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Living conditions of Norwegian war children

A register-based study

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Preface 2004

A three-year research project on the childhood circumstances of war children (*Oppvekstvilkår for krigsbarna*) was initiated in the autumn of 2001. The project has been funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Children and Families, and is part of the welfare programme on society, family and childhood (*Velferdsprogrammet - samfunn, familie, oppvekst*) in the Research Council of Norway, under Steinar Kristiansen, senior adviser, and Professor Bjørn Hvinden, head of research. The project is based at the Department of Culture Studies, University of Oslo.

The research group consisted of Dr Lars Borgersrud, researcher at the Department of Culture Studies, Dag Ellingsen, senior adviser at Statistics Norway, Professor Kjersti Ericsson, from the Department of Criminology and Sociology of Law, and Dr Eva Simonsen, researcher. The project leader was Professor Anne Eriksen, from the Department of Culture Studies. Three reports have been published by the project group to date:

- Lars Borgersrud: *Overlatt til svenske myndigheter. De norske krigsbarna som ble sendt til Sverige i 1945* (Handed over to the Swedish authorities. The Norwegian war children who were sent to Sweden in 1945). Unifob/Department of Culture Studies, University of Oslo 2002.
- Eva Simonsen and Kjersti Ericsson: *Krigsbarn i fredstid – sosialpolitiske og profesjonelle føringer i synet på tysk-norske krigsbarn 1945 -1947* (War children in peacetime – social policy and professional guidance on German-Norwegian war children 1945–1947). Department of Criminology and Sociology of Law, University of Oslo 2004.
- Lars Borgersrud: *Staten og krigsbarna. En historisk undersøkelse av statsmyndighetenes behandling av krigsbarna i de første etterkrigsårene* (The State and war children. A historical study of government authorities' treatment of war children in the early post-war era). Department of Culture Studies, University of Oslo 2004.

This fourth report from the project sheds light on the living conditions of a sample of war children, based on data from electronic registers. An article on this report has already been published in Statistics Norway's journal *Samfunnspeilet* no. 4/2004, under the title *Mange krigsbarn med vanskelige levekår* (Many war children had difficult living conditions).

Publication of Kjersti Ericsson and Eva Simonsen's book, which is based on the life stories of war children, is planned for early 2005. The final publication planned is a book entitled Children of World War II – The Hidden Enemy Legacy, which is expected to be published in spring 2005.

I have benefited greatly from working with Borgersrud, Ericsson and Simonsen in the research group. The staff at the National Archives of Norway were very helpful in my work on the German archives, and a special mention goes to Kåre Olsen, Deputy Keeper of Public Records, for his assistance. In Statistics Norway, researchers Helge Brunborg, Hege Kitterød and Lars Østby served as a well-qualified support group. Finn Gjertsen, adviser, provided valuable input for the interpretation of the cause of death statistics. Turid Sætre, senior consultant at Statistics Norway, carried out most of the work involved in finding the national identity numbers of war children. Marianne Lilleaas, a politics student, helped me with the registration work at the National Archives of Norway, as well as some of the searches at Statistics Norway. Roar Vålen, senior consultant, and Anders Akselsen, adviser, set up and linked the registers, and produced tables according to my requirements. Knut Strøm, senior consultant, performed these same tasks for 'cause of death'.

The project research group, Statistics Norway's research group, Kåre Olsen at the National Archives of Norway and the Danish historian Anette Warring have all read and commented on the manuscript. Thank you to everyone for your help.

Preface 2023

This report is a direct translation of the report by Dag Ellingsen published in 2004. Some references have been updated.

The translation is funded by the Children Born of War Project foundation. Since publication of the report in 2004, the field of research has expanded considerably. However, this remains the only published report that has used systematically collected register data from both the war and post-war period. In conjunction with the ERC project EuroWARCHILD at the University of Oslo, the foundation therefore felt it would be worthwile to have the report translated, thus reaching a wider international audience.

The translation was carried out by Akasie språktjenester AS and was quality assured by the report's author. Dag Ellingsen now works as a researcher at the Work Research Institute at Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet) and is a professor at the Norwegian Police University College. Ingvill Constanze Ødegaard, professor and chair at the foundation, was also involved in the quality assurance process.

Abstract

War children in this context are defined as children with a German father and Norwegian mother, born during or shortly after World War II. The study aims to provide the most representative picture possible of the living conditions of these children, in contrast to previous presentations, which were based on highly skewed samples. The methodology is new, in that we start with a sample of children registered in handwritten German war archives, which are located at the National Archives of Norway. We also managed to trace the national identity numbers of a significant proportion of these children and were thus able to retrieve data about their living conditions from modern registers. We believe that this methodology also has considerable potential in relation to other relevant research work.

The picture we formed of the war children's living conditions is complex. On the one hand, various findings indicate that many war children's living conditions were poorer than that of their peers. Mortality in the period from 1960 to the present day is markedly higher among war children. Suicide mortality is higher than among their peers, as is mortality due to cardiovascular disease. Several war children have claimed disability pension at a relatively young age. Overall, this suggests that a significant proportion has had health problems and consequently a lower quality of life. The divorce rate is markedly higher among women. Fewer have a higher education. Their income level is lower, as is their level of wealth.

