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# »Children Born of War«: The Life Course of Children Fathered by German Soldiers in Norway and Denmark during WWII – Some Empirical Results

*Ingvill C. Mochmann & Stein Ugelvik Larsen\**

**Abstract:** »*Kriegskinder: Lebensverläufe von Kindern deutscher Soldaten die während der Okkupation in Norwegen und Dänemark gezeugt wurden - einige empirische Ergebnisse*«. This paper will address a particular group of individuals whose rights are often forgotten in the aftermath of wars and conflicts, the so-called “children born of war”. These are children who have been fathered by a foreign soldier and a local woman. In the first part of this paper, evidence from different countries will be presented and different categories of children born of war will be introduced. In the second part of this paper, some aspects of the life course of Danish and Norwegian children fathered by German occupying forces during WWII will be presented based on the results of a questionnaire survey. Finally, it will be discussed whether information accessible so far may be valid for children born of war in different conflicts at different times and to which extent it can serve as a basis for elaborating particular policies which secure the basic human rights of children born of war.

**Keywords:** children, WWII, stigmatisation, children born of war, life course analysis, German occupation, Denmark, Norway.

## 1. Introduction

Throughout history, there have probably always been children born during and after conflicts and wars where the father has been a member of an enemy, allied or peacekeeping force and the mother a local citizen. As pointed out by Ericsson and Simonsen (2005b:1) with regard to World War II this war “did not only take lives, it also created lives”. This statement is likely to hold also for other wars. Knowledge available so far indicates that the consequences for

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The data used in the empirical part of this paper have been collected and prepared by an international research group working on the research project “A comparative study on Danish, Norwegian and Dutch war children” under the leadership of the principal investigator Prof. Stein Ugelvik Larsen, Department of Comparative Politics, University of Bergen, Norway. Members of the group are Stein Ugelvik Larsen and Elna Johnsen, Norway, Arne Øland, Denmark, Ingvill C. Mochmann, Germany, and Monika Diedrichs, the Netherlands.

many of the children have been devastating, independent of whether the relationship between mother and father was of a loving or exploitative nature. The children are born with a stigma of belonging to the enemy and are often treated as such, both, at the social and political level. Some have been abandoned, abused, mobbed, excluded from family and community and even harassed by the state. Little evidence exists on this topic, as the mothers are often too bitter, shameful or traumatised to talk about it. The children themselves may have no knowledge about their real biological origin or they know, feel and hear about their origin from relatives or community members, but are too afraid to address the issue – they learn from early years that this topic is a taboo. Nevertheless, some information exists from different conflicts and countries such as children fathered by German soldiers and local women in occupied countries during World War II, children fathered by US soldiers and Vietnamese women during the Vietnam War, and children born of rape as a military strategy of “ethnic cleansing” during the civil war in former Yugoslavia (cf. among others War and Children Identity Project reports 2001, 2002, and 2003).

In the first part of this paper, knowledge from different countries will be presented and different categories of children born of war will be introduced. In particular, detailed information exists on the life courses of Norwegian and Danish children fathered by German soldiers during WWII. These children have raised their voice during the past few decades and research projects have analysed their lives. Thus, in the second part of this paper, results from a questionnaire survey among Danish and Norwegian children will be presented. In the third part it will be discussed to which extent the results presented in part two and other knowledge available so far may be valid for children born of war in different conflicts at different times and to which extent the results can serve as a basis for elaborating particular policies which secure the basic human rights of children born of war.

Although, there have probably always been children born of war this has until the beginning of the 21st century not been reflected in research on the topic and access to data, literature and information is rather scarce. For some countries historical documents exist, newspaper articles as well as autobiographies or biographies of the children. In the case of Norway even administrative records of children were available from those born in the “Lebensborn” institutions. As part of a larger research project on Norwegian children fathered by German soldiers, these were later connected to a Norwegian population data base containing official statistical data in order to analyse the social structural position of Norwegian children born of war and their life course compared to other Norwegian children (for details cf. Ellingsen 2004:44 ff.). However, particularly, an overall assessment of knowledge and information on children born of war is missing which examines similarities and differences across time and nations. Nevertheless, so far there seems to be an agreement among practitioners, scientists and others concerned with the issue that

- children born of war are discriminated and stigmatised in the home countries simply due to the fact that their fathers belong to a foreign force, and that
- the discrimination and stigmatisation has had a lifelong negative impact on the children and life opportunities, and thus
- children born of war belong to a particular vulnerable group whose human rights need special advocacy.

