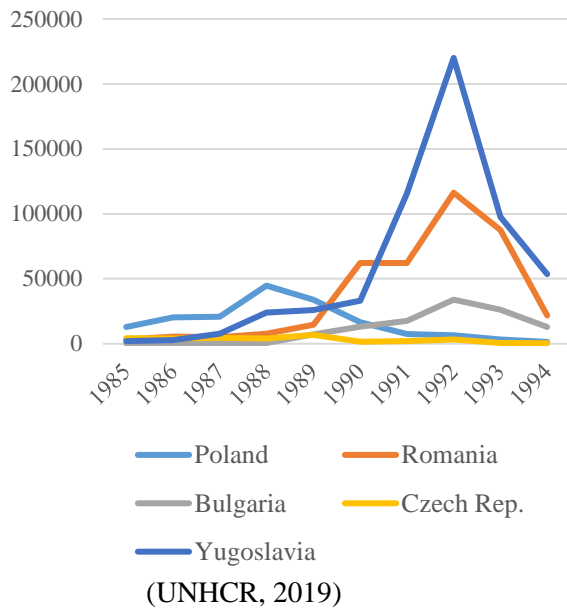


Figure 2. Arab Spring and asylum seekers

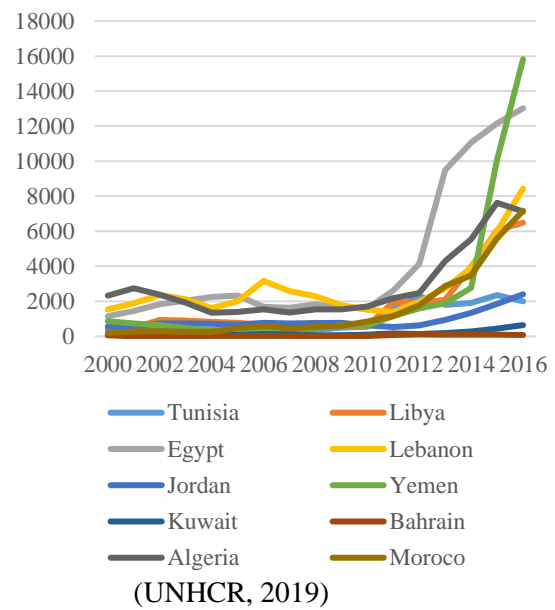


Figure 3. Emigration Freedom and Democracy

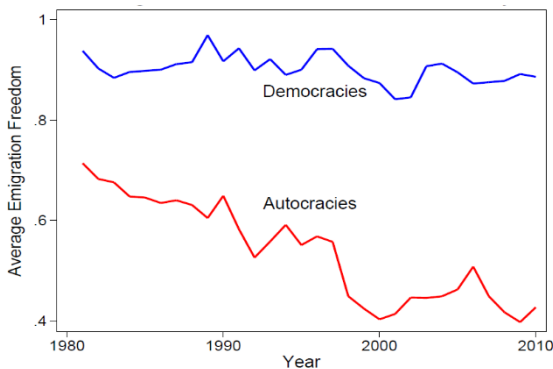
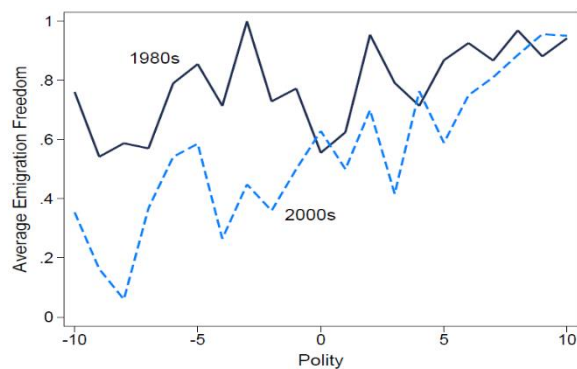


Figure 4. Emigration Freedom by Polity Score



The attitude toward emigration held by different regime types is clearly shown in Figures 3 and 4, which are presented by Miller and Peters (2014). The first graph shows the average level of emigration freedom according to the type of regime from 1980 to 2010. As shown in the graph, in the last 30 years, autocratic countries have more strongly controlled freedom of international movement compared to democratic countries. The second figure shows the correlation between the polity score on the x-axis and the average emigration freedom on the y-axis. In the 1980s and 2000s, both the x and y axes are in a proportional relationship, with

some fluctuations, suggesting that the countries with a higher polity score tend to provide better protections of the freedom of international movement. The historical indicator that the freedom of emigration increases as the democratization process progresses is important in explaining the impacts of regime change in an autocratic country on its population outflows. This is because regime transition in an autocratic country can be interpreted as a change in the level of structural control exercised by the regime on its people. Given that refugee status applies to those who are under physical, political, and economic threats in their home countries,<sup>1</sup> it can be inferred that the sudden democratization of an autocratic country provides the oppressed people, who are in a status of involuntary stay, with opportunities to leave that country (Weiner, 1996).

From the empirical evidence, we can infer that the transition or failure of the state authority can boost the outflow of population. However, what we should not overlook is that some autocratic governments can maintain the regime in an existing way without significant changes. Therefore, it is also necessary to analyze the possibility of refugee outflows when the autocratic regime is strongly maintained.

In general, it is widely accepted that autocratic countries tend to tightly limit outmigration, while democratic states allow it (Breunig et al. 2012; Miller and Peters 2018). Control over emigration in democratic countries is not common, although the entry of foreigners tends to be restricted in order to protect the welfare of those nations' citizens (Messina and Lahav, 2005). Democracies are expected to abide by international laws protecting individual human rights, including the freedom of movement.<sup>2</sup> However, the exit from a nation tends to be limited in

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/refugee-status-determination.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

autocratic countries (Miller and Peters 2018). From a political point of view, there are several key reasons why autocratic countries regulate their citizens' ability to leave. First, an autocratic regime tries to keep its population flows under state control in order to prevent the grievances of the people against the regime from becoming visible through the phenomenon of massive outmigration (Bearce and Laks Hutnick, 2011; Betts and Jones, 2016). It is believed that in autocratic countries where freedom of political expression is limited, citizens can alternatively express their dissatisfaction with the government by leaving the country. This can impair the legitimacy of the autocratic regime (Hirschman, 1970, 1978). Another reason is to prevent the public from being exposed to democratic ideas. Alemán and Woods (2014) argue that relaxation of emigration is likely to improve civil rights. It is now well established from a variety of studies that active economic, cultural, and human exchanges between autocratic and democratic countries can contribute to the democratization of the autocratic side (Bearce and Laks Hutnick, 2011). More importantly, population movement across countries can play a role in spreading the norm of democracy (Levitsky and Way, 2005; Rapoport et al., 2017).

Tsourapas (2019) analyzes that the autocratic regime tends to conserve tight control over the population outflows because emigration abroad impedes maintaining order and makes it difficult to eliminate any dissent. Therefore, in most autocratic countries, securitizing emigration at the border is implemented to systematically control those who attempt to leave the country without permission. In the past, such policies have existed in the Soviet Union, China, and Mozambique (Ibid.). Besides, many autocratic countries exercise robust control over diaspora communities residing abroad to prevent them from becoming politically mobilized and threatening the regime. That is, the coercive and violent repression exerted on diaspora communities for the purpose of silencing the voice of those citizens has existed in many autocratic countries. Thus, the outflow of mass refugees can be unlikely in a situation

where a strong autocratic regime is stably exercising tight border control without significant changes. Cuba, Uzbekistan, and North Korea, for example, are all governed by powerful autocratic regimes which have exercised firm border control and repression against illegal defectors. In these countries, exist visas have been required for overseas trips, and if illegal travel is detected, criminal penalties have been applied (Human Rights Watch, 2019; Tsourapas, 2019). A common trend in these countries is that there has been a relatively low level of population outflow. Since 2000, the number of asylum applications per year, originating in Cuba, Uzbekistan, and North Korea has been, on average, 2500, 2000, and 360, respectively.

Based on the discussion, three hypotheses are established as bellow.

- 1. There is significantly positive relationship between the failure of state authority and the outflow of population outflow from autocratic countries.*
- 2. The democratization of the autocratic regime significantly positively increase the population outflow.*
- 3. The durability of the autocratic regime significantly negatively affects population outflows.*

## **2 Statistical analysis**

### **2.1 Data and statistical model**

A statistical model is established examining the effect of regime variation on population outflow across autocratic milieus. The study employs a panel data covering 138 countries for the full sample, and 71 countries for the sample for autocracy from 2000 to 2016. Our dependent variable (i.e., population outflow) is proxied by the number of asylum applications submitted, which is available from UNHCR (2019). Since the variance is observed to be much

higher than its mean, there is over-dispersion in our dependent variables. Therefore, the study employs a negative binomial regression model, which allows disagreed mean-variance as well as inclusion of an error term (Hilbe, 2011; Liu et al., 2005).

The study's main estimation model can be specified as follows:

$$\text{The number of asylum applications}_{i,t} = \alpha_{i,t} + \beta_1 \text{Authority\_Failure}_{i,t} + \beta_2 \text{Regime\_Transition}_{i,t} \\ + \beta_3 \text{Regime\_Durability}_{i,t} + \beta_{4-11} \text{Controlling}_{i,t} + i.\text{year} + \varepsilon$$

The subscript (i,t) denotes the variables values for each country i at a given year t. The model controls for country and year fixed effects to capture the time-invariance differences across countries and unobserved factors influencing trends in asylum applications across countries.  $\beta_1$  captures the overall impacts of the failure of state authority on the outflow of asylum seekers. According to Hypothesis 1, the value of  $\beta_1$  should be positive, indicating that less stable regimes tend to be associated with higher population outflows. Regarding Hypothesis 2, the coefficient  $\beta_2$  is expected to be positive, indicating that countries experiencing a democratic regime transition are associated with higher population outflows due to the higher chances of escape.  $\beta_3$  is expected to be negative, indicating that regimes that are durable tend to reduce population outflow. This indicates that in countries with an autocratic regime, population outflows tend to be lower due to the lack of opportunity to leave.

