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Social integration and well-being of North Korean migrants in South Korea

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Abstract

I examined the social integration and well-being of North Korean migrants in South Korea, guided by a modified model of migrant integration that includes indicators of both systemic integration and value integration of North Korean migrants. The level of systemic integration was measured using indicators of employment, education, housing, and health. The level of value integration was measured using indicators of a sense of belonging, a sense of trust, and multicultural acceptance. The main data for this study were collected by a telephone survey of 400 North Korean migrants aged 15 and over conducted from November 24, 2016 to December 7, 2016. Data analysis revealed a low level of systemic integration and poor health condition of North Korean migrants. The level of value integration was intermediate. North Korean migrants strongly identified as South Korean citizens and strongly believed that they could reach the same status as South Koreans. However, their North Korean culture and identity were not recognized or accepted in South Korean society and they felt strong pressure to assimilate to South Korean culture and identity.

INTRODUCTION

The large-scale entry of North Korean migrants[1] to South Korea commenced in the mid-1990s and their settlement has continued for more than 20 years. The previous government policy toward

[1] North Korean residents who escaped North Korea and settle in South Korea are called by various names. The South Korean government's official term is "Defecting North Korean residents" and these people are often called North Korean

North Korean migrants tended to focus on helping them settle in South Korean society. Likewise, many previous studies of North Korean migrants measured their level of adaptation on various dimensions, diagnosing the cause of maladjustment, and seeking ways to improve adaptation ability (Lee et al., 2003; Park, 2012; Yoon, 2001). The changes in policy environments in recent times, however, have made it difficult for the government to carry out a support policy solely targeted at this migrant group. For example, there has been growing criticism of the government policy that the level of support for this group is excessive compared to other groups of people such as those who have low incomes, are members of single-headed households, or have disabilities (Kim, 2014; Lee, 2014; Yoon, 2014b). Another argument has been that government support programs like the protection of minimum living expense deepens welfare dependency and eventually hinders self-sufficiency (Park, 2012). Thus, the present transition period requires new ways of thinking about the proper relationship between North Korean migrants and South Korean society, and government policies need to be revised to accommodate new changes and demands in policy environments.

Before the mid-1990s, the intense competition between North and South Korean regimes gave the very few North Korean defectors who claimed they had escaped North Korea in search of freedom some degree of political utility to the South Korean government, which consequently supported them fully. However, the approximately 1000 North Korean migrants who enter South Korea every year no longer have political utility with the end of the period of regime competition. Further, it seems inappropriate to offer full support to people who have lived in South Korean society for more than 10 years as protected subjects of the Ministry of Unification as the main goal of the Ministry is to improve inter-Korean relations and lay the foundation for unification. It has therefore been argued that the Ministry of Interior and Safety or the Ministry of Health and Welfare should take over the settlement of North Korean migrants. In the same vein, calls have been made to treat North Korean migrants as ordinary citizens rather than special people, and to incorporate them into the existing administrative and welfare system rather than providing special treatment and facilities (Yoon, 2014a). Also, wide consensus among experts indicates that material support alone is insufficient and that native residents' attitudes toward this group also need to become more positive (Sohn & Lee, 2012; Yoo & Lee, 2014). Thus, although researchers and policymakers initially focused on the adaptation of North Korean migrants (Lee et al., 2003; Yoon, 2001), now they need to change their perspective to focus more on integration (Kim & Choi, 2011; Kwon, 2014; Park et al., 2016). If the adaptation perspective focuses on the provision of a material base of adaptation, the integration perspective underscores the material as well as the psychological incorporation of migrants into the host society. Also, the integration perspective no longer views North Korean migrants simply as the target of support but more as active agents who should fulfill their duties and responsibilities as citizens. Another important difference between adaptation and integration is that the former is largely a matter only for migrants while the latter is a reciprocal process between migrants and natives. Thus, the full integration of North Korean migrants requires directing more attention at raising awareness of native residents to accept North Korean migrants as full members of society.

The primary goal of the present research was to examine the current state of North Korean migrants from the integration perspective. For this purpose, I review existing indices of migrant

defectors or North Korean refugees. The currently widely used Korean term is "Talbukmin" (脫北民) that replaced the previously popular term "Talbukja" (脫北者), which was thought to have a slightly more derogatory nuance. In this article, I use the term "North Korean migrants" rather than defectors and refugees in order to view their incorporation into South Korean society from a migrant integration perspective.

integration developed in Western countries and develop a modified index of migrant integration for North Korean migrants. Using this index, I examine the integration level in both material and psychological areas and determine the causes of problems and present potential solutions. Although the development of a valid index was not a major study goal, this process was essential to capture the characteristics of North Korean migrants more realistically.

