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Family Systems, Political systems, and Asia's 'Missing Girls'

The Construction of Son Preference and Its Unraveling

Monica Das Gupta

Abstract

Son preference is known to be found in certain types of cultures, that is patrilineal cultures. But what explains the fact that China, South Korea, and Northwest India manifest such extreme child sex ratios compared with other patrilineal societies? This paper argues that what makes these societies unique is that their pre-modern political and administrative systems used patrilineages to organize and administer their citizens. The interplay of culture, state, and political processes generated uniquely rigid patriliny and son preference.

The paper also argues that the advent of the modern state in these settings has unraveled the underpinnings of the rigid patrilineal rules, and unleashed a variety of forces that reduce son preference. Firstly, the modern state has powerful tools for incorporating and managing its citizenry, rendering patrilineages a threat rather than an asset for the state. Secondly, the modern state has brought in political, social, and legal reforms aimed to challenge traditional social hierarchies, including the age and gender hierarchies of the kinship system. Thirdly, industrialization and urbanization have ushered in new modes of social organization, which reduce the hold of clans and lineages. Studies of the impact of the media suggest that states can accelerate the resultant decline in son preference, through media efforts to help parents perceive that daughters can now be as valuable as sons.

Family Systems, Political systems, and Asia's 'Missing Girls': The Construction of Son Preference and Its Unraveling

Monica Das Gupta[1]

INTRODUCTION

What explains the large geographic variation in the proportion of boys to girls across the developing world? What factors underlie this variation, and what might help bring the sex ratios to more normal levels in the regions where they are currently high?

Most societies show some degree of preference for sons, though this is often quite mild (Williamson 1976). Demographic estimates indicate that some degree of excess female child mortality may be quite widespread, especially at ages 1-4 years (Hill and Upchurch 1995, UN 1998), though such estimates are sensitive to having an accurate comparator of expected sex differentials in mortality. Avoiding this complex question, Table 1 shows which regions and countries have child (under-5 year) sex ratios above the global average.

Table 1 shows that in 2005, the child sex ratio was around 1.05 in both the developed world and the developing world (excluding China). It also shows that most world regions are at or below this average, including Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, Northern Africa, Western Asia, and Southeastern Asia ─ though the sociological and other reasons for the outlying observations of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia are currently unknown and need to be studied. The only regions with significantly elevated ratios are East Asia and South-central Asia, and this is due to the high ratios in China, South Korea, and India.

Country-level data can hide much regional variation in large heterogeneous countries like China and India (Map 1). In China, the highest child sex ratios are in the eastern and central regions. The large western region shows modest or no evidence of elevated child sex ratios, and similar patterns are seen in the Northern region and parts of the South. In India, high child sex ratios are concentrated in the Northwestern region, while the rest of the country shows moderate or no elevation in these ratios.

The story of high child sex ratios is well-documented. We know that girls have a biological advantage in survival over boys, from conception onwards (Waldron 2005) ─ but that in some settings, girls' biological advantage is reversed by a strong preference for sons, resulting in higher mortality of girls before birth or during early childhood.

We also know that son preference is found in certain types of cultures, that is, patrilineal cultures, which commonly manifest some discrimination against daughters.[1] And we know that the more rigidly patrilineal the culture the greater the discrimination against daughters.[2] In such settings, daughters are formally transferred on marriage to their husband's family and can no longer contribute to their natal family. This drastically lowers the value of daughters relative to sons, reducing parents' willingness to invest in raising girls.

But what explains this fact, that some patrilineal societies are organized into such tight units defined through the male line alone, leaving so little flexibility for women to play a part in their household of birth ─ and (for example) cannot inherit parental property even if they have no brothers? What distinguishes these societies from other patrilineal societies that do allow some flexibility of this kind?

This paper argues that this results from differences in political systems ─ what distinguishes China, South Korea, and Northwest India from other patrilineal settings is that their traditional political systems used patrilineages to organize and administer their citizens. Patrilineal kinship systems are capable of tight organization and control of lineage members

(Fox 1967), and the neo-Confucians in China and Korea sought to use this for political ends (Deuchler 1992, Faure 2007). This required the unusually rigid manifestation of patrilineal kinship rules. The interplay of culture, state, and political processes shaped gender roles and the relative value of boys and girls to their parents, and explain the large geographic variation in child sex ratios between countries, as well as between regions of China and India.

The paper also argues that the advent of the modern state in these settings has unraveled the underpinnings of the rigid patrilineal rules, and unleashed a variety of forces that reduce son preference. A vector of forces are now at work,[3] with some making for higher child sex ratios ─ such as easier access to sex selection technologies, and reduced family size ─ while the reduced incentives to prefer sons over daughters work in the opposite direction. This means that we cannot predict the exact timing and pace of normalization of child sex ratios, but we can understand the factors underlying their normalizing trend.

1. THE ROLE OF KINSHIP SYSTEMS IN SHAPING GIRLS' AND BOYS' RELATIVE VALUE TO THEIR PARENTS

Kinship systems shape the relative value of girls and boys largely through their rules of inheritance. The details of these rules vary considerably on the ground, so some simplification is needed to distinguish their main differences. Inheritance is through the male line in *patrilineal* systems, through the female line in *matrilineal* systems, and through both the male and female lines in *bilateral* systems. Residence are *patrilocal* if a couple lives with the husband's kin after marriage, *matrilocal* if with the wife's kin, and *neolocal* if the couple establishes a new household after marriage.[4]

a) Matrilineal Kinship Systems

These are rare today. Where the dominant system is patrilineal, legislative and other measures premised on patrilineal principles gradually erode matrilineal property relations and social systems.[5] This process is still ongoing in the matrilineal societies of Northwest India and in Yunnan province of China (Nongbri 1993, Hua 2001).

b) Bilateral Kinship Systems

These permit a great deal of flexibility in inheritance and residence. People recognize kin on both the father's and the mother's sides, may inherit from either side, and a couple may live with relatives on either side or by themselves. Kinship obligations are fluid and negotiable. Bilateral kinship arrangements are becoming increasingly common in the modern world, where rigid rules of inheritance and residence are being broken down by the exigencies of living and working in an industrialized economy.

Bilateral kinship systems are also "traditional" in many societies, even from the pre-modern period. They are common in SouthEast Asia, as documented in ethnographies of the Malays, the Filipinos, across Indonesia (Java, Bali, Borneo), and Thailand.[6] Since unilineal descent and inheritance is not practiced, people typically do not remember kinship relationships beyond their grandparental generation. This has been termed "genealogical amnesia" (Geertz and Geertz 1964), and Carsten (1995) has documented it in ethnographies across SouthEast

Asia. The "…concern is with the lateral expansion and size of the family and kin group than with the lineal depth of relationship" (Fox 1961).

Studies in Indonesia and Malaysia show that old people receive support from both sons and daughters, and also support them (Frankenberg et al 2002). A study in the Philippines found that old people are equally likely to live with married sons as with married daughters, in sharp contrast to Taiwan where the likelihood is overwhelmingly in favor of married sons (Casterline and Domingo 1993).[7]

These bilateral kinship systems generate little distinction between the value of sons and daughters to their parents. This is in contrast with patrilineal kinship systems, as illustrated by the fact that Malaysia's ethnic minorities of Chinese and Indian origin manifest strong son preference, unlike the majority Malay population (Goodkind 2006).

Islamic inheritance law can reduce gender equality in bilateral settings and increase it in patrilineal settings, since it enjoins that girls get half the share of boys. Banks (1983) argued that Malays usually continue equal division of property despite Muslim law, but Ong (1990) argues that this customary practice is being undermined by Islamic revivalism. In strongly patrilineal systems Islamic law brings in some measure of gender-equity at least in principle (see below).

c) *Patrilineal Kinship Systems*

Patrilineal kinship systems are the most common traditional system across Europe, East and South Asia, and several African societies. However, most of these societies offered some flexibility in the actual practice of inheritance and residence rules, while only a few were rigidly patrilineal.