However, which evidence is there actually with respect to this assumed discrimination and stigmatisation? This question is often raised the moment special programmes are demanded to secure the rights of children born of war. Certainly, all children experiencing wars are or may be exposed to traumatic events. Furthermore, many children are exposed to discrimination such as HIV-infected children, refugees, child soldiers and poor children. Even though information might be scarce and not representative, this paper will try to prove, that children born of war are most likely to belong to a particularly exposed group in post-conflict situations and that, although variations may exist across time and nations, the rights of these children have to be settled in international law. In the empirical part, results from questionnaire surveys based on 336 Norwegian and 209 Danish children born of war will be used. Health problems during adolescence until present, experiences during school years and whether they experienced negative relationship in family are analysed. The aim is two-fold: firstly, to find out whether there are indications that the Norwegian and Danish children fathered by German soldiers and local women during WWII were discriminated and stigmatised on any of these fields and secondly, whether differences exist between the two Scandinavian countries.

## 2. Definition of “children born of war”

Terminology used in describing children fathered by enemy soldiers in different conflicts varies. In Norway, for example, the neutral term used to characterise children fathered by German soldiers and Norwegian women during WWII is “krigsbarn” (war children). Nevertheless, in many other countries the term “war children” is used to describe a certain generation who experiences war times. Of course, the Norwegians also had their rather common term “tyskerunger”, the French used the expression “Enfants de Boches”, and the Dutch “moeffenkinder”, labelling them as German kid or child of a “(German) whore”. However, such expressions are hardly useable in scientific terms to describe a certain part of a population. The term “Wehrmachtskinder” introduced by Drolshagen (2005) might be meaningful with regard to describing children fathered by German soldiers in occupied territories during WWII, however, is not applicable as a concept describing children born of war in conflict and war across time and nation. In Vietnam, for example, the children of US soldiers and Vietnamese women were called “Bui doi” (dust of life)

(Grieg 2001:20). Many other expressions are used to describe children born in different wars, some will be introduced later in this paper, common for most are that their names have a negative touch. Thus, the term “children born of war” applied by Carpenter (2005:10) may seem the most appropriate to use and will be applied in this paper.

### 2.1 Four categories of “children born of war”

The “War and Children Identity Project” (WCIP) defines children born of war as “a child that has one parent that was part of an army or peace keeping force and the other parent a local citizen where the weight is on the stigma these children can be subject to as a result of their background” (WCIP 2006). WCIP focuses on:

- Children who receive stigma as a result of being born by women who had a relationship with foreign soldiers, peacekeeping soldiers or allied forces.
- Children born as a result of sexualised violence / rape used as war strategy.

Based on this definition, children born of war might be categorised in four main types: 1) children of enemy soldiers, 2) children of soldiers from occupational forces, 3) children of child soldiers and 4) children of peacekeeping forces. The main characteristics of the groups will be briefly described in the following:

1) Children of enemy soldiers are fathered by foreign soldiers who are located in the country or region and clearly defined as enemies such as German soldiers in Norway, Denmark, Netherlands, France, and Russia during WWII or Bosnian Serb Army in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the war in former Yugoslavia in the 1990s and US soldiers in Vietnam.<sup>1</sup>

2) In the case of children of soldiers from occupational forces the soldiers can be seen as enemies or allied, depending on the view of the local population. The allied forces occupying Germany in the post WWII years were for example in the population by some conceived as saviours and by others as enemies. In the case of Canadian troops in Great Britain or the Netherlands or US troops on Iceland, these were allied troops. Nevertheless, a liaison between local women and participants of the allied forces was often not accepted in the community and both mothers and children were stigmatised (cf. Ericsson and Simonsen 2005:44).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> An example of a child fathered by an enemy soldier is Anni Frid, one part of the popular group ABBA, who was born in Norway as a child of a Norwegian woman and a German soldier. She thought her father had died during the war, but a German fan got her in contact with him, and they finally met in 1977 (see Grieg 2001:55ff.).

