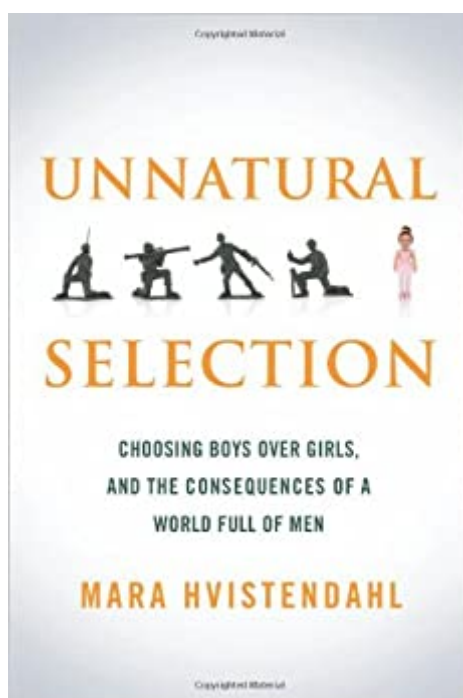


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# Unnatural Selection: Choosing Boys Over Girls, And The Consequences Of A World Full Of Men



## Synopsis

Finalist for the Pulitzer Prize  
Finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize  
A Wall Street Journal Best Book of 2011  
A Slate Best Book of 2011  
A Discover Magazine Best Book of 2011  
Lianyungang, a booming port city, has China's most extreme gender ratio for children under four: 163 boys for every 100 girls. These numbers don't seem terribly grim, but in ten years, the skewed sex ratio will pose a colossal challenge. By the time those children reach adulthood, their generation will have twenty-four million more men than women. The prognosis for China's neighbors is no less bleak: Asia now has 163 million females "missing" from its population. Gender imbalance reaches far beyond Asia, affecting Georgia, Eastern Europe, and cities in the U.S. where there are significant immigrant populations. The world, therefore, is becoming increasingly male, and this mismatch is likely to create profound social upheaval. Historically, eras in which there have been an excess of men have produced periods of violent conflict and instability. Mara Hvistendahl has written a stunning, impeccably-researched book that does not flinch from examining not only the consequences of the misbegotten policies of sex selection but Western complicity with them.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Xinran, author of [A Message from an Unknown Chinese Mother](#) and [Sky Burial](#) "This is a book about whole nations wounded by sex selection. Mara Hvistendahl...describes a history we would be wise to learn from." [SuperFreakonomics](#) "Yes, it's a rigorous exploration of the world's missing women, but it's more than that too: an

extraordinarily vivid look at the implications of the problem. Hvistendahl writes beautifully, with an eye for detail but also the big picture. She has a fierce intelligence but, more important, a fierce intellectual independence; she writes with a hard edge but no venom – rather, a cool and hard passion."Jonah Lehrer, author of "How We Decide" A fascinating and thoroughly researched book on a most important subject. The staggering population imbalances described by Hvistendahl should be of concern to all."Judy Norsigian, Executive Director, Our Bodies Ourselves – "A critically important story of demographic surprises and skewed sex ratios, trafficked wives and mail-order brides. Thanks to the devaluation of females and misused technologies, sex selection has reached staggering dimensions in recent decades. Hvistendahl's call to action is the most well-documented and compelling yet."The Wall Street Journal, June, 18, 2011 – "Ms. Hvistendahl is a first-rate reporter and has filled Unnatural Selection with gripping details. There is so much to recommend." – Bloomberg, June 19, 2011 The Daily Brief, June 12, 2011 – "Hvistendahl has a keen sense of detail, and her book is filled with lively encounters with the doctors, academics and bachelors who, she argues, all play a part in the changing demographics worldwide. Her research only gains in importance as these imbalanced generations, where men outnumber women by as much."Globe and Mail, July 1, 2011 – "Brave, well researched and imminently controversial. From the distant vista of the West, where we don't really consider what it would mean to have an only son who can never find a mate, the unbalanced sex ratio in Asia may seem like relatively small news. This remarkable book goes a long way to bringing the pain and the urgency of the issue home. Mara Hvistendahl is not just entering an important conversation, she's starting one. – the dogged self-destruction of a braggadocio crippled by the conviction of his own superiority." – Washington Post, July 3, 2011 – "Massively well-documented. [Hvistendahl] has written a disturbing, engrossing book." – "Provocative, wide-ranging. A thoughtful, smartly researched overview of medical developments, policymaking and cultural trends that combined to upset the global sex ratio." – The Daily Beast, Eleanor Clift, June 22, 2011 – "[Hvistendahl] approaches these sensitive subjects without an ideological ax to grind, whether pro-life or pro-population control, documenting how sex selection has taken hold thanks to technology, lower birth rates, and deep-seated cultural biases that require a boy to carry on a family's lineage." – New York Times, Ross Douthat, June 26, 2011 – "Unnatural Selection reads like a great historical detective story, and it's written with the sense of moral urgency that usually accompanies the revelation of some kind of enormous crime." – Marcy Darnovsky – "Ms. Blog", June 7,

