

Study suggests poor mothers favor daughters

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Poor mothers will invest more resources in daughters, who stand a greater chance of increasing their status through marriage than do sons, suggests a study in the *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*.

Masako Fujita, Michigan State University anthropologist, and her fellow researchers tested the [breast milk](#) of mothers in northern Kenya and found that poor mothers produced fattier milk for their daughters than for their sons.

On the contrary, mothers who were better off financially favored sons over daughters.

The results, also featured in the journal *Nature*, support a 1973 hypothesis that predicts poor mothers will favor their daughters.

The *Nature* article, titled "Rich milk for poor girls," notes that Fujita and her team assessed the [fat content](#) from 83 mothers living in villages in which men can have multiple wives. They found that mothers with less land and fewer livestock provided richer milk to their daughters than to their sons.

On average, a mother in northern Kenya raises six children.

The study is one of the first to explore parents' unequal biological investment in their children, such as the [nutritional content](#) of breast milk.

Provided by Michigan State University

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