Conversely, a number of similarities are also seen between the war children, their peers and a comparison group of other children with single mothers. Very few have never married. The divorce rate among men is roughly the same as among their peers. Those who have had children, have had, on average, as many children as others born in the same period. Many war children seem to have lived their lives in the same way as 'most people', at least from the outside: they have a normal education, an average income, live well, are married, and have children. Overall, the impression that is formed is social development patterns that are influenced by stigmatising processes but also by a considerable potential for more 'restorative' life courses. This study can demonstrate numerous differences in living conditions between war children and other groups that we have used for comparison. However, based on the data and the methodology that were available to us within the time and resources at our disposal, it has not been possible to clarify the extent to which these differences are caused solely by their status as a war child.

The differences in living conditions between war children and the comparison groups primarily apply to the war children and their peers. The comparison between the war children and the control group of other children with single mothers is extremely complicated in many areas, and several of the observable differences are not statistically significant. The sample of children with single mothers is also considerably skewed, which reduces the value of the comparisons.

Project support: Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Children and Families

Contents

1. Forming the most representative picture possible

My work on the living conditions of war children began with an article in the *Aftenposten* newspaper on 5 October 2001. A debate had taken place in the newspaper on whether we could consider ourselves satisfied with our post-war settling of scores with so-called 'traitors'. The main purpose of my article was to make the point that not only those in the post-war criminal investigations and trials had to be analysed, but also those who were subjected to a more public reckoning. Important groups in the latter category are the so-called 'German sluts' (*tyskertøser*), their children and the children of members of Norway's far-right political party *Nasjonal Samling*. I proposed that we should also seek to form the most representative picture of the living conditions of war children and others who were considered losers in the war, and that this could be done using register data. After the article was published, I received a request from the Research Council of Norway for me and Statistics Norway to conduct research on war children. The Research Council had long been interested in such a study but had not found a practical solution.

1.1. Who are classed as war children?

In a broad sense, the term 'war child' can mean anyone whose childhood was impacted by the war. In the Norwegian context, this refers to World War II. Some children were affected by the events of the war, some were more likely to be given the status 'war child' because of something their parents did in the period 1940–1945. The key groups of 'war losers' consist of the children of members of *Nasjonal Samling* – typically those who were convicted as traitors after the war – and children of German fathers and Norwegian mothers ('German brats' (*tyskerunger*)). A fundamentally different category of war children are children of members of resistance groups. Some of this group's parents would have been imprisoned and tortured during the war, some of the children lost their parents and others grew up in exile. Virtually all children in the Jewish minority in Norway suffered harassment, and many also died. Another large vulnerable group is made up of children of wartime seamen, i.e. Norwegian seamen who sailed to foreign shores during the war. The perception of whether the different groups' parents were on the 'right' or 'wrong' side of the war has naturally had a major impact on their fate as war children.

Many of the war children will have been born during the war and/or grown up in this period. Others may have been born after the war, which for example applied to some of the 'German kids'. Meanwhile, others may have been born long before or after the war but became war children because of their parents' actions during the war. This applies to, for instance, many of the so-called NS (*Nasjonal Samling*) children.

In this research project, the focus is on children of German fathers and Norwegian mothers, the so-called 'German brats'. This is also the group that were given the official designation 'war children' at the end of the war by the War Children's Committee, which was appointed in May 1945. Its work is presented in Olsen (1998) and will also be thoroughly analysed in connection with the work of our research group (see Borgersrud 2004 and Simonsen and Ericsson 2004).

War children were born in the period 1941–1946. However, our sample does not include those born after the peace treaty in May 1945, referred to later in the report. It will never be possible to give a precise estimate of how many such war children existed, let alone those who are alive today. Kåre Olsen, a historian at the National Archives of Norway, published a thorough, extensive work on the war children and their mothers. Following a detailed review of the various sources of information on figures, Olsen ends up with an estimate of between 10 000 and 12 000 children (Olsen 1998, pp. 68–72).

1.2. German war archives

Our study takes its point of departure from the so-called Lebensborn archives. This is essentially material that was collected by the German authorities in Norway. Some of the junior staff in the Lebensborn system were Norwegian, but the management was German (Olsen 1998). The word *Lebensborn* can be translated as 'fountain of life', and the origin and implementation of the Lebensborn system was an undertaking by the German Nazis. The aim was to protect the racially valuable children that resulted from relationships between Norwegian women and German men. A large volume of information was gathered about the mothers and fathers to ensure that it was indeed children who were considered racially valuable who were taken care of under Lebensborn. The system was also a starting point for providing social welfare payments for the women and children concerned, and in practice, the Norwegian Lebensborn system was primarily a function of social policy.

It is beyond the scope of this project to go into more detail about the purpose of Lebensborn, and what the system actually entailed. We merely wish to state that the Lebensborn system provided enough information for us to identify the war children (and many of the mothers) in today's modern population registers, and thereby link them to their current national identity numbers. The German authorities collected vital information about the expectant Norwegian women and the German fathers-to-be. The information on each case was systematised in individual folders and compressed into two protocols, as well as in index cards arranged by the mother's name and father's name in the Lebensborn system. For further details, see Appendix A.

