Gender birth rate trend analysis
in the United States

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Report for
ETC 5242 Task 1

1 August 2023

AACSB ACCREDITED   EQUIS ACCREDITED   AMBA ASSOCIATION ACCREDITED

Contents

1 Introduction

The current study delineates a detailed analysis of the birth counts for boys and girls born in the country of The United States of America. The study is based on two separate datasets, the first of which contain gender wise birth data from the years of **1629 to 1710** and the second, containing the gender birth data from the years of **1940 to 2002**. Utilisation of statistical techniques and subsequent feature engineering of the current and the historical data would further provide key insights into the changes of gender birth rate in the aforementioned country of interest. While the studies of Mathews, Hamilton, et al. (2005) and Ritchie and Roser (2019) have uncovered change of birth rates as a result of various socio-economic causes such as demographic changes, **the current study would however be limited to exploring the key changes in the number of births for girls and boys using statistical methods and feature engineering.**

It is critical to acknowledge that while the study by Pryzgoda and Chrisler (2000) defines the terminologies of "Sex ratio" and "Gender ratio" as two different statistics, however for the sake of simplicity, these terms may be used interchangeably in the context of the current study.

2 Research Questions

In this section of the study, the following key research questions pertaining to the new births in The United States will be formulated and further analysed in section 3 :

1. **How do the datasets belonging to the periods of 1629-1710 and 1940-2002 differ from one another** ?
2. **How has the birth rate for girls changed over the period of 1940-2002** ?
3. **Are there any similarities in the birth rate of girls between the time periods of 1629-1710 and 1940-2002** ?
4. **Would creating new statistical features allow us to gain better insights into the data** ?
5. **Are boys born in greater proportion to girls during the period of 1940-2002** ?

3 Analysis

The current section will provide a step by step analysis for each of the formulated research questions of section 2.

3.1 Query 1

A basic understanding on the size of the data and the number of entries for the datasets belonging to each of the two time periods will be explored in this section.

```
head(df_present)
```

```
## # A tibble: 6 x 3
##    year    boys   girls
##   <dbl>   <dbl>   <dbl>
## 1  1940 1211684 1148715
## 2  1941 1289734 1223693
## 3  1942 1444365 1364631
## 4  1943 1508959 1427901
## 5  1944 1435301 1359499
## 6  1945 1404587 1330869
```

The above code-chunk and its output provides us with the glimpse of the dataset. The dataset contains three features. These features are explained as below:

- **Year** : The year pertaining to the count of new births in the United States.

- **boys** : The number of births classified as "boys" for the corresponding year.

- **girls** : The number of births classified as "girls" for the corresponding year.

Let us observe how do the values of the number of births between the periods of 1629-1710 and 1940-2002 vary from one another.

```
summary(df_present)
```

```
##       year           boys            girls
##  Min.   :1940   Min.   :1211684   Min.   :1148715
##  1st Qu.:1956   1st Qu.:1799857   1st Qu.:1711404
##  Median :1971   Median :1924868   Median :1831679
##  Mean   :1971   Mean   :1885600   Mean   :1793915
##  3rd Qu.:1986   3rd Qu.:2058524   3rd Qu.:1965538
##  Max.   :2002   Max.   :2186274   Max.   :2082052
```

```
summary(df_arb)
```

```
##       year           boys          girls
##  Min.   :1629   Min.   :2890   Min.   :2722
##  1st Qu.:1649   1st Qu.:4759   1st Qu.:4457
##  Median :1670   Median :6073   Median :5718
##  Mean   :1670   Mean   :5907   Mean   :5535
##  3rd Qu.:1690   3rd Qu.:7576   3rd Qu.:7150
##  Max.   :1710   Max.   :8426   Max.   :7779
```

As we can clearly observe, the **magnitude of the boys and girls born during the period of 1940-2002 are much larger than that for the period of 1629-1710**. This is expected as a result of the global rise of population owing to factors such as better infrastructure, better lifestyle, better socio-economic factors and improvement in medical sciences.

