

Migration Policy and Autocratic Power

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November 15, 2014

The Two Koreas

- North Korea has heavily restricted emigration
- Under the military dictatorship, South Korea encouraged emigration

Three Questions

1. Can autocracies regulate flows?
2. Under what conditions does (expected) emigration lead to regime change?
3. Do autocratic leaders strategically restrict or encourage emigration to forestall regime change?

Past focus

- Immigration policy in wealthy states
- Local effects of emigration (e.g., Mahmoud et al. 2014)
- Remittances
- Little within autocracy literature

Some work showing emigration predicts democratic change

(Spilimbergo 2009; Bearce and Hutnick 2011; Docquier et al. 2013)

- Overlook *where* emigrants move to
- Regime response as endogenous factor
- Variation among countries

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Threat of Exit

- Where voice is curtailed, exit becomes main source of pressure
- Directly harms regime and signals dissatisfaction
- Responses: Control vs. concessions

Democratic Diffusion

- Exposure to democracy shifts preferences (not just for migrants) and builds political capacities
- Especially dangerous for most repressive autocracies

Motives for Allowing Emigration

- Remittances, trade, investment, reduced redistribution
- “Safety valve” for dissidents, reduce unemployment/underemployment

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Motives for Allowing Emigration

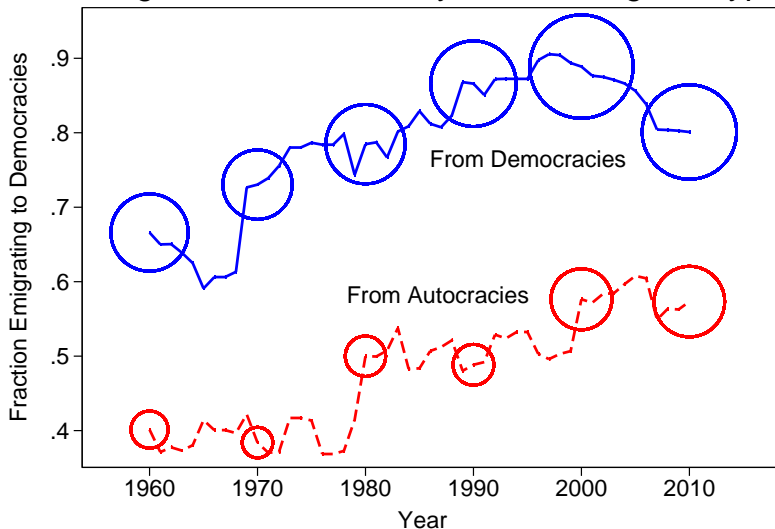
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Hypotheses

Mechanism	Emigration Freedom	Democratization
Threat of Exit	-	+
Democratic Diffusion	-	+
Economic Benefits	+	-
Safety Valve	+	-

Where Migrants Move From and Where They Go

Emigrant Destinations by Sender Regime Type



Sample of autocracies, 1981–2010

1. Does *Emigration Freedom (EF)* affect actual flows?
2. Does expected emigration (and emigration freedom) predict regime change?
3. Does expected emigration predict emigration freedom in line with its effects on regime change?

Estimate Gravity Model:

$$\ln(Em_{ijt}) = \ln(Pop_{it}) + \ln(Pop_{jt}) + \ln(Dist_{ijt}) + \mathbf{X}_{ijt} + \mathbf{W}_{it} + \mathbf{Z}_{jt} + \gamma_t + \varepsilon_{ijt}$$

Calculate imputed values \widehat{Em}_{ijt} , then compute

$$\begin{aligned}\widehat{Em}_{it}(Pop. Share) &= \frac{\sum_j \widehat{Em}_{ijt}}{Pop_{it}} \\ \widehat{Em}_{it}(Polity Average) &= \frac{\sum_j \widehat{Em}_{ijt} \times Polity_{jt}}{\sum_j \widehat{Em}_{ijt}}\end{aligned}$$

Does Emigration Freedom Affect Flows?

DV = <i>Emigration Flows</i> (ln)	Total		No College	College	Total
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Sender Variables					
<i>Emigration Freedom</i>	0.122*** (4.40)	0.073** (2.78)	0.117*** (4.40)	0.078*** (3.47)	-0.026 (-0.76)
<i>Judicial Independence</i>					-0.162*** (-3.68)
<i>Emigration Freedom</i> × <i>Jl</i>					0.252*** (4.13)
N	186,081	162,055	102,100	114,197	161,859
Sender Countries	104	104	103	103	104
Adj. R^2	0.391	0.409	0.388	0.427	0.409

Notes: See paper for full table. The table shows regressions predicting yearly emigration flows from a sample of autocracies to each other country. t statistics (based on robust standard errors clustered by country dyad) are shown in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Does expected emigration (and emigration freedom) predict regime change?