We are not aware of any other register that could have given us a similar starting point. The closest alternatives are the church registers from the war and the post-war period from relevant areas, or the 1946 Census. The problem with both sources is that they are extensive and handwritten. Large volumes of irrelevant information therefore need to be waded through to find the war children, which is obviously time-consuming. As for the church registers, the information on German/ Norwegian heritage is also not sufficiently complete to provide valuable information. However, it should be noted that various statistical calculations of the number of war children were based on the 1946 Census, and on breakdowns by year of birth and place of residence. We will come back to these tables in Chapter 6 and Appendix A, but unfortunately, we were unable to trace the source material for these calculations.

A good number of war children, estimated at just under 2000, were born in the years immediately after peace was agreed in May 1945. Some were conceived during the war and born in 1945 and the first months of 1946. Others were born even later. Many Germans stayed in Norway for a long time after the war, awaiting the repatriation of Germans worldwide. Some of the German men also had contact with Norwegian women while they were in internment camps after the war. The last German soldiers did not leave Norway until 1947.

1.3. The mothers – the missing link

Our remit in this register-based study is to comment on the living conditions of war children at different points in time. One of the main problems here is that we do not know enough about their parentage, and especially about their mothers. Modern and historical research into the lives of these women has not been a priority. This makes it difficult to describe the childhoods and social backgrounds of war children. In our project, we were also referred to the German archives' data on the mothers' backgrounds, but this information was insufficiently complete to be useful.

In earlier work, the undersigned has been concerned with disproving or weakening a number of mythical portrayals of war children's mothers and other women who had a relationship with a German soldier (Ellingsen 1995). It is important to be aware that there was a relatively large number

of them. In addition to the 10 000–12 000 women who had at least one child as a result of the relationship, there were probably at least three times as many women who had a relationship – of one kind or another – with a German man during the war.

Furthermore, the 'German slut' has often been portrayed as a prostitute in effect, or at the very least promiscuous. This is probably an image that only applies to a small selection of the women, but which in the public's eyes is a prominent group. Two or three other groups of women probably had far more contact with the Germans. Firstly, in many places (including the Lebensborn archives), the women are referred to as housemaids. These are girls who worked for the more affluent city dwellers. The relationship with German men may have been eased by the fact that they were far from home, and thus outside the usual social control linked to contact with family and neighbours. The women who worked at German facilities or near areas where large German forces were stationed were in a similar position. The final main group consists of the many women and girls who lived in local communities where German forces had almost occupied the whole village or small town. In order to accommodate all the soldiers, the local population often had to surrender a large part of their home to German soldiers and officers, thus remaining at close living quarters to the enemy. There is further reason to emphasise that it appears that very few of the women had any Nazi sympathies or committed any form of criminal treason. This applies to the war children's mothers as well as the other girls who fraternised with the Germans.

The methodological approach we have used here for the war children can also be applied to their mothers. The approach will be facilitated by the fact that the German archives generally have more information and more certain information about the mothers than the children. Linking to the background data on the mothers would enable an interesting further analysis of the war children. However, this was beyond the time and resource framework for our project.

1.4. The problem of the skewed sample

The main purpose of this register-based study was to form the most representative picture of war children and their living conditions after the war. Presentations of the war children and their mothers have always been based on particular and incomplete knowledge of special subgroups in this population. The mothers were often portrayed through the image of the visible 'German slut' (Ellingsen 1995). Their children have been labelled mentally retarded, fifth columnists, etc. To the extent that anyone has attempted empirical, scientific studies, the empirical data has consisted of very specific samples. A typical example from the post-war era is the study by Augusta Rassmussen (1947), a doctor for the police and prison service. She tested a sample of 310 so-called 'German sluts' in an IQ survey and found that the intelligence of the majority was far below average. Many of the women could be described as 'slow' and 'not particularly gifted'. Rassmussen found the girls in the internment camp for 'German girls' on the island of Hovedøya outside Oslo. There are at least two problems with this survey. Firstly, the value of an IQ test performed on people being forcibly detained must be questioned; a good result on such a test requires motivation. Secondly, and most importantly for our methodological point, the sample of 'German girls' is skewed. The internment camps mainly housed girls who were publicly known to have had relations with the Germans, the girls who were considered a public, moral problem. A general problem with the surveys was that they measured education level rather than intelligence (Simonsen and Ericsson 2004).

An even more extreme image of the mothers and children emerged in the report by the so-called 'War Children's Committee', appointed in the summer of 1945. The committee contacted Ørnulf Ødegaard, senior consultant and director at Gaustad Hospital in Oslo, for a statement on the children's mental status. Based on his impressions of around 35 'German girls' who had been patients at Gaustad during the war, he reasoned that if around half of the mothers had hereditary 'defects', then around 2 500 of the estimated 9 000 children would have 'mental defects' –

particularly mental retardation. If many of their fathers could also presumably be considered defective to some degree or other (which Ødegaard believed since they had settled for such girls), the number of war children with problems would increase considerably (Innstilling til Sosialdepartementet 1945, Simonsen and Ericsson 2004).

