

# Study Reveals The *Real* Reason Parents Dislike Their Daughters' Boyfriends

Huffington Post | By [Shelley Emling](#)



Daddy's little angel brings home a new boyfriend, this one covered in tattoos and riding a motorcycle. Daddy and mommy are horrified. Sound familiar? Sure. But there's actually a reason why parents react the way they do to their kids' choice of mates -- and it has little to do with the idea of not wanting their little sweetheart to grow up.

A new study has uncovered an [evolutionary explanation](#) for why some parents try to control who their children pair up with.

The study, involving a [University of Bristol](#) researcher and published this week in the journal *Evolution & Human Behavior*, shows that [negative reactions to mate choice](#) may be rooted in an evolutionary conflict over resources.

[Dr. Tim Fawcett](#) and a team of scientists examined how parents and children view mate preference and the conflicts that often creep up when those views don't align.

The team built a computer model to simulate the evolution of parental behavior when their daughter is searching for a partner. The model shows that, typically, parents should prefer a son-in-law who is more caring and supportive than their daughter would otherwise choose.

The model predicts that, when parents distribute resources equally among their children, their mate preferences should coincide exactly. But when parents contribute more to children whose partners invest less, a conflict occurs.

After all, each family has only one financial pie and they want to give equal pieces to each offspring. But if one child is married to a deadbeat partner, then parents often need to come to the rescue. And that causes anger.

"Parents are equally related to all of their children, whereas children value themselves more than their siblings -- so each child wants to get more than their fair share of parental resources," Fawcett said in a press release. This means that the children are willing to settle for a mate who is less caring than their parents would ideally like.

The scientists say their investigation is far from over.

"Surveys show that children tend to place more importance on physical attractiveness, smell and sense of humor, whereas parents care more about social class and family background," said Piet van den Berg, lead author on the study, in a press release. "We don't yet understand the reason for this difference, but it probably has something to do with our evolutionary history."

There are some ways parents can help their adult children find love that will be appreciated. Check them out [here](#).

Have you ever clashed with your kid over a mate choice? Let us know in comments.