<sup>2</sup> Eric Clapton, for example, is son of a Canadian soldier from Montreal and a British woman. Children of Canadian soldiers in Europe were often referred to as “war leftovers” (Grieg 2001:20).

3) In recent years, the topic of children born by child soldiers has reached the public agenda. An estimated 25.000 children, of whom 7.500 are girls have been abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda since the start of the conflict. Among these, some 1000 are "child mothers" who conceived while in captivity (UN News Centre, 2006). This implies that in Uganda alone more than 1000 babies can be assumed to have been born from girl soldiers. Considering that girls are involved in many other wars and conflicts around the world such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sierra Leona and Indonesia, it becomes clear that this is not a marginal problem, particularly when also taking into account that the number may be assumed to be even higher as many girls probably will not tell because of shame and not wanting to be stigmatised.

4) Finally, the last category includes children fathered by members of peacekeeping forces. In its annual report 2001 the "War and children identity project" (Grieg, 2001:19) WCIP informed that children had been born as result of peacekeeping missions in countries like Korea, Cambodia and Liberia. It was argued that with increasing involvement in conflicts probably more UN-children would be born and several instruments the UN should implement to secure the rights of these children were addressed, such as; soldiers should be informed about the responsibilities following involvement with local women, they should be economic responsible for the children, also after returning to their home country. The WCIP also recommended that similar responsibilities should hold for all armies. Finally, in 2006 the UN actually prepared a draft strategy as part of efforts by the United Nations to enforce its "zero tolerance" policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. The "Draft United Nations policy statement and draft United Nations comprehensive strategy on assistance and support to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations staff or related personnel" states that:

The United Nations commits to providing assistance and support to three different categories of persons: (a) "complainants"; (b) "victims"; and (c) children born as a result of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations staff or related personnel. This commitment, however, in no way diminishes or replaces the responsibility of the individual perpetrators of acts of sexual exploitation and abuse. (UN, A/60/877:5, 2006)

This UN policy might be of great importance to children born of war world wide as many of the social, political and economic rights and support systems addressed in the document would be applicable also in other war and conflicts. The UN policy might thus serve as best practise for personnel involved in other national and other international military and peacekeeping operations.

## 2.2 Context of conception – love, rape or prostitution

Within each of the above described categories a further distinction might be drawn between children of consensual relationships, children of rape and sex-

ual exploitation and children of prostitutes. It should be emphasised, however, that it is often difficult to clearly differentiate between what is exploitation and what is consensual in situation of wars and crisis. Examples of children of prostitutes are children of US soldiers based in the Philippines and local women working in the entertainment industry. 25.000 children are estimated to have been fathered by US soldiers. Children of Filipino women and US soldiers are, among others, called "Babay na sa" (bye-bye to daddy) (Grieg 2001:11 & 20). With regard to children of rape, particularly where mass rape was used as a military strategy of ethnic cleansing with the aim of impregnating women and girls, whole societies were left traumatised. The children become the symbol of the trauma the nation went through while society prefers not to acknowledge their needs (UNIFEM Report 2003, here in Carpenter 2005:4). These children are often referred to as "devil's children" (Rwanda), "children of shame" (East Timor), "monster babies" (Nicaragua) and this labeling shows how these children are perceived in their home country.

