

# The Timing of Life

Topline results from Round 9 of  
the European Social Survey

ESS Topline  
Results Series

Issue

11

# The Timing of Life: Topline results from Round 9 of the European Social Survey

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## Message from the Director

One of the really exciting elements of the European Social Survey (ESS) is the fact we include two rotating modules in each round. These rotating modules are proposed by teams of external academics to address a key academic or policy concern within Europe. The data adds to the European knowledge base and aims to have wide appeal both within and beyond academia. By providing space on our survey we are ensuring ESS is an open research infrastructure.

Following an open call for proposals two applications are selected for development. In Round 9 (2018/19) of the ESS we included modules on fairness and justice in the context of income and life chances and the timing of key life events. The data collected through this latter module is analysed in this publication by the team who initially proposed these questions.

Round 9 of our survey was not the only time that data was collected on this topic. The majority of questions fielded in 2018/19 were initially asked in Round 3 (2006/07) of the ESS. It means that comparisons between the two time points can be made.

The questionnaire design team (QDT) who have drafted this report - expertly led by Francesco Billari (Bocconi University) - have provided some interesting and insightful analysis in

issue 11 of our Topline series. We thank them for their time and effort developing the module and for producing this excellent report.

It is a source of great pride that the ESS European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) now has the most members (25) of any ERIC in operation. Round 9 of our survey saw the highest number of participating countries (29) since Round 6 was fielded in 2012/13. It now means that, since 2002, ESS data has been collected during 430,870 face-to-face interviews across 38 countries.

Analysis of Google Scholar indexing has established that 5,429 academic publications have included substantial use of our data (2003-20). To see this high number of research articles is something of real pride for everyone involved at every level of the ESS.

Special thanks for this module should be given to members of our core scientific team (CST) who collaborated with the QDT. Namely, Salima Douhou, Brita Dorer, Rory Fitzgerald, Diana Zavala Rojas and Luca Salini.

As ever, we are also very grateful to our funders, national teams, survey agencies, interviewers and, of course, all the respondents who offered their time to make all of this possible.

**Rory Fitzgerald**  
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## Introduction

"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose, under heaven" sang the Byrds in their song "Turn, turn, turn" back in the 1960s, reminding us that there are expectations about when important events are supposed to happen in people's lives. The Byrds' idea dates back to pre-modern times, and is inspired by what was written in the Book of Ecclesiastes as early as the 3rd Century BCE.

The very fabric of societies is based on scripts about how the timing of life should be organized. When are young people considered to be "adults"? When are adults considered to be "old"? When should crucial events in life, such as leaving the parental home, starting a job, becoming parents, and retiring happen. Ideas about the organization of life also concern the order of these key transitions (e.g., whether marriage should come before parenthood), and the combination of life situations (e.g., employment and childcare).

These scripts help to organize our lives and reduce uncertainty about the future. We use them to evaluate our progress and that of others. Lagging behind in achieving major milestones can affect our well-being. The extent to which deviations from such scripts are acceptable tells us something about the level of tolerance in society. If a gap exists between these social expectations and the opportunities

to enact them, governments and citizens alike can take actions to better align ideas and opportunities. In this sense, scripts are not only adapted as a result of changing circumstances, but also have power of their own in being a source of change. Scripts of life tend to differ for men and women. These differences are also fundamental in informing us about gender relationships in societies; smaller differences in expectations about the timing of women's and men's lives suggest greater gender equality in a society.

Data collected in Round 3 (2006/07) and Round 9 (2018/19) of the European Social Survey included a module on the timing of life. Between these two time points, important economic and institutional changes occurred. The Great Recession, especially, profoundly influenced the lives of Europeans. Young people were hit hardest, making youth empowerment a key policy challenge. Adults were also affected, with labour market difficulties disrupting family choices, particularly for women, bringing pressing problems related to work-life balance and gender equality. The Great Recession, in combination with increased longevity, has fuelled debates about the sustainability of pension schemes and active ageing. How have Europeans' ideas about the timing of life changed over these 12 years? This Topline Publication provides an answer.

# The Timing of Life

## The ages of adulthood, middle age, and old age for men and women

How do members of different societies perceive entry into three life phases: adulthood, middle age, and old age? Do they see different age boundaries for men and women, and do men and women see things differently?

### People do not become “adult” until they are into their 20s - and men everywhere reach adulthood later than women

Figure 1 shows that cultural ideas about when people become “adult” are significantly later than the legal age, which is typically 18. Average perceived ages of adulthood span nearly eight years, ranging from a low of 18 (British and Czech women) to a high of almost 26 (Bulgarian men). Most profound is the finding that men everywhere are seen as becoming adults later than women.

