

Son Preference, Parental Satisfaction, and Sex Ratio Transition

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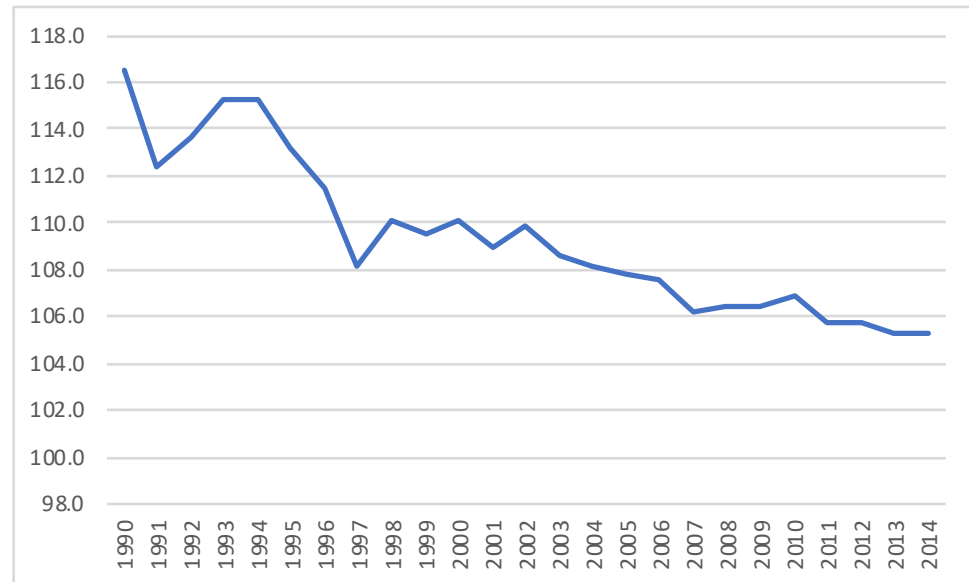
General Question

- Does having sons translate into more satisfaction in a society where sons are preferred to daughters?

Country & Data

- South Korea
 - Nice satisfaction data are available
 - Sex ratio at birth is high → Sign of son preference

Figure 1: Change in SRB in Korea



Specific Questions

- Can we capture son preference using satisfaction data?
- If so, in which domains of life, e.g., financial domain, family domain, social domain, do sons make the parents more satisfied?
- Are the results obtained here consistent with the sex ratio transition (the rise and the fall of SRB)?

Literature

- Lee et. al. (2013)
 - Cross-sectional data targeted for the elderly in one particular island in South Korea.
 - Mixed gender preference
- Margolis & Myrskylä (2016)
 - German and British panel data
 - Mixed gender preference

Literature

- This study
 - Examines the impact of having sons on parental satisfaction using national-level panel data in a country with son preference,
 - Gets into the sources of son preference with the domain of life approach, and
 - Checks the consistency with the sex ratio transition.

Main Results

- At the timing of birth, sons better satisfy parents in the domains of income and relative relations.
- No advantage is found for daughters at the timing of birth.
- The results provide a hint for understanding the full cycle of the sex ratio transition.

Korean Labor & Income Panel Study

- Wave 1 in 1998, Wave 17 in 2014
- Overall Life Satisfaction (5-point scale)
- Domain-specific Satisfaction (5-point scale)
 - household income, family relations, leisure activities, housing environment, relations with relatives, and social relations
- This study uses
 - Married individuals aged 45 or less
 - 61,851 observations

1st Regression Analysis: Fertility Behavior

- Aim: to test if the probability of progressing to the next parity is higher for parents with only daughters than for parents with only sons.
- Result: Yes → consistent with son preference

# Children	One	Two
Only daughters	1.05	5.38***
Both daughters and sons	---	1.32

- RE Logit model. Ref: Only sons. Demo-socioeconomic variables are controlled. Odds ratio for progressing to the next parity.

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

2nd Regression Analysis : Birth and Parenthood on Satisfaction

- Aim: to test the impacts of child birth and parenthood on satisfaction while controlling for the gender of children.

Domains	Overall Life	Income	Family	Leisure	Household	Relative Relation	Social Relation
Birth	.052***	-.001	.046***	-.009	.040**	.035**	.044***
+ Son Birth	.007	.062**	-.008	.020	.009	.049**	.020
Parenthood	-.037**	-.037*	.017	-.171***	-.056***	.004	-.032*
+ Son PH	-.049***	-.013	-.013	-.029	-.023	-.053***	-.035**

– FE OLS model. Demo-socioeconomic variables are controlled.

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

2nd Regression Analysis Result 1: Birth on Satisfaction

- At the timing of birth, sons better satisfy parents in the domains of income and relative relations.
- No advantage is found for daughters.

Domains	Overall Life	Income	Family	Leisure	Household	Relative Relation	Social Relation
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2nd Regression Analysis Result 2: Parenthood on Satisfaction

- Being a parent of sons lowers satisfaction in overall life and in the domains of relative and social relations.
- No disadvantage is found for daughters.

Domains	Overall Life	Income	Family	Leisure	Household	Relative Relation	Social Relation
Birth	.052***	-.001	.046***	-.009	.040**	.035**	.044***
+ Son Birth	.007	.062**	-.008	.020	.009	.049**	.020
Parenthood	-.037**	-.037*	.017	-.171***	-.056***	.004	-.032*
+ Son PH	-.049***	-.013	-.013	-.029	-.023	-.053***	-.035**

– FE OLS model. Demo-socioeconomic variables are controlled.

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Remarks 1: Son Preference

- Son preference has its roots in the domains of income and relations with relatives.
 - This supports the idea that son preference derives from parental expectations that sons financially support the family, including aged parents, and represent the family in relative networks.
- However, the positive impact of having sons does not last long.
 - Overly high expectation? Boys are just terrible?

3rd Regression Analysis : Change in Son Preference

- Aim: to test if the impacts of having sons diminished.
- Top: 1st half. Bottom: 2nd half.
- Results: The positive impacts of son birth disappeared in the 2nd half. → consistent with the fall in SRB

Domains	Overall Life	Income	Family	Leisure	Household	Relative Relation	Social Relation
Birth	0.0523*	-0.0214	0.0282	-0.00694	0.0254	0.0112	0.0160
+ Son Birth	-0.00556	0.0976**	-0.0112	0.0179	0.0355	0.0763*	0.0761**
Birth	0.0528**	0.0300	0.0578***	0.00856	0.0433	0.0591***	0.0644***
+ Son Birth	0.0159	-0.00281	-0.0299	0.00912	-0.0142	-0.00376	-0.0445

Remarks 2: Sex Ratio Transition

- Economic development ignites the sex ratio transition.
 - 1) Low fertility → raises SRB in a country with son preference and prenatal sex-selective technology.
 - 2) Socioeconomic changes (e.g., introduction of SS) → expected roles of sons less valuable → weaker son preference → reduces SRB
- The ignition is the same, but the time lag in its impacts generates the rise and the fall in SRB.

Thank you

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