



Royal Irish Academy Grants Report

Title:	Dr.
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Discipline:	Humanities and Social Sciences
Year of Award:	2018
Project Title	Social Changes and Authoritarian Resilience in North Korea

1. Research background:

The government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea) has had to grapple with numerous changes to its domestic society in the last 30 years. Domestically, the shadow economy has become a regular feature of everyday life, technology has made it more difficult to control information, tens of thousands of people have defected from North Korea, and gender relations have changed as the market has facilitated female wealth accumulation. These developments are bound to influence the elite cohesion and regime resilience of the DPRK and my research aims to understand how the North Korean government remains in power amid changing circumstances.

2. Please outline the findings of your research and/or milestones achieved (did you achieve the primary objectives - if not, what did you learn from the process)?

The research analyzes social changes in North Korea since the end of the Cold War (e.g., marketization, defection, changing gender relations). It is hoped that the result is not only a fuller picture of North Korea's autocratic resilience, but also theoretical insights that are applicable to the wider study of comparative authoritarianism. Research about North Korean regime dynamics often segments threats to authoritarian rule into elite-level politics on the one hand and societal-level changes on the other without adequately conceptualizing the interactions between them. Our research, however, aims to integrate the two levels of analysis to arrive at a fuller explanation. Our current manuscript does this, and we also used the trip to write an application for a small grant to extend our research by examining the dynamics of defection from North Korea.