2011 – “An important contribution, disturbing but gripping, and challenging to all of us, perhaps especially to U.S. advocates of reproductive justice. It provides both a deep understanding of the staggering dimensions and consequences of sex selection, and an urgent prod to confront it.”

In 2007, the booming port city of Lianyungang achieved the dubious distinction of having the most extreme gender ratio for children under five in China: 163 boys for every 100 girls. The numbers may not matter much to the preschool set. But in twenty years the skewed sex ratio will pose a colossal challenge. When Lianyungang’s children reach adulthood, their generation will have twenty-four million more men than women. “The prognosis for China’s neighbors is no less bleak: rampant sex selective abortion has left over 160 million females “missing” from Asia’s population. And gender imbalance reaches far beyond South and East Asia, affecting the Caucasus countries, Eastern Europe, and even some groups in the United States -- a rate of diffusion so rapid that the leading expert on the topic compares it to an epidemic. As economic development spurs parents in developing countries to have fewer children and brings them access to sex determination technology, couples are making sure at least one of their children is a son. So many parents now select for boys that they have skewed the sex ratio at birth of the entire world. “Sex selection did not arise on its own. Largely unknown until now is that the sex ratio imbalance is partly the work of a group of 1960s American activists and scientists who zealously backed the use of prenatal technologies in their haste to solve an earlier global problem. “What does this mean for our future? The sex ratio imbalance has already led to a spike in sex trafficking and bride buying across Asia, and it may be linked to a recent rise in crime there as well. More far-reaching problems could be on the horizon: From ancient Rome to the American Wild West, historical excesses of men have yielded periods of violence and instability. Traveling to nine countries, Mara Hvistendahl has produced a stunning, impeccably researched book that examines not only the consequences of the misbegotten policies underlying sex selection but also the West’s role in creating them.

Was interested in this topic, and the book was read by our book club. The research is well done, and the book does hold one’s attention up to a point. It’s simply too much girth for the subject matter; thus, after about half way through the book ... one can begin to think ‘okay, got it already.’ Having stated the above, if you have time on your hands, and really want to delve into this issue ... go for it!

This book offers a highly readable and well documented account of how many societies are generating horrendous gender imbalances. However, the final sections are quite confused. The author was unable to draw out some obvious implications from the earlier chapters, namely that the comparative ease of access to abortion, coupled with new technologies for identifying the gender of babies in the womb, had laid the basis for what amounts to systematic destruction of unborn girls. It is a feminist issue that leaves many feminists utterly confused.

This well-written book really delivers some chilling information. I just wonder why people aren't caring about the plight of women? The millions of aborted girls means millions of men that will never, ever have a wife. Where do people think the ISIS is coming from? Why is there a seemingly unlimited number of unmarried fighting age males? Hm? Wake up, people!

The topic is alarming and the book is very well-researched and informative. However, I found the book rather dense with information and a bit academic to get through even though I was transfixed by the subject matter. Even with these misgivings, however, I think it is a very important book and something that should be widely-read. The main topic is just plain scary and makes me edgy about the future of our planet dominated by a preponderance of men.

By far the best book I've read in 2014. The facts are presented logically so that understanding the technology is clear. It is certainly material which makes for interesting reading. Statistics lend the cases credence though one reader's complaint that the statistics are taken out of context may be a fair criticism.

