



According to a university study, people on the left prefer Lionel Messi and those on the right prefer Cristiano Ronaldo

The debate between Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo has reignited once again, this time in the political arena. According to a study, people with left-leaning political views tend to prefer the Argentinian, while those with right-leaning views would favor the Portuguese player.

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Preferring Cristiano Ronaldo to Lionel Messi: Is it a matter of right or left? This popular social media game, which can be played with just about anything, is now in the news thanks to research published on the Social Science Research Network platform. According to [a study titled "Political Identity Beyond Politics: The Messi-Ronaldo Preference Across 26 Countries,"](#) preferring one of the two players over the other could be a matter of political orientation.

The study's methodology is based on responses from 10,661 people living in 26 countries, who answered between April and May 2026. Using a two-level hierarchical linear model, researchers were able to determine participants' responses to the Messi-Ronaldo debate by considering other factors such as individual ideology, authoritarianism, self-esteem, and the FIFA ranking of their country of origin. The results show that respondents who identified as progressive tended to prefer Messi, while those who identified as conservative preferred Cristiano Ronaldo.

Specifically, the researchers concluded that the factor that best predicts respondents' final choice between Messi and Ronaldo is political orientation. Among other criteria, the Argentinian tends to be preferred by people with a more analytical mind, while the Portuguese player appeals more to those with an authoritarian orientation or higher self-esteem. However, the authors urge caution for two reasons: the study has not been peer-reviewed, and while the observed statistical effect is real, it remains modest.