Patrilineal systems which permit exchange between parents and adults daughters

These systems permit some scope for adult daughters to play a role in their parental household, unlike the more rigid systems described below. For example, in peasant Europe (as also in Japan), parents without sons would typically have their daughter and her husband inherit the property.[8] The emphasis was more on reproducing the *household* rather than the patrilineage. Moreover, in large parts of rural Europe it was completely acceptable for a grown daughter to remain single for many years as part of their parents' household, supporting and being supported by the aging parents.[9]

In North Africa and the Middle East, intermarriage between cousins is common, so married women often remain in close proximity to their own parents. Kandiyoti (1988, 1991) refers to the belt of 'classic patriarchy' that extends from this region through India and China. Referring to the practice of patrilocal marriage throughout this belt, she notes that

> "The extent to which this represents a total break with their own kin group…varies in relation to the degree of endogamy in marriage….Among the rural Arabs of the Levant, there is much greater mutuality among affines…" (Kandiyoti 1991:31)[10]

Even in non-endogamous marriages, relations between parents and daughters continue after marriage (Moghadam 2003: 124). Cousin marriage is also common amongst South Asian Muslims. In Pakistan, a 2004-05 survey in Punjab and Sindh provinces found that 77 percent

of the women had married a blood relative, and 62 percent had married men from the same village or a nearby village (Jacoby and Mansuri 2007).

Islamic law also enjoins that daughters inherit from their parents (albeit half the share of sons), though women in many patrilineal Islamic societies forego this in order to maintain their brothers' support in the event of marital problems (Kandiyoti 1998, 1991). Yet having such a law offers women greater rights and protections than the rigid patrilineal situation of there being no question of inheritance, and little scope for returning to brothers for support should the marriage not work out.

Patrilineal kinship systems are also found in many African societies. There is much variation on the ground in the kinship systems (Guyer and Peters 1987), but the literature indicates that women have considerable economic autonomy.[11] Women earn significant amounts through activities such as agriculture and marketing, and keep at least part of the earnings, building up their own assets (Kandiyoti 1988:276). Ekejiuba (2005: 44-45) notes that women in patrilineal societies in rural West Africa earn and accumulate their own assets, and contribute financially to their natal kin. Such potential for autonomy is denied to women in the patrilineal societies of China and India, whose labors accrue to their husband's lineage.

These more flexible forms of patriliny can generate some son preference, as evidenced in some excess female child mortality in pre-modern Germany (Klasen 1994) and in the Middle East and North Africa today (Table 1, Hill and Upchurch 1995, Yount 2001). However, son preference is far higher in the rigidly patrilineal systems discussed below.

Patrilineal systems which preclude exchange between parents and adult daughters

Northwest India, China and South Korea have rigidly patrilineal kinship systems whose basic organizational logic is strikingly similar, despite considerable local variation in detail. The traditional social organization prevailing in these settings in the early decades of this century (and to a large extent also today in rural areas) was one in which men were organized into clans and sub-clans (lineages upto various levels of genealogical depth, down to the household). Clans are strictly exogamous, marrying within one's clan would be to commit incest. On marriage, women are exported to her husband's lineage: her (temporary) "slot" in the household ceases to exist, and a new (permanent) "slot" is created for incoming brides.[12]

Daughters are effectively lost to their parents when they marry. And marriage offered adult women the only legitimate access to support by a household. Fox's (1967:117) description for China applies also to Northwest India and South Korea:

> "… the lineage unloaded its consanguine women *(the women born into it)*, and once they were gone they were gone. It obtained brides from other lineages to bear up sons to its name. Thus, the Chinese illustrate with harsh clarity the point about the lineage not having any use for its 'non-reproductive' members (its 'rubbish'). A woman has no role as sister and daughter, but only as wife and mother..." (italicized text mine)

Thus it is that only men constitute the social order, and women are the means whereby men reproduce themselves. Access to key economic and social assets depends on one's position in a lineage, so enormous importance is placed on carefully recording the precise lineage ties between men for generations. Women are recorded, if at all, only as the wives of the men

who gave rise to succeeding generations of men. Ancestor worship seals the bonds within the patrilineage, binding its men together in rituals honoring their male ancestors.

Patrilineages functioned as corporations. Although land was privately held, people could not sell land inherited from the patrilineage to an outsider, without giving members of the lineage the first right of refusal.[13] A man without sons would typically seek to acquire one by re-marrying, or by adopting the son of a male kinsman. Bringing in a son-in-law was very difficult, because the lineage would bring to bear a lot of pressure to keep the land within the lineage.

Child sex ratios are by far the most masculine in these rigidly patrilineal settings (Table 1, Map 1), given their effectiveness at marginalizing daughters and reducing parents' incentives to invest their resources in raising girls. This underlies the widely documented practices in these settings of ante-natal sex selection, female infanticide, and greater alacrity at seeking medical services for sons than for daughters. As the technology of sex-selection became more accessible physically and financially, there was some shift from postnatal to prenatal sex-selection (Goodkind 1996), but the improved ease of sex-selection also generates a spike in the manifestation of son preference such that the total proportion of 'missing girls' rose in all these settings.

The aversion to raising daughters in these settings is driven by the fact that girls are seen as a drain on household resources. This is why the proportions 'missing' rises when households face a resource crunch ─ such as the privations of war, a famine, or fertility decline in which total family size drops more quickly than the number of sons desired (Figure 1). It is also why excess female child mortality is widely found to rise with birth order, as parents trying to reach their desired number of sons are faced with the daunting prospect of raising multiple girls. If significant dowries need to be paid at a girl's marriage, this aggravates the situation further, but the issue of dowry does not explain the underlying son preference. In China and South Korea, the net expenses of a son's marriage are estimated to be 3-4 times higher than that of a daughter's marriage (Das Gupta et al 2003). In India's Northwestern states of Punjab and Haryana, brideprice was the norm in the early twentieth century, but nevertheless the costs of raising a girl were resented as encroaching on the sons' inheritance (Darling 1947).[14]

The next section seeks to explain what underlies the rigid patriliny found in these settings.

2. THE ROLE OF THE PRE-MODERN STATE AND POLITICAL SYSTEM IN FORMALIZING PATRILINY IN CHINA, KOREA, AND NORTHWEST INDIA

In China and Korea, the state made a concerted effort to propagate Confucian values to reinforce the ruler's authority and build a strong authoritarian state. This involved pressuring and incentivizing people to form themselves into patrilineages, and to adopt elaborate rituals of ancestor worship tying the lineage members together.[15] This was designed to promote stability and loyalty to a series of nested corporate groups — the household, the lineage, and the state. Avenues to status and power lay through the lineage. The roles and status of each member of a household and lineage were specified, under the unchallenged authority of the (male) head of the family. These authoritarian kinship relationships were mirrored through the political hierarchy, culminating in obeisance to the king.

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Presented as a civilizing force, this enabled the state to control local societies through lineage organization and lineage elites, minimizing the need for force and expensive administrative outreach.

> (In Korea), "…the "Confucianization" of society was first and foremost a cultural process…. a civilizing process that promised to humanize social mores and practices by transforming morality. Of course, it had a political facet as well: it gave power to monarchs, courts, and associated elites." (Ko et al 2003: 8-9).

> (In China), lineages defined the polity, "…linking villages to the normative universe of the higher orders of Chinese civilization." (Duara 1988:87)

As the ethnographies below indicate, people who chose to conform to the family and ritual systems propagated by the state obtained privileged access to many forms material reward, including access to official positions and control over local resources. By extension, this implies that within a locality the higher one's social class, the greater the likelihood of preferring sons over daughters. This class differentiation in son preference is likely to be somewhat modified by the fact that poorer people seeking upward mobility often seek to emulate the values and behaviors of the higher classes.

As part of reinforcing lineage and state authority, the state reinforced parental control over children. Wolf (2005: 221-225) argues that this helped Chinese parents to exercise far greater control over their children than parents in Northern Europe, though both were patriarchal societies.

> "Parents used both the threat and reality of the law to control rebellious children…. under Ch'ing law, when parents or grandparents requested a magistrate to punish their junior's defiance, 'the authorities, without investigation and acting solely on the parents' complaint', could pronounce a sentence of banishment, revocable if the parents withdrew the complaint." (Gates 1996:87)

Propagating Confucianism was also accompanied by efforts to obliterate Buddhism, with its emphasis on individual self-realization and salvation, which was perceived as detracting from loyalty to the family and state (Deuchler 1992, Faure 2007: ch 8). At least in China, this conflation of religion with administrative and political systems went further ─ the hierarchy of the gods mirrored the organization of social and political life on earth (Wolf 1974) ─ with the Stove God placing the family in the administrative and political realm of the empire. As Faure (2007:13, 216) describes it, "Deities are dealt with as if they were emperors and officials", and "…religion and ritual…played a central role in relating the Chinese imperial state to local society." While Japan also adopted some aspects of Confucian culture, it was not systematically used to reinforce state power (Berthrong 1998: ch 6).

a) China

Confucianization was actively propagated by the state from the Ming dynasty onwards in China. As described below, lineages were held responsible for ensuring law and order within their own groups, and linked through rituals and economic incentives with the imperial bureaucracy.

