

1939 vs. 2008: What do men and women want in marriage?

Oxford educated economist Max Roser published an interesting—and telling—chart on Twitter recently.

Roser, the founder of [Our World Data](#), analyzed the top 18 traits men and women valued in their partners and compared them cross-generationally, from 1939 to 2008.

The following values were identified as important and ranked by men or women: **Mutual attraction, Dependable character, maturity, intelligence, pleasing disposition, sociability, Good health, good looks, desire for children, good financial prospects, good cook, similar education background, similar religious background, social status, similar politics, chastity, refinement, ambition.**

So what changes did Roser identify?

Well, several values rose sharply in importance for both genders. Men and women in 2008 ranked the values of mutual attraction/love, intelligence, sociability, and good looks much higher than people in 1939. Several values declined slightly across genders: pleasing disposition, good health, maturity/emotional stability.

One value rose sharply for men but dropped steeply for women. Interestingly, a desire for a home and children rose from 7 to 4 for men, but dropped from 6 to 9 for women. (Does anyone else find it counterintuitive that men say they value home/children much higher than women?)

But the biggest takeaway from Roser's graph is the absolute drubbing chastity took over 70 years. Both genders in 2008 ranked chastity dead last on their list of the top 18 values in a marital partner (men and women had ranked in 10 in

1939).

It was the Marquis de Sade, I believe, who recommended liberal bedroom activity to compensate for “that cruel chastity humans are obliged to maintain in public.” De Sade, it seems, was simply born a couple centuries too early.