

# Do couples over-think the decision to have kids?

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The view of one's own fertility and having children has significantly changed in the last 60 years. In a new study, researchers engaged with more than one hundred Swedes between the ages of 17–90 to discuss

how they regard fertility and family formation.

"Many [older people](#) who took part in the study are worried about how the younger generation reason. They are worried that their children are considering too much before starting a [family](#)," says Maja Bodin, researcher in the EU-funded project, Repronion.

A total of five research groups from the universities of Malmö, Lund, and Copenhagen are included in the overall project. The groups study several aspects of, or challenges around, reproduction and fertility; male fertility, reproductive medicine and health aspects linked to fertility are some examples. Bodin's group is working with awareness issues.

"The focus is on the sociological perspective. The purpose is to look at how people think and reason at different ages and also how this has changed over time. A lot has happened in terms of knowledge and research. The oldest people in the study had children at a time when there were neither [birth control pills](#) nor fertility treatments, which today is seen more as a matter of course," says Bodin.

The participants in the study were able to discuss issues of fertility and [family formation](#) in a total of 26 focus groups. The interviews were conducted between 2019 and 2020.

"It has always been important to have a stable loving relationship before having children, but the requirements and expectations for the relationship have changed. Earlier, maybe you met someone in their teens, or early 20s, had [children](#), and hence the family formation started.

"Today, there is a completely different way of thinking about interchangeability, and also access to contraception, which affects the possibility of having heterosexual relationships that do not necessarily lead to family formation," says Bodin.

Now, childbirth takes place later in life and is preceded by careful planning in terms of both career and housing.

"There are more opportunities today, when it comes to traveling, education and making a career. Many educations are long-term; in addition, a lack of housing was also seen to play a role. With this, family formation has increasingly become a project that is perceived to require careful planning."

At the same time, the development of [reproductive medicine](#) has meant a revolution and far more people today have the opportunity to get help.

"There is also a completely different awareness that has made it more legitimate to talk about problems related to fertility, childbirth and family formation," adds Bodin.

Provided by Malmö University

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