It might be argued that children born of war rape, genocide and sexual exploitation are not comparable to children born based on consensual relationships. However, research results on children from WWII fathered by German soldiers in several European countries indicate there is no guarantee the child will have a good life although it was conceived in a love affair – many children have grown up with hatred, rejection, mobbing and discrimination both in the family and society, often themselves not knowing about their biological background (cf. for information from different countries see among others Olsen 2002, Picaper and Norz, 2004, Ericsson and Simonsen 2005a, Ericsson and Simonsen (ed.) 2005b, Mochmann and Larsen 2005). Reversely, an eastern German man who was a result of a rape by Russian soldiers when the Red Army invaded Germany in 1945 was affectionately raised by his mother who chose to keep him rather than sending him away to a children's home in Moscow (Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk 2007). Furthermore, there are many examples of children born where the biological origin cannot be hidden, such as children of afro-American allied soldiers and local German women born after WWII and these children were often stigmatised although not conceived by rape (cf. Lemke Muniz de Faria 2002).

Thus, splitting up the group of children born of war at such an early stage in research seems unproductive and further research should be carried out in order to find out more about similarities and differences in discrimination and stigmatisation of children born of war prior to further efforts to differentiate among the different categories and background of their conception. The inclusion of all children born of war is also of significance for the purposes of advocacy as the size of the group indicates the magnitude of the problem. This aspect will be addressed further in the following section.

## 2.3 The magnitude of the “problem”

Table 1: Estimates of Children by Military Personnel 1914-2000

Country Father/ Mother	Years of military pre- sence	Numbers
French and British/ German	1914-1918	15000
Japanese/ Korean	1940-1945	100+
American/ British	1941-1948	23000
Canadian/ British	1940-1947	22000+
Canadian/ Rest of Europe (mostly Dutch)	1945-1946	8000
American/ Rest of Europe	1945-1946	not known
American/ West-German	1945-1956	96000
British/ Soviet	1941-1945	14+
UN(US)/ Korean	1950	2000+
German/ Norwegian	1940-1945	12000
German/ France	1941-1945	80000
German/ Dutch	1941-1945	10000-50000
Austrian/ US	1945-1955	2000+
US/ Philippines	1965-1982	52000
Indonesia/ East-Timor	1975-1999	5000
US/ Vietnamese	1965-1975	40000
Liberia	1990-1998	25000+
Japanese/Chinese	1945-1950	19000+
Rwanda	1993	2000-5000
Serb/ Bosnian	1992	4000
UNTAC/ Cambodia	1992-1997	25000

(Source: a reduced version of the overview table published in Grieg 2001: 8-9)

It is not known how many children are born of war. Examples of this topic being raised can be traced back to World War I. About 15.000 German children are estimated to have been fathered by French and British soldiers from 1914-1918 (Grieg 2001:21). In Northern Europe where the German occupation force held records of children by German soldiers during the World War II the numbers are in tens of thousands. Some estimate that the number of American/Asian children born after the Vietnam War numbers more than 100 000. Nevertheless, more than 500.000 war children might be assumed to live today (Grieg 2001:7). An overview with some of the estimates by the War and Children Identity Project has collected from various sources is given in the Table 1.

Although Table 1 only presents some of the wars and conflicts where war children have been born and does not include children from more recent or ongoing conflicts it clearly points out that this is a global and timeless phe-



nomenon. As pointed out above, in Northern Uganda alone at least 1.000 children are expected to have been born by abducted girls soldiers forced to serve as wives or sex slaves to leaders in the Lord Resistance Army (LRA).

### 3. Discrimination and stigmatisation of Norwegian and Danish children fathered by German soldiers during WWII – some research results