	Δ Polity (5-year)			Democratic Transition
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>Emigration Freedom</i>	0.078*** (5.64)	0.088*** (6.08)	0.012 (0.42)	0.591*** (4.19)
$\widehat{Em}(\text{Polity Average})$	0.182*** (7.45)	0.152*** (5.94)	0.065 (1.85)	0.785*** (3.67)
$\widehat{Em}(\text{Pop. Share})$	-0.113 (-1.28)	-0.094 (-1.06)	0.544* (2.46)	-2.290* (-2.50)
$\widehat{Em}(\text{Polity Average}) \times EF$			0.174** (3.17)	
$\widehat{Em}(\text{Pop. Share}) \times EF$			-0.856** (-2.79)	
Controls	Polity, Year Only	Full Set	Full Set	Full Set
N	1,882	1,881	1,881	1,806
Countries	116	116	116	117
Adj./Pseudo R^2	0.088	0.106	0.118	0.153

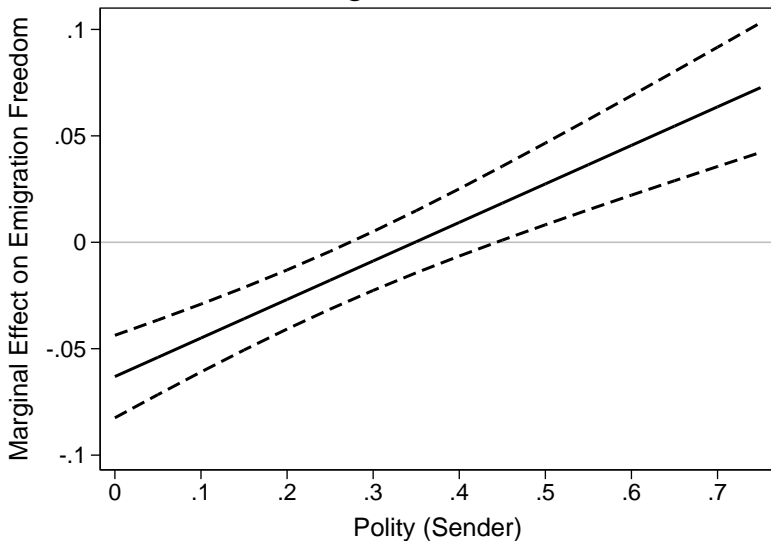
Notes: See paper for full table. The table displays regressions predicting the five-year change in *Polity* (Models 1-3) and a probit predicting democratization over five years (Model 4). All models use a sample of autocracies. *t* statistics (based on robust standard errors) are in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Does expected emigration predict emigration freedom in line with its effects on regime change?

DV = <i>Emigration Freedom</i>	(1)	(2)	(3)
$\widehat{Em}(Polity\ Average)$	-0.355* (-2.56)	-1.262*** (-6.38)	-0.994*** (-4.60)
$\widehat{Em}(Pop.\ Share)$	1.600*** (5.75)	1.175*** (3.90)	1.049** (3.14)
$\widehat{Em}(Polity\ Average) \times Polity$		3.621*** (6.48)	3.718*** (6.46)
$\widehat{Em}(Pop.\ Share) \times Polity$		1.292 (1.58)	2.719* (2.34)
$\widehat{Em}(EF\ Average)$	1.375*** (10.60)	1.356*** (10.35)	1.085*** (8.15)
$\widehat{Em}(GDP/capita\ Average)$			0.190*** (4.05)
Controls	Polity, Regional Polity	Polity, Regional Polity	Full Set
N	2,188	2,188	2,175
Countries	119	119	118
Pseudo R^2	0.080	0.090	0.171

Notes: See paper for full table. The table displays ordered probits predicting *Emigration Freedom* in autocracies. *t* statistics (based on robust standard errors) are in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Marginal Effect of Expected Polity Score in Emigration Receivers



Extensions/ Robustness Checks

- Democratic diffusion: Migration seems to account for diffusion
- Immigration: Similar effects, emigration has a large effect
- Actual emigration flows: Flow to democracies has same effect; less effect of total emigration
- Non-Democratic Regime Change:
 - Expected flow to democracy predicts breakdown and irregular turnover
 - Expected total emigration predicts breakdown but not turnover
- Different types of autocracies
 - Expected total emigration most stabilizing in personalist regimes
 - Expected flow to democracy has strongest effect on military regimes
 - Communist regimes most likely to restrict emigration freedom, especially if emigrants likely go to democracies
- Democracies: Expected total emigration provides stability as does flow to other democracies (weakly)

Conclusions

- Autocratic leaders strategically use emigration
- Restrict emigration when citizens are likely to go to democracies
- Allow emigration when economic benefits are high

Contributions

- Migration: Politics of autocratic sending countries
- Neglected element of how autocracies fight for survival
- Mechanism of democratic diffusion