## **Independent variable**

Our first hypothesis states that the failure of the autocratic regime increases the population outflow (H1). This hypothesis is built on the belief that the failure of the regime, signaling the

country's political instability, can pose a threat to people and force them to flee. Moreover, the failure of a strong autocratic regime can cause a power vacuum and weaken the control that that government has exercised over its people. On the other hand, our third hypothesis predicts that if there is no significant transition in the current regime, the volume of population outflows from autocratic countries will not increase (H3). In other words, if the current autocratic regime remains stable and unchanged, the population outflows from those countries are likely to be curbed. There is a high possibility that the current policy stance of the autocratic regime, which firmly controls the outflow of population abroad, will continue.

To test for the first and third hypotheses, two measures are employed to proxy regime collapse and status quo regime. Regarding the former, the failure of state authority (Authority\_Failure) is measured using a part of the Political Instability Task Force (PITF) State Failure Problem Set, developed by Marshall et al. (2018). This Authority\_Failure is measured on a scale of 1 to 4. The lowest score represents a continuing regime collapse with trivial damage to state authority, while the highest score represents a complete state collapse. Observations that have not experienced state failure are coded 0. Overall, the lower the value of this indicator, the more stable the current state authority is without suffering from internal and external challenges. We expect this variable to determine whether the magnitude of population outflow is proportional to the degree of collapse of state authority. Strict government control over the people in an autocratic country is possible when the ruling regime is durable. To measure the status quo in the regime, we employ the interaction term between the regime durability variable (Regime\_Durability). The higher the durability of the autocratic regime, the less the population outflow. The durability of a regime captures the length (in years) of a regime's existence. The variable is log-transformed for a normal distribution data. The autocratic military regime variable comes from Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions:

A New Data Set by Geddes et al. (2014). This binary variable is coded as 1 for autocratic military regimes and 0 otherwise.

The second hypothesis states that the democratic transition is likely to increase population outflows from autocratic countries (H2). This hypothesis will be validated by using the regime transition variable, which measures the change in Polity2 index against the previous year's value. A positive value for this indicator indicates that the regime is more democratic than in the previous year. A negative value indicates that the regime becomes more autocratic compared to the previous year. Original data on this variable is taken from Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800–2018 (Marshall et al., 2019).

## **Control variables**

State-sponsored repression has been identified as one of the major causes of forced migration (Schmeidl, 1997). To determine whether government repression increases forced migration abroad, the physical integrity rights index, one of the indicators of the Human Rights Dataset from Cingranelli-Rishards (Cingranelli et al., 2014), is utilized. This item is measured on a scale of 0 to 8. The higher the values, the better the protection of an individual's physical integrity rights by the government. Thus, it is expected that it is inversely related to the population outflow, based on the expectation that a high level of individual physical integrity rights should lower the motivation to leave the country. Another controlling factor that should be accounted for is the presence of genocide and politicide, which are binarily coded, i.e. unity for their presence and zero otherwise (Marshall et al., 2017).

The presence of intrastate and interstate conflicts has often been included in previous studies' analysis of forced migration. In the event of a sudden change or transition in an autocratic regime, armed conflict between competing power groups can be possible and can create a significant threat to the people. We include dummy variables for civil war and international war to capture the impact of violent conflict on the volume of forced migration. Their presence is coded 1, and their absence is coded 0. These indicators are available in *Major Episodes of Political Violence (MEPV) and Conflicts Regions, 1946–2016* by Marshall (2017).

In addition, many control variables that were frequently included in previous studies are included in the analysis. First, to control the impacts of economic security on the population outflow, GDP per capita (logged) is employed. This variable is expected to capture whether the individual's economic capacity and economic security play a role in the decision to move abroad. Population (logged) is used to see if population pressure plays a role in population outflow. In addition, land size (logged) is included in the analysis as a geographic indicator. All these indicators come from the World Bank (2019). Finally, the democracy in the region variable is included to see if the proportion of democracy in the region where the country of origin of forced migration is located induces population outflow. I account for this possibility by controlling for the proportion of democratic regimes in a region. Previous studies predicted that democratic neighbors can induce the population outflow from autocratic countries (Moore and Shellman, 2007; Uzonyi, 2014). Given the large number of asylum application is applied to democratic countries, it is an important indicator to identify the pulling impact of democracy on the outflow of populations from autocratic countries.



## 2.2 Findings

The results of the negative binomial regression are shown in Table 1, comprising four models: Models 1-2 present negative binomial estimates of asylum applications in non-democracies between 2000 and 2016, and Models 3-4 show the results of a full sample including democratic and non-democratic regimes. Model 1 is a baseline model. Model 2 accounts for some influential observations with civil war, international wars, and genocide & politicide. In many studies of forced migration, the presence of generalized violence has been identified as the most influential driver of human displacement (Davenport et al., 2003; Deal, 2013; Schmeidl, 1997; Weiner, 1996; Zolberg, 1989). Therefore, it may be argued that the results obtained in the main analysis could be indeed the effects of samples with generalized violence instead. The analyses in Model 1 (non-democracies only) and Model 3 (both democracies and non-democracies) are performed by excluding country-year observations with civil wars, international wars, and genocide & politicide.

In all models in Table 1, the failure of state authority variable (*Authority\_Failure*) is proportional to the number of asylum seekers and is statistically significant. As we expected, the failure of state authority is positively associated with the volume of asylum seekers, i.e., the number of asylum seekers increases as the degree of regime failure increases. The findings can be explained by the political uncertainty caused by the collapse of the state, which motivates more people to leave the country. However, what can be inferred from the results table is that the paralysis of government functions caused by the collapse of the state leads to a weakening of government control over the people, which can lead to population outflows across borders. The results also suggest that if the regime has a strong resistance to the

challenges of rebels and is immune from the collapse, that is, it can maintain its power, population outflow can be curbed. The regime transition variable is also positive and has a strong statistical significance. This result suggests that the democratic transition of the regime can lead to population outflow. Therefore, our third hypothesis is supported (H2) such that durable autocracies tend to have lower population outflows. In accordance with the present results, previous studies have explained that a democratic regime shift can ease border control and increase the outflow of population (Davenport et al., 2003; Zolberg, 1989). Our third hypothesis states that maintaining the status quo of the autocratic regime will curb population outflow. This hypothesis is tested once again by using the regime durability variable (Regime\_Durability). In models 1 and 2 of Table 1, the regime durability parameter ( $\beta_3 < 0$ ) shows statistical significance. This indicates that the durability of an autocratic regime has a significant influence on population outflows. However, in Model 3 and Model 4, which take account of both autocratic and democratic regimes, the results lost its significance. The results indicate that the durability of an autocratic regime, which exerts robust control over emigration, plays a role in suppressing the outflow of asylum seekers, but the effect of regime durability in suppressing population outflows may not be significant in democratic countries.

Most of our control variables also reveal the expected signs. In particular, the finding shows that the outbreak of civil war increases forced migration. This result seems to be consistent with other research which found a significant positive relationship between civil war and increases in forced migration (Davenport et al., 2003; Moore and Shellman, 2004). On the other hand, the involvement of international wars does not have a significant impact on forced migration in our analysis. In the case of genocide and politicide, it is found to be strongly positively associated with the number of asylum seekers in all models (Lischer, 2007). The physical integrity rights variable has negative statistical significance at the .001 level. These

suggest that better government protection of physical integrity rights can reduce population outflows. This result mirrors those of the previous studies that have examined the association between state repression and forced migration (Weiner, 1996). The population variable is also statistically significant, indicating that countries that are densely populated tend to produce more asylum seekers. The GDP per capita variable is found to have a marginally positive relationship with the dependent variable, but a strong statistical significance is shown in the baseline model. This also accords with the earlier study, which showed that the economic capacity of an individual is an essential factor in deciding to leave the country (Schon, 2019; Van Hear, 2006). The higher the proportion of democracy in the region where the country is located, the higher the amount of forced migration. The size of the nation's territory is negatively correlated with the dependent variable in all models, but only marginally statistically significant. This result shows that the larger the land, the smaller the number of asylum seekers.

Table 1. Negative binomial estimates of asylum applications

Dependent variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	Number of asylum applications			
Authority_Failure	0.138*** (3.32)	0.126** (3.23)	0.145** (3.27)	0.128** (2.97)
Regime_Transition	0.0455*** (3.77)	0.0445*** (3.68)	0.0440*** (3.98)	0.0428*** (3.94)
Regime_Durability <sup>+</sup>	-0.0603* (-2.23)	-0.0488 <sup>+</sup> (-1.78)	-0.0122 (-0.53)	-0.00596 (-0.25)
Physical integrity rights	-0.0700*** (-3.58)	-0.0472* (-2.34)	-0.112*** (-8.12)	-0.103*** (-7.27)
Population <sup>+</sup>	0.222** (2.83)	0.192* (2.46)	0.243*** (6.12)	0.242*** (6.07)
GDP per capita <sup>+</sup>	0.277*** (5.86)	0.286*** (5.94)	0.123*** (4.10)	0.121*** (4.00)
Land size <sup>+</sup>	-0.0768 (-1.35)	-0.0484 (-0.84)	-0.0676* (-2.02)	-0.0621 <sup>+</sup> (-1.84)
Democratic neighbors in the region	0.0107*** (3.91)	0.0111*** (4.01)	0.00752*** (5.04)	0.00744*** (4.97)
Civil war*		0.403*** (4.05)		0.282** (2.85)
International war*		-0.143 (-0.43)		0.0709 (0.22)
Genocide & politicide*		0.633** (3.22)		0.584** (2.64)
_cons	-3.444** (-3.09)	-3.525** (-3.14)	-3.008*** (-5.57)	-3.113*** (-5.73)
Number of observations	707	695	1635	1623

*t* statistics in parentheses <sup>+</sup>  $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Note: 1) \* Dummy variable 2) <sup>+</sup>log transformed variable for a normal distribution

### ***The expected duration of the impact of a change in regime on the outflow of population***

To identify whether the effect of the transition and collapse of the regime on the outflow of the population lasts only in the short term or persists over a longer period of time, I include the lagged (t-1 and t-2) variables of Authority\_Failure and Regime\_Transition in the analysis. In the model taking account of the full sample, when variables are lagged for one year, the

Authority\_Failure and Regime\_Transition variables are positively significant at 1% and 5% levels, respectively. However, when 2-year lagged variables are included, the statistical significance of both variables is lost. These results indicate that regime transition and collapse may have a short- to medium-term effect on population outflow.