During the German occupation of Norway 1940-45 between 10.000 and 12.000 children were born by German soldiers and Norwegian women. Most of these children were a result of consensual relationships. Nevertheless, it proves that being conceived in a love affair, even if the mother tried to help the child and protect it, is not necessarily a ticket to a good life for these children. Biographies and research show that many of the Norwegian children have been discriminated and stigmatised and in many cases even the Norwegian state was actively involved in this treatment (cf. Borgersrud 2004). For example, analyses of register data show these children have poorer health, higher suicide rates, less education and income than other Norwegians from the same age cohort (Ellingsen 2004). Furthermore, the children were often considered enemies in the Norwegian population, with the worry – particularly in the first post-war WWII years that they might become a troop of marching, German friendly young adults who could become a threat to Norway in future (Ericsson and Simonsen 2005a:46). In 1986 Norwegian children fathered by German soldiers established the Norwegian war child association (NKBF). This association has been fighting for a financial compensation by the Norwegian state, arguing the State neglected its responsibility to secure the rights of these children in post-war Norway. A state-funded research project was initiated to analyse the life course of the children (cf. NFI-project report 2007). Independent of the outcome of the survey, however, the Norwegian state decided in 2005 to give the children – 60 years after the war – a small financial compensation (for details on the compensation see Justissekretariatene 2006). Many children thought this was far too little compared to the abuses they had been exposed to and complained to the European Court for Human Rights in Strasbourg in 2003 about the treatment they endured as “war children”, as well as the Norwegian authorities’ failure to take any remedial measures subsequently. July 2007 the Court declared the application inadmissible (European Court of Human Rights 2007).

The Danish war child association (DKBF) was established in 1996. The driving force behind its establishment was the need of its founder(s) to find knowledge about the biological background and identity after years of secrecy, deception and lies about their origin (Øland 2005:53). According to official statistics approximately 5.500 children were born with Danish mothers and German fathers during the German occupation of Denmark 1940-45. However,

as argued by Øland (2005:60ff.), the precise number will never be known, but there may be more than 8.000 and due to illegal abortion, secret adoption, emigration etc. even more.

In the following, results from questionnaire surveys based on 336 Norwegian and 209 Danish children born of war will be presented. The survey was carried out among 650 members of the Norwegian war child association (NKBF) in 1997 and almost 400 members of the Danish war child association (DKBF) in 2003. The survey was carried out by means of written questionnaires which included both standardised and open-ended questions. The survey includes altogether 250 questions about childhood, youth, parents, identity, school years, health, experiences, etc. The response rate was approximately 50% in both countries. It should be emphasised that the sample is not representative for all children born of war in neither country as the sample is mainly drawn from members of the associations. Furthermore, the number of women is larger than men in both countries, although the difference is bigger in Norway (67% women, 33% men) than Denmark (59% women, 41% men). The aim of the analysis is to find out whether there are indications that the Norwegian and Danish children fathered by German soldiers and local women during WWII were discriminated and stigmatised and whether differences exist between the two countries in the area of health problems while adolescence until present, experiences during school years and whether they experienced negative relationship in family.

These children may not be representative for all children born of war, neither in World War II context nor in European or world-wide context. Nevertheless, the results may give us important information regarding the fate and experiences of this population group – between 50 and 60 years old at the time of the surveys – which go beyond the description of life biographies. This information may thus provide useful knowledge which, both, war children born today as well as in future may profit from.

### 3.1 The evaluation of personal health during adolescence until today

As the results of health can be assumed to be biased with regard to gender the figures listed in Table 2 have been divided with respect to gender in both countries. Women may generally be inclined to have certain types of medical problems and to see medical services. Thus, Table 2 indicates that women in both countries are more likely to have any of the listed health problems compared to men. Nevertheless, the overall number of men and women in Norway who have had any of the problems is, in all areas, almost the double as the Danish sample. This indicates that independent of gender the Norwegian children seem to have experienced bigger health problems than the Danish children born of war. 44,4% of Norwegian women and 32,4% of the men have concentration difficulties compared to 22,8% of the Danish women and 20% of the Danish

men. With regard to “sadness or depression” 45,9% Norwegian men and only 22,4% Danish men claim to have experienced this. Among the women the difference is not so big, only 55,6% in Norway compared to 48% in Denmark. Also with regard to “nightmares about war and evil”, restlessness”, “tiredness beyond normal” and “sleeping problems” rather big differences exist between the two countries. In Norway, even more than half of the men say they have experienced restlessness and almost 45% of the women. Finally, whereas 1/3 of Norwegian men and half of the women have been in contact with the health system due to these problems, this number is only 12,9% and 30,9% respectively in Denmark.

