

What do liberals and conservatives look for in a date?

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Liberals and conservatives are looking for the same thing when they join online dating websites, according to new research co-authored by University of Miami political scientist Casey Klofstad. The study, published in *Political Behavior*, shows that both liberals and conservatives are looking for a partner who is like themselves.

For their study, titled "The Dating Preferences of Liberals and Conservatives," the research team randomly sampled 2,944 profiles from a popular Internet [dating site](#), and examined the dating preference of users who identified as either liberal or conservative. The data allowed them to compare the way each dater described themselves on a number of dimensions, including race and ethnicity, religion, and the desire to have children, to the characteristics of their ideal date. Overall, regardless of ideology, daters want a partner that shares their characteristics.

Klofstad says that the [tendency](#) to seek out partners that are like us could contribute to the increasing political divide between liberals and conservatives. "Parents pass their [political preferences](#) on to their children. So, if we are more easily able to find someone like ourselves by 'shopping' for a partner online, Internet dating could hasten this process of [political polarization](#). Of course, this process would occur over [generations](#), not overnight."

Other findings:

Few individuals were willing to express a definitive political preference. The majority of online daters, 57 percent, reported that their politics are "middle of the road" rather than liberal or conservative. When asked to describe their body type, a larger proportion of daters voluntarily described themselves either "heavy set," having "a few extra pounds" or "stocky" than listed "politics" as one of their interests.

Conservative daters are more likely to be males and are less likely to belong to a racial or ethnic minority group. Liberals are younger, less likely to have been married, and less likely to have children. While liberal daters are better-educated than conservatives, this does not translate into any detectable income disparities between the two groups.

By and large, liberals and conservatives do not differ in their tendencies to seek out a partner that shares their characteristics. There are some notable exceptions, however. Overall, conservatives appear to be somewhat less accepting of dissimilarity. For example, conservatives are more likely than liberals to desire a date who shares their current relationship status, and conservative males are more likely than liberal males to want to date a female of their own race.

Provided by University of Miami

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