Let us try to visualise the same through figure 1.

```
options(scipen = 999) # To remove scientific notation

df_arb_long <-
  pivot_longer(
    df_arb,
    names_to = "gender",
    values_to = "born",
    cols = c(boys, girls)
  )
pl1 <-
  ggplot(data = df_arb_long, aes(x = year, y = born, fill = gender)) +
  geom_area(color = 'black') + theme_classic() +
  ggtitle("Birth statistics between 1629-1710 \n in The US") +
  theme(plot.title = element_text(hjust = 0.5),aspect.ratio = 0.5) +
```

```r
  labs(fill = "Gender", x = "Year", y = "Number of births")


df_present_long <-
  pivot_longer(
    df_present,
    names_to = "gender",
    values_to = "born",
    cols = c(boys, girls)
  )
pl2 <-
  ggplot(data = df_present_long, aes(x = year, y = born, fill = gender)) +
  geom_area(color = 'black') +
  theme_classic() +
  ggtitle("Birth statistics between 1940-2002 \n in The US") +
  theme(plot.title = element_text(hjust = 0.5),aspect.ratio = 0.5) +
  labs(fill = "Gender", x = "Year", y = "Number of births")

plot_grid(pl1, pl2, labels = "AUTO", ncol = 1)
```

A

B
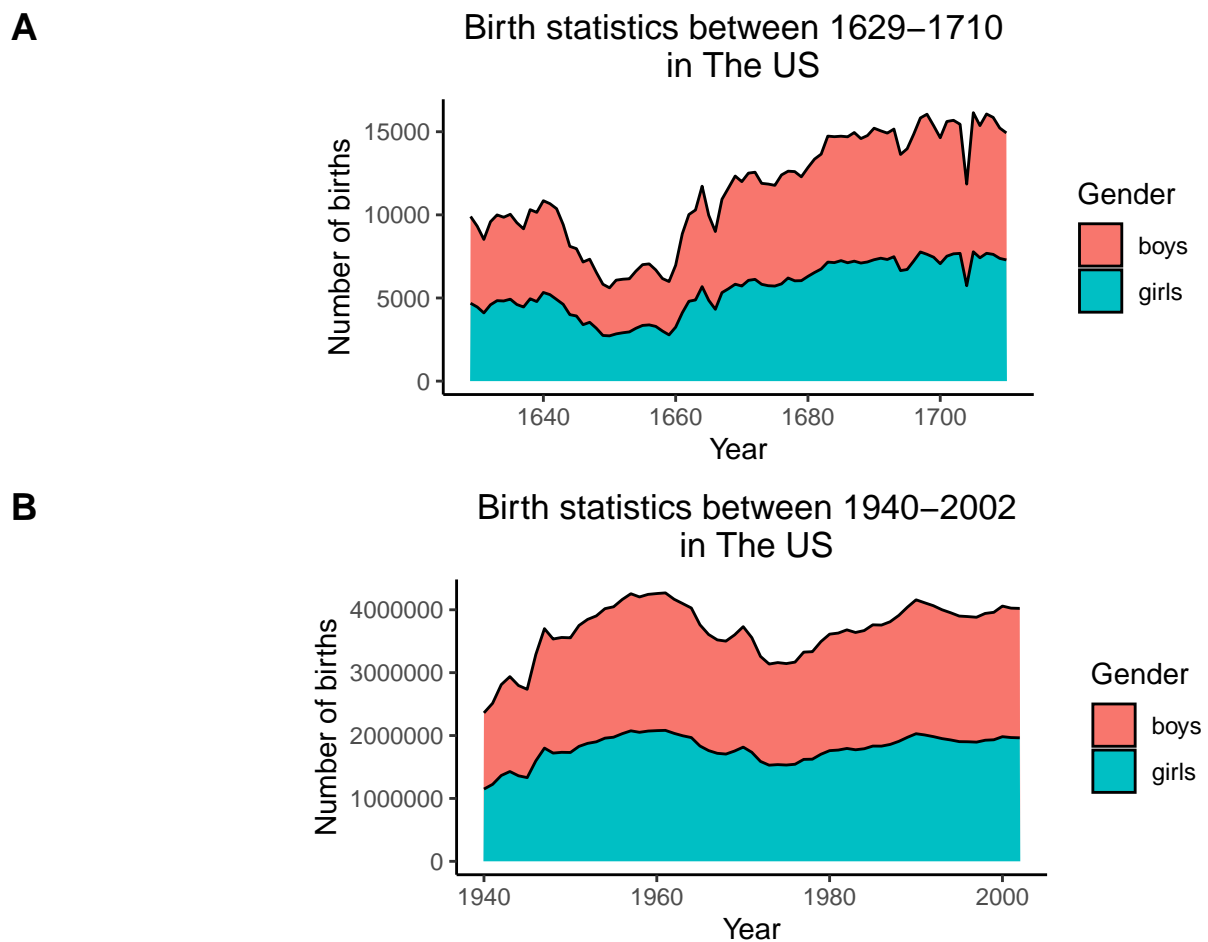
Figure 1: *Number of births in The United States of America*

