

Economics of Dating 2: The Brutal Reality of Dating Apps

KRISTIAN FORS on September 16, 2019 at 10:18 pm

Last August, I wrote an article titled "[The Economics of Dating](#)," and with another school year starting, I decided to write a sequel about dating apps. While the purpose of dating apps is to connect romantically compatible people, a surprising number of users report not being able to find suitable romantic partners. However, in the very idea of a dating app there are inherent flaws which lead to dissatisfaction.

Groucho Marx was a comedian who once made the comment, "I don't care to belong to a club that accepts people like me as members." The joke became known as the Groucho Marx effect. In essence, the Groucho Marx effect indicates there is often a problem in the incentive structures of social institutions. He would never join a club that accepts a person like him, because to him that indicates that the club must be low quality.

With Marx in mind, let us consider the motivations of those who use dating apps. Are they looking to find new people to add to their social life, or are they looking to find a social life, period? People who *exclusively* use dating apps are not the people one would typically choose to date in real life. And dating apps are not equally productive for men and women.




For males, the plot thickens. There was a recent study called [Are Men Intimidated by Highly Educated Women? Undercover on Tinder](#) which analyzed the differences between male and female behavior on Tinder. The study demonstrated the men liked 61.9% of women on Tinder and women liked a mere 4.5% of men on Tinder. This study is illustrative of the fact that women are the [selectors of sexual selection](#), made evident by Charles Darwin in *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*.

This advantage is further corroborated in the study [Genes Expose Secrets of Sex on the Side](#), which explicitly states that "twice as many women as men passed their genes to the next generation." For example, if a wife dies after childbirth, the husband might marry again and have more children. Thus twice as many women contributed genes to the next generation.

The Pareto distribution, also known as the 80-20 rule, is a "power-law probability distribution" that demonstrates how 20% of people in an economy typically accumulate 80% of the overall income. This 80-20 rule occurs across numerous domains and is widely speculated to exist in the sexual selection domain as well, and it certainly applies to Tinder.

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TUE 28	Planning Commission Planning Commis... Tremonton, UT				
TUE 28	Writing Group - Critique Workshop Brigham City, UT				
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

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According to a study entitled *Tinder Experiments II: Guys, unless you are really hot you are probably better off not wasting your time on Tinder* – a quantitative socio-economic study, "the bottom 80% of men (in terms of attractiveness) are competing for the bottom 22% of women and the top 78% of women are competing for the top 20% of men." This data almost precisely matches the Pareto distribution. The study elaborates to point out the fact that this means that "the Tinder economy has more inequality than 95.1% of all the world's national economies." As illustrated by these two studies, if you're a guy on Tinder, the odds are not on your side.

Sexual selection is a harsh domain, and its brutality becomes even more evident in an ultra-superficial environment like Tinder.

When searching for a partner, dating apps can seem alluring. Although the siren's call may be captivating, it's better to stay on the ship and try to meet someone in real life.



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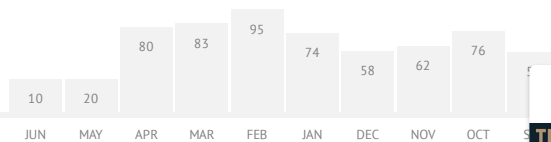
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