Timing Parenthood
Independence, Family and Ideals of Life

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The present thesis is a qualitative study of reproductive decision-making. It explores ways in which Swedish young adults talk about the timing of parenthood, the ideal life, good parenthood and the auspicious childhood. The work contributes to the debate on why fertility rates are declining and why the transition to parenthood is being postponed in the contemporary Western world. The study illuminates the complexity of reproductive decision-making; it is an exploration of a range of notions and discourses that impact on people’s lives and ways of understanding the world, such as discourses on kin, family, friendship, the romantic relationship, parenthood, age, biology and the independent, individualized individual. It is also a study of individual positioning towards different, often conflicting ideals, and individual strategies when trying to solve the pertinent dilemmas caused by contrasting notions.