Table 2. Negative binomial estimates of asylum applications

	Model 1	Model 2
Dependent variable	Number of asylum applications	
Authority_Failure(t-1)	0.131** (2.96)	
Authority_Failure(t-2)		0.0411 (0.78)
Regime_Transition(t-1)	0.0242* (2.13)	
Regime_Transition(t-2)		-0.000939 (-0.09)
Regime_Durability	-0.0212 (-0.90)	-0.0336 (-1.36)
Physical integrity rights	-0.0968*** (-6.46)	-0.0862*** (-5.50)
Population <sup>+</sup>	0.213*** (4.89)	0.227*** (5.01)
GDP per capita <sup>+</sup>	0.0854** (2.64)	0.0791* (2.30)
Land size <sup>+</sup>	-0.0507 (-1.39)	-0.0409 (-1.07)
Democratic neighbors in the region	0.00882*** (5.51)	0.00799*** (4.59)
Civil war*	0.328** (3.15)	0.309** (2.81)
Internationalwar*	0.292 (0.87)	0.198 (0.60)
Genocide & politicide*	0.580* (2.53)	0.474 <sup>+</sup> (1.86)
_cons	-2.309*** (-3.87)	-2.304*** (-3.72)
Number of observations	1487	1349

*t* statistics in parentheses <sup>+</sup>  $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Note: 1) \* Dummy variable 2) <sup>+</sup>log transformed variable for a normal distribution

### **3. Case study - North Korea**

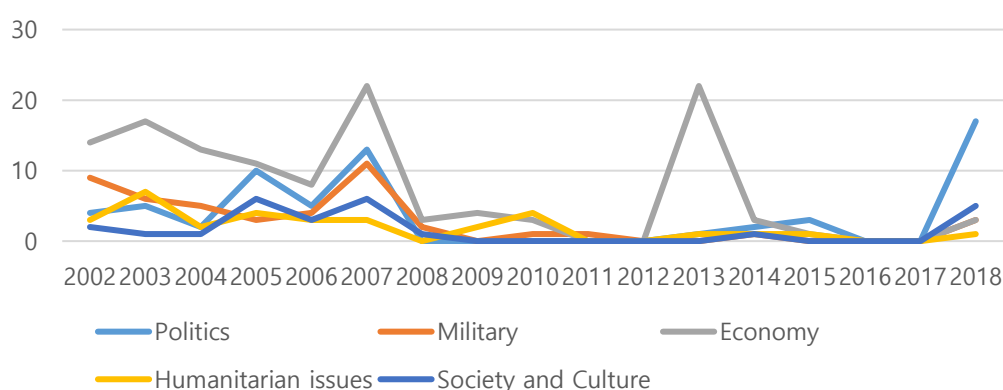
The statistical analysis supports the impact of changes in an autocratic regime on population outflow. Based on these findings, this paper now examines different paths of regime development that the North Korean regime can follow, including 1) regime collapse, 2) status quo, and 3) democratic transition, and analyzes the possible impacts of each path of regime development on forced migrations from North Korea.

It has been about ten years since Kim Jong-un became the supreme leader of North Korea after the death of North Korea's second leader, Kim Jong-il, in 2011. Over the past decade, evaluations of the stability of the Kim Jong-un regime have been conducted continuously from outside, and plans and proposals have been presented to prepare for a sudden change in the North Korean regime. In particular, a lot of weight has been put on the scenario of the collapse of the North Korean regime under the pressure of sanctions. Unlike the predictions that were rampant from the outside, since 2018, North Korea has been sending some signals of change to the international society by expressing its commitment to moving toward normalizing its relations with the international community. On the flip side, however, their military provocations are still ongoing. The mixed messages from North Korea tell us that the future of the North Korean regime can unfold in various directions in the future. Hence, at this point, this paper revisits the possible paths of transition that the North Korean regime can follow, and poses a question about what the consequences of each regime transition might be.

Since 2018, the North Korean regime has expressed its willingness to change by shifting to practical actions such as closing down the nuclear test site at Punggye-ri, resuming the inter-

Korean summit, and engaging in various diplomatic dialogs with neighboring countries. North Korea's recent movements are significant. For example, the inter-Korean dialog in the political sphere, which has been held only six times in the last 10 years, was held 17 times in 2018 alone. There have been three inter-Korean summit talks to confirm the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and to establish a peaceful relationship between the two Koreas.

Figure 5. Inter-Korean Dialog for Each Field (2002–2018)



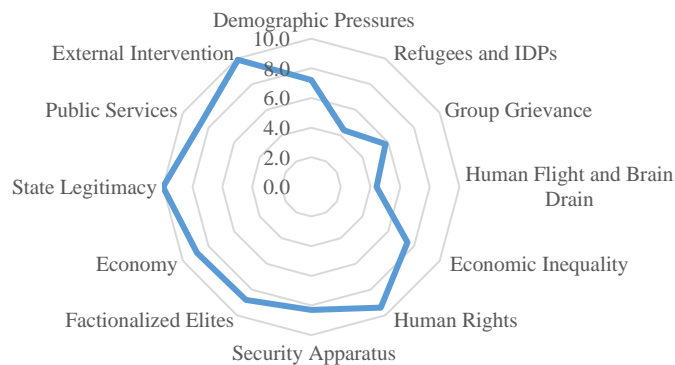
(Ministry of Unification ROK, 2018)

We cannot make hasty judgments as to how the changes signaled by the North Korean regime will evolve. This is because there have been signs of change in the North Korean regime in the past. As shown in Figure 5, the North Korean regime showed a pattern similar to the present one during the period from 2002 to 2008, showing indicators of change in various fields, when South Korea was ruled by a progressive administration. This could suggest that the current movement could either be typical of a recurring North Korean pattern or a fresh signal of change created by the new regime leadership. It could be said that the unusual movements of the North Korean regime can result in the state taking various courses of action depending on the outcome of the nuclear negotiations with the international community and the success of normalization of relations with neighboring countries. Therefore, at this point it

is necessary to analyze the possible impacts of changes generated by the North Korean regime on the North Korean people, the Korean Peninsula, and the East Asian region.

A massive outflow of North Korea's population is a potential problem that we cannot overlook, because it is a security issue that is closely related to regional stability. Although mass population outflows have not yet occurred in North Korea, this country is not fully free from the potential for this to happen. According to the Fragile States Index of 2018, the case of North Korea shows the shape of a broken circle, which represents overall high levels of the condition of fragility in a country, while the level of refugees and IDPs and the volume of human flight is visibly low compared to other indicators (The Fund for Peace, 2018). This figure could illustrate the fact that, despite various conditions for experiencing population outflows having been met in the area, the phenomenon has not yet been prominent due to the operation of heavy border controls which were imposed by the North Korean national security agency to thwart illegal defectors (Bennett, 2013). Hence, no one can guarantee that the future pattern of population outflow from North Korea will be same as that in the past, should structural changes in the North Korean regime take place.

Figure 6. Fragile States Index 2018 — North Korea



(The Fund for Peace, 2018)



Although research on the future of the North Korean regime and the resultant impact on population outflows, including forced migrants, has been accumulating rapidly over the past decades, most of the previous studies have tended to focus on a North Korean "regime collapse" scenario in explaining population outflows. However, what we should not overlook is that a regime transition in North Korea can take any course, and all of these can lead to a structural change in the vertical relationship between the North Korean regime and the people. In particular, more detailed analysis is needed of the potential impact of the democratization or liberalization of the North Korean regime on North Korean society and its people.

In this study, I set out three major paths for the North Korean regime to move forward. The first scenario is "Regime collapse." It has been pointed out that the dictatorship of North Korea could face resistance by internal forces. The collapse of the regime may occur due to challenges from the prevailing elites or due to pressures from below. An externally induced regime collapse is also possible. If the diplomatic isolation and economic deterioration continue, the legitimacy of the Kim Jong-un regime could suffer considerable damage. The second scenario is "Status quo." The autocratic regime of North Korea has sowed some seeds of change over the past few decades, but none of them has bloomed. It could be the case that North Korea maintains the current status of autocracy without major changes. The last path is a "Democratic transition" in the North Korean regime. In order for the North Korean government to give up nuclear development and find a new means of survival, it is inevitable that a substantial transformation would be required. The reign of the Kim dynasty in North Korea has lasted for the last almost 70 years, which suggests that a sudden democratic transition in North Korea would have considerable impact on the North Korean people and their society.

The key conceptual framework for this study, which explains the relationship between North Korean regime transition and population outflows, involves the motivation for North Koreans to flee and the availability of opportunities to move abroad. Regime transition in an autocratic country can be interpreted as a change in the level of structural control exercised by the regime on its people. The motivations and opportunities for North Koreans to flee may be increased or restricted depending on the path the regime transition goes down.

### **3. 1 The future of the North Korean regime and its impact on population outflows**

#### **3.1.1 Regime collapse**

One possible path that North Korea's regime may take is experiencing a weakening of the current autocratic government. This could appear in various forms. Regime change could take place through a coup or revolt by internal forces. In the most extreme form, it could be the collapse of the regime (Olson, 2016). Pessimism over the stability and durability of the North Korean regime has been steadily rising and attracted much attention after Kim Jong-il's death. The view was that the emergence of a new leader, Kim Jong-un, who lacked political experience could lead to a power vacuum among the elites and increase political instability in North Korea (Kim and Roland, 2012). Bruce Bennett is a leading scholar who asserts that there is a possibility of the collapse of the North Korean regime. In his book, *Preparing for the Possibility of North Korean Collapse* (2013), he argues that the North Korean regime is already in the process of failing or eroding and that collapse could take either of two forms: the collapse of the regime or the collapse of the government. The limitations caused by the continuous blocking of the inflow of external information, the loss of the engine of economic growth

caused by cuts in foreign currencies due to the economic sanctions, insufficient energy, and constant natural disasters are viewed as major factors weakening the legitimacy and durability of the regime (ibid.).