On the one hand, we thus have some obviously skewed and pseudoscientific descriptions of the war children and their mothers from the years immediately following the war. On the other hand, many descriptions in modern times often entail considerable built-in bias in the opposite direction. This applies to, for instance, the documentary literature covering this subject. A typical example is one of the very first books written about Norwegian war children, *Skammens barn*, a documentary novel from 1986 (Kjendsli 1986). Here we meet a woman who apparently had a happy childhood as an adoptee in Germany and was then returned to Norway where she was adopted by Norwegian parents. This of course makes for good reading and provides important information, but the fate of the book's main protagonist was only shared by 25 out of the 10 000–12 000 war children. Just under 250 war children were thought to be in Germany without their parents after the war. Of these, just over 50 were brought home to Norway, mainly in the period 1947–1949. Among these, only 20–25 were not reunited with their biological mother (Olsen 1998, pp. 391-394). We cannot criticise books about the destiny of a particular child for not being representative, and Kjendsli's novel is a well-told story about children who were passed around in the system and their search for an identity. The book, together with a number of media articles, also raised awareness of the issues surrounding the war children. The problem is that such fates are often perceived as typical and common.

In the past few years, the image of war children as a relatively homogeneous group of vulnerable people has been consolidated, partly through the compensation cases initiated under the auspices of the Norwegian association for war children, *Krigsbarnforbundet Lebensborn*. These cases will not be covered in this report, but they were brought by seven people who belonged to a particularly vulnerable group of war children. Again, it is entirely reasonable that war children who carry such burdens take legal action against the State, but the media coverage of these cases may have reinforced the impression of war children as a fairly homogenous group of vulnerable people. Public opinion can also lose sight of the everyday torment suffered by many war children. Extreme cases of violence and ostracism come to the fore, but the small, everyday reminders and snubs are forgotten.

1.5. Resilience and stigma

There was reason to believe, even before the review of our empirical data, that the picture of war children's living conditions is considerably more complex. On the one hand, there is the stigma theory approach in the sociology of deviance and criminology, which postulates a problematic future for groups that are exposed to 'social labelling' at an early stage (Becker 1963, Scheff 1966, etc.). On the other hand, there is the relatively new branch of research within psychology called 'resilience research' (see Borge 2003 for an overview). The concept of 'resilience' refers to a person's capacity to withstand or recover from a shocking, traumatic event, which in turn is related to resistance and coping skills, but also qualities in the child's surrounding environment. In this research, for example, the sample consists of very vulnerable children who have lived with alcoholic parents, often with severe mental disorders, in homes characterised by conflict and financial hardship. Many children with such a negatively influenced childhood end up having significant problems in their own adult lives; however, a not inconsiderable proportion of the children also do well, and some are highly successful (see e.g., Werner and Smith 2001). These studies also have access to representative interview data, which we do not have. Thus, it is not just that people seem successful 'on the surface': good income, good education, stable marriage, etc. The children who

have been followed in these studies themselves report that they live harmonious, relatively happy lives. In the Norwegian context, they have been referred to as 'dandelion children' (*løvetannbarn*).

As mentioned in the preface, the design of our quantitative project closely follows the qualitative research of Kjersti Ericsson and Eva Simonsen on this topic. These two researchers interviewed 110 war children throughout Norway, as well as in Sweden and Germany. The interviews had a life course perspective. The sample was self-selected, i.e., the war children associations helped them to find a number of members who wanted to be interviewed by the two researchers. The aim was to purposely obtain a somewhat skewed sample, i.e., to find 'children' who have had a difficult life as a war child. We will return to this study (Ericsson and Simonsen, 2005).

A recurring finding in the interviews conducted by Ericsson and Simonsen is symptomatic of the perception of this group: many of the interviewed war children, who are consistently in the more vulnerable group, initially say that they are not a typical war child, by which they mean they were not subjected to severe abuse, as was portrayed in, for instance, the compensation lawsuits in 2001. However, many of the interviews are peppered with comments about bullying at school, stepfathers who showed them no affection, mothers who did not want to discuss the war and their parentage, complicated marriages, etc. The interviews also provide telling examples of individual strategies and abilities to overcome being labelled a 'German brat'.

At its core, our living conditions study is also about shedding light on the degree of social determinism in people's lives. To what extent is it predetermined that people with an unfortunate social background will encounter a variety of insurmountable problems in their lives, and to what extent do people with the same background enter social contexts that give them opportunities? The report is rounded off with a short discussion of the relevance of stigma theory in understanding the living conditions and childhood circumstances of war children.

1.6. Vulnerable groups

Ericsson and Simonsen mostly recruited their interview subjects through Norway's association for war children (*Norges Krigsbarnforbund*) and Norway's national association for justice (*Landsforeningen rettferd for tapere*). *Krigsbarnforbundet Lebensborn* declined to participate in the research project. The aim was to obtain a sample of vulnerable people and form a picture of the life course of these people, thereby shedding light on any exclusion and marginalisation processes encountered by war children. However, it is not possible to shed light on some groups in an interview survey.