Research on North Korean migrants

Previous research on North Korean migrants has examined their entry and settlement in Korean society on various dimensions, including economy, society, culture, psychology, and ideology (Lee et al., 2003; Park et al., 1996, 2016). Like migrants in many countries around the world, North Korean migrants experience many difficulties in adjusting to their new environment systematically and psychologically. The most problematic aspect of North Korean settlement has been their difficulty in finding stable employment, and most remain unemployed or find employment as manual laborers or service workers (Lee et al., 2003). Owing to the lack of stable employment, they are unable to earn enough income to achieve financial independence and thus report a high rate of welfare dependency (Park, 2012). Culturally, they encounter difficulties in interpersonal relations with native residents due to socio-cultural differences in language. North Korean migrants generally have different accents, lower comprehension of Chinese characters, and are less familiar with English words. North Koreans also have different values, ways of thinking, and social systems. North Koreans tend to have narrow social networks with native residents, which restricts their information intake, opportunities, and natural integration. Except for churches, few groups and organizations offer them close contact with native residents. They are unable to establish primary-group relations with native residents, and their social circles eventually become restricted to other North Korean migrants (Yoon et al., 2005). Psychologically, North Korean migrants experience difficulties in developing intimate relations with native residents due to many residents' prejudice toward and sense of social superiority over North Korean migrants (Yoon et al., 2014). Many researchers have highlighted the social and integration difficulties suffered by these migrants due to prevalent social prejudice and discrimination (Yoon & Chae, 2010). Many North Korean migrants also suffer from poor health and a high prevalence of chronic diseases, which restrict their employment opportunities and their efforts to lead a normal socio-economic life (Yoon, 2007).

Although North Korean migrants are a minority group of only 33,752 people as of the end of the 2020 in a country of more than 51 million people (E-country indicators, 2021), they and their settlement have been the subject of extensive research. However, many studies have been conducted from the point of view of adaptation and not systematically from the point of view of integration. Previous studies have not closely examined interactions between native residents and North Korean migrants. The present study differs from previous research in that it studies North Korean migrants from the viewpoint of integration rather than adaptation.

Definitions of migrant adaptation and migrant integration

The biological concept of adaptation means that a species requires a minimum set of capacities to survive and reproduce. Budyta-Budzyńska (2011) regards adaptation as the second of a four-stage series of entry steps for immigrants into the host society: separation, adaptation, integration, and

assimilation. Here, adaptation is the minimal accommodation to the environment that enables survival. It does not require close contacts with members of the host society. By contrast, integration is a process and state where immigrants establish closer relationships with members of the host society while not abandoning their own culture and identity, as is required for the last stage of assimilation.

The concept of integration first appeared in the literature of international relations. European integration is a good example of the application of integration in international relations. The renowned political scientist Karl Deutsch (1978) defined integration as a process in which specific people or groups belong to a single system, share a sense of belonging, and develop mutual ties. Integration does not just mean systemic integration at the political or legal level, but also means social integration in national identity, a common value system and lifestyle, education, and other social institutions.

Immigration researchers frequently use the concept of integration to measure the level of inclusion of migrants into the host society. Castles and Miller (2009, p. 247) called the process of migrants becoming members of the host society "incorporation" and distinguished four types: differential exclusion, assimilation, integration, and multiculturalism. Here, integration is different from assimilation in that it recognizes mutual accommodations between migrants and members of the host society, and that migrants maintain their culture and form their own communities. International Organization for Migration (2011) provides a more concrete definition than Castles and Miller (2009), stating that integration is the process by which migrants become accepted into society, both as individuals and as groups, having a two-way process of adaptation by migrants and host societies. It does not imply permanent settlement but the consideration of rights and obligations of migrants and host societies, of access to different kinds of services and the labor market, and of identification and respect for a core set of values that bind migrants and host communities in a common purpose.

Refugee researchers have come up with similar definitions of migrant integration. Harrell-Bond (1986, p. 7) referred to integration as "a situation in which host and refugee communities are able to co-exist, sharing the same resources – both economic and social – with no greater mutual conflict than that which exists within the host community." Threadgold and Court (2005, p. 8) made a useful definitional point by stating that "broadly speaking, integration is the process by which immigrants and refugees become part of the receiving society" but they caution that "it is often used still to imply a one-way adaptation or acculturation to the dominant culture and way of life." They argued that many definitions of integration appear to have elements of mutual adaptation but that in general terms the understanding of integration is a form of "assimilation light." What is common in the previous definitions of migrant integration is that it is a reciprocal process or a two-way adaptation between migrants and members of the host society, not a one-sided effort of migrants.

South Korean scholars have also made efforts to define an integration index suitable for the Korean context. Hee-Jung Kim (2009, p. 6) has stated that social integration means "the process of disunited social groups' and members' incorporation into one entity as a result of adaptations." In addition, she considered social integration to be related not only to legal matters but also to national identity and the core value systems of lifestyles and educational concerns; thus, social integration can enable people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds in a society to be understood as equal members of its society. Chul-Woo Lee (2012) considered that social integration, as opposite to exclusion, means mutual bonding and harmonious interactions among social members on all levels. Seung-Mi Han (2012, p. 258) claimed that social integration policies should not aim at the unconditional assimilation of newcomers but for their incorporation into

an "open, democratic society" where immigrants are allowed to maintain their native languages and cultures.

