

In [PNAS](#) (Proceedings of the National Academy of Science), December 9, 2008 vol. 105 no. 49
19171-19176

An [article](#) by Mikhail Lipatov, Shuzhuo Li, and Marcus W. Feldman : "Economics, cultural transmission, and the dynamics of the sex ratio at birth in China"

Here is the abstract:

"In rural China, the ratio of newborn boys to newborn girls [sex ratio at birth (SRB)] has been rising for several decades, to values significantly above its biological norm. This trend has a number of alarming societal consequences, and has attracted the attention of scholars and politicians. The root of the problem lies in a 2,500-year-old culture of son preference. This culture is intricately linked with the economic reality of each couple's life, so that there are financial and psychological repercussions to parents who have no sons. To bring greater clarity and understanding to this issue, we present a quantitative framework that describes the interaction between economics and cultural transmission. We start with an explicit mechanism by which economic incentives can change cultural beliefs of a given individual, and go on to include a mechanism of cultural inheritance from generation to generation. We then show how economic conditions can affect the dynamics of cultural change in an entire society, and may lead to a decrease in the country's sex ratio at birth."