Table 2: Health problems during adolescence until present  
(multiple answers in %)<sup>3</sup>

	Norway		Denmark	
	Men (N=111)	Women (N=225)	Men (N=85)	Women (N=123)
Concentration difficulties	32,4	44,4	20,0	22,8
Tiredness beyond normal	25,2	39,6	14,1	28,5
Restlessness	52,3	44,9	28,2	35,8
Dizziness	18,0	23,1	11,8	24,4
Sleeping problems	31,5	43,1	16,5	35,0
Nightmares about war and evil	17,1	22,7	5,9	8,1
Problems in contact with other people	26,1	27,1	17,6	24,4
Sadness or depression	45,9	55,6	22,4	48,0
Anxiety	30,6	41,8	12,9	29,3
Irritation	42,3	37,3	36,5	34,1
Easy emotional reactions	38,7	40,0	31,8	30,9
Can't stand watching war films	22,5	28,4	15,3	24,4
Contact with health system due to problem	31,5	50,2	12,9	30,9
Hospital stay due to problem	11,7	13,8	4,7	13,0

<sup>3</sup> Question: Have you during adolescence and until today experienced any of the following problems?

### 3.2 Experiences during school years and relationship in family while growing up

Now, turning to the question of negative and positive experiences during school years, some differences between the countries are revealed.<sup>4</sup> For example, 45,2% of the Norwegians answer having been called a “German kid” whereas this has only happened to 13,4% in the Danish sample. Similarly, the Norwegian child of a German soldier was “physically mobbed by adults” four times as much (15,2%) and “physically mobbed by other children and youth” three times as much (25,6%) as a Danish one (4,3% and 7,7% respectively). And whereas 35,7% of the Norwegians were “exposed to wicked tongues“ this number is only 10% among the Danes. In general, as many as 37,5% of the Norwegians answer they “had to accept many insults” compared to 11% of the Danes. Looking at some questions addressing the school situation, 18,5% of the respondents in the Norwegian sample and only 7,7% of the Danish answer “Teachers looked down at me – got no help when mobbed” and 8% of the Norwegians and 1,9% were “pointed out as “German kid” by the teachers”. Also on the way to and from school the Norwegian children were to a larger extent exposed to mobbing than the Danish children – 20,2% were “often beaten up” compared to 5,3% in Denmark. However, at the same time, for example, in both countries the number saying “I had few friends and was mostly by myself” is almost equal (25% in Norway and 22,5% in Denmark). Furthermore, more Norwegians than Danes say “school time was normal and they never felt threatened or heard anything bad” and 36,9% of the Norwegians say “there was always someone who took my side when I was in difficulties”, whereas the number in Denmark is only 9,1%. This might be explained the way the question was asked in the survey. The respondents had been asked to mark those situations which took place. As the Danes had less negative experiences than the Norwegians they might not feel that the positive values apply to their situation. However, whether this is an impact of the survey and coding or is explained by any other factors need further investigation.

The last area to be discussed here with regard to discrimination and stigmatisation of children born of war addresses situations experienced while growing up in the close family. Many children grew up in different family settings and conditions and sometimes these changed over the years. Whereas some were adopted or grew up with foster parents others grew up with grandparents or other close relatives. The reasons mothers left their children behind were many; some wanted to escape stigmatisation and start a new life somewhere else, others thought it would be better for the child, others again saw no other possibility as they had no job or money to raise a child. In many cases the mothers

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<sup>4</sup> Question text: Here I have listed some situations there might be that children born of war experienced in school or on the way to/from school. Did any of these happen to you? (mark those alternatives which you think fits with your situation during school years).

kept the children, but married a native man and the child grew up with the mother and stepfather. Table 3 shows experiences of Danish and Norwegian children born of war based on whether they grew up with adoptive parents, foster parents and grand parents or mother and stepfather.