Integration is thus much broader than adaptation in scope; integration requires mutual acceptance between immigrants and members of the host society and acknowledges multicultural diversity. In the present research, I develop a working definition of migrant integration that contains the essential elements of migrant integration frequently mentioned in previous research, but that is also relevant for North Korean migrants in South Korea. The working definition is called "multicultural migrant integration" as it synthesizes two models: migrant integration and multiculturalism. It refers to a process through which migrants become members of the host society by maintaining their ethnic group culture while adopting the host society culture, securing safe and stable living conditions and equal opportunities, having a sense of belonging to the host society, developing close relations and connections with natives and the host society. It incorporates both material and psychological aspects of integration, and is achieved when migrants reach parity with natives in material integration and migrants and natives share the same sense of identity and belonging as members of society.

Indices of migrant integration

Various indices have been developed by immigration researchers and research institutions to measure migrant integration. One widely used measure is the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), which was developed by the Brussel-based Migration Policy Group in collaboration with the British Council, Foreign Policy Centre, and University of Sheffield. The MIPEX was employed to measure the situations of migrant integration in 15 European countries in 2004. The latest MIPEX V in 2019 estimated the status of migrant integration for a total of 52 countries.[2]

The MIPEX calculates the level of migrant integration in each country, based on specialists' reviews of laws, policies, and publications related to issues of migrant integration. It assesses eight policy areas: labor market mobility, family reunion for third country nationals, education, political participation, health, long term residence, access to nationality, and anti-discrimination. Each area has four strands or dimensions (i.e., access, eligibility, security, and rights), and each dimension consists of three to seven sub-categories (Niessen, 2014). The MIPEX score varies from 0 to 100, with a higher score indicating better integration of migrants in the host country.

Ager and Strang (2008) developed another internationally used model of migrant integration. They examined the social integration of refugees in the UK and proposed a framework that consists of four elements: the foundation, facilitators, social connection, and markers and means of integration. Here, the foundation refers to the protection of rights and citizenship of migrants. The acquisition of permanent residency and citizenship is the essential base for social integration and the level of rights and services given to permanent residents and citizens determine the success or failure of migrant integration. Facilitators consist of language and cultural knowledge and safety and stability. Language and cultural knowledge refers to migrants' acquisition and the skill of the host society's language and culture, interpretation and translation services provided by public organizations to migrants for their settlement, and intercultural education for mutual interaction between migrants and natives. Safety and stability refers to the protection of migrants from racial discrimination, violence, and bullying, as well as the provision of equality opportunity for migrants to participate in the host society. Social connection consists of three different types

[2] Information on MIPEX V is available at MIPEX's website (http//www.mipex.eu).

of networks: social bridges that migrants form with natives, social bonds that migrants form with their fellow group members, and social links that enable migrants to have access to government services. Finally, markers and means are both indicators of and means to achieve integration as measured in areas of employment, housing, education, and health.

Note that neither the MIPEX nor Ager and Strang's (2008) model incorporates the social psychological dimension of migrant integration like a sense of belonging and trust. Migrants who are isolated from a majority group without a sense of belonging cannot be considered fully incorporated into a mainstream society. Another point is that the index of migrant integration should incorporate indicators that can measure reciprocal changes in attitudes and behavior of both natives and migrants because integration is a mutual process. According to Berry's model of acculturation, integration refers to the maintenance of migrant's traditional culture and identity and active participation in the host society's social and cultural domains (Berry, 1987). Thus, even when migrants achieve parity with natives in social and economic status but are denied the right to practice their own culture and identity, they are in the mode of assimilation and not integration. I propose an indicator of multicultural acceptance to measure the degree migrant culture is recognized and accepted in a host society.

Krechel (1999) distinguished two dimensions of integration: systemic integration and value integration. Systemic integration is an integration of political and economic systems, whereas value integration is the process and outcome of achieving a common identity by sharing common values. He claimed that only when the two types of integration are achieved, is true integration possible. I fully agree with Krechel's idea and want to add one more dimension of markers and means to Ager and Strang's (2008) original model of migrant integration. The newly added markers and means include a sense of belonging, trust, and multicultural acceptance.

North Korean migrants have multiple and complicated statuses and identities in South Korean society. They are migrants who need to adjust and settle in a new political and economic system and are Korean ethnics and nationals who share very similar cultural backgrounds with native South Korean residents. Thus, there are problems of applying directly indices of migrant integration developed in Western societies, and thus a need to develop a modified index tailored to the characteristics of North Korean migrants. In the present research, I adopted Ager and Strang's (2008) four elements of migrant integration (i.e., the foundation, facilitators, social connection, and markers and means of integration) and Krechel's (1999) distinction between systemic and mental integration in a revised model (see Figure 1). I also propose detailed indicators that measure each component of migrant integration. The new model and indicators are summarized in Table 1.