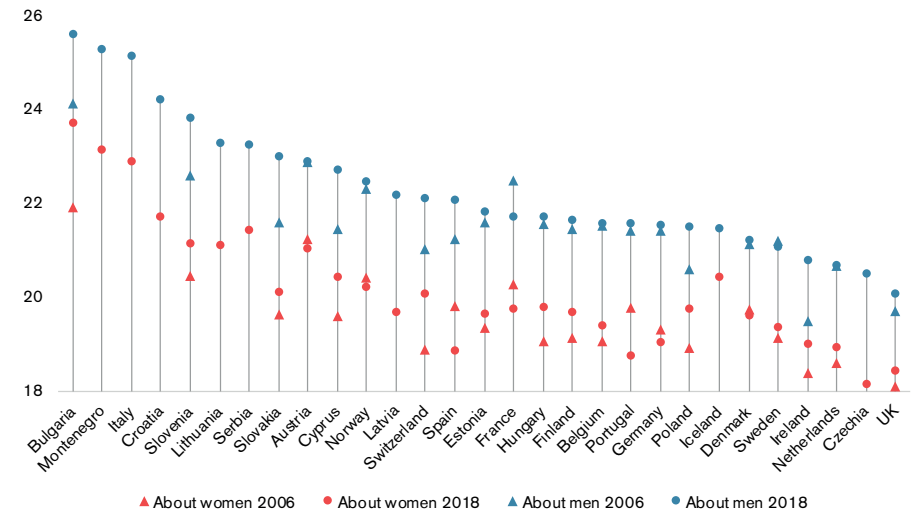
Between 2006/07 and 2018/19, the perceived age thresholds increased in all countries, but more so for women’s adulthood. In 12 countries, ages for men are nearly identical at both time points; for women, this is true in only seven countries. The highest ages are found when women judge men; the lowest when men assess women. At both times, male respondents in 16-17 countries say that women enter adulthood before age 20. In sharp contrast, there is no country where women say that men become adults before age 20.

In 2006/07, female respondents in five countries believed that men reach adulthood when they are 23 or older; in 2018/19, this is true in 12 countries. In 2018/19, three countries see age 23 as the entry point into women’s adulthood, which was not the case anywhere in 2006/07. Perceptions of adulthood are markedly gendered, suggesting perceived differences in psychological maturity, social relationships, and economic independence.

### Across countries, people reach “middle age” at very different times - but within countries, men and women reach it at the same time

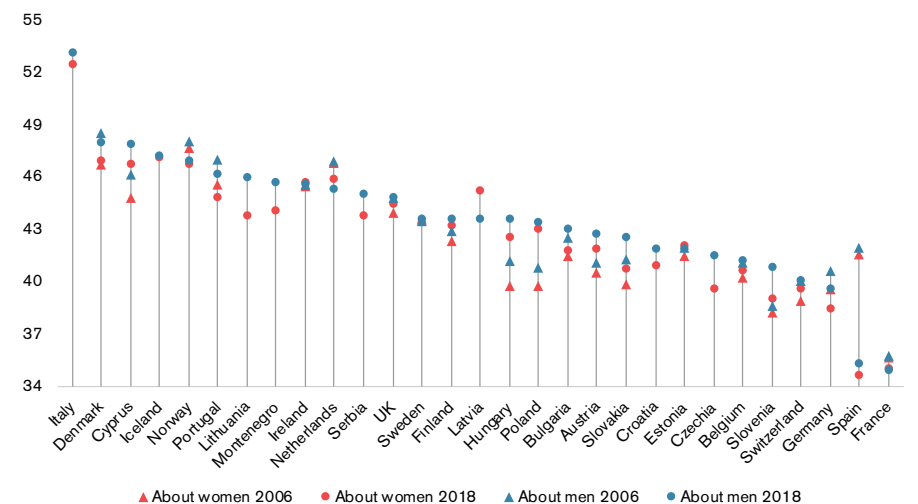
Across Europe, transitions to adulthood and old age are partially defined through laws and policies. These types of markers do not exist for middle age. Does this lead to greater variability in views on timing? Figure 2 reveals that this generally seems to be the case, both in the range of average ages (from a low of just under 36 for women in Spain to a high of 53 for Italian men in 2018/19 - a difference of 17 years) and standard deviations (not shown here), which are in most countries greater for middle age than for adulthood and old age (from six to almost 11 years).

**Figure 1. Average starting point for adulthood in 2006/07 and 2018/19 for women and men**



Source: European Social Survey Round 9, 2018, and Round 3, 2006. Post-stratification weights have been applied for country-level analysis. Measure: “At what age, approximately, would you say women/men become adults?”

**Figure 2. Average starting point for middle age in 2006/07 and 2018/19 for women and men**



Source: European Social Survey Round 9, 2018, and Round 3, 2006. Post-stratification weights have been applied for country-level analysis. Measure: “At what age, approximately, would you say women/men reach middle age?”

# The Timing of Life

## The ages of adulthood, middle age, and old age for men and women

However, assessments of middle age for men and women track more consistently within countries. The ages for men are generally a little higher, but there does not appear to be a “double standard” for the two genders. Even in Spain and Italy, which show the lowest and highest values, the ages assigned to women and men are quite similar (34.6 versus 35.3, respectively, in Spain and 52.4 versus 53.1 in Italy).

The striking range of ages across countries suggests cultural differences in the meaning and significance of “middle age” as a concept, making translation difficult (e.g., in French it is called “prime of life,” which for both men and women is deemed to be age 35). Notably, most averages are clustered within a few years of 45. Life expectancy in many of these countries is in the upper 70s and low 80s, so 45 is slightly high as a literal marker of life’s midpoint.