As we can observe through figure 1, the magnitude of births are observed to be **significantly higher during the period between 1940-2002** when compared to the period between 1620-1710.

3.2 Query 2

In this section, the number of births classified as "girls" will be focused on to gain further insights through a scatter plot as visualised through figure 2.

```
pl3 <- ggplot(data = df_present, aes(x = year, y = girls)) +
  geom_point(shape = 2, color = 'red') + theme_classic() +
  ggtitle("Number of girls born during 1940-2002 \n in the US") +
  theme(plot.title = element_text(hjust = 0.5), aspect.ratio = 0.5) + labs(x = "Year",
                                                y = "Number of births")
pl4 <- ggplot(data = df_arb, aes(x = year, y = girls)) +
  geom_point(shape = 2, color = 'blue') + theme_classic() +
  ggtitle("Number of girls born during 1629-1710 \n in the US") +
  theme(plot.title = element_text(hjust = 0.5), aspect.ratio = 0.5) + labs(x = "Year",
                                                y = "Number of births")
plot_grid(pl3,pl4,ncol =1)
```
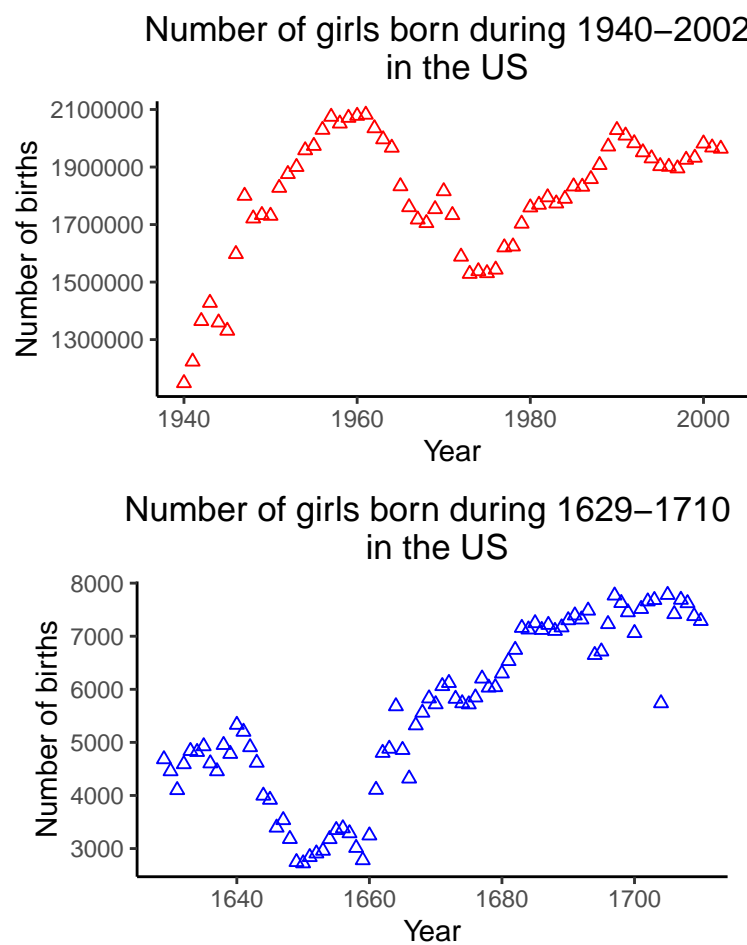

**Figure 2:** *Girls born during each period in the US*

3.3 Query 3

Based on the analysis of figures 2 and 3, we can observe the following key points:

1. The magnitude of girls born in the period between 1940-2002 is **significantly higher** than in the period between 1629-1710.