In order to say whether the children born of war in either country were more exposed to these negative experiences than other children from the same cohort would require appropriate data. Many children experienced poverty and bad economy and little food after the war as well as alcohol abuse and violence. Nevertheless, the differences between Norway and Denmark are still quite interesting and seem to coincide with the impressions of the results presented in the other areas that the Norwegians have been more exposed to negative experiences than the Danes. Striking is that in Denmark children who grew up with adoptive-, foster- or grandparents had significantly less negative experiences than those who grew up with mother and stepfather. This does not hold for Norway where those who grew up with adoptive-, foster- or grandparents even have a higher number of negative experiences in some areas compared to those who grew up with mother and stepfather. For example, 8% of those who grew up with adoptive-, foster- or grandparents were exposed to sporadic violence, whereas this is only 1,9% among the Danish. Among those who grew up with mother and stepfather the numbers are 7,4% in Norway and in Denmark even 9,6%. Furthermore, almost 10% of the Norwegians were exposed to psychological violence from adoptive-, foster- and grandparents and only 2,9% of those in the Denmark. Also, here the number is quite high among those who grew up with mother and stepfather, 7,7% and 8,1%, respectively. Actually, in almost all areas related to violence, the Danish children who grew up with mother and stepfather seem to have experienced the most violence - sporadic violence from stepfather against mother (11%) and sporadic violence themselves from stepfather or mother (9,6%) or regular violence from mother and stepfather (5,7%) - and the highest alcohol consumption (6,2%). Finally, there seem to be differences also with regard to the sexual abuse where the numbers are also higher in Norway than Denmark. However, this difference may also be explained by the higher number of women in the Norwegian sample, rather than being a country difference.

Table 3: Experienced negative relationship in family (multiple answers in %)<sup>5</sup>

	Norway (N=336)		Denmark (N=209)	
	Grew up with adoptive parents/ foster parents/ grandparents	Grew up with mother and stepfather	Grew up with adoptive parents/ foster parents/ grandparents	Grew up with mother and stepfather
Due to bad economy, too little food	13,7	14,6	9,6	13,4
Big alcohol consumption	5,1	5,4	1,4	6,2
Sporadic violence from husband against wife (stepfather against mother)	4,5	8,0	1,0	11,0
Sporadic violence against you as child	8,0	7,4	1,9	9,6
Regular violence from husband against wife (stepfather against mother)	1,8	2,1	1,0	4,8
Regular violence against you from adoptive father etc./ stepfather	2,7	<i>see next category</i>	1,4	<i>see next category</i>
Regular violence against you from adoptive mother/ mother and stepfather	3,3	4,2 <sup>6</sup>	1,4	5,7 <sup>6</sup>
Sexual abuse by adoptive father etc./ stepfather	3,6	2,1	1,0	1,9
Sexual abuse by adoptive mother	4,2	0,3	0,5	-
Sexual abuse by others	not asked	4,5	not asked	1,4
Psychological violence from parents/ others	9,8	7,7	2,9	8,1
Mobbed by sisters/ brothers, grown ups did not care	3,6	2,1	0,5	1,9

<sup>5</sup> Question text: Today it is often being argued that children suffer injury when growing up due to difficult conditions in the family. Did you while growing up with your adoptive parents, foster parents, grandparents/relative experience any of the following ? (mark what fits with when you grew up). The questions asked to those who grew up with their mother and stepfather are the same.

<sup>6</sup> The number includes both mother and stepfather.

In summary, obviously differences exist with regard to the experiences of Danish and Norwegian children born of war and how they were treated in the respective families, communities and society with regard to the events presented here. However, it should be emphasised that, although the number is higher in Norway compared to Denmark the majority of the respondents have not experienced any of the negative events in either country. Nevertheless, the picture is probably much more differentiated and further analysis and the inclusion of factors from other areas are necessary. For example, among the Norwegians almost 65% knew about their German background when growing up, only 47% of the Danes did. This can have had an impact both on how the child was treated in society and how it behaved. It could also indicate that it was easier to keep this information confidential in Denmark than in Norway. This knowledge about the background might again have had an important impact on the children and their possibility to develop an identity, which again might have had an impact on their psychological well-being. In the Danish case, Øland (2005:68) argues that due to the silence about their origin, both in private and public life, many of the children grew up among others in confusion, with identity problems and vague feelings of guilt. Which impact identity and knowledge about biological background has had on the personal development and well-being of Danish and Norwegian children born of war will be analysed and discussed in detail in future research work.