### Women everywhere become “old” before men, and men everywhere fuel this perception

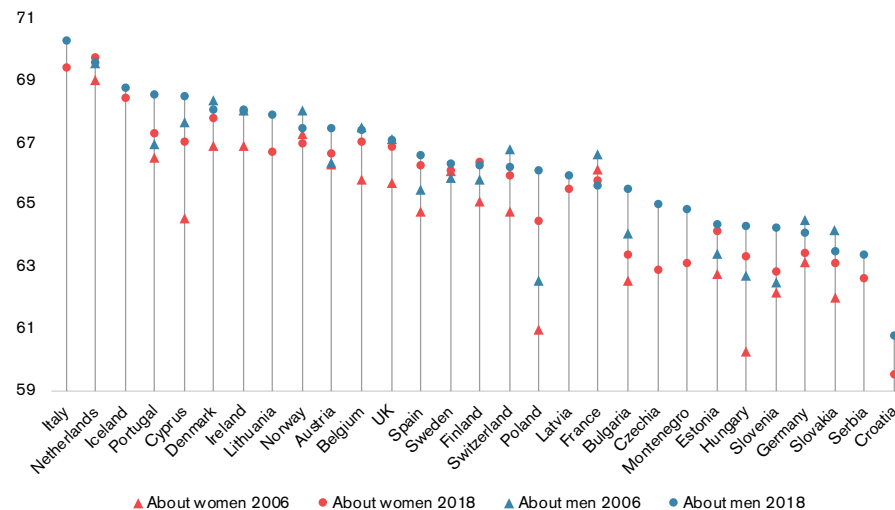
Figure 3 shows that the perception of old age has been extended between 2006/07 to 2018/19, often by a few years. In Central and Eastern European countries, these

“gains” have been pronounced, particularly for women. Ages differ significantly across countries. In 2018/19, there is a low of 60.8 and 59.5 for men and women respectively in Croatia, and 70.2 and 69.3 in Italy - a cross-national difference of almost 10 years.

Everywhere, women are seen as becoming old before men. Most profound is that these views are driven by men, who everywhere say that women become old before men. Women give later ages regardless of whether they are talking about women or men, and slightly later ages for women. This “double standard” pattern exists in all countries in both 2006/07 and 2018/19, softening in the most recent wave.

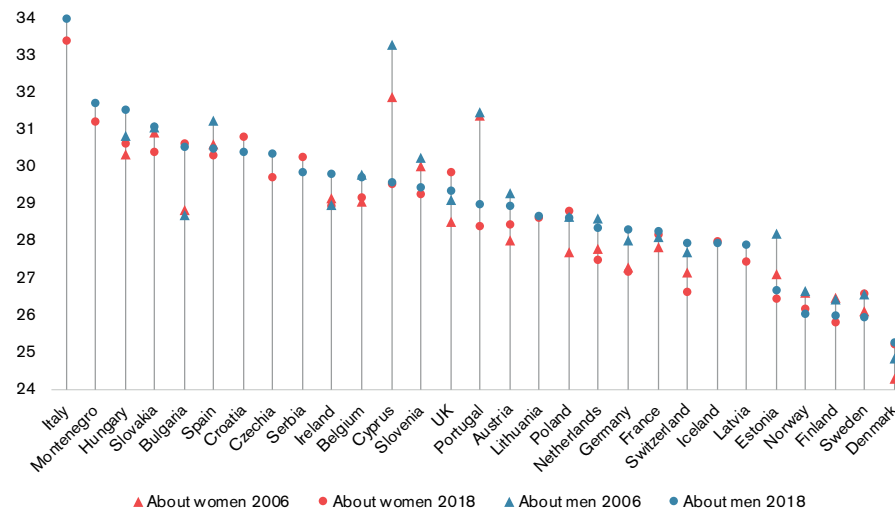
The rising ages of old age may in some countries reflect improved life expectancy and social conditions, and later eligibility ages for aging programs and pensions. The stark gender differences are paradoxical. Because life expectancy favours women, one might have expected trends in the opposite direction (men would get lower ages), although women suffer more from chronic health conditions and manage them longer. The aging bodies of women may leave them vulnerable to loss of social status in ways that men are less likely to experience.

**Figure 3. Average starting point for old age in 2006/07 and 2018/19 for women and men**



Source: European Social Survey Round 9, 2018, and Round 3, 2006. Post-stratification weights have been applied for country-level analysis. Measure: “At what age, approximately, would you say women/men reach old age?”

**Figure 4. Average upper limit age for living with parents in 2006/07 and 2018/19 for women and men**



Source: European Social Survey Round 9, 2018, and Round 3, 2006. Post-stratification weights have been applied for country-level analysis. Measure: “After what age would you say a woman/man is generally too old to still be living with her/his parents?”

# The Timing of Life

## Greater approval of living with parents and of cohabitation

A central milestone on the road to adulthood is leaving the parental home. Across Europe, there are longstanding differences in the timing of leaving home, as was shown in the Round 3 (2006/07) module (Billari & Liefbroer, 2010). Southern Europeans have historically lived longer with their parents, but they have in recent decades even further delayed the age at which they leave home. This postponement had already started among Central and Eastern Europeans before the Great Recession. In general, a longer stay in the parental home is seen as a signal that it is difficult to become independent - as the Guardian put in the title of a 2014 article, [The dependent generation: half young European adults live with parents](#).