METHOD

Participants and procedure

Primary data were collected for the North Korean Residents' Economic and Social Integration Survey ($N = 400$) in 2016 (Im et al., 2017). The telephone survey was conducted between November 24, 2016 and December 7, 2016, by trained researchers of the Database Center for North Korean Human Rights, a private organization established in 2003 to improve North Korean human rights and support settlement of North Korean migrants in South Korea. The research team used stratified and systematic sampling methods, determining the number of respondents by age and place of residence to secure a representative sample of the population of North Korean migrants in South

TABLE 1 Areas and indicators of the integration of North Korean migrants

Main area		Sub area	Indicators
Markers and means	Systemic integration	Employment	Employment rate, employment stability (regular vs. irregular job), work hours, occupation and industry, class of work, wages and income
		Housing	Residential segregation or integration with South Korean native residents, housing type and standard, socioeconomic status of neighborhood
		Education	Level of education in North Korea and South Korea, academic performance of North Korean migrant youth, college enrollment rate
		Health	Subjective evaluation of physical and mental health, number and type of illness, difficulty in social and economic activity as a result of illness
	Value integration	Sense of belonging	Sense of belonging as a local resident, Korean ethnic, and South Korean national, intention to emigrate to other country
		Sense of trust	Sense of being trusted as equal and capable members of society
		Multicultural acceptance	Degree to which North Korean culture and identity are recognized and accepted
Social connection		Social bridges	Number of South Korean friends or acquaintance, number of social groups or voluntary associations where South Korean native residents are dominant
		Social bonds	Number of North Korean friends and people who can help in emergency, number of social groups, or voluntary association where North Korean migrants are dominant
		Social links	Access to government's support services
Facilitators		Language and cultural knowledge	Korean language skill (including foreign words and Chinese characters), level of knowledge of South Korean laws, system, and cultural practices, information provision service of the public organization (e.g., newsletters), intercultural education for mutual understanding
		Safety and security	Practice of discrimination, violence, and bullying against North Korean migrants, equal opportunity to participate in South Korean society
Foundation		Rights and citizenship	Degree to which basic rights as South Korean national are protected

Note: The model of migrant integration proposed by Ager and Strang (2008) was modified to fit the case of North Korean migrants.

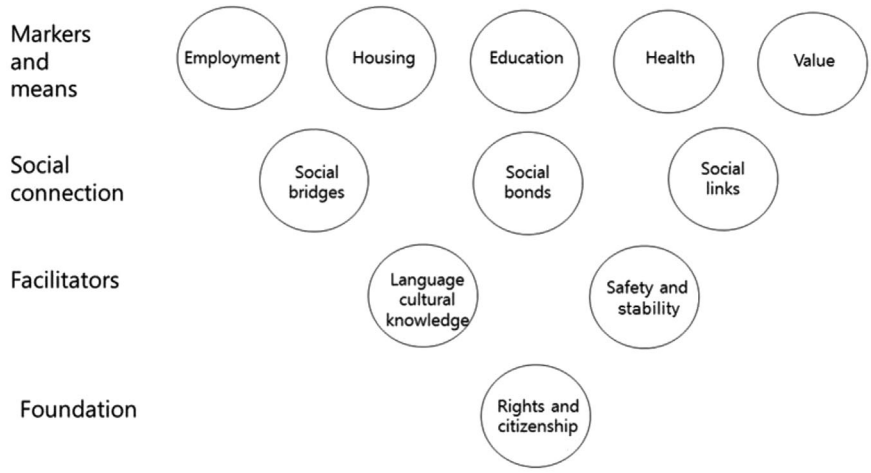

FIGURE 1 Multicultural Migrant Integration Model. Note: This model is an expanded revision of the Ager and Strang's migrant integration model (Ager & Strang, 2008, p. 170)

TABLE 2 Demographic characteristics of respondents

	N	%		*N*	%
Gender			Year of entry		
Women	297	74.2	Before 2004	30	7.5
Men	103	25.8	2005–2009	169	42.3
			After 2010	199	49.8
			No answer	2	.5
Age			Education		
15–19	9	2.2	Elementary school	38	9.6
20s	73	18.3	Middle-high school	261	65.7
30s	104	26.0	College	41	10.3
40s	128	32.0	University	50	12.6
50s	53	13.3			
60s	33	8.2			

Korea. The population was all North Korean migrants aged 15 years or older who entered South Korea before November 2016, excluding those who had died or lived in group facilities at the time of the survey. Participants were sampled by applying a 95% confidence level and a ±5 error rate. I participated in this survey as a co-researcher and helped with the research design, questionnaire development, analysis, and report writing. Since 2005, the Database Center has conducted regular economic and social integration surveys. The Database Center maintains a panel that can represent the North Korean migrant population across the country, so that survey results can be generalized to all North Korean migrants. I refer to the 2016 Economic and Social survey as the 2016 NKDB survey hereafter.

