

## **“Traditional Norms and Parental Investment in Human Capital”**

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Cultural norms may influence parental behavior that shapes children's human capital. We study the effect of traditional norms on parental investment in human capital using recent survey data from Tanzania. Our novel data allow us to capture detailed parental investment behavior, such as time and attention devoted to children's learning. We focus on two dominant forms of traditional kinship norms in developing countries --matrilineal and patrilineal kinship norms. Employing a spatial fuzzy regression discontinuity design, we find that matrilineal parents invest less in their children's human capital. They spend less time and attention on their children's learning and are less likely to sign up their children for preschool, private school, and primary school. Lower parental investment by matrilineal parents is reflected in the poorer cognitive skills of their children, captured by standardized test scores on numeracy and literacy. We further explore various mechanisms and the effect of a nationwide policy reform that was intended to undo traditional norms.