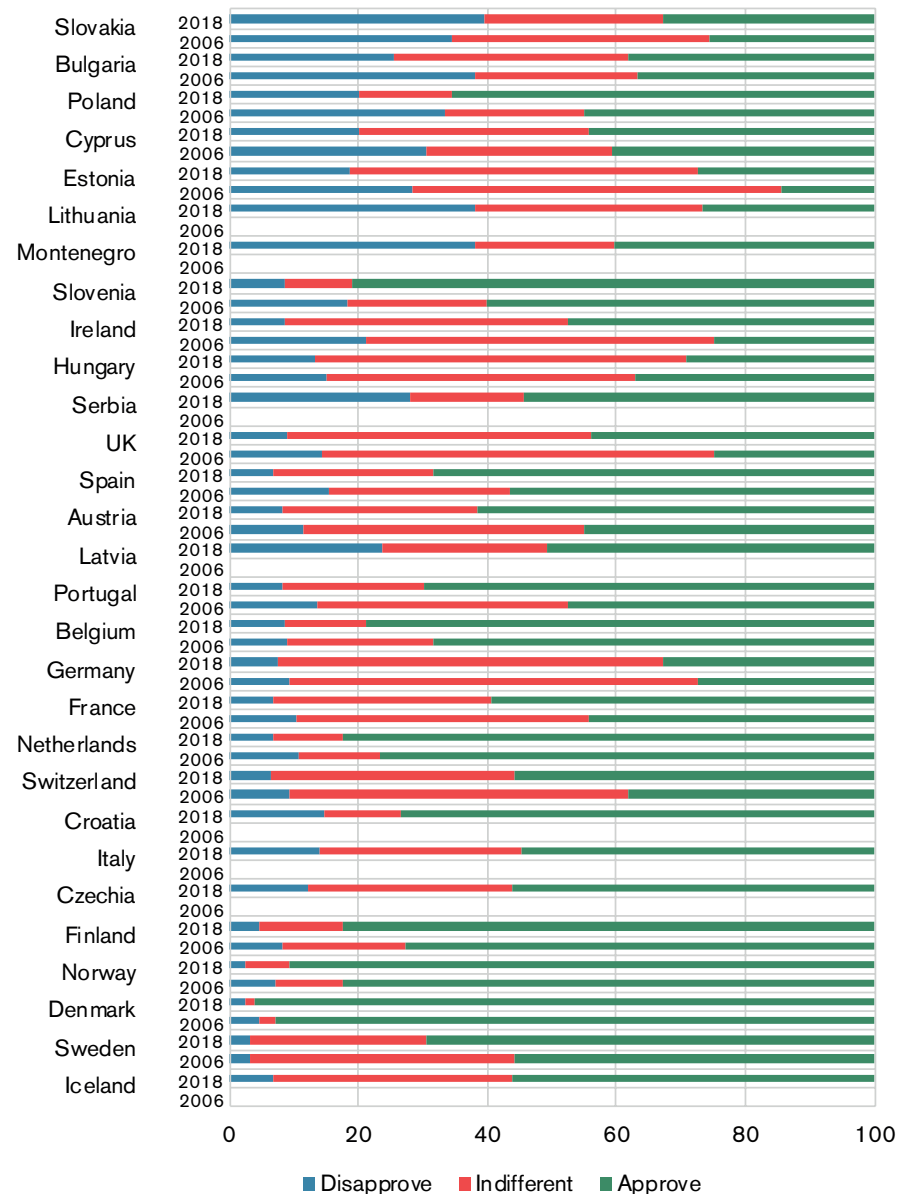
Respondents were asked about the upper "age limits" after which women and men are considered too old to live with their parents. Respondents from Southern Europe and several Central and Eastern European countries tend to set the highest upper age limits (see Figure 4). The highest value in 2018/19 is for Italian men: 34 years. While the upper age limit for men is consistently higher than that for women, what is striking is the stability of the country gradient, with constant or slightly increasing age limits between 2006/07 and 2018/19. Yet, there are some notable exceptions: in

Cyprus, Portugal, and to a lesser extent in Estonia, upper age limits in 2018/19 are lower than 2006/07.

Other milestones of adulthood include forming a stable partnership and deciding to live together. To what extent do Europeans approve of what used to be a "non-standard" order of unmarried cohabitation preceding marriage? Figure 5 shows that, across Europe, the centrality of marriage has declined, the acceptance of unmarried cohabitation has grown, and disapproval of unmarried cohabitation is residual. Similar trends are visible if we consider the approval, or disapproval, of having children while cohabiting (not shown here).

While the acceptance of unmarried cohabitation has grown, there is great stability with respect to the age at which it is acceptable ("no longer considered too young to start living with a partner without being married," not shown here). The lower age limit ranges from around 18 (Estonia and Latvia) to between 20 and 21 years (Italy) and is consistently slightly higher for men than for women. Similar observations hold for the lower age limits for marriage: there is great stability over time and a gender difference of about a year (not shown here). The lower age limit is generally a little higher for marriage than for unmarried cohabitation.

Figure 5. Approval of unmarried cohabitation in 2006/07 and 2018/19



Source: European Social Survey Round 9, 2018, and Round 3, 2006. Post-stratification weights have been applied for country-level analysis. Measure: "Using this card, how much do you approve or disapprove if a woman/man lives with a partner without being married? 1. Strongly disapprove, 2. Disapprove, 3. Neither approve nor disapprove, 4. Approve, 5. Strongly approve". In the figure, "Strongly disapprove" and "disapprove", and "approve" and "strongly approve" are grouped together.

# The Timing of Life

## Becoming a parent? Ideally later

On the “traditional” pathway to adulthood, the next milestone is becoming a parent. This transition is perhaps the most consequential for both individuals and societies. In recent decades, Europeans have become less eager to make this transition in their young adult years. Europe exhibits the lowest total fertility rates of all geographic regions in the world, with total fertility below two children per woman in most countries since at least the late 1970s.<sup>1</sup> A major reason for further declines of birth and fertility rates has been the postponement of parenthood by young adults.

Figure 6 shows that, in all countries for which there is data in both 2006/07 and 2018/19, the average ideal age for parenthood has shifted upwards for both motherhood and fatherhood. Not surprisingly, the ideal age is lower for motherhood than for fatherhood, with the gap typically being around two years. In 2018/19, the average ideal ages for motherhood range from about 25 to 28 years. The lowest ideal ages are for the Baltic states Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, along with Slovakia and Bulgaria. Historically, these countries have exhibited a relatively early transition to motherhood. The highest ideal ages for motherhood are in Southern European countries Cyprus, Italy, and Spain, as well as in Switzerland, Ireland, and the Netherlands.