2. Although the magnitude of girls born for the two time periods vary significantly, however a few similarities in the trends may be observed between the two time periods. These include the sudden dip in births followed by a rise and eventual stagnation of the numbers.

3. During the period between 1940-1960, there was **a consistent increase in the number of girls born in the country**.

4. The period between 1960-1975 observed a **sudden drop in the number of girls born**.

5. However, the number of girls born were **back on the rise** after the year 1975.

6. Between the period of 1990-2000, the **number of girls born were observed to stagnate at approximately 2000000 births a year**.

```r
pl5 <- ggplot(data = df_present, aes(x = year, y = girls)) +
  geom_point(shape = 2, color = 'red') + theme_classic() +
  ggtitle("Number of girls born during 1940-2002 \n in the US") +
   labs(x = "Year", y = "Number of births") + theme(plot.title = element_text(hjust = 0.5),
                                                    aspect.ratio = 0.7) +
  annotate(
    "segment",
    x = 1945,
    y = 1900000,
    xend = 1950   ,
    yend = 1800000,
    arrow = arrow(type = "closed",
                  length = unit(0.02, "npc"))
  ) +
  annotate(
    "text",
    x = 1946,
    y = 1980000,
    colour = "black",
    label = 'Consistent rise in number of girls \n born between 1940-1960',
    size = unit(2.5, "pt")
  ) +
  annotate(
    "segment",
    x = 1965,
    y = 1300000,
    xend = 1973   ,
    yend = 1500000,
    arrow = arrow(type = "closed",
                  length = unit(0.02, "npc"))
  ) +
  annotate(
    "text",
    x = 1965,
    y = 1250000,
    colour = "blue",
    label = 'Dip in number of girls born \n between 1960-1975',
