

Scanian Offspring Gender Preferences before 1910.

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Research objective:

By developing the notion of male offspring preference given the sex composition of previous offspring among couples, in a period prior to and during the fertility decline, this project aims to identify gendered attitudes in Sweden between 1813 and 1910.

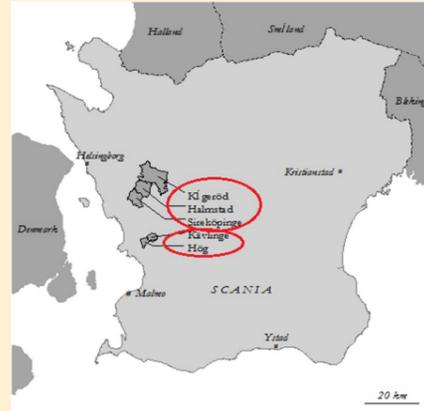
Hypotheses:

H1 (sex-composition): If male offspring are preferred over female offspring, couples that have only daughters will exhibit higher transition rates to higher parities than couples that have only sons or mixed-gender offspring.

H2 (timing): If male offspring are preferred over female offspring, this should be most evident during the pre-industrial period, when sons might have been preferred for their role in a predominantly agricultural society, with a partible inheritance system.

Data:

We will analyse a sample of mothers from the Scanian Economic Demographic Database (SEDD). This database covers 5 parishes in southern Sweden, Hög, Kävlinge, Halmstad, Sireköpinge and Kågeröd., 1813-1910.



Results:

Women's Relative Risk of Subsequent Birth at parity 3. Clustered Cox Proportional-Hazard Regressions	
1813-1910	
Mixed gender	ref.
All boys	1.110
All girls	1.155*
N	9 619
1813-1850	
Mixed gender	ref.
All boys	1.145
All girls	1.369**
N	2 692
1850-1910	
Mixed gender	ref.
All boys	1.107
All girls	1.071
N	6 927

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

Methods:

This analysis incorporates clustered Cox proportional-hazard regressions to calculate the relative risk of a subsequent birth for each birth interval. The independent variables of interest are the sex mix of previous children born, grouped into three categories—“all boys”, “all girls”, and “mixed gender.”

Controls:

- Mothers' age
- Mothers' birth year
- Fathers' SES
- Rural vs. semi-urban

Conclusion:

Our results confirm that a preference for sons was present in pre-industrial Swedish families as demonstrated by a higher propensity to progress to the next parity for families who have already 3 female children.