This enabled extending the boundaries of the empire with minimal administrative and military presence.

> "The reach of the state was not unlimited. During the imperial era (the state's) official authority extended directly only to the county magistrate…. (Below that, the state relied on the lineages) to enforce its edicts and maintain social stability." (Ikels 2004:90-91)

As Siu and Faure (1995b: 211-212) put it, this system ensured that "…even when the imperial bureaucracy was physically distant its impact was symbolically intense".

> "Although contact with the imperial bureaucracy by localized descent groups might only have been imagined or symbolic, higher-order lineage halls or academies based in regional cities and provincial capitals were arenas in which upwardly mobile local groups maintained direct dialogues with imperial officials."

Studies of China show the fascinating incentives at work for ethnic minorities to abandon their kinship systems and organize themselves into patrilineages in order to promote their own interests and exclude others from access to resources. Becoming Confucianized offered a way for ethnic minorities to enter the dominant Han ethnic fold, and access the benefits of belonging to the mainstream culture.

> "Lineages, then, are complex historical constructions in which kinship and descent have come to serve as legitimizing labels for claims to settlement rights and territorial control….cultural institutions (in this case lineage) and political economy (in this case territorial control) never ceased to constitute each other through time." (Siu and Faure 1995b: 213-214)

> "The construction of lineage,…ethnic identity, and popular religion in south China were dialogues creating identities, setting boundaries, asserting entitlement, and enforcing exclusion. The processes were integral to the expansion of the late imperial state, which presented itself less as an administrative machinery than as a cultural idea. As the former, the state was remote; as the latter, it was penetrating because its symbolic codes…shape(d) perceptions of viable options." (Siu and Faure 1995a: 17)

Faure (2007: 10) refers to "…the centrality of ancestral sacrifice as the linchpin connecting state authority and local communities…. "by adopting neo-Confucian rituals, (local communities) drew upon the authority of the state in positing common descent as the foundation of territorial relationship. Local communities thus colluded with the state in treating lineages as the building blocks of orderly society."

Those who failed to participate in this system were perceived to be uncivilized second-class citizens, but could redeem themselves over time by subscribing to the dominant mores:

> "Those marginalized were often labeled inferior and politically undeserving to the point of not belonging to the same cultural universe." (Siu and Faure 1995b: 213-214)

> "Contrary to the impressions of the established lineages that Zhigang had been a rather 'uncivilized' place with mixed surnames…. An Ou surname lineage did establish itself, building seven ancestral halls. By …1837, it was able to put together a genealogy." (Siu and Liu 2006: 301)

Siu and Liu (2006: 290-291) describe how in the Pearl River Delta during the Ming and Qing dynasties, some segments of the local population appropriated symbols of state power and

> "…converted themselves into 'legitimate' members of the imperial order. By calling themselves Han, they distinguished themselves from indigenous populations in the area. In this process of self-differentiation during the Ming and Qing, single-surnamed communities arose in the Pearl River Delta. They acquired vast areas of river marshes, controlled markets and temples, and flaunted literati connections. What were seen as orthodox notions of Chinese culture and markers of identity were improvised by the upwardly mobile to create a language of exclusion that was eventually shared by state officials and the locally powerful."

Other local populations excluded from this system were denied settlement rights, which Faure (2007:4) explains were rights to exploit common property resources, such as cultivating land that was not privately claimed, building houses on wasteland, and gathering fuel from the hillsides and fish from streams or the sea.

Elsewhere, Siu and Faure (1995b: 211-212) describe
> "…the daunting growth of the He lineage and its ancestral trust in the last three centuries. It prospered on the reclamation of the sands among the numerous tributaries of the Pearl River, and subsequently on the rents it collected from tenants who were largely labeled as Dan and denied settlement rights. As its economic base expanded and diversified, lineage identity and ritual aggrandizement intensified…. A lineage genealogy was compiled and aggressively used to set clear boundaries against tenants and neighbors, even though the document contained blatant inconsistencies about the very founding of the lineage."

Faure (2007: 363) describes how in the Guizhou mountains, "…from the eighteenth century on, commercial logging provided a sudden impetus for economic development. The Miao people living in the area took immediately to the use of land deeds as evidence of land rights, enforced ethnic boundaries between themselves and the immigrants from Hunan who flocked to the region, began building timber houses in the style of Han village houses, and, by the nineteenth century, compiled written genealogies as they distinguished themselves in imperial service by providing men to fight against the Taiping."

Another incentive to be fully incorporated into the Confucian kinship system of the Han majority was that this was a requisite for upward mobility into the civil service, with all the prestige and power associated with it (Ko et al 2003:19).

Lineages with their networks also became engines of economic growth ─ especially in China's southeastern coastal region with its rich potential for commerce and trade ─ as well as integral components of the Ming state (Gates 1996, Faure 2007:7).

> "incorporation via the ritual process tied the lineage closely with the growth of business and the pooling of capital for investment purposes." Faure (2007:14)

The studies cited above derive from Southern China, where patrilineages formed stronger propertied corporate structures than in the North. In Northern China, lineages were typically weaker and had less corporate property than in the southeastern region (Duara 1988:86-88). Siu and Faure (1995b: 210, citing Freedman 1965) argue that this is related to the rich commercial possibilities in this region. Yet even in the North, the imperial bureaucracy vigorously promoted lineages "as keepers of the moral and social order" (Duara 1988:101), and lineages played an important role in the lives of the villagers in terms of social and economic cooperation and organized public life:

> "lineages or their segments formed the basic political divisions…. In other words, kinship space overlapped with 'political space'." (Duara 1988:101).

Mao sought to destroy lineages and their rituals, but since 1989 these have been revived in Southern China with encouragement from local governments, to consolidate ties with overseas Chinese who invest heavily in the economy (Shu 2004, Siu 1989).

The system generated strong pressures from both living and dead kin, to bear sons. It is believed that one's own soul and that of one's male ancestors need to be cared for by male progeny, without which the dead will become what in China is called "hungry ghosts." No pension plan can cover care in the afterlife. Angering the ancestors through unfilial acts can bring their wrath down on you in this life, bringing supernatural sanctions and bad luck. Not bearing a son is a major dereliction of filial duty.

b) *Korea*

The process of Korea's Confucianization has been studied closely. During the Choson dynasty (1392-1910), a process of rigorous social engineering was carried out, borrowing heavily from readings of the Chinese texts (Deuchler 1992, 2003). The existing bilateral family system was replaced with a rigidly patrilineal system, abolishing girls' rights to parental property and the possibility of couples living with either the man's or the woman's family (Deuchler 1992:80-81, Ko et al 2003: 10-11). Ancestor worship was strenuously promoted, to strengthen corporate bonds within the lineage and to the rulers (Deuchler 1992:133). A Department of Rites refined the details of this patriarchal authoritarian regime, and fought relentlessly over centuries against the survival of traces of the old bilateral system of kinship.

> "Social organization was tied together by a threefold mechanism: the domestic sphere, represented by the wife, was subordinated to the public sphere, represented by the father and son, they in turn were the sovereign's subjects." (Deuchler 1992:111).

An "extraordinary strength of agnatic solidarity" (Janelli and Janelli 1992: 181) was generated by the close link between an individual's fortunes and that of his lineage. This was a highly ascriptive system: access to political power, as well as the economic and social assets of the lineage, was regulated through one's position in the lineage. Lineages commonly held some joint property, which was used to support ancestor worship rituals, and to help lineage members in need. Lineage members interacted frequently in the context of daily life and specified rituals, and offered a source of mutual support and mutual supervision: "the *p'a*

(lineage) performed many of the social services on the local level that are now provided by public schools, police, and social welfare agencies" (US 1990, parentheses mine).