    size = unit(2.5, "pt")
  ) +
```

```
annotate(
  "segment",
  x = 1983,
  y = 1500000,
  xend = 1985  ,
  yend = 1700000,
  arrow = arrow(type = "closed",
                length = unit(0.02, "npc"))
) +
annotate(
  "text",
  x = 1985,
  y = 1450000,
  colour = "darkgreen",
  label = 'Girl child births start \n increasing again from 1975',
  size = unit(2.5, "pt")
) +
  annotate(
  "segment",
  x = 1995,
  y = 1700000,
  xend = 1995  ,
  yend = 1850000,
  arrow = arrow(type = "closed",
                length = unit(0.02, "npc"))
) +
annotate(
  "text",
  x = 1995,
  y = 1600000,
  colour = "darkred",
  label = 'Stagnation in the number \n of girls born after 1990',
  size = unit(2.5, "pt")
)
pl5
```
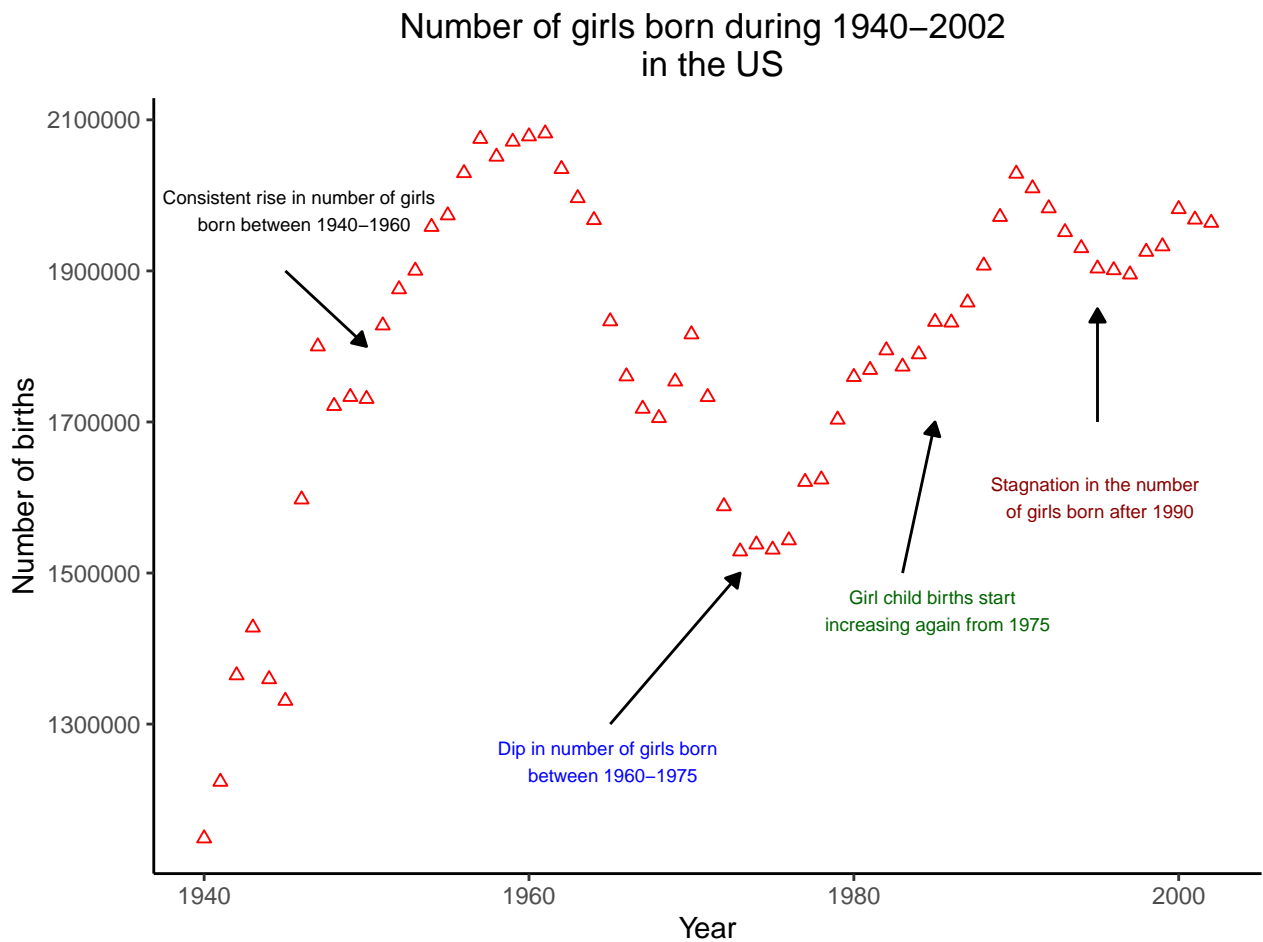
Figure 3: *Trend analysis of girls child births in The United States during 1940-2002*

3.4 Query 4

While the raw dataset provides an overall understanding of the gender birth number in the United States, this section will focus on the creation of new statistical features which will help provide deeper insights. Based on the available data, a total of 4 new features will be created. These features may be described as follows:

1. **Total** : Total number of child births for the corresponding year in the United States.
2. **Ratio** : This feature maybe defined as the ratio of the number of girls born to the number of boys born for a particular year.
3. **Prop_girls**: This feature maybe defined as the ratio of the number of girls born to the total number of children born for a particular year.
4. **Prop_boys**: This feature maybe defined as the ratio of the number of boys born to the total number of children born for a particular year.