1. <https://population.un.org/wpp/Maps>

Country differences for the ideal ages for fatherhood are to some extent similar, but there are notable differences. The Baltic states are among the countries with relatively low ideal ages for fatherhood, as they were for motherhood. But Iceland, Finland, Denmark, and the United Kingdom now join these ranks of lowest ideal ages for fatherhood. Although the country rank orders of ideal ages for motherhood and fatherhood changed somewhat between 2006/07 and 2018/19, countries with a preference for either relatively early or relatively late transitions to parenthood show a great deal of continuity.

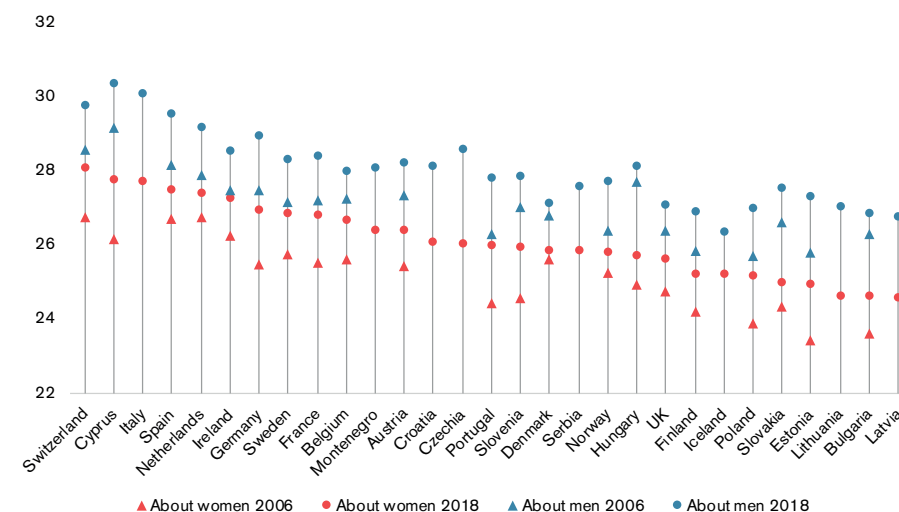
The postponement of fertility is also evident in the upper age limit for becoming a parent. This has increased in almost all countries, and in 2018/19 it was consistently just below age 45 for motherhood and slightly above age 45 to around age 50 for fatherhood (Figure 7). The upper age limit for fatherhood is in most countries around five years later than for motherhood.

For motherhood, it is also possible to compare these ideal ages with actual ages of first birth according to Eurostat data (Figure 8). This comparison shows a pervasive gap between ideals and reality: in all European countries, respondents state ideal ages that are lower than the actual ages. The gap ranges from 1.5 to 4 years.

The shift across Europe in the increasingly high ideal age of becoming a father or mother is of great societal significance because it is likely to lower annual birth rates. There are at least two reasons for this. First, even when births are postponed but not forgone, the annual number of births will decline. Second, some people who have postponed parenthood will eventually not experience it, whether due to

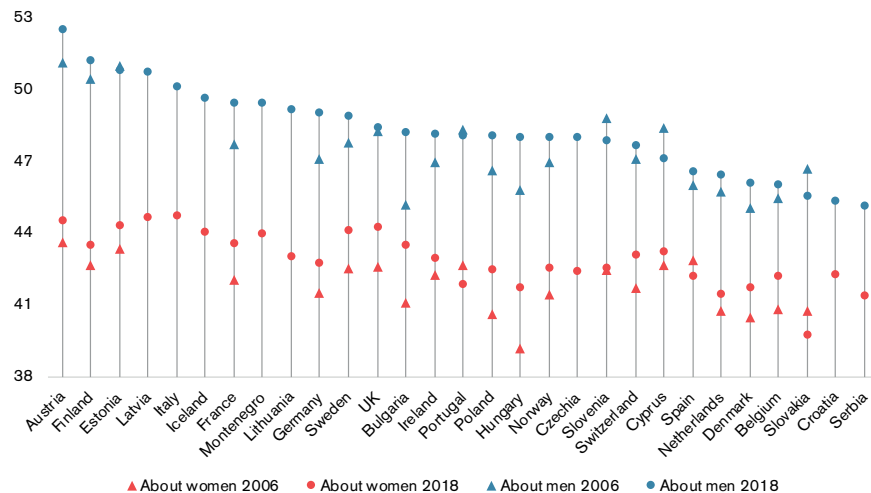
fecundity, relationship statuses, or other social or economic conditions that make it difficult to have a child. Postponement has increased the demand for medically assisted reproductive technologies (ART) and is expected to do so in the coming years, but ART will not solve all fertility issues. Future research will have to address the reasons for and implications of the staggering increase in the ideal ages of parenthood.

