

# More children in Europe with Swedish family policy

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European politicians who want women to have more children should consider the Swedish model with subsidised child care and paid parental leave. This is the conclusion of a new doctoral thesis from the University of Gothenburg.

The study concerns how family policies can make women have more children.

'This is an important issue in many countries, especially in south and [central Europe](#). Without immigration and increased [birth rates](#), the populations of Spain, Italy and Germany are estimated to dwindle to less than 20% of today's numbers over the next 100 years,' says Andrej Kokkonen, doctoral student at the Department of Political Science, University of Gothenburg.

The problem can be solved through family policies that are adapted to people's need for [economic security](#) outside the family.

'If the goal is to make women have more children, you need to enable them to combine children and work,' says Kokkonen.

Subsidised [child care](#) and a paid parental leave, as in Sweden, are the two key features of a national family policy that is centred around the needs of the individual. Subsidised child care and paid parental leave, where the money is paid to the parent who stays at home, provide economic security for a [single parent](#) in case of divorce or separation. This type of

security is lacking in countries with more traditional family policies.

Kokkonen's study also points to the strong effect of family policies on when in life people decide to form a family.

'Earlier studies have missed that people form families earlier in life in countries with family policies centred around the individual. It also turns out that more families are formed in these countries. The reason is that people dare to move in together and plan a family even if they are not sure that the relationship will last. People in more traditional countries are more hesitant in this respect,' says Kokkonen.

This also implies that families formed in countries with family policies centred around the individual are not as stable as families formed elsewhere. Subsidised child care and paid parental leave increase the divorce rate.

Provided by University of Gothenburg

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