The above new features will be calculated through the following code chunk.

```
df_present <- df_present %>% mutate(Total = boys + girls) %>%
  mutate(Ratio = girls/boys) %>%
  mutate(Prop_girls = girls/Total) %>%
  mutate(Prop_boys = boys/Total)


head(df_present)
```

```
## # A tibble: 6 x 7
##    year     boys    girls    Total Ratio Prop_girls Prop_boys
##   <dbl>    <dbl>    <dbl>    <dbl> <dbl>      <dbl>     <dbl>
## 1  1940 1211684  1148715  2360399 0.948      0.487     0.513
## 2  1941 1289734  1223693  2513427 0.949      0.487     0.513
## 3  1942 1444365  1364631  2808996 0.945      0.486     0.514
## 4  1943 1508959  1427901  2936860 0.946      0.486     0.514
## 5  1944 1435301  1359499  2794800 0.947      0.486     0.514
## 6  1945 1404587  1330869  2735456 0.948      0.487     0.513
```

3.5 Query 5

This section shall aim to understand the difference between the number of boys and girls born during the period between 1940-2002 in The United States. For gaining in-depth insights, the proportionality of male births will be visualised. The code chunk below provides the visualisation technique to be used for understanding the change in child sex-ratio during the period of interest.

```
pl6 <- ggplot(data = df_present,aes(x = year, y = Prop_boys)) +
  geom_line(size=1.5,alpha=0.6) + ylim(0.475,0.53) + theme_classic() + geom_point(color = "darkred",size=1) +
  geom_hline(yintercept = 0.5,
             color = 'blue',
             linetype = "twodash",
             size = 2,alpha=0.6) + labs(x = "Year", y= "Proportion of boys") +
  ggtitle("Proportion of boys in the US \n between 1940-2002") +
  theme(plot.title = element_text(hjust = 0.5)) +

  annotate(
    "text",
    x = 1980,
    y = 0.52,
    colour = "darkred",
    label = 'Higher proportion of boys born \n between 1940-2002',
    size = unit(2.5, "pt")
  ) + theme(aspect.ratio = 1)
pl6
```

Figure 4 suggests that the proportion of boys and consequently, the number of boys born in the United States during the period between 1940-2002 is **indeed greater than the proportion of girls born in the same time period**. As a result, the observations pertaining to the birth statistics of the United States between the period of 1940-2002 **closely corroborates** with the findings of Arbuthnot (1710) during the period of 1629-1710.

Proportion of boys in the US
between 1940–2002
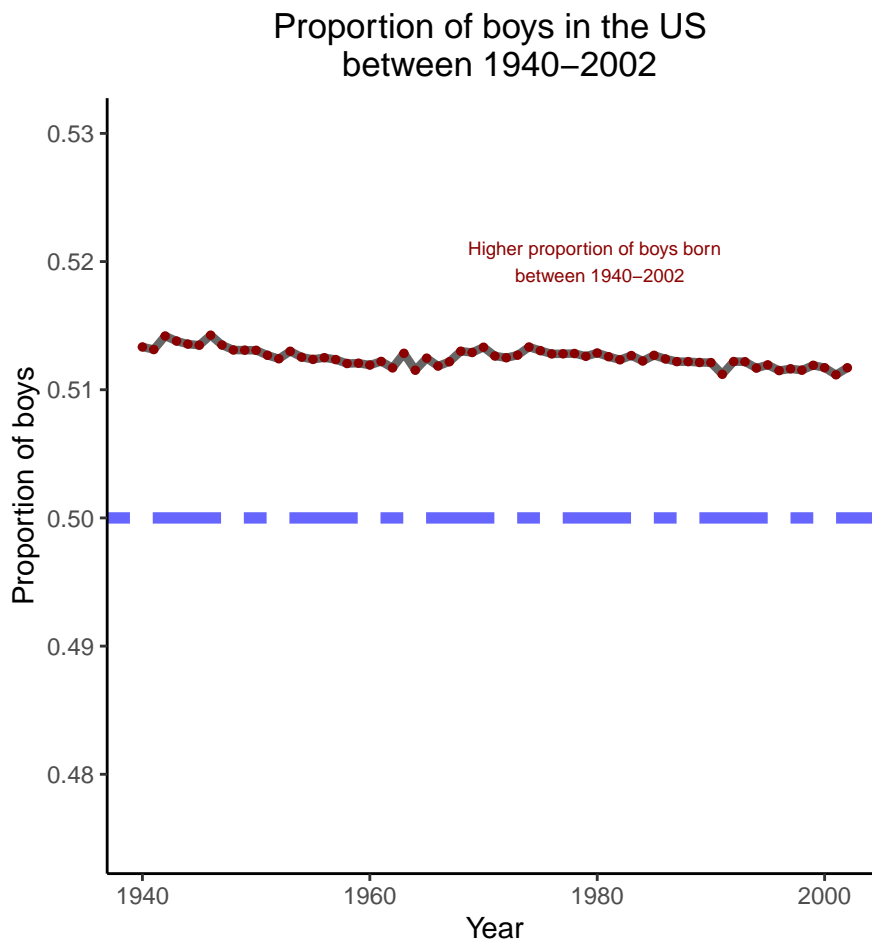
Figure 4: *Proportion of boys born between 1940-2002*