Demographic characteristics of the sample are reported in Table 2. Note that the sample included more women than men, representing a higher proportion of women in the total North Korean migrant population. Participants in their 30s and 40s were also selected at a higher rate

TABLE 3 Percentages of North Korean migrants by employment condition

Group	Year	*N*	Economic participation rate	Employment rate	Unemployment rate
North Korean migrants	2016	400	59.3	55.3	6.8
	2015	403	59.3	55.1	7.1
	2014	400	50.8	47.3	6.9
	2013	390	48.2	42.3	12.2
General population	2016	43,537	62.9	60.6	6.8
	2015	43,181	62.7	60.8	3.1
	2014	42,728	61.5	59.4	3.4

Source: Im et al. (2017, p. 72). Data about the general population came from the annual social surveys of the general population conducted by the Statistics Korea.

Note: Economic participation rate is a rate of all workers who are employed or actively seeking employment divided by the total civilian working-age population.

(58%). Most participants entered Korea between 2005 and 2009 or after 2010, so the percentage of respondents whose length of stay in Korea was longer than 6 years reached 92.5%. The most common level of education was graduation from middle and high school; the proportion of college graduates was only 12.6%.

I used descriptive statistical analysis to measure the integration level of North Korean migrants by indicators of the migrant integration model I have proposed. Since there is no previous study that systematically measured the integration level of North Korean migrants using the present migrant integration model, I focused on investigating the level and characteristics of integration by individual indicators. The integration level for each indicator was measured on a scale from 1 (not well at all) to 5 (very well).

RESULTS

Systemic integration of North Korean migrants

Employment

The most basic and fundamental area of migrant integration is employment. If a migrant secures stable employment, social and psychological integration is likely to follow. Unfortunately, employment is the most difficult hurdle for North Korean migrants when they enter the mainstream society. The employment rate of North Korean migrants was 55.3% (see Table 3), as compared to 60.6% of the general population. The unemployment rate (6.8%) was twice the rate of general population (3.6%). When I compared the employment status of North Korean migrants from 2013 through 2016, both indicators of employment exhibited gradual progress: the employment rate increased from 42.3% in 2013 to 55.3% in 2016 while the unemployment rate decreased from 12.2% to 6.8% during the same period. Despite this upward mobility, North Korean migrants still lag behind the general population in employment status. The direct comparison of North Korean migrants to the general population is misleading, however, because unique demographic characteristics (a very high proportion of about 70% women) and generally low social class backgrounds of North Korean migrants. A more meaningful comparison would be to compare a subgroup of North Korean migrants with a comparable subgroup of the general population with similar age,

sex, and social class compositions. However, such information was not available. Future research should make a more detailed comparison.

Employment instability leads to low income. Regarding monthly personal income, 55.7% of North Korean respondents earned less than 922 US dollars, and only 9.9% earned more than 1845 dollars. In terms of family income, 40.3% earned less than 922 dollars per month. Low income may in turn lead to less satisfaction: 54.9% of respondents said they were not satisfied with their income. Low income likely also increases the welfare dependency rate: 33.2% of respondents were the recipients of the government minimum living expense program. Although the welfare dependency rate has declined over time from 48% in 2012, 43.1% in 2013, 45.2% in 2014, to 37.7% in 2015, relative to the general population's welfare dependency rate in 2015 of 3.2%, the income level of North Korean migrants is very low (Im et al., 2017, p. 130). Considering the high unemployment rate, low income, low satisfaction with income, and high welfare dependency rate, I would evaluate the overall level of the economic integration of North Korean migrants as "not well."

Housing

The South Korean government provides generous housing services to North Korean migrants when they enter the mainstream society after approximately 3 months of rehabilitation and reeducation at the government facility called Hanawon. In this facility, they receive psychological tests and counseling, education on understanding Korean society, career guidance, and vocational training. The Korean government provides long-term lease in public apartments designed for low-income people so that North Korean migrants pay just monthly management and utility fees. Therefore, North Korean migrants do not own their own houses and are heavily concentrated in public apartment complexes. Only 6.5% of respondents owned their own houses, 11.3% lived in long-term lease, and 78.9% lived in monthly rent. The most common type of housing was apartments (88.5%), followed by multi-household row houses (7.3%), and detached houses (3%). Despite the gradual residential upward mobility, the majority still lived in public housing projects along with low-income neighbors of the general population and were residentially segregated from the middle- and upper-classes. When examining the housing density as an indicator of housing quality, 37.3% of respondents said that their current home was cramped, 30.5% felt spacious, and 32.3% felt neither cramped nor spacious. The level of satisfaction with housing was, however, moderately high: 56.8% said they were satisfied with their housing while 20% were dissatisfied. Considering the low home ownership rate, low socioeconomic status of the residential areas, high residential segregation, but moderate housing density and moderate satisfaction with housing, I would evaluate the overall level of the residential integration of North Korean migrants as "not well."

Education

Many North Korean migrants have a low level of human capital as measured by education and occupational skills and work experience: 9.6% had an elementary school education, 65.7% had middle school or high school education, and 22.9% had college and university education. The percentage of people who received additional education in South Korea was 38.5%. For comparison, in 2016, the education level of South Koreans was 47% for college graduates and above, 40% for high school graduates, and 13% for middle school graduates and below (OECD, 2016). A more serious problem with education is not the level of formal education but the content of education

and its transferability to South Korean society. North Korean migrants who received an education based on North Korean-style socialism called the Juche (or self-reliance) ideology (Institute for Unification Education, 2014) experience difficulties in adapting to South Korea's capitalist economy.