Strong supernatural sanctions ensured conformity to the Confucian rules. Kendall (1984) describes beliefs in ancestors and ghosts in rural Korea in the 1980s, and spells out how they served to generate a great deal of pressure to conform to the needs of the corporate group.[16] Ancestors with male descendants who take care of them can be a benign influence on their family. But even these can be restless and dangerous if they died with unfulfilled desires, such as seeing their grandsons. Those who died unmarried or without male descendants are filled with resentment and can create all kinds of problems for their siblings and other kin. It is apparent that there is much pressure from a wide range of family members to ensure that each individual performs their filial duties of marrying and bearing sons quickly, and caring for their ancestors.

The main features of this kinship system were maintained through the twentieth century:

> "During the colonial period (1910-1945) under the Japanese, the Confucian norms of loyalty and filial piety continued to be taught in schools….and the norms of the patriarchal family system with a male house head were written into the Civil Code. Household registration records used to enforce these norms also served to aid the colonial authorities in social control." (Sorensen and Kim 2004:156)

After becoming independent, the South Korean state incorporated these patrilineal kinship rules into the Civil Code in 1958.[17] The traditional principles of loyalty to the ruler and filial piety were thus used to help maintain social and political stability under a series of authoritarian governments.

c) *Northwest India*[18]

Much of Northwest India is dominated by the Jats, who have a lineage system organized on similar principles as that promoted by neo-Confucians in China and Korea.[19] The origins of the system are unknown, but the records indicate that the basic elements of the system have been in place since at least the thirteenth century (Pradhan 1966). The Jats are concentrated in the presentday Indian states of Punjab and Haryana, but are also found in parts of Western Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan.[20]

As in China and Korea, the clans are patrilineal, patrilocal and exogamous, organized into territorial units in which one clan will dominate. Daughters leave the parental household on marriage. While a man may seek help from his mother's brother, there is no question of seeking it from his daughter or her husband's family. The patrilineage (subclan) is a property-holding descent group, and land cannot be alienated from it: if a man without sons tries to pass on his land to his daughter's son, this will be challenged as appropriation of ancestral property.

Conserving land within the lineage also meant that members of sub-clans lived near each other, making it easy to control individual members. And the lineage members had a shared interest in the furthering of their lineage's prestige and power.

> "Like the clan, the *thok*s (sub-clans) of a village each have a compact area, both residential and agricultural…. (T)he rules of inheritance maintain this

spatial compactness, since land cannot be sold outside the *thok*. The nexus between the ties of kinship and local contiguity enables the various headmen to exercise social control with the respective kinship segments. This is done through the political councils of these segments. The greatest part of a person's life is lived within his own *thok*." (Pradhan 1966:60, parentheses mine)

" In the village and in the wider area of the clan, a person derives his political status by virtue of his *thok* affiliation….Politically a person is of no consequence unless he has the support of his *thok*. The power and political prestige of a *thok* depend upon its depth span, numerical strength and economic resources." (Pradhan 1966:69)

Ancestor worship rituals boosted kinship ties, though as Pradhan notes this practice runs counter to the mainstream Hindu ideology of reincarnation.[21]

"The worship of ancestors constitutes a religious charter for the lineage and clan organization of the Jats" (Pradhan 1966:70)

"The spirits of all ancestors are believed to look after the welfare of their descendants….The spirits are the guardians and must be propitiated so that their benevolence may be ensured. Failure to propitiate may enrage the spirits, who may become malevolent and bring down misfortune in the shape of illness, economic or other kinds of loss, or physical harm. But they are also propitiated because of the sentiment of filial piety and to ensure their peace in another world. (Pradhan 1966:70)

Jat clans and lineages were more formally organized for administrative and military purposes than indicated by the descriptions of the Chinese and Korean systems. Clans and lineages are organized into a formal hierarchy, and each level had its headman and formal representative. The levels of aggregation were clearly specified: for example, the village of Rampur was the head of a group of four villages, and that in turn belonged to a cluster of twenty villages, and so on.[22]

Pradhan (1966:102-110) gives a rich description of the administrative, judicial, and military functioning of this system over centuries, based on extensive records. This was done at various levels, depending on the nature of the issue. At the lowest level was the village, which resolved most of its internal affairs through lineage and village councils. Above that were the successively higher levels of aggregation of villages, each able to exert more social and political pressure than the lower level — the *thamba*, the *khap*, and the *sarv-khap* councils. The council meetings had rules and procedures, and the ability to impose sanctions on offenders.

The functions of *khap* leaders included administration of the *khap* area, assembling councils for defense of the area, organizing military campaigns, collecting land revenue, managing and running the *khap* army, and holding council meetings for adjudicative purposes.

"The *thamba* council… had administrative, adjudicative and executive powers. It was responsible for the defence and political stability of the villages under its jurisdiction, it decided inter-caste and inter-village disputes, and in certain cases it had police powers to arrest the culprits and bring them before

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the council…. The *khap* council was also an administrative, adjudicative and executive body with police and military powers. Inter-*khap* and *sarv-khap* councils had only adjudicative and military powers. Adjudicative power was used to decide and settle disputes between the *khap*s. Military power was only used against foreign invaders in joint military operations of the *khap*s." (Pradhan 1966:102-103)

The *khap*s were powerfully organized for military purposes.

"Each *khap* had a standing army of its own. At a time of foreign invasion their armies fought side by side against the invaders. The decision to defend the *sarv-khap* areas was taken in a *sarv-khap* countil meeting and was communicated to various *khap*s which acted upon it…." (Pradhan 1966:106)

Under the Mughal Empire, the Jat clan system held its own. The *khap*s would negotiate with the Mughal court for certain privileges, or protest against certain taxes or regulations. The success of their negotiations depended on the relative strength of the *khap*s and of the Mughal Emperor at the time. Sometimes the rulers asked the *khap* to provide them military support against another group, and this would be provided subject to approval by the *khap* council, including a decision on what conditions to stipulate for the help.

"Political or military weakness at Delhi was exploited… to gain concessions from the rulers." (Pradhan 1966:107)

d) *Variations within the Three Settings*

These three settings show significant variation in the details of kinship organization, and these variations are reflected in the extent of son preference. India and China are very large countries, and there is significant regional heterogeneity in their kinship systems. This regional variation in kinship systems is mirrored in the geographic differences in child sex ratios across these countries (Map 1). Korea offers a different example of variation on the patrilineal theme.

In India, less than 5 percent of the population lives in the Northwestern region, which has strongly patrilineal organization and strong son preference. There are pockets of matrilineal kinship in Northeastern India and Kerala. Although most of South India is formally "patrilineal", women do not necessarily move out of their village when they marry (Dyson and Moore 1983). They can have considerable interaction with their parental family after marriage, and can return to stay with the parents if necessary. Many studies have emphasized how different kinship rules are in Southern India.[23] Women can function as independent social and legal entities in ways virtually unthinkable in the North. In much of the rest of the country, patrilineal inheritance and patrilocal residence dominate, but were not underpinned by political systems ─ they were parts of regular kingdoms.

Regional differentials within India seem to play an important role in mediating the effect of dowry payments on the treatment of daughters. Although dowries have imposed a heavy burden across India in recent years, levels of discrimination against girls continue to be far higher in the Northwest than in South India, where there is much more scope for give and take between a married woman and her family of birth.

Within the Northwestern areas dominated by Jats, the other caste groups show lower evidence of son preference than Jats. This corresponds with the fact that the Jats effectively owned the place, owning most if not all of the land and extending their lineage-based administrative system to the village as whole ─ the other castes were heavily dependent on the Jats for access to their livelihood, through patron-client relationships (Pradhan 1966, Das Gupta 1995). The stronger son preference of Jats has been noted from early censuses (Hutton 1933: 200-204). Interestingly, Visaria (2007) found that the district of Gujarat with the lowest child sex ratio in the 2001 census had a heavy concentration of people who migrated there from Haryana about 200 years ago, and still follow Jat customs.

In China, the Han with their rigid patrilineages constitute the overwhelming majority of the population, but as discussed above patrilineal corporate structures were weaker in the North than in the South. Some of the non-Han minorities have not yet adopted the Han kinship system. For example, the southern provinces bordering Myanmar and Laos have minorities such as the Na who practice matrilineal kinship, and the Lahu who practice bilateral kinship (Hua 2001, Du 2002). In Western Chinese provinces such as Xinjiang, the Uyghurs prefer to marry within their own village and cooperate economically with both maternal and paternal kin, so daughters are not lost to their parents (Rudelson 1997). Anderson and Siver (1995: Table 7) find the 1990 census data show clear ethnic differentials in the sex ratios at birth in Xinjiang province: the Uyghurs had a normal ratio of 105, while the Han had an elevated ratio of 109.