4   Conclusion

The key takeaways from the above analysis are as follows:

1. The magnitude of children born are significantly greater in the period of 1940-2002 when compared to the period of 1629-1710.

2. Statistics pertaining to female child birth were observed to undergo a sudden dip and then subsequently rise and stagnate for both the time periods. Hence, the two time periods were observed to report similarities in its trend.

3. Proportion of male child birth continue to be greater than female child birth in The United States during the period of 1940-2002. A similar observation was first reported by Arbuthnot (1710) for the period of 1629-1710.

5   Resources

The above analysis was undertaken with the help of the following software and packages:

1. **RStudio**: Integrated Development for R. RStudio, PBC, Boston, MA URL http://www.rstudio.com/.

2. **ggplot2**: H. Wickham. ggplot2: Elegant Graphics for Data Analysis. Springer-Verlag New York, 2016.

3. **tidyverse**: Wickham H, Averick M, Bryan J, Chang W, McGowan LD, François R, Grolemund G, Hayes A, Henry L, Hester J, Kuhn M, Pedersen TL, Miller E, Bache SM, Müller K, Ooms J, Robinson D, Seidel DP, Spinu V, Takahashi K, Vaughan D, Wilke C, Woo K, Yutani H (2019). "Welcome to the tidyverse." *Journal of Open Source Software*, *4*(43), 1686. doi:10.21105/joss.01686 https://doi.org/10.21105/joss.01686.

4. **here**: Müller K (2020). *here: A Simpler Way to Find Your Files*. R package version 1.0.1, https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=here.

5. **knitr**: Yihui Xie (2014) knitr: A Comprehensive Tool for Reproducible Research in R. In Victoria Stodden, Friedrich Leisch and Roger D. Peng, editors, Implementing Reproducible Computational Research. Chapman and Hall/CRC. ISBN 978-1466561595.

6. **rmarkdown**: Allaire J, Xie Y, Dervieux C, McPherson J, Luraschi J, Ushey K, Atkins A, Wickham H, Cheng J, Chang W, Iannone R (2023). *rmarkdown: Dynamic Documents for R*. R package version 2.23, https://github.com/rstudio/rmarkdown.

7. **cowplot**: Wilke C (2020). *cowplot: Streamlined Plot Theme and Plot Annotations for 'ggplot2'*. R package version 1.1.1, https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=cowplot.

References

Arbuthnot, J (1710). II. An argument for divine providence, taken from the constant regularity observ'd in the births of both sexes. By Dr. John Arbuthnott, Physitian in Ordinary to Her Majesty, and Fellow of the College of Physitians and the Royal Society. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* **27**(328), 186–190.

Mathews, T, BE Hamilton, et al. (2005). Trend analysis of the sex ratio at birth in the United States. *National vital statistics reports* **53**(20), 1–17.

Pryzgoda, J and JC Chrisler (2000). Definitions of gender and sex: The subtleties of meaning. *Sex roles* **43**, 553–569.

Ritchie, H and M Roser (2019). Gender Ratio. *Our World in Data*. https://ourworldindata.org/gender-ratio.