The limitations of an anachronistic ideology that does not reflect the demands of the people have also been regarded as a factor causing instability of the regime. Park, using path dependent theory, analyzes that the monolithic system, backed up by the Juche Ideology which was established during the Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il regimes, has played an important role in consolidating and maintaining the stability of the current regime (2014, pp.8-11). However, researchers have also evaluated the legitimacy of Juche Ideology, which justifies absolute autocracy, and have found it to have been significantly weakened under the Kim Jong-un's regime (Kim et al., 2015). Choi (2017) points out that both the economic crisis and the influx of information from the outside have undermined the ideological foundation that sustains the North Korean regime. As a result, the Kim Jong-un regime has had to rely more on rule by force based on a stricter penal system. Gerschewski (2013) explains that the elements that make up the regime stability of an autocratic country are legitimation, repression, and co-optation. In his work, he points out that many autocratic countries failed to resolve the gap between ideological claims and social reality, thus losing regime legitimacy. In the case of Cuba and North Korea, which are classified as "ideocracies," the indoctrination mechanism, which serves as the backbone of the regime, is no longer sustainable. Again, no matter how strong the control measures that are used, it is impossible to completely prevent the inflow of information from the outside. The widening gap between the ideological claims made by the autocratic regime and actual reality make the North Korean regime more vulnerable to public assessment (ibid.). It is believed that it would be difficult for both the North Korean and Cuban regimes to maintain

long-term stability unless their economic levels rise to those of China or Vietnam (Saxonberg, 2013).

The diminishing solidarity among the ruling elites is also pointed out as a factor weakening the current regime. In the past, strong cohesion among the top-level power elites has been the foundation for sustaining the North Korean regime, guided by the Juche Ideology and the absolutism of the Suryong system (Kim, 2008). However, according to a systemic qualitative assessment of the North Korean political system conducted by Kim et al. (2015), partisan homogeneity and the once strong solidarity between the autocrat and the political elites has been significantly diminished in the Kim Jong-un regime. It is viewed that the coalition of power elites surrounding Kim Jong-un's regime is mainly based on economic interests and is maintained by the regime's strong surveillance and control. Hence, the division of these power elites responsible for sustaining the regime would accelerate if economic interests are damaged. Kim et al. argue that the fact that the ruling regime lacks ideological legitimacy has already led to the desertion of power elites by pointing out that the 46 high ranking individuals left the country between 2012-2015 (ibid. pp. 170-172). Furthermore, widespread public dissatisfaction with economic policies has significantly undermined the political loyalty felt toward the country's supreme leader, Kim Jong-un. Choi's (2017) analysis posits that the failure of the central economy in North Korea and the marketization generated by the public have changed the fundamental relationship between state and society. North Korean leaders have lost the ability to control the masses through ideology in the same way as they did in the past. In other words, the North Korean regime takes the form of "dominance without hegemony," which is not sustainable in the long term (ibid.).

The conflict between economic and political policies is also pointed out as a factor weakening the legitimacy of this regime. Cha (2013) argues that the marketization and ideological reification that the North Korean government has carried out has resulted in widening the gap between ideology and reality. While marketization, which was introduced after 2002, has lowered the people's economic dependence and political loyalty to the regime, the North Korean government is caught in the dilemma of reproducing a political ideology that seems far removed from reality in order to justify its economic failure and to control a society evolving toward democracy. According to a survey conducted by the Database Center for North Korean Human Rights on 414 North Korean defectors living in South Korea in 2018, 61.8% of survey respondents replied that they had remitted to their families living in North Korea through unofficial routes. The total amount of these remittances delivered to North Korean families is reported to exceed \$270,000 a year. Given that there are 34,000 North Korean defectors staying in South Korea, it suggests that a significant number of North Koreans now rely on remittances from overseas for their livelihood. According to statistical analysis carried out by Escribà-Folch et al. (2018), based on cross-national data on a latent measure of anti-government political protest and individual-level survey data from eight African non-democracies, remittances are found to increase political protest in dictatorships by expanding the resources that government opponents can mobilize to protest against the regime. The weakening of the North Korean people's ideological and economic dependence on the ruling party and the formation of alternative financial sources through informal routes at the individual level, which allows North Koreans to protest against the regime, can be regarded as factors that can cause destabilization of the North Korean government. The common premise of previous studies holding skeptical views about the North Korean regime's stability is that North Korea's diplomatic isolation and economic deterioration will hamper the legitimacy and stability of this autocratic system. From this viewpoint, considering the weakened legitimacy

of the current establishment due to continued diplomatic and economic isolation, the possibility cannot be ruled out that both elite groups and the masses may express their grievances in the form of coups or revolts, further undermining the stability of the regime.

The prevailing view is that any type of regime collapse in North Korea can change the balance of power, not only in the Korean Peninsula but also in the entire East Asian region, and it can have direct or indirect impacts on the population outflow from North Korea (Bennett, 2013; Han, 2017).

This collapse could take various forms. For example, Bennett (2013, pp. 5-7) defines collapse as a situation in which the Kim regime is overthrown by opposing elites. The collapse of government is defined as the absence of any individual or group to take control of the government after the existing ruling regime has been overthrown. A scenario of regime collapse stemming from the outbreak of violence by popular uprisings has also been discussed, although the possibility of this occurring is not high (Han, 2017). The consequences of regime collapse for North Korean society can vary depending on how the existing government breaks down and which group of forces takes control. Stares (2016) argues that the likelihood of the use of violence by the ruling regime to tackle the opposition tends to increase in the face of the weakening of the regime caused by either popular uprising or leadership challenges by elite groups. According to the possible regime collapse and absorption paths presented by Pollock (1999, p.65-66), a conflict between the party and the military after the collapse of the current regime, it could lead to prolonged political turmoil and instability. Furthermore, it is expected that the threat of war may increase if the conservative military rulers take control of the regime.

The assertion that the collapse of the regime will increase population outflows is the prevailing theory, based on the belief that it will result in violence caused by conflicts among various elite groups (Mastro 2018; Pollack and Lee, 1999). Based on the analysis of both American and Chinese contingency plans towards the collapse of the North Korean regime, Mastro (2018) predicts that in the event of a sudden collapse of said regime, the influx of conflict-induced North Korean refugees into China is highly likely; this will trigger China's military intervention, based on the fact that the Chinese government has already established a military plan against the influx of refugees from North Korea. According to the analysis of Geddes et al. (2014), only 61 percent of the 16 communist countries that existed before the collapse of communism were democratized, and most of these countries experienced civil wars. Geddes et al. (2014) claim that the collapse of an autocratic state, ruled by a personalist dictatorship, is unlikely to lead to democratization and tends to result in the country falling into political chaos or being taken over by other autocratic regimes. From this perspective, the possibility of the outbreak of civil war caused by regime collapse cannot be overlooked. Much of the literature on the North Korean government is concerned with the occurrence of civil war, which is a situation that could result from regime collapse (Bennett 2013; Pollack and Lee, 1999). Rotberg (2003) argues that a highly regimented regime in North Korea or in Iraq could collapse when the autocrat is overthrown. He also points out that the collapse of the regime can bring society into lawlessness by causing a power vacuum in the central government, which can increase violence by various sub-state actors (ibid.).

In a situation where a power vacuum is created after the Kim regime is overthrown or he is incapacitated by poor health, there is a possibility of intervention from neighboring countries. It has been observed that in the context of the outbreak of war or the collapse of the North Korean regime, military intervention from China in the North Korean region is highly likely; such intervention can be attributed to geopolitical, political, and economic considerations (Scobell and Cozad, 2014). The main purpose of intervention will be preventing North Korea's political and military instability from spilling over into neighboring countries. It has also been observed that the presence of the US and ROK military in North Korea and the dominant influence of these two countries in the stabilization process could lead to a political and military threat to China, which would induce that nation to engage in more aggressive intervention (ibid.). In particular, the desire to neutralize nuclear threats that could affect their own interests and to minimize refugee outflows from North Korea stand out as major motivations for intervention (Mastro 2018). South Korea and the United States also have a military operation plan called "Oplan 5029" to prepare for a sudden change in the North Korean regime. It is likely that external intervention in North Korea by outside forces seeking their own national interests could heighten regional tension and increase the possibility of civil war (Saeed and Przystup, 2011). Tschirgi (2004) also points out that external intervention in failing states, under the guise of so-called stabilization, tends to reflect the national security interests of the participating countries. Geopolitically, North Korea is bordered by China, Russia, and South Korea and shares its maritime territory with Japan and China. Politically, it is a region where the democratic alliance formed between Korea, the United States, and Japan, and the communist bloc formed between North Korea, China, and Russia can encounter each other. Given this, when the North Korean regime collapses, it may be difficult to find a consensus to satisfy all the interests of these countries on the Korean Peninsula. If such an external



intervention were to take place with military force, it could also have an adverse effect on regional stability.

Analysis has shown that external intervention can increase the probability of the onset of civil war not only in the country of origin but also in neighboring countries, based on a statistical analysis that derives risk score for all states from 1957 to 2007 (Regan and Meachum, 2014). Moreover, it has been pointed out that external intervention can even increase the duration of civil wars (Sambanis and Elbadawi, 2000; Wood et al., 2012). A large number of previous studies on forced migration have focused on the impact of violence on outmigration caused by civil war (Melander and Öberg, 2007; Moore and Shellman, 2004; Weiner, 1996). Despite the existence of coercive control and punishment by the North Korean government of its people, the country has been relatively immune from civil war. This is because the Kim regime has suppressed potential opponents to its power by forming and maintaining an absolute ruling system through the use of the purge tactic (Horak, 2011). In addition to a strong control system, the absence of immediate violence in the region has played a role in maintaining a low level of population outflows from North Korea. However, if the current North Korean regime loses its legitimacy and a power vacuum is created among elite groups, the possibility of civil war may increase. The outbreak of civil war caused by conflicts between various actors, both inside and outside the country, can increase the possibility of a mass population exodus from North Korea.