Western Chinese provinces such as Tibet and Qinghai have large Tibetan populations, who traditionally practice fraternal polyandry (Child 2003, Levine 1988). A 1958 census of one of these areas shows high proportions of adult women unmarried (Child 2003: Table 5). These women lived either within the household or in an "adjunct house", and might have children.[24] They received financial and other support from their natal family, and remained available to help their families. This is radically different from the Han system, in which there was little scope for grown daughters to be supported by their natal household, and certainly not to raise illegitimate children there.

Another variation on patrilineal kinship organization is in Korea, where the lineage is continued through the line of the eldest son in each generation, and the other sons would start their own sub-lineages (Kwang-gyu 2003:93). This meant that the eldest son had the burden of caring for all the preceding generations of male ancestors (Janelli and Janelli 1982:179-80), and it was especially important for him to bear a son to continue the family line. In China, the responsibilities of ancestor worship are equally shared by all the sons, but in Korea other sons only take on the task if the eldest son fails at his task (Janelli and Janelli 1982: 179-180; Janelli and Yim 2004:138). This inflexibility heightens the urgency for eldest sons to have a son of their own ─ and the data show that the eldest sons' wives report the strongest son preference and are more likely to continue childbearing till they bear a son (Larsen el al 1998; Chung and Das Gupta 2007).

3. THE ROLE OF THE MODERN STATE IN UNRAVELING PATRILINEAL FAMILY SYSTEMS

The advent of the modern state removed the political underpinnings of patrilineal kinship systems. This has had a powerful impact, unraveling the pre-modern states' reinforcement of these kinship systems in China, South Korea and Northwest India. This unraveling is accelerated by urbanization and industrialization, which reduce the power of family and lineages.

A great deal has been written on "modernization", and its impact on social organization and norms. Early theorists focused on the profound cultural and behavioral implications of the shift from pre-industrial to industrial economic organization.[25] Essentially, this involved a shift from face-to-face communities bound by religious and other traditions, to more impersonal social groupings characterized by contractual associations. Accompanying this was a shift whereby people's social status derived less from "ascription" based on characteristics such as their family of birth, and more from their individual achievements. Later theorists argued that "modern" societies and individuals are motivated by the pursuit of innovation and rationality, rather than adherence to traditions.[26]

The ways in which 'modernization' has diminished the power of the lineage system are unpacked here.

a) Modern States Have Powerful Tools for Incorporating Citizens without Resort to Kinship

The tools available to the modern state obviate the administrative and political need for patrilineages. The modern state has many highly effective administrative tools for incorporating citizens and ensuring their compliance with the states' imperatives. It has little need for lineages to implement edicts and maintain social stability, and modern transport and communications bring the reach of the state everywhere. As Duara (1988:217) says of China:

> "The modernizing drive of the 20th-century state forced local leaders to dissociate their political vocation from the traditional cultural nexus and rearticulate it through more formal administrative arrangements with the state."

Pradhan (1966) describes how politically and militarily active the Northwest Indian Jat clans were from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century, but that with the consolidation of British rule

> "The introduction of a new system of administration and the institution of law courts… reduced (the clans') political effectiveness." (Pradhan 1966:109, parentheses mine)

Modern commercial practices also offer a powerful alternative to the commercial functions of the lineage, which had been especially prominent in China. From the early twentieth century, lineages

> "…came to be looked upon as sources of backwardness by the rising intelligentsia, nurtured on Western ideas imported via the city. The new institution of favor that gathered capital for financial investment was the business company. In any case, after the Qing dynasty was overthrown in

1911, ancestor without emperor was no longer a viable formula for the integration of local society into the state, and the intelligentsia's inclination to law rather than ritual as a basis for modernization coincided with the new statist view that leaned towards commerce and industry, rather than land, as the sources of growth for a strong China. The sequel to the rise of the lineage, therefore, would be the history of the replacement of ritual by a legal basis for incorporation." Faure (2007:14)

Indeed, modern states seek to bring all citizens directly under their rule, and to be the sole source of formal power, including for policing and military defense. This makes them likely to want to undermine traditional organizations with these powers, and clans and lineages are prime examples of independent power bases with considerable potential strength.

A radical effort to destroy lineages was made in Mao's China, to remove their potential for challenging local government. Genealogies and ancestral halls were destroyed, and ancestor worship rituals banned, along with the assembling of large clans or lineages. This was a sea-change from the pre-modern effort to promote these practices to administer the country and unify it politically and culturally (Ikels 2004:89-92). Lineage control was replaced with commune control, and the old system of lineages regulating their members was replaced by direct intervention by local cadres in citizens' personal lives. Local cadres were expected to mediate in family disputes, raise consciousness of how women are oppressed in households, address issues like husbands drinking too much, make sure that women participated in the community's political life (Das Gupta et al 2004), and resolve familial disputes about caring for old parents (Zhang 2004). And the commune system of production meant that households no longer controlled resources, and therefore were no longer faced with choosing whether to invest household resources in raising sons versus daughters.

Mao's tight control over people's lives and livelihoods brought child sex ratios down sharply. His death was followed by administrative loosening, and the return of "household responsibility" in place of communal management resources. This re-opened the issue of manifesting traditional son preference, while at the same time the impact of gender-egalitarian policies retained their hold. The result is a complex interplay of tradition and modernity in China today.

Similar, if less dramatic, efforts were made to undercut the power of lineages and clans in Northwest India since the late nineteenth century, first by the colonial administration and then by the Indian government. A fundamental aspect of this was to use modern institutions of administration to force changes upon the clans' traditional way of controlling access to land (Chakravarty-Kaul 1996). The Jats tried to fight back, but it was a losing battle. As late as 1978, the Jats mobilized in their traditional way to pressure the Indian government to abandon its efforts to distribute common land to landless residents of Kanjhawla village. They succeeded in mobilizing Jats from across Haryana and Punjab for the cause, but were unable to hold out against the power of the state.[27]

b) *Movements Challenging Traditional Hierarchies and Inequalities*

Political and social movements

Modern states draw heavily on the ideas of the Enlightenment, with its ideas of the equality of citizens (at least in principle) and its "refusing to accept that there is any God-ordained

social hierarchy" (Israel 2001:11, Pierson 1996: ch 5). These ideas are radically opposed to Confucian social engineering, and to the strict age and gender hierarchies of patrilineages. The Indian state incorporated the idea of equality of citizens under the law directly into its Constitution, and backed it up with policies to reduce social and gender hierarchies. In China, both the Nationalists and the Communists were deeply influenced by ideas derived from the Enlightenment (Schwarcz 1986), and committed to breaking traditional age and gender hierarchies. South Korea sought to maintain an authoritarian government and traditional gender hierarchies for a long time (see below), but these broke down eventually under strong pressure from civil society. As Kwang-gyu (2003) points out, modern ideas of individualism, freedom and equality gradually swept away Confucian morality in South Korea.

Citizens' movements have also been strongly influenced by Enlightenment principles. Social reform movements in China and India, from the nineteenth century, questioned and challenged traditional hierarchies, including gender hierarchies (Das Gupta et al 2004). This is reflected in efforts to ban practices iniquitous to women, and in the writings of major literary figures such as Tagore and Lu Xun who explored gender inequities in the family and society. The independence movement in India and both the Nationalists and the Communists in China helped popularize these radical social messages, firmly establishing the concept of gender equality in civil discourse and laying the basis for women's movements. Citizens' movements have also pressured governments towards change. In the conservative authoritarian setting of South Korea, the democracy and labor movements were notable in supporting greater gender equality (Koo 2002).

In India and China, active efforts were made to incorporate women into public life. Women were encouraged to play prominent roles in India's independence movement, and efforts continue to expand their participation in public life, for example through a law requiring that women hold a third of local elected government positions. In China, women's laborforce contribution was formally recognized by giving them work points along with men. Communist cadres made persistent efforts to bring young women out of their homes to participate in political meetings, breaking them out of the traditional shackles of their marital home.[28] Modest efforts were also made in South Korea, for example by including women in the rural development movement (*Saemaul Undong*) with its programs for savings, income generation, agricultural extension, and family planning (Whang 1981).