Book Review. "Unnatural Selection: Choosing Boys Over Girls, and the Consequences of a World Full of Men" by Mara Hvistendahl. This is an absolutely fascinating, well researched book. It has been impossible for me to stop reading it - I was even reading it on line at Costco. There are 163 million females missing in Asia. Why and who is to blame? In nature, 105 boys are born for every 100 girls. This ratio is biologically ironclad. Between 104 and 106 is the normal range, and that's as far as the natural window goes. Any other number is the result of unnatural events. If the male number in the sex ratio is above 106, it means that couples are having abortions when they find out the mother is carrying a girl. Yet today in India there are 112 boys born for every 100 girls. In China, the number is 121 --though plenty of Chinese towns are over the 150 mark. China's and India's

populations are mammoth enough that their outlying sex ratios have skewed the global average to a biologically impossible 107. But the imbalance is not only in Asia. Azerbaijan stands at 115, Georgia at 118 and Armenia at 120. Hvistendahl puts the blame squarely on sex-selection abortion. In Asia, it was found that women will continue to get pregnant until they have a son. Herein is the problem: A male child is more valued than a female child. And, in China's one-child policy, couples want a son. Women in the U.S. have a right to have an abortion. But what if abortion was forced on them? What if abortion is used as an alternative to having a female baby? Hvistendahl gives some horrific cases of forced abortions on women 7 and 8 months pregnant. Field workers in Asia got paid for every abortion they performed. Hvistendahl's research shows that in the 1960s the Ford Foundation, the United Nations and Planned Parenthood zealously backed the use of cheap prenatal technologies (portable ultrasound equipment) that would indicate the sex of a fetus. This was reasoned to be the best way to stop over-population. It permits women to select to have a son. In many cases, the U.S. used foreign aid as a hammer to implement sex-selection policies. It worked. The world is becoming increasingly male. What will that mean in the near future? Sex-selection abortions are the reason that 163 million girls are missing from the world. It all started with Paul Ehrlich, author of the 1968 bestseller "The Population Bomb." He popularized the idea that ensuring that couples had sons was an effective means of curbing population growth. What are the consequences? Hvistendahl lists "wife tourism", bride buying, prostitution, and other horrific practices. A world predominately male brings with it increased violence and social unrest. Yet, how can the U.S. expect other countries to ban abortions when there is really no way to know if telling a woman the sex of her fetus means the woman will have an abortion? Women go to one doctor to find out the sex of their fetus and then, if they are carrying a female fetus, go to another doctor for an abortion. Hvistendahl illustrates the problem in South Korea which has the fourth-lowest birthrate in the world, according to the United Nations. South Korea will soon be a country primarily of old people. To combat this frightening problem, abortion is now illegal in South Korea except in specific cases. Take for example this: In 2009, Sungshin Women's University in Seoul organized an event aimed at trying to raise awareness about the country's very low birth rate. It sparked controversy when the organizers requested women students in the audience to submit a sworn statement that they would have children. When I visited Ethiopia 2 years ago we traveled on roads built and being built by the Chinese government. The road building is extensive throughout the country. Our tour guide said that they set up camps for the workers who did not spend any time with the locals. There is absolutely no interest in mingling with the population. All their food was prepared for them. If anyone gets sick, the managers join the workers. Quotas were always met. As the demand for wives

grows, will the men of female-starved countries seek out women from other ethnic groups? From my column, The Devil's Hammer for Feb. 6, 2012. The fantastic Australian Bee Gees Show at Excalibur, "Unnatural Selection: Choosing Boys Over Girls, and the Consequences of a World Full of Men", Apollo 16 astronauts found alien ship, remote viewers say, Happy Pizza, and more... [...]

Mara Hvistendahl's story of the worldwide horror of gender selection favoring baby boys is riveting. She has clearly traveled the globe to reach tiny rural pockets where this abuse thrives as well as its corollary issues of sex trafficking and bride buying for the generation of men coming of age with far fewer women to pair off with. The stories of the people affected are moving in a very human way, but her scope extends far beyond that to the complicated political history that engendered this problem, which involves the US in ways that are quite shocking. And she delves into the complex issues arising from a young, single male-dominated society, such as the one that flourished in the American frontier. This is a very thoughtful, multifaceted, and compelling book.

Unnatural Selection came I would say at the right... Its a must read for parents who feel the need to populate the world with men. It redefines thought on family size composition and the assumption that "my neighbors will give birth to girls".

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