<https://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/15/nyregion/15babies.html>

***U.S. Births Hint at Bias for Boys in Some Asians (edited)*** By [Sam Roberts](https://www.nytimes.com/by/sam-roberts)June 14, 2009

* The trend is buried deep in United States census data. The proportion of boys and girls born to Americans of Chinese, Indian and Korean descent changes depending on existing children.

In those families, if the first child was a girl, it was more likely that a second child would be a boy. If the first two children were girls, it was even more likely that a third child would be male.

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The statistical differences are:

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|  | Ratio | |
|  | Boys | Girls |
| US Average | 1.05 | 1.00 |
| Asian Americans\* who already have one daughter | 1.17 | 1.00 |
| Asian Americans\* who already have two daughters | 1.51 | 1.00 |
| \*Chinese, Korean & Indian Americans |  |  |

Studies have not detected a similar preference for males among Japanese Americans.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the normal ratio of boys to girls in America?

2. In Asian American\* families with a girl, what is the ratio of boys to girls?

3. If the family has 2 girls, what is the ratio of boys to girls?

(full text below)

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***U.S. Births Hint at Bias for Boys in Some Asians*** By [Sam Roberts](https://www.nytimes.com/by/sam-roberts)June 14, 2009

* The trend is buried deep in United States census data: seemingly minute deviations in the proportion of boys and girls born to Americans of Chinese, Indian and Korean descent.

In those families, if the first child was a girl, it was more likely that a second child would be a boy, according to recent studies of census data. If the first two children were girls, it was even more likely that a third child would be male.

But a number of experts expressed surprise to see evidence that the preference for sons among Asian-Americans has been so significantly carried over to this country. “That this is going on in the United States people were blown away by this,” said Prof. Lena Edlund of Columbia University.

She and her colleague Prof. Douglas Almond studied 2000 census data and [published their results](http://www.pnas.org/content/105/15/5681.full?sid=0a05e18f-a42f-4254-8c7a-10c5116c7e94) last year in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

In general, more boys than girls are born in the United States, by a ratio of **1.05 to 1**. But among American families of Chinese, Korean and Indian descent, the likelihood of having a boy increased to **1.17 to 1** if the first child was a girl, according to the Columbia economists. If the first two children were girls, the ratio for a third child was **1.51 to 1** or about 50 percent greater in favor of boys.

Studies have not detected a similar preference for males among Japanese Americans.

The findings published by Professors Almond and Edlund were bolstered this year by the work of a University of Texas economist, Prof. Jason Abrevaya. He found that on the basis of census and birth records through 2004, the incidence of boys among immigrant Chinese parents in New York was higher than the national average for Chinese families. Boys typically account for about 515 of every 1,000 births. But he found that among Chinese New Yorkers having a third child, the number of boys was about 558.

Joyce Moy, executive director of the Asian American/Asian Research Institute of the City University of New York, said that family values prevalent in China have seeped into American culture even among younger immigrants.

“Inheritance in the old country is carried through the male line,” she said. “Families depend on the male child for support.”

Dr. Norbert Gleicher, medical director of the Center for Human Reproduction, a fertility and sex-selection clinic in New York and Chicago, said that from his experience, people were more inclined to want female children, except for Asians and Middle Easterners.

Experts say that Asian-American families are using sex-selection techniques, also called familybalancing.

In China, sex selection is usually achieved by aborting female fetuses, which doctors say also occurs in this country, although few parents were willing to be interviewed about it.

Dr. Lisa Eng, a Hong Kong-born gynecologist who practices in Chinatown and Sunset Park, Brooklyn, said she tried to discourage couples who prefer boys from having abortions.

But, she said, “If it’s going to be a third, they’re pretty determined to have a boy. If it’s a boy, they keep it. If it’s a girl, they’ll abort.”