It is obviously not possible for interviews to shed light on the lives of those who are deceased. According to our data, 10–11 per cent of war children died in the period 1960–2002. A somewhat smaller or equivalent proportion probably died before 1960: the average mortality up to 1960 for women and men born in the period 1941–1945 was just over 7 per cent (Mamelund and Borgan 1996). If the war children had a similar excess mortality in this period as in the period 1960–2002, an estimated 10–11 per cent of the war children may have died in this period as well. However, the mortality rates for war children up to 1960 must be taken for what they are: imprecise estimates. In all likelihood, people who were particularly vulnerable will be overrepresented in the deceased group.

Another vulnerable group will be war children who live on 'the margins of society', such as drug addicts, patients with severe mental health disorders, prisoners etc. These are groups that are probably more difficult to recruit for interviews. Some people with these types of backgrounds may be captured in our study.

Ericsson and Simonsen are not aiming to form a picture of war children's lives that can be said to be representative of all the 10 000–12 000 'children' who were born. The more problematic aspect of

some interview surveys with a similar research design is the claim of providing a representative picture. Published in 2002, the book entitled *De kalte oss naziyngel. NS-barnas historie 1940–2002* (they called us Nazi spawn, NS children's history 1940–2002), by Baard H. Borge, gives a wide-ranging picture of the lives of children of members of the *Nasjonal Samling*. The representativeness problem arises when Borge, albeit a little hesitantly, claims that his data give a reasonably comprehensive picture of the fate of all NS children since the war. He rejects the possibility of a representative sample of such children being found but believes that his survey forms a picture that is reasonably close to what a representative survey would have found.

This reasoning is difficult to follow when we look at Borge's methodology. His core dataset consists of 375 completed questionnaires from as many NS children. The forms are rather extensive and could take several hours to complete for someone who has been through a lot. Many people will be reluctant to participate in such a survey. Borge also states that around 1000 questionnaires were sent out, and the response rate is therefore well below 40 per cent.

The sample is based on self-selection. Borge distributed the questionnaires with the help of an informal network of NS children. He also presented his project in the media and received good coverage. Many people subsequently approached him requesting a questionnaire.

Some of the results are clear evidence that the survey sample must have been skewed. Not surprisingly, it is the education variable that shows a skewed distribution. Borge finds that 60 per cent of his informants studied at college or university, and that a further 25 per cent had an upper secondary education. These are exceptionally high figures in a group where the majority of the informants were born between 1930 and the mid-1950s. Among those who were between 50 and 59 years old in 2002, 27 per cent of the men and 23 per cent of the women had a college or university education. The proportions were considerably lower among the over 60s. The skewed distribution is not surprising given the design of the questionnaire and the self-selection bias in the sample.

1.7. Not aware of own war child status?

Interview surveys with self-selected samples of war children will obviously only include people who are aware of their status as a war child. However, it is conceivable that this register-based study includes some children who are not aware that they have a German father. How could this have happened?

Firstly, the mother may have kept the child's parentage a secret or told them that their Norwegian stepfather is their biological father. Secondly, it is possible that their paternal origins have been obscured in the adoption process.

It is impossible to give a meaningful indication of how many of the war children in our sample were unaware of their status as a war child. It is likely that the mothers who have kept the child's paternal origins a closely guarded secret have also actively avoided registration in the Lebensborn system. If the mother's strategy to keep the child in the dark is to succeed, this also often requires no one else in the child's environment to know 'the secret'. Some of the informants in the Ericsson and Simonsen (2005) survey report secrets that were ruthlessly revealed to them at school, at their confirmation or in other encounters with people in the local community.

A high percentage of 'unwitting' war children would of course impact on our reasoning in relation to, for example, the effect of being stigmatised as a war child. This applies to both the interpretation of our register-based study and the general understanding of the fate of war children. However, the number of unwitting war children is not expected to be high given the relatively transparent nature of Norway's post-war society. Many of those who may not have known that they had a German father, however, may have felt a general uncertainty about their parentage. This uncertainty may

also have had its price, so it cannot be automatically assumed that they have lived a life of 'blissful ignorance'.

1.8. External perspective

Our study is based on available register data. Data of this type can, in a way, be described as 'second-hand' or external. We examine people from an external perspective and draw conclusions about their living conditions based on what the register data tell us about income, marriage, divorce, mortality, cause of death, etc. Some of these indicators will give a clear picture of the complex concept of 'quality of life'. We readily assume that a suicide is a clear indicator of a very poor quality of life, at least in the final stages. Becoming a disability pensioner at a relatively young age due to a mental health disorder also relatively unambiguously points to the same conclusion. However, less clear is whether a high income gives a much better quality of life than a more moderate income (Hellevik 1999), while a meagre income is more closely associated with a correspondingly poor quality of life and reduced agency.

Thus, we were unable to ask the war children some crucial questions: Are you in good health? Are you satisfied with your quality of life? Do you have many close friends, or do you feel lonely? What is your relationship with your family? Such questions and answers are, understandably, not available as register data for the general population, and it would be unethical to seek out the war children in our sample to ask such questions. Such an approach could have brought up bad memories for some of them, and some may even be unaware of their war child status. However, we have two research methods we can employ to 'circumvent' this problem and more closely examine the quality-of-life issue:

Firstly, our register data were analysed in conjunction with the impressions given through the qualitative interviews by Ericsson and Simonsen (and vice versa). Here, their informants give an impression that education (or lack thereof), as well as the fact that many of them are disability pensioners, are key indicators of a reduced quality of life. These two indicators are included in our study (see Chapters 7 and 8).