Elsewhere, too, modernizing states reduced the traditional constraints that patriarchal systems imposed on women. For example, many Middle Eastern governments "passed legal and other reforms favorable to women", and encouraged the expansion of women's education and employment (Keddie 2006:103). And the expansion of women's rights and participation in public life in the Western world during the twentieth century is well-documented.

Modern communication technology offers powerful tools for social engineering, enabling states to disseminate new ideas rapidly to its citizens. In both China and India, the state used this actively to spread ideas of gender equality.[29] Both countries have used their state-run radio and television, as well as billboards and other media, to raise awareness of the problems and constraints facing women, and to project images of women who are able to take charge of their lives at home and at work. They have also sought to use the media to disseminate information about women's legal rights. Some studies of the impact of the media have been done in India, and find that it is powerful in altering attitudes about gender equality, as well as about family size (Bhat 1998, Jensen and Oster 2008).

Legal reforms

Legal reforms have been powerful tools for disseminating new ideas about gender equality. Some reforms have faced stiff popular opposition and been difficult to implement widely, but the very fact of promulgating more gender-equal laws represents an ideological sea-change. In both China and India, a series of laws were passed from the nineteenth century onwards, but sweeping legal changes came from the 1950s. In both China and India, laws were passed in the early 1950s to give rights of equal inheritance to women, ban child marriage, and strengthen the economic rights of divorced and widowed women.[30]

These laws met deep-seated and violent resistance in China, and resulted in an estimated 70,000 to 80,000 suicides and murders of women between 1950 and 1953 (Davin 1976: 87). Widespread peasant opposition threatened social and political instability, and the state backed off from implementing these controversial aspects of the law (Andors 1983). Further efforts to protect divorced women's rights were made in the 1980 New Marriage Law, and the 1985 Inheritance Law sought to counter gender discrimination in inheritance. In reality, land in China is allocated on the basis of village residence, and residence continues with few exceptions to be determined patrilineally (Gao 1994:95). In the allocation of village land, a daughter's share is deleted on her marriage and a new share in granted for her in her husband's village. Similar peasant resistance to equal inheritance was seen in Northwest India, with anecdotal accounts of brothers murdering sisters who sought to claim a share of their parent's land ─ but over time women have become increasingly emboldened to seek their inheritance, especially if they have no brothers (Chowdhry 1994:348-9).

In South Korea, the 1948 Constitution made all citizens equal under the law, at least in principle. Women's legal persona was asserted ─ they were no longer formally debarred from credit or property transactions, mediating disputes, initiating lawsuits or making donations (Kim 1993). However, much of the traditional kinship system was enshrined in the 1958 Civil Code, and only in 1990 was this revised to provide for equal inheritance of sons and daughters in the absence of a will, and to give divorced women the right to half the property acquired during marriage as well as the possibility of obtaining child custody. In 2005, the Supreme Court ruled that women could remain members of their natal household after marriage, and that women and men have equal rights and responsibilities to care for their ancestors. Also in 2005, the government abolished male family headship and allow parents who so wished to register their children under the mother's family name with effect from 2008.

The conditions of urban life make it easier to implement laws supporting greater gender equity in inheritance. Customary rules of inheritance are the most inflexible regarding immovable lineage assets such as land: giving these to a daughter would involve the deeply radical action of passing land out of the lineage. It is far easier to give daughters a share of assets acquired on one's own, and non-farm occupations offer a high potential for acquiring such assets. It is also far easier for women to demand their rightful inheritance in urban areas, where legal resources are close at hand — in contrast to rural areas, where such amenities are distant and instead the woman is surrounded by lineage members hostile to the idea of property passing out of their lineage.

c) ***The Effects of Urbanization and Industrialization on Households and Families***

Urbanization and industrialization alter the capacity of the lineage to regulate the lives of its members. As described above, in pre-industrial China, Korea, and Northwest India, a person's access to power, social status, and economic opportunities depended heavily on their gender, lineage, and even their position within their lineage. Industrialization offers people the opportunity to earn a living independent of these factors ─ through jobs acquired on the basis of their own education and skills. And modern education exposes people to new ways of thinking.

The organization of urban life also helps reduce pressures to conform to traditional expectations of filial duty. The reach of the lineage is weak in urban areas, where people live and work amongst non-kin in apartments and offices. This contrasts sharply with rural areas, where people live and work surrounded by lineage members. Access to social support networks also changes: in rural areas women are isolated while men are surrounded by kin, but this does not hold in urban areas.

The greater physical mobility of urban industrialized life means that whether people live near their parents is determined by their jobs and personal circumstances, not by their gender. Sons may live elsewhere, and married daughters may live nearby their parents. Daughters' ability to visit their parents is enhanced by improved transportation and women's greater role in deciding which social ties to maintain (see below). Whether parents derive support from a child often depends more on the nature of their relationship, than on the sex of the child. This reduces the gap between the value of daughters and sons to their parents.

These changes have been documented most extensively in the literature on South Korea. Women have increasingly entered the laborforce, and gained autonomy thereby. But there are also dramatic changes in the position of women in families where men continue to be the primary breadwinner and the woman manages the home. Urban women's roles in household management has expanded greatly, to cover not only managing the home and the children's education ─ but also non-traditional roles such as managing the family income and investments, and negotiating with administrative offices (Kwang-gyu 2003: 107-109; Sorensen and Kim 2004:170-171; Janelli and Yim 2004:141).

Women have also become freer to maintain connections with their own families. Janelli and Yim (2004:133,143) find that by the 1990s, even in rural Korea, daughters "…came to visit parents or siblings and to help with weekend or fulltime farmwork." And they cite a 1998 survey, that elderly women who live apart from their children have more frequent contact with their eldest daughter than with their eldest son.

> "Because married women's new responsibilities included maintaining the social relations of the family … many of these women have chosen to maintain relationships not only with their husband's natal kin, but also with their own. With the massive migration of younger men and women to major cities, moreover, a young couple may live closer to the wife's than the husband's kin, resulting in the family's choosing to spend all or a portion of their holidays with the former." (Janelli and Yim (2004:133)

With the advent of the modern state and other changes described in this section, the power of the clans and lineages has been eroded, diminishing the incentives for preferring sons over daughters. The impact of this on child sex ratios was temporarily offset by the advent of new

technology that greatly facilitated sex-selection, resulting in sharp rises in child sex ratios from the 1980s. The South Korean data offer an interesting insight into this process: while the *manifestation* of son preference rose with the advent of the new technology, the reported *intensity* of son preference was falling (Chung and Das Gupta 2007). Between 1985 and 1994 the percentage of women reporting strong son preference nearly halved, but the sex ratio at birth rose. After that, the effect of reduced son preference prevailed, and the sex ratio at birth dropped sharply in South Korea.

South Korea is a small and homogenous country compared with China and India's enormous size and heterogeneity, but similar processes seem to be at work in many regions of China and India. Retherford and Roy's (2003: 72) analysis of trends in ideal sex ratios in India during the 1990s concluded that "son preference is declining in almost all states and in almost all socio-economic groups within states". Their analysis was based on the first two NFHS surveys, and the third survey recently released shows that son preference continues to decline steadily ─ including in Punjab and Haryana, the states that have consistently shown the highest child sex ratios in the country (Table 2). China's quinquennial censuses make it easier to detect recent trends in child sex ratios than in India, which only holds decennial censuses. The Chinese census data indicate that many of the provinces in the East and Central South regions ─ which have historically had the highest child sex ratios ─ show a fall in these ratios in recent years (Das Gupta et al 2009). Guilmoto (2009) also anticipates a progressive decline in sex selection in these areas.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Kinship systems matter ─ the more kinship rules exclude adult daughters from contributing to their parents, the lower the incentives for parents to raise girls. Girls and boys are equally likely to help their parents in bilateral and matrilineal kinship systems. Patrilineal systems vary in the extent to which they allow some flexibility for adult daughters to remain close to their parents, and these differences in kinship rules are reflected in differences in sex ratios.

The correspondence between kinship rules and son preference is striking. Within the same country, different levels of permissible contact between daughters and their parents (as documented in ethnographic studies) are mirrored in regional differences in child sex ratios in India, and in regional and ethnic differentials in China. Even within the same culture, variations in kinship system matter ─ in South Korea, the eldest son is primarily responsible for continuing the family line, and this is reflected in stronger son preference than that expressed by the wives of other sons.