The education handicap is particularly serious for young people. The school dropout rate is higher than that of the general population, and the level of academic disparity with native students was high. According to the Ministry of Education, the dropout rate of elementary, middle, and high school students was high at 10.8% in 2008, but decreased every year to 2.2% in 2015. However, compared to the .8% dropout rate of native students during the same period, the dropout rate of North Korean migrants was still nearly three times that of the general study population (Park et al., 2016). In addition, the lack of access to private education is disadvantageous in terms of competition with native students. Considering the low level of education, socialist way of education as opposed to capitalist education, high school dropout rate, low academic performance, and low access to private education, I evaluate the overall level of educational integration as "not well."

Health

The poor nutrition and health care system in North Korea degraded the health condition of North Korean migrants prior to their arrival in South Korea. Also, the typically long secret and fearful sojourn through China and other third countries worsened their already poor health conditions. Only when they arrived in South Korea and began to have time to relax did they discover the illnesses that hampered their active social and economic participation: 45.8% of respondents reported that they were currently suffering from illness. In addition, the degree to which the illness interfered with daily life was severe; 86.9% of respondents reported that their daily life had been disturbed due to sickness in the past month. The levels of mental and physical health were not good: 31.5% of respondents said they had felt sad or desperate enough to interfere with their daily activities for more than 2 weeks in a row during the last year. Also, 24.5% of respondents reported that they could not go to a hospital or clinic in the last year when they had an illness to treat. Yoon (2007) found that the poor health condition of North Korean migrants reduced their chance of employment and increased dependency on government subsidies. He added that South Korea's exceptionally high labor intensity makes it difficult for North Korean migrants to work for long periods in one workplace, and frequent turnover results in a high unemployment rate. Thus, he argued that good health is a necessary condition for their full participation in society. Due to the low level of physical health and mental health, great difficulties in daily life due to illness, and low access to hospital or clinic, I evaluate the overall health condition of North Korean migrants as "not well."

Value integration

Sense of belonging

Self-reported identity is one indicator of the extent to which North Korean migrants feel a sense of belonging to South Korean society. In a 2010 survey of North Korean migrants and native residents that examined their mutual perceptions, North Korean migrant respondents were asked how they

defined themselves among the following categories: North Korean, South Korean, South Korean with North Korean origin, and Compatriot (Yoon & Chae, 2010). The most frequently mentioned category was South Korean with North Korean origins (50.6%), followed by South Korean (24.9%), North Korean (15.3%), and Compatriot (9.2%). A comparison of these results with those of native residents suggested that the two groups have different perceptions. Out of 1019 native resident respondents, the most frequently chosen category used to describe North Korean migrants was South Korean with North Korean origins (43.9%), followed by North Korean (42.9%), and South Korean (11.2%) (Yoon & Chae, 2010, p. 57). These different patterns illustrate that while North Korean migrants have a strong sense of belonging to South Korean society, native residents have some hesitance to accept them as South Korean people.

A useful resource for understanding native residents' perceptions of North Korean migrants is a survey conducted in 2014 on the public perception of North Korean migrants as part of research supported by the National Human Rights Commission of Korea (Yoon et al., 2014). The research company Korea Research conducted face-to-face interviews of 1011 men and women aged 19 years and over nationwide. The results show that native residents' interest in North Korean migrants was low, with the highest rate of recognizing them as North Koreans, followed by South Koreans with North Korean origins. Native residents had a low degree of accepting North Korean migrants as being the same as themselves, and particularly had a negative attitude toward North Korean migrants playing important roles in areas of national security and politics power. Native residents indicated that they believed North Korean migrants were not familiar with South Korean capitalism and individualism and, although they perceived North Korean migrants as simple and humane, native residents found it difficult to trust and to establish intimate relationships with North Korean migrants because they were form North Korea (Yoon et al., 2014).

The latest survey data, which shows native residents' perceptions of North Korean migrants, is an internet survey conducted by Korea Research of 1026 men and women aged 19 years and over nationwide on September 1–9, 2017 (Yoon & Song, 2018). The purpose of the survey was to investigate native residents' perceptions of the human rights issues of major minority groups in Korea. One of the survey questions assessed the interests and intimacy of native residents with each minority group, and the degree to which freedoms, rights, and human rights of each group were respected. The results showed that native residents' interest and intimacy with North Korean migrants was lower than those of disabled persons, international marriage migrant women, and migrant workers, excluding lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTQ) people. However, the degree to which freedom, rights and human rights of North Korean migrants were respected was perceived as higher than those of international marriage migrant women, migrant workers, and LGBTQ people (Yoon & Song, 2018, p. 116). The above survey results further illustrate the social psychological barriers between native residents and North Korean migrants.