**Figure 6. Average ideal age at parenthood in 2006/07 and 2018/19 for women and men**



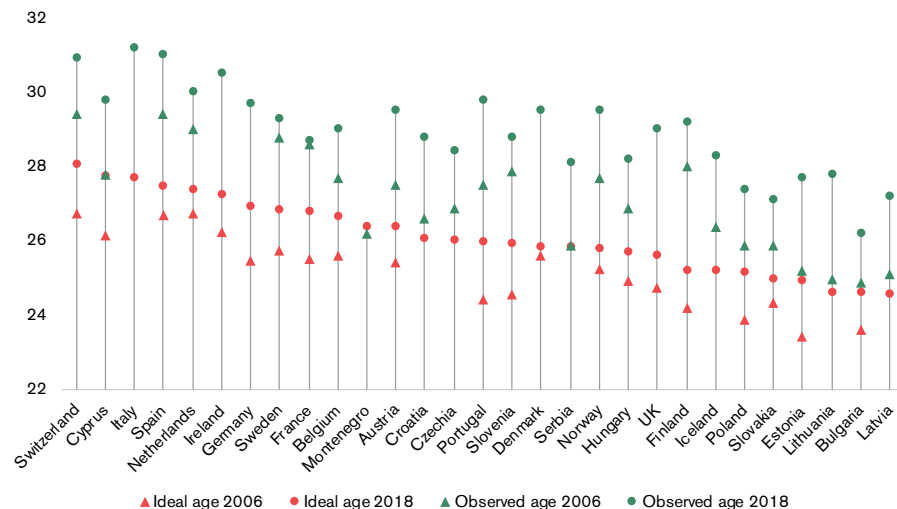
Source: European Social Survey Round 9, 2018, and Round 3, 2006. Post-stratification weights have been applied for country-level analysis. Measure: “In your opinion, what is the ideal age for a girl/boy or woman/man to become a mother/father?”

**Figure 7. Average upper age limit for parenthood in 2006/07 and 2018/19 for women and men**



Source: European Social Survey Round 9, 2018, and Round 3, 2006. Post-stratification weights have been applied for country-level analysis. Measure: "After what age would you say a woman/man is generally too old to consider having any more children?"

**Figure 8. Average ideal and observed ages for becoming a mother in 2006/07 and 2018/19**



Source: European Social Survey Round 9, 2018, and Round 3, 2006, for ideal age and Eurostat for observed age. Post-stratification weights have been applied for country-level analysis. Ideal age measure: "In your opinion, what is the ideal age for a girl or woman to become a mother?"

# The Timing of Life

## Europeans extend the ideal age of retirement

Increased longevity and the Great Recession have triggered debates across Europe about the affordability of pension schemes, and many countries have raised the mandatory age of retirement. To what extent are these demographic and policy shifts reflected in the views of the EU population?

Figure 9 shows the average ideal retirement age for men in 2006/07 and 2018/19, which varies significantly across Europe. In 2006/07, it was below age 60 in Norway, Ireland, Denmark, and Sweden. In all countries with data in both rounds, the average ideal retirement age increased – in most countries by one to two years, but with sharper increases in Poland, Ireland, Belgium and Hungary. Interestingly, in most countries the average ideal retirement age is lower than the mandatory retirement age. For instance, in the Netherlands, the average ideal age is 63.5, but the mandatory retirement age is 67.

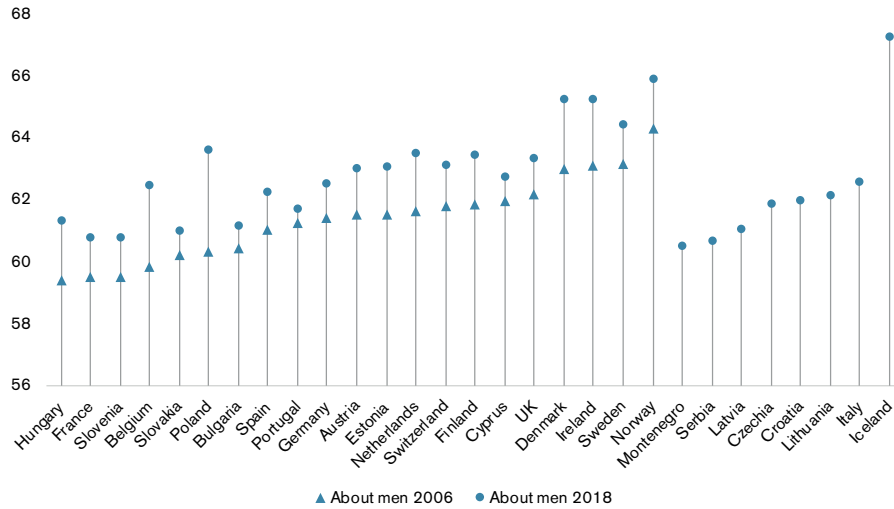
What about women? Figure 10 shows that the ideal retirement age for women varies more across countries than it does for men, and is increasing. In 2006/07 values spanned eight years, from Poland (55) to Norway (63); in 2018/19 it

spanned nine years, from Bulgaria (57) to Iceland (66). In all countries and at both time points, the average ideal age to retire is clearly lower for women than for men.

Differences in ideal ages of retirement for men and women decreased between 2006/07 and 2018/19 but nonetheless exist in all countries other than Portugal. Gender differences are especially pronounced in Eastern European countries, and are close to negligible in some Nordic countries. In 2018/19, for example, the average ideal age for men to retire in Poland was 63.5 but for women was only 58.5; in contrast, in Finland and Sweden the difference was less than one year.