The impact of the collapse of the North Korean regime on population outflows can also be explained in terms of the loss of national control over the people. As Thompson and Freeman (2009) point out, the collapse of the North Korean government has the potential to trigger a massive refugee outflow because it could paralyze the security forces. Rotberg (2003) explains

that the collapse of a regime can be measured in terms of the geographical range within which it can still exercise its control because failed regimes are unable to maintain control over their borders. Chatelard (2010) explains that an autocratic regime based on succession is able to limit the freedom of movement of a particular group of people and also to displace them arbitrarily. Considering that strong border control has been an important means of deterring outmigration from North Korea, it is likely that a sudden weakening or collapse of the North Korean regime could paralyze its physical ability to deter North Koreans from escaping. In other words, this failure, coupled with the political turmoil brought by the breakdown of central authority, could be the starting point of mass refugee outbreaks.

### **3.1.2 Democratic transition**

Some are optimistic about democratic changes in the regime in North Korea. Although various definitions of democratization exist, for the purposes of this study the term is defined as a regime change that further weakens the level of state control over the people. Hence, the general meaning of democratization, which is the process of transitioning a political system starting from the collapse and replacement of an authoritarian regime, does not necessarily strictly apply to this study (Przeworski, 1997; Pye, 1990). From a broad perspective, liberalization, the stage at which state control over the people is weakening, can be seen as an early phase of democratization, prior to radical changes in political institutions (Haggard and Kaufman, 2016). Some scholars such as Fish and Choudhry (2007) find that economic liberalization can advance political democratization. Also, in Huntington's study (1991; 1993), it is viewed that liberalization can be perceived as a slow path of political transition to democracy in that liberalization can reduce the level of state repression, restore civil society,

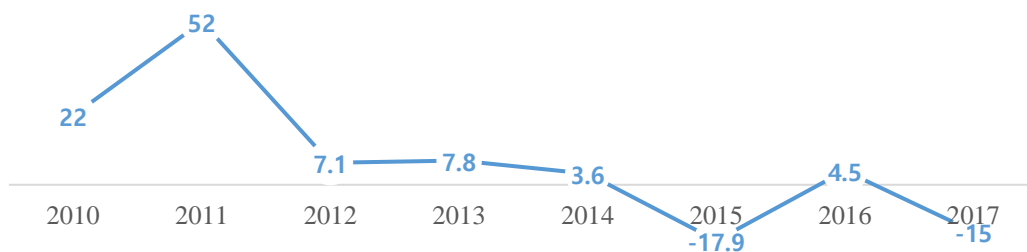
and permit the existence of public debate. O'Donnell define such cases as instances of "liberalized authoritarianism" or "limited democracy" (1986, p. 9). Historically, there are liberalized autocratic nations that maintain existing structures of authority, such as China and Vietnam. Considering the fact that the North Korean regime has never experienced the process of democratization, it is difficult to expect North Korea to establish complete democracy in the near future. Hence, in this section, the possibility that the current North Korean regime can move toward either liberalized authoritarianism or a limited democracy is discussed.

The viewpoints that conclude that democratization in North Korea is unlikely are largely based on several deterrent factors such as the government's strong control over its people and the inadequacy of any opposing forces to resist the regime in power. In terms of civil society, however, there are also counter arguments suggesting that North Korean culture is changing in various aspects. For example, the emergence of a new economic class that has been created by marketization (Lankov, 2008) and the rise of groups of young elites who can access external information can be interpreted as the potential basis for the formation of a civil society, one that along with social media and pressure on human rights violations from the international community could hamper the legitimacy and durability of the autocratic regime and hasten democratization (Cha, 2013; Choi, 2017). Lee (2017) claims that the transition process has already begun within the North Korean regime. According to his analysis, in North Korea, the party elites and the military elites are in competition, and the North Korean command will experience either a gradual transition or a radical transition, depending on which elite group takes the initiative. The scenario of gradual transition is based on alleviating political tensions and attracting foreign capital through economic cooperation and improving relations with neighboring countries. This is a path of liberalization that can develop if the party takes the political initiative. Lankov (2008) points out that market liberalization would undermine the

existing political isolation. This is because political and economic engagement with the international community can play an important role in initiating the process of democratization, once North Korean society begins to open up. Although economic liberalization and democratization cannot be considered to have a causal relationship or to be the same phenomenon, what they have in common is that they restrict governmental authority and state power over people (Huntington, 1993). Becoming a normal state presupposes that North Korea will adhere to international norms and tolerate some degree of international intervention. Geddes (2011) points out that foreign aid and investment have made a significant contribution to the political transition of autocratic countries that have experienced the third wave of democratization. Also, Gleditsch and Choung's argument (2004) that an autocratic country with democratic neighboring states is highly likely to be democratized is worthy of attention, given that information on the political and economic prosperity of South Korea is flowing into North Korea through the black market, creating great pressure on the North Korean regime. In a similar vein, Pevehouse (2002), based on a statistical analysis showing the causal mechanism between being a member of international organizations and political liberalization, claims that joining an international organization composed of democratic countries can accelerate the democratization of a totalitarian state, thus indirectly suggesting that North Korea's normalization of diplomacy with the international community can serve as a springboard for democratization. Given that the North Korean economy has lost its self-sufficiency and that the preservation of a regime which heavily depends on ideology and political fear is exposed to a number of limitations, the North Korean government will require a new instrument to reinforce its political legitimacy. The strengthening of economic power could be the most effective tool to maintain the legitimacy of a regime which must replace nuclear supremacy policy and ideology (Ikenberry et al., 2004; Schmidt, 2012). For an economic recovery, it is essential that foreign trade routes be resumed; diplomatic normalization must also be achieved.

In North Korea, however, all trade routes have been blocked due to economic sanctions, and the scale of international trade has continued to decline since Kim Jong-un took office, as shown in the following graph. In addition, North Korea's trade dependence on China has been significant, approaching 94.8%, which is an increase of 2.1 % from 2016 (Statistics Korea, 2018). Economic isolation, overall, is likely to put great pressure on the political autonomy and legitimacy of the North Korean government, which makes changes in the regime inevitable.

Figure 7. The total foreign trade of North Korea, growth of foreign trade (%)



(Statistics Korea, 2018)

Reflecting this in his 2019 New Year's address, Kim Jong-un repeatedly expressed his firm commitment to establish a permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula and to move toward complete denuclearization. He emphasized economic development based on technology, resources, and creativity, and demonstrated the will for inter-Korean economic cooperation through the resumption of the Kaesong Industrial Complex and the Mt. Kungang tourist region (*Rodong Sinmun*, 2019). This represents a significant change compared to his New Year's address of the previous year, which was heavily weighted toward demonstrating North Korea's nuclear capability and delivering warning messages to neighboring countries, including the United States and South Korea (The National Committee on North Korea, 2018). In the New Year's address published in 2018, the word nuclear was used 22 times, but in the 2019 address

it was used only once. Even though the term was used, it was included in the context that nuclear options will not be used unless the sovereignty of North Korea is threatened. On the other hand, the word economy was used 21 times in 2018 and 38 times in 2019. Kim Jong-un, the supreme leader of North Korea, is clearly demonstrating his will to denuclearize and to normalize diplomatic relations with the international community. If his intentions progress to the transparent implementation of the denuclearization process, it is expected that North Korea will be able to resume economic and diplomatic exchanges with the international community as a normal nation. The weakening of political legitimacy, the loss of economic independence, the deterioration of public support, and the pressure from the international community are driving democratic changes in the North Korean regime.

This study expects that democratization in North Korea will increase the volume of outmigration, as it will ease the level of state control over emigration. Loosened state control, which will result in a reduction in the risk of being penalized for escaping, is likely to provide opportunities for oppressed North Koreans to leave the country. Hence, the democratization process is likely to end the phenomenon of involuntary stay. The political and economic dissatisfaction of the people with the government can be visibly expressed by leaving the country, once structural obstacles are diminished (Hirschman, 1970, 1978).

According to Freedom House, the degree of freedom in North Korea in 2017 was rated at 3 out of 100 (Freedom House 2017). Given that serious human rights abuses are still being committed, it is likely that the sudden increase in the level of freedom of movement caused by democratization will lead to a population exodus. The outflow of forced migration, caused by a temporary relaxation of state regulation over international movement, is a phenomenon that can occur regardless of the intentions of the North Korean regime.

In sum, democratization in North Korea is likely to increase the volume of outmigration. First, it is expected that the volume of defectors will increase due to the loosened border controls. Second, it is also possible that the North Korean government will strategically allow emigration for political and economic purposes once democratization proceeds in North Korea.

### **3.1.3 Status Quo**

In contrast to the prediction that the regime will collapse, there are views that North Korea's current regime will remain stable. Another possible path for North Korea's regime is for it to maintain the status quo, where the form of the current regime continues without major changes. A group of researchers believe that the Kim Jong-un regime has durability in various aspects. At least on the surface, the Kim Jong-un regime has dispelled some external concerns that had arisen in the early days of the administration by demonstrating its durability over the past six years. Ironically, McEachern (2018) explains that the country's economic and military capabilities were the factors that enabled the Kim Jong-un regime to conduct stable government operations. He points out that the succession of Kim Jong-un from his father was made under much better conditions than Kim Jong-il's succession in terms of the level of economic and nuclear capabilities (ibid.).

The absence of potential political forces to oppose the current autocratic regime is also pointed out as a major reason for the long-term dominance of the Kim regime. Although historically most authoritarian regimes have been overthrown by political rivals, in North Korea, neither political rivalry nor a civil society that can lead mobilization to resist Kim's

regime exist. Dukalskis (2016) views the Kim Jong-un regime as being in a stable status because the potential opposing forces that could pose a threat to the current regime were eliminated at the early stage of his administration. In a similar vein, Saxonberg (2013) argues that revolutionary potential is low in North Korean society by pointing out that, unlike other former communist countries such as East Germany and Romania, there are no dissident groups with the aim of instigating a revolutionary movement. Along with the absence of a civil society, Fiori and Kim (2014), based on their comparative study on democratization in the Middle East and African regions compared with the North Korean region, point out that the elite split and the lack of experience with a democratization movement are factors that sustain the current autocratic regime and hamper democratic transition in North Korea. They also claim that favorable international pressures for democratic change in North Korea have not been effectively formed. By using an example of the attitude of the Chinese government towards the democratic transition in the North Korean regime, it is explained that surrounding North Korea tend to prefer the status quo of the North Korean regime so that North Korea can exist as a region to buffer political and security interest conflicts the surrounding countries may have (ibid. p.51).