To measure North Korean migrants' sense of belonging to Korean society, they were asked in the 2016 NKDB survey how they felt as residents of their local communities, as Korean citizens, and as Korean people (or Korean race). The results showed that they had the strongest sense of belonging as Korean people, followed by Korean citizens, and residents of the local community: 86% of respondents said they felt as Korean people, 78.4% as Korean citizens, and 59.5% as local residents.

Another indicator of the sense of belonging in Korean society is the intention to return to North Korea, China, or immigrate to a third country such as the United States or the United Kingdom. Immigration is referred to as a "ballot by foot." The more difficult it is for North Korean migrants to integrate in South Korea, the more likely they are to return to North Korea or immigrate abroad. When asked whether they ever thought of returning to North Korea or China or immigrating to

a third country, some respondents replied that had thought of returning to North Korea (18.6%) or China (13.8%) or immigrating to a third country (24%). Thus, overall, more than half (56.4%) of North Korean migrants had considered relocating abroad indicates a low sense of belonging to Korean society. However, according to the results of several opinion surveys on immigration, native residents were also strongly interested in immigration. Gallup Korea asked 1215 men and women aged 19 or older nationwide in October, 2013 whether they had seriously considered immigration in the past year; 18% answered yes (Gallup Korea, 2013). JobKorea and Albamon, employment consulting firms in Korea, conducted an immigration-related opinion survey of 4802 adult Koreans in January 2017, and 71% of respondents answered that they were willing to immigrate abroad if they have a chance (JobKorea, 2013). Thus, the intention of North Korean migrants to immigrate abroad is not particularly strong. Considering the strong identification as Korean citizens and strong intention to remain in South Korea, I evaluate the sense of belonging of North Korean migrants as "well."

Sense of trust

Trust is an important asset in interpersonal relations between North Korean migrants and native residents. It can allow North Korean migrants to get access to the opportunity structure in the mainstream society through networks with trusted native residents. In the 2014 survey of the general population, native residents were asked how much they would accept North Korean migrants in socially important positions. They had a low level of trust in North Korean migrants. For example, 44.1% answered that North Korean migrants could not be the same as South Koreans because of their North Korean origin, and 45.5% thought that it was difficult to allow North Korean migrants to become elected as congressmen or mayors/governors. Further, 50.5% opposed the idea of employing North Korean migrants in positions that handle national security.

In the 2016 NKDB survey, the North Korean respondents were asked how difficult it was to be the same as South Koreans because they were from North Korea: 43% of respondents answered that it was difficult to be same as South Koreans and 44% said it was not difficult. Also, when asked if they could rise to the same status as South Koreans when they worked hard, 69% of respondents answered yes, and 24.5% answered no. These results tend to show that North Korean migrants have a perception that the status of North Korean origin is disadvantageous in South Korean society, but can be overcome with hard work. Thus, I evaluate native residents' sense of trust of North Korean migrants in Korean society as "so so."

Some may interpret the above results as not about trust, but about discrimination. However, since North Korean migrants' trust in South Korean society is closely related to the discrimination they experience, they could both be seen as aspects of trust. Confidence in being able to be treated the same as South Koreans can be understood as a measure of the degree of the social integration of North Korean migrants.

Multicultural acceptance

Unlike assimilation, integration means that migrants' unique culture and identity are recognized and respected. However, North Korean migrants tend to favor assimilation rather than integration as far as culture and identity are concerned. When asked whether they should abandon North Korean lifestyles in South Korea, 73.2% of respondents said yes while 26.8% said no. Also, when

asked whether it would be desirable to preserve their North Korean culture and identity, 41.9% of respondents said yes while 42.8% said no. Therefore, it seems clear that North Korean migrants have a strong tendency to assimilate into South Korean culture and identity rather than to preserve their original culture and identity. Although it is difficult to judge here whether this attitude is voluntary or forced upon them by Korean society, multicultural acceptance is not encouraged by the general population and not actively sought after by North Korean migrants.

So far, I have examined the integration level according to individual indicators, but now I comprehensively look at the overall integration level of North Korean migrants. Table 4 lists the 24 individual indicators used to measure the integration level. The integration level in each indicator was measured on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 means *not well at all*, 2 means *not well*, 3 means *so so (or not well nor well)*, 4 means *well*, and 5 means *very well*. I calculated the overall score of systemic integration by averaging the scores of indicators measuring employment, education, housing, and health. I did the same procedure for value integration with indicators of a sense of belonging, a sense of trust, and multicultural acceptance.

The results indicated that the average level of systemic integration was 2.1, which is the level of "not well." The average level of value integration was 3.0, which corresponds to the level of "so so" and is higher than the level of systemic integration. The sum of all 24 indicators varies between 24 (all 1s) and 120 (all 5s), and the overall mean is 56 divided by 24, which is 2.3. Thus, it can be concluded that the overall integration level of North Korean migrants is "not well."