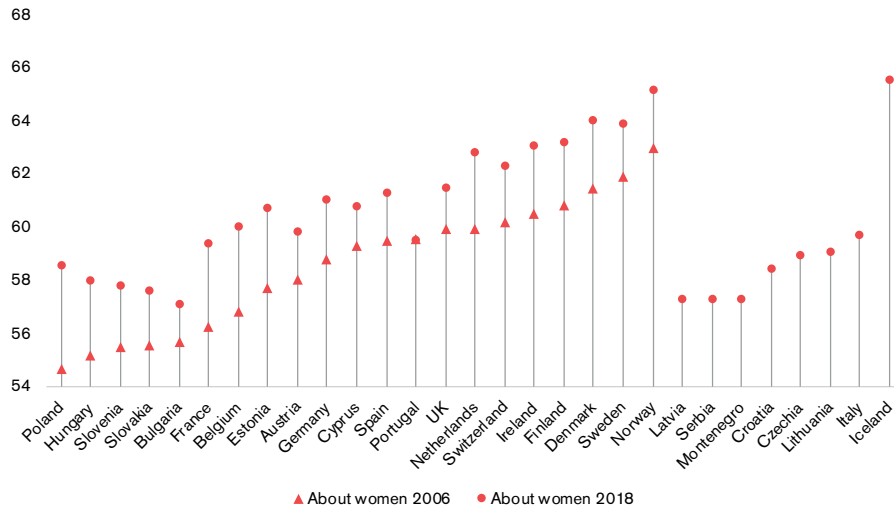
These results indicate that Europeans often prefer to retire earlier than permitted by their country's retirement policies. At the same time, Europeans have in the last decade raised their ideal retirement ages, suggesting that they are adapting to changing economic and demographic realities. Differences in ideal ages of retirement for men and women suggest that in many countries, views of labour market roles remain gendered, although that gap appears to be closing.

**Figure 9. Average ideal retirement age in 2006/07 and 2018/19 for men**



Source: European Social Survey Round 9, 2018, and Round 3, 2006. Post-stratification weights have been applied for country-level analysis. Measure: "In your opinion, what is the ideal age for a man to retire permanently?"

**Figure 10. Average ideal retirement age in 2006/07 and 2018/19 for women**



Source: European Social Survey Round 9, 2018, and Round 3, 2006. Post-stratification weights have been applied for country-level analysis. Measure: "In your opinion, what is the ideal age for a woman to retire permanently?"

## The Timing of Life

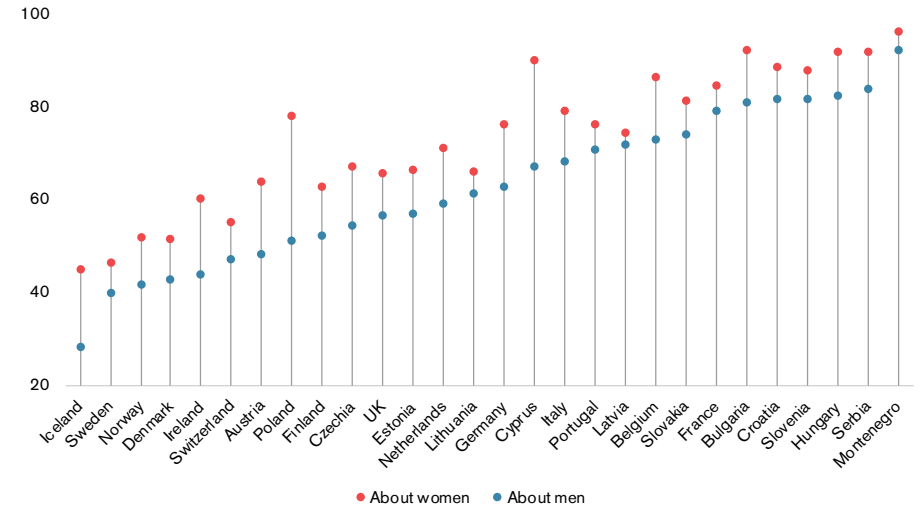
### Working after retirement eligibility is not very popular

Although many people wish to retire before they are eligible for retirement, the opposite can also occur. People may want to remain active in the labour market after they are eligible for retirement. This goal is central to policies meant to foster active ageing. Europeans were asked when they thought that men and women were too old to work 20 hours a week or more. Countries vary widely in terms of specific ages.

Figure 11 shows the percentage of European respondents who in 2018/19 thought that men or women should not be working (full- or part-time) after age 70. The vast majority in Eastern European countries, but also in countries like France

and Belgium, think that people should stop working by 70, whereas in Northern Europe about half think it is permissible to work after 70. Most Europeans therefore do not see it as desirable to work far beyond retirement ages, especially in countries with lower life expectancy. In some Northern and Western European countries, however, sizable proportions think that men and women could still be active in the labour market after age 70. This view is stronger in countries where there is less financial need to work after retirement, which suggests that the continuation of careers in these societies is mainly viewed as an expression of individuals' preferences to remain active in their later years.

**Figure 11. Percentage of Europeans stating that men and women are too old to be working part-time after age 70 in 2018/19**



Source: European Social Survey Round 9, 2018. Post-stratification weights have been applied for country-level analysis. Measure: "After what age would you say a woman/man is generally too old to be working 20 hours or more per week?"



# The Timing of Life

## Conclusion

Data gathered in Round 9 (2018/19) and Round 3 (2006/07) allowed us to document remarkable differences in scripts of life across Europe. Broadly speaking, there is a widespread and growing postponement of life transitions. Also, while the gender revolution has made women's and men's lives more similar, there are instances in which the script for women remains substantially different from that for men. This is apparent in the ages at which they are deemed to become "adult", "middle aged", and "old". " We also documented a visible gap concerning first birth: ideals and behaviour are systematically different, with earlier ages of entering parenthood being viewed as more desirable than the actual ones. Across all societies, we observed increasing tolerance for unmarried cohabitation. Finally, we documented a gap between the ideal ages of retirement and the ages of eligibility or mandatory retirement, which are higher than the ideal ages.