Secondly, other analyses of living conditions have clarified some important correlations between more external living condition variables and more 'internal' perceptions of quality of life. We would like to highlight here the association with a social network. Empirically, there is a clear correlation between being outside the ordinary family sphere, i.e. being unmarried, divorced or separated, and a poorer quality of life, measured in terms of self-reported happiness (Hellevik 1999) or an accumulation of poor living conditions (Andersen 1999). We therefore focus on this indicator. Another clear correlation is seen between health and poor quality of life (Barstad 1999, Hellevik 1999). We lack indicators of self-perceived health in our study, and of uptake of health services. We do, however, have data on disability pensions and sick leave, and mortality is also a strong indicator of health. We will therefore also have a strong focus on these indicators.

1.9. Ethical implications

Sometimes we extract vital and sensitive personal data without asking for the person's consent. However, a kind of consent or mandate is implied from the Norwegian authorities and the general public. The war children and their supposedly problematic fate have been put on the official agenda, largely because the war children organisations have wanted public discourse about the topic. In this context, it is difficult to undertake meaningful research without obtaining such vital and sensitive information.

However, this is not only a problem in the type of research in which register data are used: in many qualitative studies for example, in-depth interviews will be used, where the whole purpose is to dive

deep into underlying conditions. Such studies will feel far more intrusive for those concerned. In the present study, none of the war children will know that they are participants, and the results are of course presented in such a way that it is not possible to identify individuals or families. The difference in relation to qualitative surveys with interviews is of course that the interviewee will have given their consent to be interviewed. However, this methodology is problematic in that it is very difficult to ensure that the person being interviewed fully understands the potential distress that the interview may cause. The way that data from interviews is presented is also subject to more stringent requirements in order to ensure that the individuals cannot be identified – by themselves or anyone else.

It is of course problematic that some war children might think 'leave us alone' – we do not want any more attention. Some will also find that new public interest in the issue will stir up old problems and feelings (Norges forskningsråd 1999, p. 99). However, this objection is problematic because it will ultimately prevent almost every form of public scrutiny of sensitive historical processes in which people have suffered. The silence is also convenient for those who have mistreated others, or who have not been held accountable for their abusive behaviour.

We therefore dig deep, including into sensitive matters. We do not dig as deep as in in-depth interviews, but we get to know details that would have been under-communicated or not communicated at all during an interview. We also found highly sensitive information about deceased people, particularly in relation to suicides. However, the form of presentation is different when, as in our case, we are providing statistics. Categories with few people will generally be less interesting to present, precisely because they apply to so few people and are not therefore statistically significant. We also do not want to present people in a way that they can be identified – by themselves or anyone else. People also prefer not to know who has participated in the survey, or if they themselves are included in the sample. We do not use small geographic units, and our categories for income, occupation etc. are general and broad. We also do not comment on individuals.

1.10. Research design and structure

Below is a brief presentation of our research process. A more comprehensive description is given of the methodology in Appendix A.

The identification phase

In the first phase, we carried out two operations. First we selected a random sample of war children from the German Lebensborn archives with the aim of finding as much vital information about them as possible. This information was then used to identify the 'children', their date of birth and their national identity number.

Building a register

In the second phase, we built up a register of war children we had identified. The register is based on the national identity numbers that everyone in Norway was given in 1964, in accordance with the 1960 Census. The national identity number provides the link to modern registers, from which we extracted data on a number of living condition variables (see below).

Analysis

The third phase entails analysis of the data. How do the war children score compared with other groups? Who should we compare them with? Does the score vary with respect to gender, year of birth, geographic background, etc.? Key variables are:

- Level of education
- Employment status, including unemployment

- Income
- Mortality, including cause of death
- Disability pension with underlying diagnosis
- Use of other social welfare benefits
- Family, children, divorce

We will explain the choice of variables later in this chapter. In a study like this, it is of course important to provide a detailed explanation of the methodology. However, this would involve reading highly technical details, and would not be particularly interesting to some readers. We therefore give a more detailed explanation of the methodology in Appendix A, where we briefly explain some of the methodological choices and implications.

1.11. Missing data and sampling biases

We drew two samples of children from the Lebensborn protocols. The first of these was a random sample of every fifth child listed. The second focussed on the children who were listed first in the protocol, as this part of the protocol had more complete information.

In brief terms, we can say that the following groups of war children were not included: 1) those who were not registered by the German authorities, 2) those who were born after May 1945, and 3) a number of groups that our method was unable to identify. This latter category applies to, for instance, those who emigrated to Germany before 1960 and have not returned to Norway. Another important group is those who died before 1960. Those who were insufficiently described in the German registers, or who had undergone, for example, name change(s) since being registered in the Lebensborn archives were also not part of our sample.

