# Political divisions reshape UK dating apps as ideology trumps attraction



A new study reveals that political affiliations are significantly impacting the dating landscape in the UK, creating barriers that are harder to breach than those posed by superficial factors like physical attractiveness. British dating apps have become arenas of political ideology, with millions of users openly admitting they would not date someone from a rival party. This phenomenon was explored by behavioural scientist Professor Paul Dolan in his recent book, *Beliefism: How to Stop Hating the People we Disagree With*, where he underscores how entrenched beliefs shape personal choices, including romantic partnerships.

The research, involving 3,000 UK participants, found that political preferences are now a major consideration in dating—indeed, individuals are twice as likely to choose a date based on political affiliation as they are on education level. This revelation points to a cultural shift where a person's political identity can overshadow even their physical appeal. Notably, Labour supporters are particularly stringent; they show a marked tendency to avoid Conservative voters, actively shunning potential partners from the opposing camp. In contrast, Conservative participants appear more willing to date Labour supporters, especially those who do not fit leftist stereotypes, such as being traditional or non-vegan.

This political snobbery is reflected in broader societal trends. A report highlights that nearly half of Labour voters and a significant portion of Conservative supporters express reluctance to engage with someone from the opposing party. In fact, data from OKCupid indicates that 91% of users believe a strong understanding of politics is essential, and 73% acknowledge that political views affect their daily lives. The changing dynamics have led to a rise in political filters on dating platforms, with many users stating "Swipe left if you vote Tory" becoming commonplace on profiles.

Interestingly, the study by Professor Dolan also revealed a paradox: political tolerance can be a powerful attraction. Those who express an openness to dating across party lines generally receive more favourable responses, even surpassing those drawn to purely physical attributes. Dolan states, “People are put off by intolerance,” emphasizing that showing acceptance can enhance an individual's desirability on these platforms.

However, the implications of this growing political divide are more profound than mere dating woes. Analysts have pointed out that if individuals increasingly reject partners based on political difference, broader societal fractures could emerge. As Dolan noted, “This is more than a dating problem… it reflects how people are increasingly unwilling to engage with opposing views in all areas of life.” This speaks to a worrying trend where social interactions, once defined by a diversity of opinions, are narrowing into ideological echo chambers.

In summary, the melding of political preferences with dating choices represents a significant cultural evolution in the UK. Dating apps are not merely tools for romance; they are mirrors reflecting a society that is becoming increasingly divided along ideological lines. As political polarization intensifies, it raises the question of whether these patterns will continue to shape personal relationships, further entrenching societal divides, or whether people will begin to seek common ground beyond political differences.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2060398/party-rivalry-passion-killer-britons), [[2]](https://stylus.com/consumer-attitudes/swiping-for-political-compatibility-dating-apps-in-a-polarised-landscape)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2060398/party-rivalry-passion-killer-britons), [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/dating/how-politics-impacts-relationships-a4558721.html), [[5]](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-experimental-political-science/article/abs/democracy-of-dating-how-political-affiliations-shape-relationship-formation/79CD8CFC3E8862E586B2661E6C85AD89)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://psmag.com/news/big-problem-online-dating-making-country-politically-polarized-64977/), [[6]](https://www.americansurveycenter.org/research/partisan-attachment-how-politics-is-changing-dating-and-relationships-in-the-trump-era/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2060398/party-rivalry-passion-killer-britons), [[2]](https://stylus.com/consumer-attitudes/swiping-for-political-compatibility-dating-apps-in-a-polarised-landscape), [[5]](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-experimental-political-science/article/abs/democracy-of-dating-how-political-affiliations-shape-relationship-formation/79CD8CFC3E8862E586B2661E6C85AD89)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2060398/party-rivalry-passion-killer-britons), [[2]](https://stylus.com/consumer-attitudes/swiping-for-political-compatibility-dating-apps-in-a-polarised-landscape), [[4]](https://psmag.com/news/big-problem-online-dating-making-country-politically-polarized-64977/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2060398/party-rivalry-passion-killer-britons> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://stylus.com/consumer-attitudes/swiping-for-political-compatibility-dating-apps-in-a-polarised-landscape> - This article examines how political preferences influence dating choices, highlighting that 50% of UK Labour voters and 24% of Conservative voters avoid dating someone from the opposing party. It also notes that 50% of Remain voters and 28% of Leave voters from the 2016 Brexit referendum share similar sentiments. The piece discusses the broader implications of political polarization on romantic relationships and suggests that dating apps are increasingly reflecting these divisions.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/dating/how-politics-impacts-relationships-a4558721.html> - The article explores the growing influence of politics on dating, citing statistics from OKCupid where 91% of users believe staying informed about politics is important, and 73% think politics impacts their daily life. It discusses how political affiliations are becoming deal-breakers in relationships, with users increasingly including political preferences in their dating profiles. The piece also touches on the cultural divide in London's dating scene, with millennials skewing left politically.
4. <https://psmag.com/news/big-problem-online-dating-making-country-politically-polarized-64977/> - This article discusses a study published in the journal Political Behavior, which found that users of online dating sites are selecting matches based on criteria highly correlated with political preferences. The study suggests that this trend may contribute to increased political polarization, as couples with similar political views are less likely to encounter opposing opinions, potentially leading to more ideologically homogeneous relationships and communities.
5. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-experimental-political-science/article/abs/democracy-of-dating-how-political-affiliations-shape-relationship-formation/79CD8CFC3E8862E586B2661E6C85AD89> - This academic article presents research on how political affiliations influence relationship formation. It details five survey experiments that assess the impact of political party affiliation on individuals' perceptions of potential partners. The study provides evidence that political preferences play a significant role in dating decisions, with individuals often favouring partners who share their political views, thereby contributing to political homogeneity in relationships.
6. <https://www.americansurveycenter.org/research/partisan-attachment-how-politics-is-changing-dating-and-relationships-in-the-trump-era/> - This research examines how politics is reshaping dating and relationships in the United States, particularly during the Trump era. It highlights a 64% increase in political terms appearing in users' dating profiles on OkCupid following the 2016 election. The study explores the role of political preferences in dating decisions and the emergence of dating platforms catering to specific political groups, reflecting the growing importance of political alignment in romantic relationships.
7. <https://keep.lib.asu.edu/items/147815> - This study assesses the effect of political affiliation on dating preferences among Bumble users. It found no significant difference in participant preference towards politically charged versus politically neutral mock profiles. The research suggests that while political beliefs are important, they may not be the primary factor influencing dating decisions on mobile dating apps, indicating a complex interplay between political affiliation and romantic attraction.