A strong ruling system, designed to support the Kim regime, is also regarded as a major factor allowing regime persistence. For example, the nation's militarization, the leader system, elite co-optation, and post-unification uncertainty are assumed to be governing tools that have played a role in protecting the autocratic regime from collapsing (Horak, 2011). Kightley (2016) argues that the North Korean government has been efficient in minimizing the potential for formation of hostile forces against the Kim regime. Because the North Korean government is equipped with strong coup-proofing institutions to prevent various forms of revolt, North Korean leaders can easily identify and prevent anti-regime movements. With their qualitative



assessment on the authoritarian regime's deterrence strategies against the outbreak of revolution as a foundation, Byman and Lind (2010) argue that the North Korean regime has long deterred the formation of opposing forces through various methods, such as education, a class system, co-optation, the monopoly of information, and the establishment of direct security institutions under the regime. Scholars who believe that the possibility of regime transition or regime collapse in North Korea is low commonly point out that the basis for forming opposing forces against the current autocratic regime is very weak in North Korea.

It has been observed that a majority of the existing nation-states that have tight control over population flows are highly ideological one-party states (Dowty, 1987). This suggests that the nature of those governing systems is an important determinant influencing the degree of population outflows. This has also been the case in North Korea, where the type of governing system has played a significant role in minimizing the volume of outmigration. The North Korean regime defines "defection" as a penal offence (Lohman, 1996).

The North Korean regime strictly restricts interactions with the outside world in almost all areas (Kwon and Chung, 2012). Lohman (1996) argues that the legal system in North Korea merely reflects the interests of the state. Consequently, individual rights and freedoms tend to be marginalized in order to satisfy the interests of the ruling regime. From a legal perspective, before the ninth amendment to the Constitution was made in 1998, the right to freedom of movement was not even specified in the Constitution of North Korea. Under chapter 5, article 75 of the amended Constitution, freedom of movement and residence is legally guaranteed; however, North Koreans are still unable to enjoy those legal rights.<sup>3</sup> For a North Korean citizen,

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[http://www2.law.columbia.edu/course\\_00S\\_L9436\\_001/North%20Korea%20materials/98091708.htm](http://www2.law.columbia.edu/course_00S_L9436_001/North%20Korea%20materials/98091708.htm)

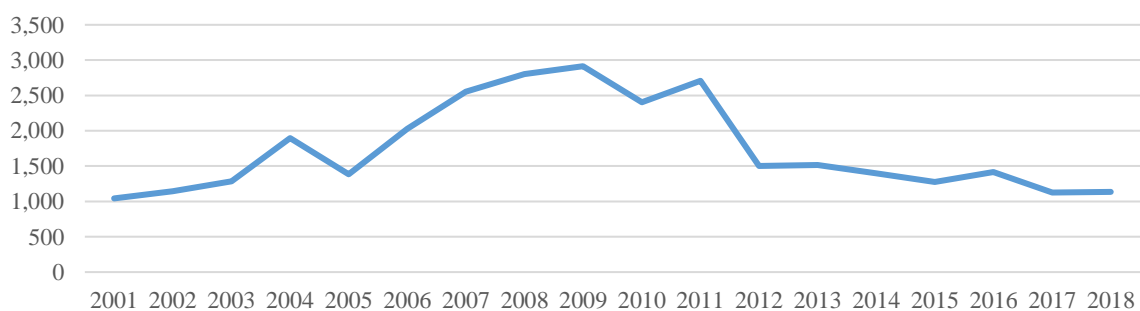
long-term stays outside his or her residence are limited, and movement across cities is also strongly controlled (Lohman, 1996). Punishments for an illegal border crossing, including imprisonment, various forms of torture, and execution have continued to be reported (Noland and Haggard, 2009). The environment beyond the borders of this nation is not favorable to North Korean defectors. China, which is regarded as the most accessible destination for North Koreans, has maintained a policy of repatriation in agreement with the North Korean government. The Chinese government does not grant refugee status to North Koreans arrested in Chinese territory and treats them as illegal economic migrants (Human Rights Watch, 2017). It is believed that one possible reason the Chinese government maintains such a strict policy toward North Korean defectors is out of concern for the political and economic instability that could be caused by the large-scale influx of refugees from North Korea (Cohen, 2014).

According to Dowty's analysis (1988), North Korea's emigration policy can be classified as following the Soviet model. In Soviet regimes, leaving one's own country was seen as a betrayal that signified disloyalty to the state. Interaction with the outside world, an ideological enemy, was perceived as a political threat to the regime. Collectivism, which prioritizes the state over the individual, became widespread after World War I, when strong ethnic and ideological blocs were formed. After World War II, in the early 1950s, the Soviet model of emigration policies permeated most of the Eastern European states, China, Mongolia, and North Korea (ibid.). Although most of these countries have experienced liberalization and have opened their borders, it seems that the North Korean regime can still be defined as following the Soviet model in that it remains hostile to the outside world, maintaining an ideological propaganda system and

controlling internal society by blocking the border to prevent both human and material exchanges.

It is difficult to count accurately how many people have fled from North Korea because these escapes take place in secret. According to a report submitted to the US Congress in 2007, estimates of the number of North Korean refugees living in China range from 30,000 to 50,000 (Margesson et al., 2007). The Norwegian Refugee Council estimates that between 50,000 and 200,000 North Korean defectors are currently hiding in China (Skretteberg, 2018). While a considerable number of people who have fled North Korea are staying illegally in China, there are others who try to ensure their political and economic security by applying for refugee status in a third country. South Korea has been regarded as a primary destination for North Korean refugees (Song, 2013). The figure below shows the number of North Korean defectors who settled in South Korea from 2001 to 2018 (Ministry of Unification ROK, 2018). The average number of North Koreans who have entered South Korea is slightly over 1,700 per year, reaching a peak of 2,914 in 2009, and has declined afterward.

Figure 8. Annual number of North Korean defectors entering South Korea

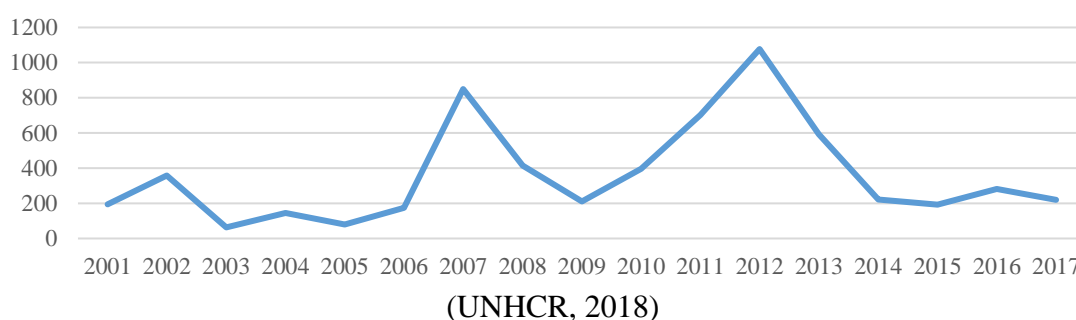


(Ministry of Unification ROK, 2018)

On the other hand, the annual number of asylum applications submitted by North Koreans is shown in Figure 9. Although China and South Korea are the most frequent destinations for

North Korean refugees, these two countries are excluded from the refugee data provided by the UNHCR. China has not officially granted refugee status to North Koreans (Lankov, 2004). Also, the Constitution of the Republic of Korea recognizes people living on the Korean Peninsula as its citizens.<sup>4</sup> For this reason, North Koreans who have entered South Korea are not recognized as refugees. The average number of asylum applications filed by North Korean defectors between 2000 and 2017 is only 350 per year. Given that the total population of North Korea was around 25 million in 2018, the ratio of asylum seekers to the total population has remained at a very low level.

Figure 9. Annual number of asylum applications filed by North Koreans



More importantly, it is remarkable that the number of people from North Korea attempting to seek asylum has tended to decrease since 2012 on both indicators. This illustrates that outmigration from North Korea has been decreasing since Kim Jong-un came into power. It can be surmised that the Kim Jong-un regime has raised the level of surveillance against population outflows, and this has made it harder for North Koreans to escape. The ruling system of North Korea established by Kim Il Sung has been maintained through three generations of hereditary succession for almost 70 years. The fundamental framework of government has not

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<http://www.law.go.kr/LSW/eng/engLsSc.do?menuId=2&query=CONSTITUTION%20OF%20THE%20REPUBLIC%20OF%20KOREA#liBgcolor2>

changed much. In the sense that control over North Korean population flows is directly related to the stability of the regime, the existing policies on emigration, so important for maintaining that stability, are likely to be maintained if there are no remarkable changes in the current government in the near future.

### **3.2 Statistical analysis controlling for an autocratic military regime**

This study aims to identify the effects of various transitional paths that the North Korean regime may face on the outflow of asylum seekers. Additional statistical models are established examining the effect of regime variation on population outflow across autocratic milieus, particularly under the rule of military regime, considering that the North Korean regime is a system that exerts strong control over its citizens through the military. In Table 3, the Models replicate Model 4 from Table 1 and further control for countries with an exclusively autocratic military regime. The autocratic military regime variable comes from *Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions: A New Data Set* by Geddes et al. (2014). This binary variable is coded as 1 for autocratic military regimes and 0 otherwise. The study assumes that the population outflow from an autocratic state can occur when people are motivated to leave the country and given the opportunity to leave the country. The availability of chances to leave an autocratic state is closely related to the level of individual freedom of international movement. It is likely that the increase in the level of freedom of foreign movement in the autocratic military regime is expected to increase the volume of forced migration generated. This is because mitigated border control gives citizens more opportunities to leave the country. A measure of the freedom of foreign movement of the Human Rights Dataset from Cingranelli-Rishards (Cingranelli et al., 2014) is used to test this hypothesis. This indicator is measured on a 0–2 scale, where 2

indicates that the freedom of foreign movement is not restricted by the government, while 0 indicates that this freedom is entirely restricted by the government. This variable is interacted with the autocratic military regime variable. Autocratic military regime is predicted to be inversely related to the density of forced migration generated. Nevertheless, if the high level of freedom of foreign movement exists in such a regime, the deterrent effect on population outflows due to the autocratic military regime may be reduced. In other words, higher freedom of foreign movement in an autocratic regime will increase the magnitude of population outflows. To measure the status quo in the autocratic military regime, we employ the interaction term between the regime durability variable (Regime\_Durability) and the military regime (Auto\_Military). The higher the durability of the autocratic military regime, the less the population outflow.