But what explains the fact that China, South Korea and Northwest India manifest such extreme son preference compared with other patrilineal societies? Why are they organized into such tight units defined through the male line alone, leaving so little flexibility for women to play a part in their household of birth ─ and (for example) cannot inherit parental property even if they have no brothers? This paper argues that what makes these societies unique is that their premodern political and administrative systems used patrilineages to organize and administer their citizens. The interplay of culture, state, and political processes shaped gender roles and the relative value of boys and girls to their parents, underpinning a rigidly patrilineal kinship system.

This paper also argues that the advent of the modern state in these settings has unraveled the underpinnings of the rigid patrilineal rules. The administrative and other tools of modern state remove the need to use clans and lineages for administration. Indeed, such traditional powerbases are not only at odds with the modern state's approach to managing its citizens, but can be potentially threatening to the power of the state. Both the Chinese and Indian states have sought to undermine these traditional modes of organization. Secondly, the modern state and citizens' movements have in all three settings brought about political, social, and legal reforms challenging traditional social hierarchies, including the age and gender hierarchies of the kinship system. And the ways in which 'modernization' has affected the lineage system are unpacked, by analyzing how industrialization and urbanization altered modes of social organization such as to reduce the hold of clans and lineages.

These processes have unleashed a variety of forces that reduce son preference, enabling individuals to value their children regardless of their gender. A vector of forces are now at work, with some making for higher child sex ratios — such as easier access to sex selection technologies, and reduced family size — while the reduced incentives to prefer sons over daughters work in the opposite direction, making it difficult to predict the exact timing and pace of normalization of child sex ratios. The South Korean data offer an interesting insight into how these countervailing forces can work: while the *manifestation* of son preference rose between 1985 and 1994 with the advent of the new technology, the reported *intensity* of son preference was falling. Since then, reduced son preference has prevailed and sex ratios at birth have dropped sharply in South Korea. Several studies suggest that this process may also be underway now in regions of China and India, including in those regions that have historically manifested the strongest son preference. As indicated by studies of the impact of the media, this process can be accelerated by media efforts to help parents perceive that daughters can now be as valuable as boys.

Table 1. Sex ratios of children aged below 5 years in developing regions, 2005

*(Individual countries in each region are shown only
if their child sex ratios are above the average of 105)*

More developed regions	105.4
Less developed regions, excluding China	104.9
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN	**104.1**
Sub-Saharan Africa	**102.0**
Mauritania	106.4
Northern Africa	**104.5**
Tunisia	106.6
ASIA	110
Western Asia	**104.8**
Armenia	116.7
Azerbaijan	116.4
Cyprus	106.8
Georgia	115.3
Iraq	105.9
Israel	105.9
Qatar	105.2
United Arab Emirates	105.1
South-Eastern Asia	**104.1**
Malaysia	105.7
Singapore	107.3
Brunei Darussalam	106.6
Eastern Asia	**120.6**
China	122.4
Republic of Korea	108.1
Dem. People's Republic of Korea	105.2
South-Central Asia	**107.3**
Afghanistan	105.9
India	108.6
Nepal	105.3

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision* , New York, 2009 (advanced Excel tables).

**Table 2. Decline in Reported Son Preference, India 1992/3 to 2005/6**

	Ideal sex ratio of children*		
Year of survey	**India**	**Punjab**	**Haryana**
1992-93	1.42	1.57**	1.53**
1998-99	1.35	1.36**	1.46**
2005-06	1.27	1.22	1.32

* This is computed using Retherford and Roy's method (2003:33), which is to divide the reported ideal number of boys by the reported ideal number of girls. The number of reported ideal children of "either sex" is split equally between boys and girls.

Source: Calculated from the National Family Health Survey 3 (IIPS 2007: Table 4.17.1)
    The observations marked ** are from Retherford and Roy (2003: Table 6.5)

Map 1

Child Sex Ratios (m/f) in Provinces of China and States of India, 2000–01

Legend:
- 1.20 or above
- 1.15–1.19
- 1.10–1.14
- 1.07–1.09
- 1.06 or below
- No data
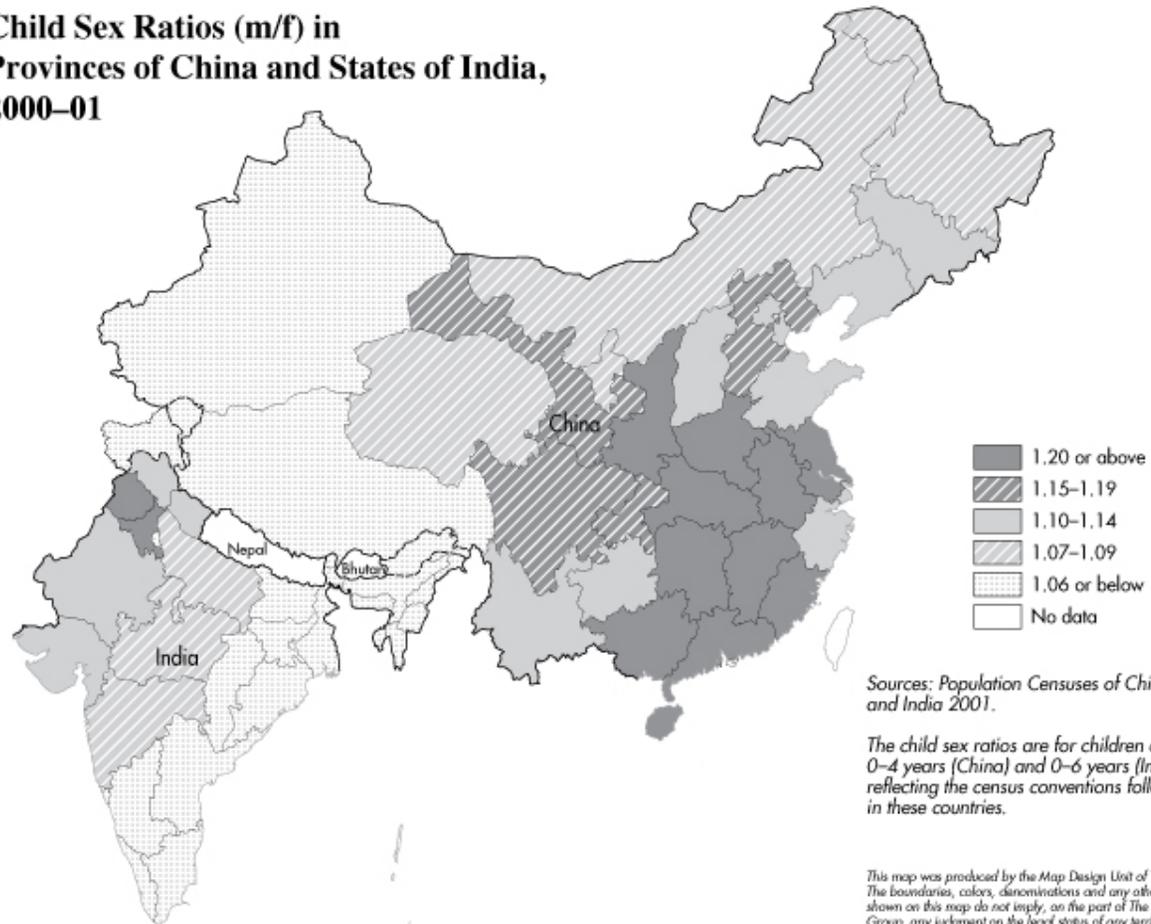
Sources: Population Censuses of China 2000, and India 2001.

The child sex ratios are for children aged 0–4 years (China) and 0–6 years (India), reflecting the census conventions followed in these countries.

This map was produced by the Map Design Unit of The World Bank. The boundaries, colors, denominations and any other information shown on this map do not imply, on the part of The World Bank Group, any judgment on the legal status of any territory, or any endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.

