

# Son Preference, Parental Satisfaction, and Sex Ratio Transition

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This study aims to understand the sources of son preference using satisfaction data in various domains of life. To do this, we use the Korean panel data and apply regression analyses. As a result, we find that sons better satisfy parents in the domains of household income, relations with relatives, and social relations at the timing of birth, while no advantage is found for daughters. These results are consistent with the idea that parents expect sons to contribute to the family in earning income and old-age support, and represent the family in relation and social networks. Namely, we can argue that such expectation causes parents to be more satisfied in related domains of life and is manifested as a preference for sons. These results are also consistent with the idea that socioeconomic changes occurring in the demographic transition eventually lower the sex ratio. Socioeconomic changes, such as the introduction of social security system, the trend toward the nuclear family, more equal gender roles, and more working opportunity for females, cause the traditionally expected roles of sons to be less valuable and, therefore, the son preference to be weaker. This lowers the sex ratio at birth without any change in fertility.