In general, the results in Table 3 are consistent with the results of the models in Table 1. Therefore, here I discuss the results of the variables interacting with the autocratic military regime exclusively. In all models of Table 3, the regime durability parameter ( $\beta_2$ ) shows no statistical significance. This indicates that the durability of a regime may not have a significant influence on population outflow. Despite the insignificant direct influence, the factor is shown to have moderating effects on the association between an autocratic military regime and forced migration. In particular, the coefficient revealed in Model 2 of Table 3 indicates the statistical significance at 5% of the interaction term Durability\_Military. This implies that the durable length of a regime has a significant influence on the population outflow of an autocratic military country. Notably, in this model after the interaction of Durability\_Military is accounted for, the single effect of Auto\_Military is not statistically significant. Nevertheless, due to the significant moderating effect of Durability\_Military, the negative values of Auto\_Military may increase to a significant level of at least 5%. In other words, if the autocratic military regime is

durable, the population outflows tend to drop more compared to a less durable autocratic military regime. In our model, an increase in the durability of the autocratic regime appears to inhibit 21% of population outflow (IRR = 0.785). These results suggest that regime durability, as measured by the length of regime duration, generally does not have a significant impact on forced migration outflows. Importantly, however, the high degree of durability of the autocratic military regime reduces population outflow. This result implies that the outflow of asylum seekers will be likely curbed if North Korea's current regime continues without major transitions.

In Model 1 and 2, the freedom of movement variable has a nonlinear relationship with the number of asylum seekers. In general, given that freedom of foreign movement tends to be less restricted in democratic countries, it can be understood that freedom of foreign movement is inversely related to the magnitude of the asylum seekers. The factor imposes direct effects on population outflow as well as significantly positively moderating the effect of an autocratic military regime (coefficient = 0.552 and 0.331, p-values < .1% and 5% respectively). This means that the decreased level of outflows of asylum seekers of military countries is smaller if the countries have higher freedom of movement across borders. For more specific effects as provided in Table 4, an increase in the level of freedom of foreign movement can decrease the number of asylum seekers by 15% (IRR=0.849). However, a higher level of freedom of foreign movement in the country under an autocratic military regime offsets around 37.9% of the negative effect on the outflow of asylum seekers. This result indicates that while a military regime alone may restrict forced migration, yet as soon as the freedom of international movement is allowed, the forced migrants will seize the greater opportunities to leave and escape from these countries. More specifically, if the North Korean regime has not been transformed into a fully democratized state, that is, while maintaining the shape of an autocratic

state, if the North Korean regime loosens its restrictions on foreign movement, an increase in forced migration is expected.

Table 3. Negative binomial regression results - controlling military regime

	Model 1	Model 2
<b>Dependent variable</b>		
Authority_Failure	0.146** (3.01)	0.145** (2.97)
Regime_Transition	0.0386*** (3.47)	0.0352** (3.13)
Regime_Durability <sup>+</sup>	0.000850 (0.03)	0.0116 (0.45)
Physical integrity rights	-0.0811*** (-5.37)	-0.0820*** (-5.46)
Population <sup>+</sup>	0.278** (6.37)	0.285*** (6.54)
GDP per capita <sup>+</sup>	0.103** (3.06)	0.0936** (2.76)
Landsize <sup>+</sup>	-0.0629 <sup>+</sup> (-1.75)	-0.0649 <sup>+</sup> (-1.81)
Democracy neighbors in the region	0.00876*** (5.28)	0.00887*** (5.36)
Civil war*	0.219 <sup>+</sup> (1.93)	0.218 <sup>+</sup> (1.93)
International war*	-0.0518 (-0.16)	-0.0524 (-0.17)
Genocide politicide*	1.105*** (4.55)	1.113*** (4.59)
Freeforeignmove	-0.165*** (-5.66)	-0.164*** (-5.65)
<b>Interactions</b>		
Auto_Military*	-0.808** (-3.17)	-0.210 (-0.71)
Freeforeignmove_Military	0.552*** (3.30)	0.321* (1.98)
Durability_Military		-0.242* (-2.44)
_cons	-3.392*** (-5.55)	-3.424*** (-5.62)
Number of observations	1434	1434

*t* statistics in parentheses <sup>+</sup>  $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Note: 1) \* Dummy variable 2) <sup>+</sup>log transformed variable for a normal distribution



Table 4. Negative binomial regression results in incidence rate ratio - controlling military regime

Dependent variable	Model 1	Model 2
Authority_Failure	1.158** (3.01)	1.156** (2.97)
Regime_Transition	1.039*** (3.47)	1.036** (3.13)
Regime_Durability <sup>+</sup>	1.001 (0.03)	1.012 (0.45)
Physical integrity rights	0.922*** (-5.37)	0.921*** (-5.46)
Population <sup>+</sup>	1.320*** (6.37)	1.329*** (6.54)
GDP per capita <sup>+</sup>	1.109** (3.06)	1.098** (2.76)
Land size <sup>+</sup>	0.939 <sup>+</sup> (-1.75)	0.937 <sup>+</sup> (-1.81)
Democratic neighbors in the region	1.009*** (5.28)	1.009*** (5.36)
Civil war*	1.245 <sup>+</sup> (1.93)	1.244 <sup>+</sup> (1.93)
International war*	0.950 (-0.16)	0.949 (-0.17)
Genocide & politicide*	3.019*** (4.55)	3.042*** (4.59)
Freeforeignmove	0.848*** (-5.66)	0.849*** (-5.65)
<b>Interactions</b>		
Auto_Military*	0.446** (-3.17)	0.810 (-0.71)
Freeforeignmove_Military	1.737*** (3.30)	1.379* (1.98)
Durability_Military		0.785* (-2.44)
Number of observations	1434	1434

Exponentiated *coefficients*; *t* statistics in parentheses <sup>+</sup>  $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$   
 Note: 1) \* Dummy variable 2) <sup>+</sup>log transformed variable for a normal distribution

### **3.2.1 Additional analysis**

#### **Controlling adverse regime changes**

Our main analysis aims to analyze the impact of regime collapse on population outflow. The loss of control or the complete collapse of the existing regime can take place typically due to irregular adverse regime changes. Therefore, the study employed a variable capturing adverse regime changes as an alternative measure of regime collapse. As presented in the study, the probability of a regime change by popular uprising or a coup by an elite opposition group exists in North Korea, even if such a likelihood remains low. However, the possibility of an adverse regime change could increase if there was a power vacuum created by the sudden incapacitation of the supreme leader of the regime. Previous studies pointed out the impact of regime change on forced migration. Notably, Moore and Shellman (2007) find that the presence of a transition regime of country of origin increases refugee flow. More importantly, the violence involved in the course of adverse regime change increases the security threats and can lead to population outflows. A substantial prior literature commonly suggest that the presence of violent conflict induces human displacement (Davenport et al., 2003; Moore and Shellman, 2004; Neumayer, 2005; Schmeidl, 1997; Weiner, 1996). Therefore, an indicator of Adverse\_Regime\_Change (violence associated with Adverse Regime Change, which is part of the PITF — State Failure Problem Set: Internal Wars and Failures of Governance, 1955–2017) is utilized (Marshall et al., 2018). This indicator is measured on a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 represents adverse regime change without armed violence, and 4 represents widespread violence affecting a wide range of areas including the capital. Observations that have not undergone an adverse regime change are coded 0. The model specifications in Table 5 replicate the models of the main analysis as presented in Table 3 with an alternative measure of dependent variable. Then, the

Authority\_Failure variable is substituted with the Adverse\_Regime\_Change indicator. The results are consistent with those of the main analysis. The occurrence of adverse regime change is significantly and positively associated with population outflows. Besides, the intensity and geographic extent of armed violence associated with adverse regime change appear to be positively related to the amount of outflow. These results suggest that the occurrence of adverse regime change in North Korea is likely to increase the outflow of population.

Table 5. Negative binomial regression results for the effects of Adverse Regime Change on asylum seekers

Dependent variable	Model 2	Model 3
Adverse_Regime_Change	0.520*** (3.38)	0.510*** (3.31)
Regime_Transition	0.0513*** (4.34)	0.0480*** (4.00)
Regime_Durability <sup>+</sup>	0.0169 (0.63)	0.0270 (1.00)
Physical integrity rights	-0.0802*** (-5.31)	-0.0811*** (-5.40)
Population <sup>+</sup>	0.281*** (6.43)	0.287*** (6.59)
GDP per capita <sup>+</sup>	0.0987** (2.91)	0.0892** (2.62)
Land size <sup>+</sup>	-0.0635 <sup>+</sup> (-1.76)	-0.0655 <sup>+</sup> (-1.83)
Democratic neighbors in the region	0.00858*** (5.17)	0.00869*** (5.26)
Civil war*	0.221 <sup>+</sup> (1.96)	0.219 <sup>+</sup> (1.95)
International war*	-0.0528 (-0.17)	-0.0537 (-0.17)
Genocide & politicide*	1.123*** (4.62)	1.130*** (4.65)
Freeforeignmove	-0.160*** (-5.52)	-0.159*** (-5.51)
Auto_Military*	-0.833** (-3.27)	-0.250 (-0.83)
Freeforeignmove_Military	0.572*** (3.41)	0.346* (2.12)
Durability_Military		-0.236*

_cons	-3.440*** (-5.62)	(-2.38) -3.468*** (-5.69)
Number of observations	1434	1434

*t* statistics in parentheses <sup>+</sup>  $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Note: 1) \* Dummy variable 2) <sup>+</sup>log transformed variable for a normal distribution

## 4 Discussion

Globally, the increase in the outflow of refugees has become an undeniable phenomenon that can affect regional security and peace (Bariagaber, 1997; Salehyan and Gleditsch, 2006). However, East Asia, including the Korean Peninsula, has been less influenced by flows of forced migrants compared to other parts of the world in the past decades. When Western European countries experienced a migration crisis which was initiated by conflicts in Middle Eastern countries, particularly Syria in 2013, the number of generated refugees from East Asia accounted for only 0.25% of the total number of refugees worldwide, while only 0.01% of the refugees from other regions flowed into East Asia (University of Zurich 2017). Nonetheless, the concerns of the international community about the possibility of a flood of refugees from North Korea have not been completely dispelled due to the persistent political and military uncertainty, economic deterioration, and human rights abuses in that nation.