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Figure 1 Excess sex ratios at census time by 5 year
birth cohorts, China 1920-1995
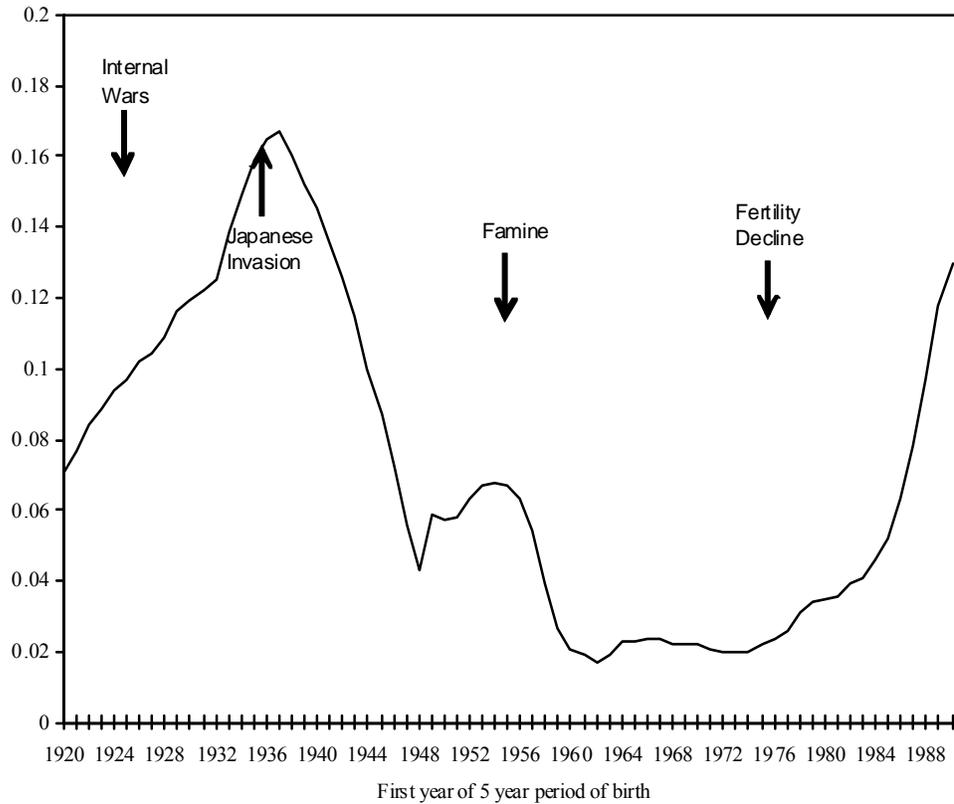
Note: These estimates are possible because of the high accuracy of age-reporting in East Asian censuses, since people know their animal year of birth in the 12-year cycle of animal years. The excess ratios peak amongst cohorts born just before a war or famine, because those who were young girls at the time of the crisis experienced the maximum excess mortality.

Source: Das Gupta and Li (1999), calculated from data from 1953, 1964, 1982 and 1990 Population Censuses of China, and the 1995 National One Percent Sample Survey.

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Endnotes

[1] See for example Klasen 1994, Hill and Upchurch 1995, and Yount 2001.

[2] See for example Das Gupta (1997, 1999).

[3] We are grateful to Terry Hull for this vector analogy.

[4] These residence rules are sometimes called "virilocal" (living where the husband lives) or "uxorilical" (living where the wife lives). Neolocal residence can go with any of the three types of inheritance system, since circumstances may require the couple to set up an independent home.

[5] Fox (1967: ch4) also points out that matrilineal kinships systems can become inherently unstable once pressure on resources grow and property becomes scarce and valuable, leading men to seek to control their parents' property, as with the Nayars of South India. Arrangements can then become complex as the men pass on their property to their sisters' sons, generating a clash between matrilineal inheritance rules and the men's desires to provide for their own sons. Such pressures are far lower if there is an abundance of land to cultivate, or in hunting and gathering societies where there is little property to be passed on.

[6] See for example, Geertz 1961; Geertz and Geetz 1975; Banks 1983; Ong 1990; Frankenberg et al 2002; Fox 1961; Dube 1997; and Limanonda 1995. In Bali, Geertz and Geetz (1975:1) sometimes found a large organized kin group that has corporately owned common property, but that these groups did not necessarily have any detailed knowledge of their genealogical relationship

[7] Some of these systems can verge on matriliny. In Northern Thailand, daughters are the main source of old age support: the norm is for newly-married couples to live with the wife's parents for some years, and for the last daughter to stay on and inherit the land and house after the parents' death (Limanonda 1995).

[8] See for example Arensberg and Kimball 1968, Sieder and Mitterauer 1983, Nakane 1967.

[9] See Sieder and Mitterauer 1983; Arensberg and Kimball 1968. A fuller comparison of these Asian and European kinship systems and their theoretical and empirical ramifications has been developed in Das Gupta (1999).

[10] Note that whether or not an individual parent is endogamously married, they will absorb social norms set in the framework of the overall level of expectation that daughters will not be lost to their family after marriage.

[11] See, for example, Kandiyoti (1988), and the readings in Cornwall (2005).

[12] In the rare cases when women do return, they and their parents have to struggle to make it work, because other members of the village resist the incursion on their property rights (See case studies in Das Gupta and Li 1999, and Das Gupta et al. 2003). This continued to apply in China even after private property was abolished, because women lost their right to be supported from communally-held property once they married (Gao 1994).

[13] For China, see Duara 1988:94-95.

[14] Dowry became the norm in this region after the 1930s, when reductions in child mortality created a situation where (given that men marry women younger than themselves) there was a surplus of marriageable women for each cohort of men. There are reports that brideprice is once again being resorted to in these states, as fertility decline has ended the "marriage squeeze" against women (Kaur 2004).

[15] Ancestor worship is found in many places, including several African societies and Japan. However, it is only in China, Korea, and Northwest India, that the objective is to bind all the men of the lineage together — people are obliged to worship all their male ancestors in systematic recognition of their position in the lineage. In African societies the worship of ancestors is ad hoc, selecting for worship those especially notable or powerful. In Japan, people can expand their universe of ancestor worship to include non-kin of whom they were fond, and Buddhism continues to exert a

far greater influence on rites than the neo-Confucianism dominant in China and South Korea (Janelli and Janelli 1982:177-182, Smith 1974). In most of India, 'ancestor worship' consists mostly of a series of funerary rites to help a deceased person make the transition from this world to the next.

[16] See also Janelli and Janelli (1982).

[17] *Inter alia*, these stipulated that family headship must be held by the men in the line of the eldest son, that inheritance should be through the male line, that men must marry outside their lineage, that women should be transferred to their husband's family register upon marriage, and that the children belong to the father's lineage even in the case of divorce.

[18] This section draws on Pradhan (1966), and the author's dissertation fieldwork in a Jat village.

[19] The Rajputs' social organization was also clan-based, but it allowed much scope for individuals to establish their own alliances outside the clan and accumulate wealth and power thereby (Kasturi 2002). Such success led people to set up fiefdoms and kingdoms. Unlike the Jats, the Rajput clan system was not used for administrative purposes, nor did it emphasize the equality of men within the brotherhood.

[20] The areas where Jats are to be found are indicated in the frontispiece map of Pradhan (1966), though this does not indicate the proportion of the local population that they constitute.

[21] The Hindu Jats' religious beliefs are loosely linked to mainstream Hinduism, and a significant number of them converted to Sikhism and Islam but maintained their Jat identity.

[22] Author's dissertation fieldwork. This system of mobilization is also described by Fortescue (1911), writing in the first half of the nineteenth century.

[23] Karve 1953; Kolenda 1987; Trautmann 1981.

[24] "An unmarried woman often resided within an ''adjunct house'' (zur-khang), a small structure that was economically and sometimes physically linked with her parents' or brothers' household." (Child 2003).

[25] For example, Toennies discussed a shift from *Gemeinschaft* (community) to *Gesellschaft* (purposive association); Maine a shift from status to contract; Durkheim, a shift from mechanical to organic solidarity, Weber a shift from behavior motivated by tradition, affect, or values to a goal-oriented rationality, and Parsons a shift from ascribed to achieved status.

[26] See for example, McClelland (1961), and Inkeles and Smith (1974).

[27] Author's dissertation fieldwork in a village near Kanjhawla, which included observing this fight. Kasturi (2002) also documents the colonial administration's efforts to undermine the considerable military and economic power of Rajput lineages in Northern India.

[28] For more detailed discussion of these issues, see Das Gupta et al (2004).

[29] For details of these efforts in China see Croll (2000), and for China and India see Das Gupta et al (2004). See also Naqvi (2006) for a description of recent media efforts in India.

[30] Parashar (1992), Das Gupta et al (2004). Indian Muslims maintained their own separate family laws.