#### 4. Measures to secure the individual, societal and legal rights of children born of war in post-conflict situations

The results presented above, indicate that at least Norwegian children fathered by German soldiers during WWII have been exposed to stigmatisation and discrimination. In order to say whether this holds also for Denmark, further analysis which compares Danish children of German fathers to Danes of the same cohort are required. The results emphasise that differences may exist between countries even in same conflicts with regard to how children born of war are treated in the society. With regard to children born of wartime rape and sexual exploitation in conflict zones the case studies documented in *Born of War* (Carpenter 2007) suggest that these children constitute a particularly vulnerable category in conflict zones. They often face risks such as discrimination, infanticide, loss of health care, education and other rights guaranteed to all children under international law. The results presented in Carpenter's book will clarify whether obvious differences between countries and conflicts among these children exist.

As it can be expected that children born of war will be a part of post-conflict situations awareness needs to be increased towards discrimination and stigmatisation these children may be exposed to both from the closest family as well as from the community and society.

The War and children Identity Report 2001 emphasises five ways in which the children born of war can be assisted (p.14):

- Provide material support to mothers and children
- Information campaigns to prevent discriminations
- Assistance in claiming compensation from fathers
- Assistance in claiming compensations from governments
- Assistance in locating father (and mothers) of children born of war

In addition, further steps must be implemented at national and international level to secure the rights of children born of war. There must be more focus on the protection and interest of the child. i.e. clear laws and regulation must exist regarding birth registration, citizenship, access to facilities such as school and health system. The rights of children born of war must be incorporated in national and international legislation in such a way they exist independent of a conflict because in peace agreements the rights of “enemy” children will never play a crucial role on the agenda – their rights must therefore be clarified prior to conflicts.

How important it is to provide information to the society concerning children born of sexual exploitation and abuse is clearly seen by the impact of the film “Grbavica”. The film produced in 2006 told the story of the relationship between a Bosnian woman who had been raped by a Serbian soldier during the civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and gave birth to a daughter. This film created a shock in society and raised the awareness of the topic in the society. A positive consequence of the movie was that the rape victims were acknowledged as victims of war and do now receive a small pension (International Center for Transitional Justice 2006).

## 5. Conclusion and outlook

As long as there are conflicts and wars, children belonging to different sides will be born, whether from love affairs, exploitation or rape and being fathered by soldiers, peacekeeping forces, humanitarian workers etc. As emphasised in this paper examples exist from all over the world and so far probably only the top part of the extension of the problem is known. A survey conducted by Carpenter (2005) among humanitarian organisations shows that most organisations have not even considered that such a group might exist. This leads to the situation where on the one hand evidence is requested in order to introduce particular programmes for special groups. But on the other hand, with regard to children born of war those working in the front line normally being the first to get in touch and get a grip on the extension of such a problem are often unaware of this category of children – and the children are too small to raise their voice and the mothers often too shameful to tell their story. Thus, it would be of importance for further survey research, to cooperate with humanitarian organisations and non-governmental organisations operating in war and conflict



areas. On the basis of registration schemes, information on children born of war could be collected where a procedure must be implemented which secures the rights of these children without simultaneously increasing their stigmatisation making them even more vulnerable or even putting their lives at risk.<sup>7</sup> Only by expanding the evidence base on children born of war, research can be carried out which is necessary to analyse the discrimination and stigmatisation of this special group across time and nations.

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<sup>7</sup> This and other topics were discussed intensively by a group of researchers, authors and others working on and with children born of war at a meeting which took place in Cologne in 2006. For further information see Mochmann 2006.

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