DISCUSSION

In this study, I reviewed previous studies on migrant integration and proposed a "multicultural migrant integration model" as an alternative approach. This model and the index that measures it complement the existing immigrant integration model and indices that have focused on integration at the institutional and material levels, thus helping to measure integration at the value level and multicultural acceptance. I applied this model to North Korean migrants, analyzing the data collected from three surveys to examine the level of social integration and well-being of North Korean migrants. The main findings revealed that the overall level of the social integration of North Korean migrants was not high. The material dimension of integration as measured in employment, income, education, and health was not favorable, while the housing condition was favorable. Particularly, North Korean migrants' health conditions were unfavorable and their low level of health hindered their full and active participation in Korean society. In the area of value integration, North Korean migrants had a strong identification as South Korean citizens and a strong belief that they could reach the same status as South Koreans. However, their North Korean culture and identity were not recognized and accepted in South Korean society and they felt strong pressure to assimilate to South Korean culture and identity.

This study makes a theoretical contribution to the field of migrant integration by expanding an existing model of migrant integration developed by Ager and Strang (2008) in the UK. Representative models and indices of migrant integration like MIPEX and Ager and Strang's model often ignore value integration and multicultural acceptability as important concepts of migrant integration. The multicultural migrant integration model I propose in this study can provide a more comprehensive perspective by combining migrant integration models and multiculturalist models that have been separated so far. Also, Krechel's theoretical distinction between systemic integration and value integration was empirically analyzed in this study on the level and pattern of integration in two dimensions.

TABLE 4 Level of the social integration of North Korean migrants

	Sub area	Indicators	Integration level
Systemic integration	Employment	Employment rate	2
		Income level	2
		Satisfaction with income	2
		Welfare dependency	2
	Housing	Home ownership rate	2
		Socioeconomic status of neighborhood	2
		Residential segregation rate	2
		Housing density	2
		Satisfaction with housing	4
	Education	Level of education	2
		Content of education	2
		School dropout rate	2
		Academic performance	2
		Access to private education	2
	Health	Level of physical health	2
		Level of mental health	2
		Difficulties in daily life due to illness	2
		Access to hospital or clinic	2
	Average level of systemic integration		2.11
Value integration	Sense of belonging	Identification as Korean people	4
		Intention to return to North Korea or China or to immigrate to other country	4
	Sense of trust	Belief in being an equal member of society	2
		Belief in reaching the same status as South Koreans	4
	Multicultural acceptance	Degree to which North Korean culture and identity are recognized and accepted	2
		Motivation for assimilation to South Korean culture and identity	2
	Average level of value integration		3
Overall level of integration			2.3

Note: Integration level is measured as 1 ''not well at all,'' 2 ''not well,'' 3 ''so so,'' 4 ''well,'' 5 ''very well.''

Anothercontribution of this study is that I have conducted empirical research on a migrant group, North Korean migrants, in a non-Western context. The experience of North Korean migrants in South Korean society reveals some important factors and mechanisms of migrant integration that have not been observed in Western countries. The theoretical contributions of research on North Korean migrants to the study of international migration and migrant integra-

tion are as follows. First, the same race or ethnicity does not guarantee the successful integration of migrants in the host society even if the migrants are compatriots of the same lineage as the native people. Second, the region of origin can become a strong basis of new racism against migrants when they come from less developed regions and especially when their region of origin is in a state of conflict with the host society. These migrants cannot return to their home country and take advantage of their networks with the home country for their settlement in the host country. In a sense, these people are caught in the middle between the two contesting countries and are equally mistrusted by the two sides. Third, when the migrants' loyalty is questioned in the country of destination, they find it difficult to maintain and express their unique culture and identity of the country of origin, and they feel a strong pressure to assimilate into the culture of the host country. North Korean migrants' strong desire to be recognized as South Koreans and their actions to deny North Korea can be attributed to South Korean native residents' distrust of them. Although they escaped North Korea because they were suppressed by the North Korean regime, they still feel pressured to prove that they oppose North Korea and support South Korea because South Koreans still regard them as being connected with North Korea. Their struggle for recognition has resulted in many North Korean migrant activists and organizations allied with anti-North Korea, anti-communist conservatives, and right-wing political parties, which turned away from citizens and civic groups with progressive ideologies. As such, the multiple and complex statuses and identities of North Korean migrants as defectors, refugees, migrants, and minorities are one of the hurdles to successful integration in their new society.

Nevertheless, the present study remains at a descriptive level by assessing the level of individual dimension of integration and the assessment of the integration level relies on a simple average of scores for each indicator. In addition, although the composite index representing the overall integration level was calculated, it took a simple method of assigning equal weights to individual indicators and summing the scores of individual indicators. It may be that some indicators more strongly influence successful integration than do others. Therefore, this study can be evaluated as showing approximate results rather than accurate results on the level of North Korean migrant integration. The development of a more accurate index, including more indicators and taking reasonable weights into account, will be left to the follow-up research.

Another limitation of this study is the direct comparison of North Korean migrants to the general population. In order to make a more relevant and useful comparison, the general population should be broken down into several subgroups in terms of human capital like education, occupational skills, and interpersonal skills, and then compared with equivalent subgroups of North Korean migrants with those of the general population. By controlling human capital variables, one can measure the effect of prejudice and discrimination and find solutions to these problems.

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