Our method led to a degree of sampling bias, with war children born at the start of the war being somewhat overrepresented. This is because the identification process led to a reduction in missing data and because we selected more war children born in the early war years. See Appendix A for a more detailed presentation of this problem.

1.12. Pragmatic choice of indicators

In studies of this type, we are restricted to a limited range of living condition indicators. Firstly, we are restricted to indicators that can be derived from (information in) electronic registers. The information on the earlier phases of the war children's lives is available in various handwritten registers, which are unwieldy to search given our timeframe. A typical result of this is that our dataset lacks indicators of criminal activity. War children and their peers were probably in their most criminally active phase in the period from the late 1950s to the late 1960s. At that time, there were no electronic registers of registered offenders. We could of course have used electronic registers from recent years, but crime rates among 50- and 60-year-olds are so low that there would not be many people with this variable. There is also no electronic record of all registered offences over the course of an individual's life, with the exception of today's younger generations.

As in most studies, our timeframe limited the number of data sources we were able to use. The main effect of this limitation was probably in relation to the time axis. If we had used the 1970 Census and 1980 Census (the 1990 Census was a sample census), we could have produced a clearer picture of developments and portrayed the war children at a time when they were midway through their careers and family life. If we had had even more time, we could have used this data, together with the 1960 Census and the 2001 Census, to present a methodologically more advanced life course perspective.

Another important limitation lies in the fact that we are restricted to registers with full counts of all individuals, i.e., not sample surveys. Sample surveys, including the crucial living conditions surveys, tend to consist of information obtained from interviews. In such interviews, several questions can be asked that are suitable for measuring the self-perceived quality of an informant's health, an indicator that could have been highly relevant in our context. However, there are not enough war children represented in such sample surveys for us to extract data on more than a few of them. Our sample of about 1150 war children is so small that, based on a probability calculation, we will only find about 10 of 'our' war children if we search the last ten years of the living conditions surveys.

Other important variables that could have been extracted from different interview surveys include the social contact pattern, the incidence of self-perceived mental health problems or anxiety, and exposure to crime. However, it is important to stress that our sample has managed to capture a number of key variables for understanding the overall living conditions of groups of people in general and of war children in particular.

1.13. Further presentation

In the next chapter, we give a brief presentation of the groups that we compared the war children within the living conditions analysis. The actual living conditions analysis starts in Chapter 3. We roughly follow the living conditions categories that are typically used by Statistics Norway. We start with the demographic data, then health, education, employment, etc., to the extent we have data covering these fields. Two exceptions are important to note. Firstly, we have a separate chapter on childhood living conditions, based on the 1960 Census (Chapter 3). Furthermore, the chapter on health includes a lot of information about disability pension, as this is the most important health indicator in our context. The data sources will be presented in the individual chapters.

2. Who should we compare the war children with?

In order to form a picture of the living conditions of war children, we should have someone to compare them with. We have chosen two comparable groups, or control groups as we will call them. One group is primarily based on the need to compare the war children with people of the same age. The second also enables us to factor in family background and thus social background.

2.1. Control group 1: Peers

This is of course a natural comparison. Those born in the same years will have a lot in common: their birth, an early childhood that took place during wartime, and the post-war era and the development of the welfare state. In theory, they will have had the same opportunities to get an education, they will have lived through various economic trends and fluctuating labour market conditions, they will have had the same expectations of access to education, and they will have been faced with the same question of whether to get married or not, etc.

The comparison with their peers is, in a way, a comparison with 'the average person', or the ordinary population if you like. This is, in itself, an interesting comparison, and one that in all likelihood will confirm that the war children are a distinct group when measured by a number of variables. They are children of single mothers, and many have probably experienced financial hardship and stigmatisation linked to their status as a 'German brat'. Based on typical experiences in empirical social science, it will not be surprising if the war children do not fare as well as their peers in crucial areas. The question is rather: How much worse will they fare? Thus, the impressions formed of the war children must deviate considerably from that of their peers before we can characterise the findings as remarkable.

To put it more bluntly: we assume that the war children have had a tough life, particularly because they are children of single mothers and of fathers who represent the enemy. However, we know that other children with single mothers born at the same time also had a poor start in life, both financially and socially. Our aim was therefore to find another control group, one where growing up as a child of a single mother had been factored in.

2.2. Control group 2: Other children with single mothers

Establishing such a control group was not easy. The natural choice would have been to find all children who were born to single mothers in the period 1941–1945, and then remove those with a German father, but this proved to be an impossible task. Firstly, we do not have sufficient register data on who was born to a single mother during this period. Secondly, we would not be able to distinguish the 'German kids' from other children with single mothers, and we would therefore risk comparing the 'German kids' with themselves to a degree. Around 20 500 children were born out of wedlock in the period 1941–1945, of whom 8000–9000 were probably war children, so this would have been problematic for our purposes.

We therefore had to solve the problem by finding a control group that had some of the characteristics of war children, but not the stigmatised parental origins. The 1960 Census provided this possibility as it enables the extraction of households with a single woman as the sole financial provider. The children of these women thus have one feature in common with that of many war children: growing up with a single mother. We assembled the control group from children born in 1940 and 1947. This meant that the control group included very few war children and that it was made up of children of a similar age to the war children.