Will these scripts of life become more stable after the disruption linked to the era of the Great Recession? Probably not. We now need to focus on the Covid-19 pandemic, which poses many

short- and long-term implications for the organization of the life course (Settersten et al., 2020), including further postponement of key transitions like finishing education, entering partnership and parenthood (Aassve et al. 2020). Further gaps may emerge between ideals and behaviour, and these gaps might demand policy action. Whether tolerance for diversity or delays will continue to grow, or whether there will be a backlash, may depend on the political direction of European societies.

The pandemic has made us aware that the modern life course to a large extent is based on a premise of predictability. This premise has now been fundamentally challenged. We do not know how long Covid-19 will be with us, and what it will do to notions of "the normal, expectable life" in different societies and historical generations. There will be a strong need for comparative research, across continents, social policy regimes, demographic conditions and cohorts of men and women.

More than ever, it will be important to monitor the timing of life, both in terms of expectations and actual behaviour.

# The Timing of Life

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# ESS data and findings

## Find out more about the European Social Survey

The European Social Survey (ESS) has undertaken 428,437 face-to-face interviews since Round 1 was fielded in 2002/03. All the documentation and data - collected over the subsequent waves up to and including Round 9 (2018/19) - is available to download or view online ([europeansocialsurvey.org](http://europeansocialsurvey.org)).

The ESS became a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) in 2013, meaning all participants contribute to the budget of the project. During Round 9, there were 27 participating countries who deposited data, including 23 ERIC Members. At the time of writing, this is the highest number of members of any ERIC.

By using the tools detailed below - EduNet and NESSTAR - you can join over 160,000 people who have already registered to access ESS data.

Analysis of our data was used in 4,417 academic journal articles, books and chapters, working and conference papers published between 2003-18.

### NESSTAR

The ESS Online Analysis package uses NESSTAR - an online data analysis tool. Documentation to support NESSTAR is available from NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data ([nesstar.com](http://nesstar.com)).

### Topline Results Series

This is the eleventh issue in our Topline Results series of publications, available to download from the ESS website. Other issues in the series include:

1. Trust in Justice (also available in Croatian and Finnish)



2. Welfare Attitudes in Europe (also available in Croatian, Cypriot Greek, Turkish and Ukrainian)

3. Economic Crisis, Quality of Work and Social Integration (also available in Serbian)



4. European Understandings and Evaluations of Democracy (also available in Albanian, Bulgarian, German, Italian, Lithuanian and Slovak)

5. Europeans' Personal and Social Wellbeing (also available in Albanian, French, Hungarian, Italian, Lithuanian, Russian, Slovak, Slovene and Swedish)



6. Social Inequalities in Health and their Determinants (also available in Danish, French, German, Irish Gaelic, Lithuanian, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovene and Spanish)

7. Attitudes towards Immigration and their Antecedents (also available in Finnish, French, Georgian, German, Hebrew, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Slovene and Spanish)



8. The Past, Present and Future of European Welfare Attitudes (also available in Bulgarian, French, German, Lithuanian and Spanish)



9. European Attitudes towards Climate Change and Energy (also available in French, German, Slovak and Spanish)



10. Justice and Fairness in Europe (available in Bulgarian, French and German)



### Findings Booklets

The following compilations of findings have been published and are available for download. These include summaries of several articles, authored by external academics using ESS data.

Exploring public attitudes, informing public policy: Selected findings from the first three rounds



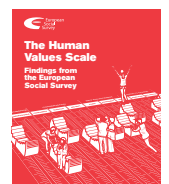
Exploring public attitudes, informing public policy: Selected findings from the first five rounds (available in Bosnian, Latvian and Luxembourgish)

Exploring public attitudes, informing public policy: Selected findings from the first seven rounds (available Bulgarian)



Measuring and Reporting on Europeans' Wellbeing: Findings from the ESS (also available in Estonian)

The Human Values Scale: Findings from the European Social Survey



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# About the ESS

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**ESS is an academically-driven survey that has been conducted across Europe since 2002. The survey measures the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour of diverse populations in more than thirty nations.**

**Undertaken every two years with newly selected, cross-sectional samples, the full dataset contains the results of over 430,000 completed interviews.**

**The European Social Survey has been a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ESS ERIC) since 2013.**

## **ESS topics:**

- Trust in institutions
- Political engagement
- Socio-political values
- Moral and social values
- Social capital
- Social exclusion
- National, ethnic and religious identity
- Health and wellbeing
- Demographic composition
- Education and occupation
- Financial circumstances
- Household circumstances
- Attitudes to welfare
- Trust in criminal justice
- Expressions and experiences of ageism
- Citizenship, involvement and democracy
- Immigration
- Family, work and wellbeing
- Economic morality, justice and fairness
- The organisation of the life-course
- Climate change and energy
- Human values scale

**27 countries participated in Round 9 of the ESS, fielded in 2018/19.**

**Members:** Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden and the UK. **Observer:** Switzerland. **Other Participants:** Montenegro, Serbia and Spain.

Multi-national advisory groups to the ESS ERIC General Assembly are the Methods Advisory Board (MAB), Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) and Finance Committee (FINCOM). The ESS ERIC Headquarters are located at City, University of London.

The ESS ERIC Core Scientific Team includes: GESIS - Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences (Germany); Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium); NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data (Norway); SCP - The Netherlands Institute for Social Research (Netherlands); Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Spain); University of Essex (UK); and University of Ljubljana (Slovenia).

The National Coordinators' (NC) Forum involves national teams from all participating countries.

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