The North Korean regime may be moving toward a different future. It may maintain its current status without major changes, may be weakened or collapsed by internal or external forces, or may move toward reform and democratization, as other communist countries have experienced. This study attempted to analyze the possibility of population outflows from North Korea according to the various paths down which the North Korean regime could proceed. It began with the belief that regime change is the key to predicting outmigration from North

Korea in the future, considering that any form of outmigration has been strongly restricted and controlled by the ruling regime.

In this study, I analyzed the probability of a large volume of outmigration from North Korea and concluded that the possibility of exodus will remain low if the current regime continues to maintain its power and operate in the same way as in the past. Hollyer et al. (2015) note that publicly observable information could enable the populace to organize a collective revolt against the regime. For an autocrat, the control of information can play a vital role in hiding the weaknesses of the regime and in preventing mass uprisings. Population migration can be a vehicle for the spread of information and can preclude the autocrat from monopolizing information. Given that the volume of outmigration from North Korea has been noticeably reduced since the Kim Jong-un regime took power, it is possible to predict that the freedom of movement of North Koreans will continue to be tightly controlled unless the regime changes its emigration policies. On the other hand, this study argues that the volume of outmigration can increase if the regime collapses or if the regime is rapidly liberalized. It may seem strange to conclude that the totally different phenomena of the collapse of the regime and the democratic transition of the regime can both increase the volume of outmigration. However, it is clear that both phenomena have in common that they can cause weakening or loss of government control over the people, which could lead to massive population outflows.

This analysis reminds us of one important thing in analyzing population outflows from North Korea: the situation that can cause these outflows is not limited to the collapse of the regime. Most of the existing studies related to North Korean refugee outbreaks presuppose the collapse of the regime in North Korea or sudden changes that are the equivalent of a government breakdown. This study agrees with the existing view that the social instability and conflicts

that will result from the collapse of the regime in North Korea can directly affect refugee outflows. However, the regime has exercised unprecedented control over its citizens for the past half-century, and such strong state control has suppressed outmigration from North Korea. Thus, any form of regime change that could change the level of state control over the people, not just regime collapse, should be discussed to analyze outmigration from North Korea.

This study is skeptical about the vague optimism that liberalization and democratization in an autocratic regime will contribute to the stability of regional security. Although the establishment of a mature democracy in a formerly autocratic country can help achieve peace locally, until that democracy is fully consolidated, the process of democratization can aggregate political crises and intensify social disorder (O'Donnell, 1973; Mansfield and Snyder, 1995). Many scholars point out that, historically, autocratic nations have experienced conflicts in the process of democratization, and that many nations have failed to actually establish a sound democracy (Ward and Gleditsch, 1998; Powell 1982). More importantly, we need to pay attention to the possibility that, should there be a sudden liberalization of the North Korean regime, the oppressed North Korean people might pour out instantly once the level of state control over them begins to decrease as a result.

As we discussed earlier, historically, large-scale exoduses occurred not only when the state's regime collapsed, but also when it was rapidly liberalized or democratized. In particular, the collapse of communism can serve as an example of how democratization can affect the outflow of refugees following the collapse of an existing regime. In order to maintain sustainable peace and security in Northeast Asia, the possible future paths of the North Korean regime and their consequences should be discussed from various perspectives among scholars and policymakers.

In particular, it is expected that both security and humanitarian measures against population outflows from North Korea should be established.

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## VIII Summary of conclusions

The summary of the overall contribution to the existing knowledge of this thesis is as follows.

This thesis provides an alternative framework for discussion of the phenomenon of displacement flows, which was approached mainly based on a conflict-induced framework in previous studies. This thesis offers a systemic understanding of the influence of regime transition in the country of origin in connection with the flow of forced migration. It shows, empirically and theoretically, how each path of regime change or transition that can be developed in various directions affects displacement flow differently. Theoretically bridging between regime transition and forced migration is essential in several respects. First, in the field of forced migration studies, this attempt enriches the analysis of the causes of forced migration. In the past, most of the studies analyzing the causes of forced migration tended to pay attention exclusively to the factors that can increase the motivation of those who want to leave the country, especially displacement due to conflict. However, what we should not miss is that human displacement can occur outside of wartime, and it can still occur even in times of peace. A population outflow occurs when people are motivated to leave, and when those who want to leave are given the opportunities to do so. In explaining the structural conditions that initiate a population exodus, this study focused on the political regime in the country of origin. The transition in the regime is the key to understanding the phenomenon of population outflow in that people's motivations and opportunities for fleeing can be increased or limited by the process of regime transition. The empirical analyses provided strong evidence that transitions that develop in different directions in the regime each can play a crucial role in the level of population outflow. The theoretical framework provided by this paper thus enables a

broader and more in-depth discussion of the phenomenon of forced migration without impeding the findings of the cause of forced migration in existing studies. It provides a hint as to why human displacement can still occur even when people are not living in times of conflict. More importantly, this study raises an important message that the international community must not only make peacemaking efforts to predict, prevent, and prepare for human displacement, but also carefully observe whether there is an abrupt and sudden regime transition in the country of origin, regardless of the direction of the transition. Secondly, this attempt at theoretical bridging has important implications for discussions about the impact of a country's regime transition on its society and its people. Studies on the consequences of regime transition in the political, economic, and security domains have accumulated considerably. However, studies that directly deal with the influence of regime transition on the inflow and outflow of the population are scarce. In this regard, this thesis has meaningful academic contributions in that it complements the existing partial understanding of the effects of political dynamics in the country of origin on the population outflow by providing a comprehensive theory linking the regime transition and forced migration.

The detailed academic implications and contributions of findings in each paper are as follows.

The first paper looks at the impact of the occurrence of coups on refugee outflows. The important academic contribution of this paper is that it deals in-depth with coups d'état, a form of political instability not covered in previous studies in connection with refugee flows, and presents an explanation of how the outbreak of the coup increases refugees flows. By offering statistical findings, supplemented by evidence from the coups in Uruguay in 1973 and 1975 and the coups in 2011 and 2013 in Egypt, this study shows that an argument that the outbreak of a coup can be considered a risk factor for anticipating an increase in refugees is not artificial,



in the aspect that the replacement of the existing regime by a coup would inevitably increase political, economic, and security insecurity, increasing people's aspirations to migrate. A more important academic novelty of this paper is not only to identify the effect of the coup per se on refugee outflows but also to show the reactive pattern of refugee flows according to regime dynamics that can unfold in various directions during and after the coup. Therefore, this study is expected to lay the groundwork for predicting and preparing for the outflow of the population according to the various regime dynamics that stem from a coup.

The second paper identifies whether regime transition affects the increase in outflow of asylum seekers, and if so, whether its influence varies depending on the direction of the transition. The findings indicate that the increase in the volume of asylum seekers caused by democratization is more pronounced in autocratic countries, suggesting that the exodus of people is more likely when oppressed people are given greater opportunities to escape. On the other hand, the increase in population flight that is initiated by autocratization is more pronounced in non-autocratic countries but was found to be insignificant in autocratic countries. The results suggest that the increase in people's motivation to flee due to autocratization is difficult to realize in an environment where the opportunity to leave is not guaranteed. This study raised several important implications. First, vague positive expectations that the democratic regime transition in autocratic countries will bring about regional stability can be dangerous. Democracy is a good thing, but the journey to democracy can be tough. In promoting democratization in autocratic countries, the international community, local experts, and policymakers need to be prepared to deal with unexpected situations that may arise in the course of a democratic transition. It should be remembered that mass outflows of the population do not only occur during conflict but may also occur in the course of the democratic transition, which is expected as the measures to end the conflict and stabilize the region are carried out.

Second, although the majority of forced migration tends to be generated in conflict zones, we must remember that many people who are still under the threat of government oppression or conflict are unable to leave because they are not allowed to go. The international community should pay attention to those who cannot escape the dangers because there is no opportunity available for them.

Since most of the forced migration is generated from autocratic milieus, it is important to see the effect of regime change in authoritarian regimes on outmigration. Regime transition in an autocratic country can be interpreted as a change in the level of structural control exercised by the regime on its people; hence, the motivations and opportunities for people to flee may be increased or restricted depending on the path the regime transition goes down. The importance and originality of the third paper is that it provides a systemic analysis of the impact of regime transition on the outflow of asylum seekers in autocratic countries and provides a comprehensive explanation of why different paths of transition can have different consequences on human displacement, supplemented by the empirical cases in which the regime transitions led an increase in outmigration. Furthermore, an in-depth case study analysis on North Korea which is presented in the paper fills a gap in the regional studies on forced migration. Surprisingly, relatively little research has been carried out on the possibility of mass forced migration from Northeast Asia and even less on North Korea, an area that is vulnerable to future political changes but has not yet experienced mass population outflows. The findings suggest that the collapse of the North Korean regime due to internal and external pressure could lead to the loss of state control over the population and create political and security threats to the people, leading to massive population outflows. Also, the volume of the exodus of people is expected to increase once sudden democratization takes place in North Korea, as it eases the level of state control over the citizenry and creates greater chances for people to escape.

However, if the current regime continues to maintain the existing way of governing, which firmly controls the people through coercive means, the likelihood of a massive population outflow from North Korea is expected to remain low. This paper makes an original contribution to the studies on North Korea by demonstrating a theoretical and practical understanding of a variety of possible paths for the North Korean regime to follow and the potential impacts of each of those trajectories on population outflows.

It is hoped that the understanding of the link between regime transitions and the outflow of forced migration proposed in this study enables the prediction and analysis of regions that have the potential for regime transition but that have not yet experienced a mass population outflow. Also, it is hoped that this thesis contributes to the international community's efforts to predict, prevent, and prepare for the sudden outflow of forced migration that may occur in the future.