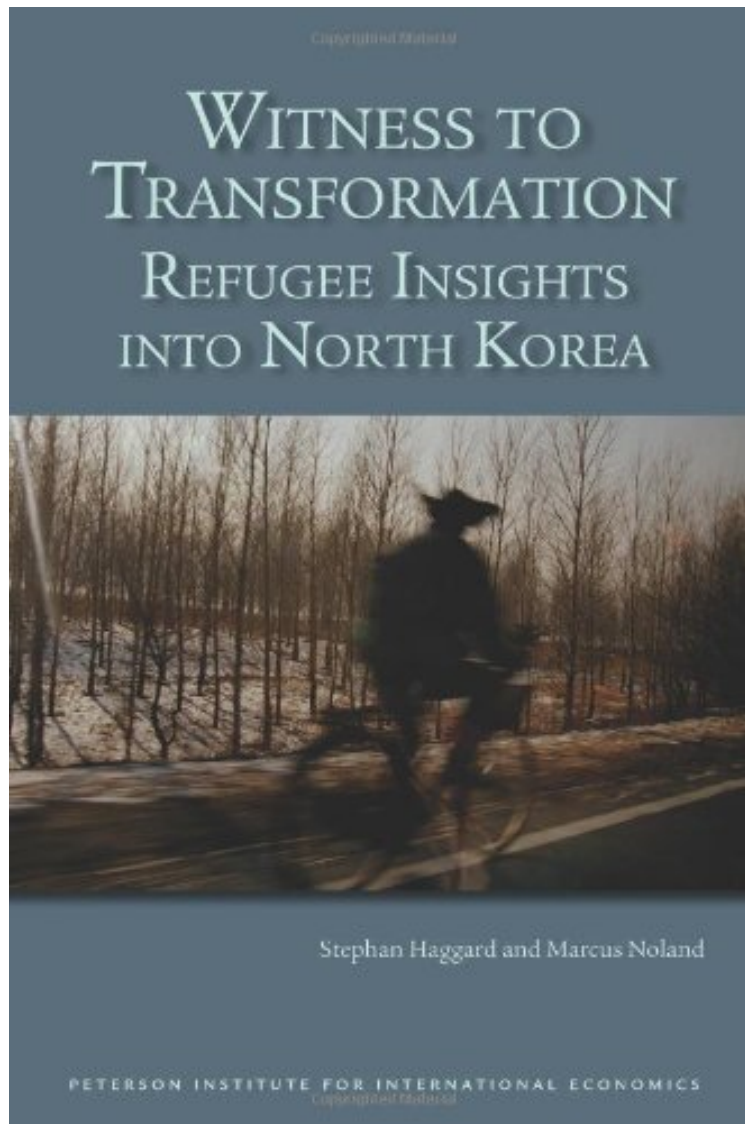


(Download pdf) Witness to Transformation: Refugee Insights into North Korea

## Witness to Transformation: Refugee Insights into North Korea

*Marcus Noland, Stephan Haggard*  
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**Marcus Noland, Stephan Haggard : Witness to Transformation: Refugee Insights into North Korea** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Witness to Transformation: Refugee Insights into North Korea:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Missing Piece in the Puzzle of North Korean Studies By Customer Witness to Transformation is a statistical analysis of two primary research groups; one group from China, and a more recent group from the Republic of Korea (South Korea). The authors draw their conclusions based on the responses from surveys completed by both groups, and compare/contrast their findings against the opposite group.

While I am not a statistician or a sociologist, the number of factors the authors account for and the caution statements of how certain data may be skewed based on problems associated with the responses helped assure me (false or true) that the authors had truly done their homework. The data, while tedious to get through at points, are nonetheless revealing and fascinating. This is not a horror tale of an escaped prisoner from a political prison camp (although some of the respondents in the surveys were escaped prisoners), but a tale which draws from the collective body of North Korean defectors. This broad-brush helps a reader interested in North Korean issues gain a perspective not previously available through all the first-hand accounts of one or a few defectors. 8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. A vital read for those concerned about international human rights and the conflict of the Koreas. By Midwest Book Review. Stories from North Korea are almost far too cruel to be true. "Witness to Transformation: Refugee Insights Into North Korea" analyzes the growing amount of people who are escaping the North Korean regime and the harsh challenges that face them in their attempts to find a new life. Drawn off heavy research from China, South Korea, other Asian Countries and America, this study provides quite the insight on refugee life for North Koreans. "Witness to Transformation" is a vital read for those concerned about international human rights and the conflict of the Koreas. 3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Through a glass darkly... By CW\_1A. A vital contribution to our understanding of modern Korea, 'Witness to Transformation' provides evidence the DPRK is rapidly entering a capitalist era, despite the flailing attempts of the regime to variously harness and hinder change. Since the famine of the nineteen nineties, when state distribution utterly failed, an unstoppable process of marketization from below has transformed the economy of the DPRK, now characterized by informal market activity and rampant corruption, exacerbated by a breathtakingly comprehensive penal system. Some of the revelations here are stunning. For example, the high number of Koreans directly attributing their miseries to their own government's policies, and the low attribution of blame to the traditional enemy of 'outside powers,' principally Yankee Imperialism. Given the extent of cradle to grave propaganda in North Korea, it is a testimony to the human imagination that so many defectors considered the United States their second most favoured home of choice, after South Korea. Clearly, many are dreaming of 'the enemy'. Although reliant on defector testimony, sneeringly dismissed by the Bruce Cumings school of thought, my feeling is that North Korean defector testimony is broadly reliable, and Noland Haggard go to great lengths to demonstrate their methodological accounting for various potential biases in the data. As the authors acknowledge, 'Witness To Transformation' is not written in the same populist style as Barbara Demick's excellent book, 'Nothing To Envy,' but they complement each other well. It is important to have data presented in this formal way, but given the remarkable insights contained, it is frankly no less compelling.

Despite its nuclear capability, in certain respects North Korea resembles a failed state sitting uneasily atop a shifting internal foundation. This instability is due in part to the devastating famine of the 1990s, and the state's inability to fulfill the economic obligations that it had assumed--which forced institutions, enterprises, and households to cope with the ensuing challenges of maintaining stability with limited cooperation between the Korean government and the international community. The ineffective response to the humanitarian crisis triggered by the famine resulted in the outflow of perhaps tens of thousands of refugees, whose narratives are largely overlooked in evaluating the efficacy of the humanitarian aid program. Exploiting Refugee Insights into North Korea; uses extensive surveys with refugees, who now reside in China or South Korea, to provide extraordinary insight into the changing pathways to power, wealth, and status within North Korea. These refugee testimonies provide an invaluable interpretation of the regime's motivations and they assess the situation on the ground with the rise of inequality, corruption, and disaffection in the decade since the famine. Through the lens of these surveys, preeminent North Korean experts Marcus Noland and Stephan Haggard carefully document the country's transition from a centrally planned economy to a highly distorted market economy, characterized by endemic corruption and widening inequality. Noland and Haggard chart refugees' reactions to the current conditions and consider the disparity between the perceived and real benefits of the international humanitarian aid program experienced by this displaced population. Finally, the book examines these refugees' future prospects for integration into a new society.