However, using this control group also entailed a few problems. On the one hand, many of the children in this control group (almost 60 per cent) lived with mothers who had been widowed. The

widows may have had pensions that put them in a more favourable financial position than other single mothers, and there is probably less stigma attached to the role of widow. Furthermore, many of the mothers of the children in control group 2 were divorced (23 per cent) or separated (8 per cent) and have thus been entitled to child maintenance. On the other hand, we will see that many of the war children were living in households where both a mother and a father were present in 1960 as opposed to living with a single mother as the sole financial provider. The war children may thus have grown up in a household that was in a somewhat more favourable financial position than the households of the children in control group 2. Based on this consideration, it might have been interesting to create control groups consisting of adopted children or children with stepfathers. However, this is not possible due to a lack of reliable data on this in the censuses, and because adoption data from this period is inadequate and difficult to access.

An additional problem is that many children who were born in 1940 will have moved away from home by 1960. These remaining 20-year-olds will therefore constitute a skewed sample, partly because they have an overrepresentation of boys/men. This is probably due to the fact that boys generally live at home longer than girls.

2.3. Three samples of war children

We have a total of three sub-samples of war children that can be used for different purposes. The one we refer to as the total sample consists of all identified war children, i.e., the result from both samples (see Appendix A). The benefit of using the total sample is that it is the largest of the samples – with over 1150 identified persons. This makes it more suitable for refining the variables, for example when we have to control for geography and perhaps gender in addition. The disadvantage is that the material is skewed in terms of age, with a marked overrepresentation of war children born in the first two war years in question, i.e., 1941 and 1942.

The first sub-sample – of just under 850 people – is suitable for obtaining the most accurate distribution between the war years. The downside is that it has major weaknesses. The sample is highly skewed as a result of missing data, particularly in the case of the 1943 cohort, which we will see under the point about mortality. The sample also becomes scanty when we have to control for year of birth.

Finally, we will use a sample of people born in 1941 and 1942. This will then be compared with everyone born in 1941 and 1942, as well as people born in 1940 and living with a single mother in 1960. The benefit is that this gives us two well-represented cohorts in the sample: 353 and 264 war children, respectively, and that there is less missing data and probably less bias than for the other cohorts. The disadvantage is, of course, the considerable age bias if the aim is to form an impression of all the war children, i.e., if we assume that there are significant differences between children born in the early and late war years, or after the end of the war.

2.4. Statistical significance

All sample surveys are subject to a degree of statistical uncertainty. We examine a large group of people (the war children in this instance) based on a random sample of the same group. The larger the sample (and the frequency of the phenomenon/variable we are interested in), the less statistical uncertainty there will be. When we compare a finding from the war children sample with a corresponding quantity from the control group consisting of their peers, we therefore have to factor in the uncertainty associated with the results from the war children sample. There will also be uncertainty associated with the results for the two control groups, where we examine everyone who belongs to the groups and not just a sample as for the war children. The uncertainty is due to the random nature of when people die, what income they earn from one year to another, etc. However, these groups are so much larger than the war children sample that the margins of uncertainty are

less significant. It is particularly during the discussion on causes of death (Chapter 4.4) that these margins of uncertainty become relevant, because the starting point here is those who have died (i.e., much smaller groups than the three compared otherwise). Note that it is the collective margins of uncertainty for both the war children sample and the relevant control group that are of interest here. (However, for the war children sample, this is made up of two components: sample uncertainty and other uncertainty.)

In order to factor in this uncertainty, we need to calculate the margin of uncertainty (standard deviation) that is linked to the specific proportion (percentage) of the sample or different groups in the sample, in relation to the size of the sample or the different groups. If the differences between the proportion in the war children sample and the corresponding proportion in the control group are greater than the margins of uncertainty, the finding is considered statistically significant. It is never possible to be 100 per cent sure that this difference is not due to statistical effects, but it is common to operate with a confidence interval of 95 per cent. In simple terms, this means that the difference we have found is real in 19 out of 20 cases. This is the measure we use in this study, unless otherwise specified. The same considerations will apply when comparing averages from the war children sample with averages in the control group.

In this report, the vast majority of the differences we discuss will be statistically significant. In cases where the findings are not significant, this will be specified. Where the findings are significant, they will normally be described as ‘clear’, ‘unambiguous’ etc. findings.

It must be stressed that a finding that is statistically significant is not necessarily a material finding in a social science understanding, i.e., where the difference is ‘major’, ‘considerable’, etc. The statistical calculation only indicates that it is reasonable to assume that the observed difference is not due to the statistical randomness associated with using a sample of a population group to comment on the whole group.

Within the framework of this study, there has been no source data or resources to perform a comprehensive multivariate analysis of why war children have lived the lives they have. The living conditions of war children can be characterised by their childhoods as war children, in a complex interplay with other aspects of their social background, where they grew up, level of education etc. We are therefore not able to pinpoint exactly the extent to which their living conditions have been marked by their specific experiences of being a war child, and isolating what could be called the ‘war child effect’ would have been extremely complicated. Typical circumstances that war children seem to have grown up in include financial hardship and the risk of extensive bullying at school, etc.

3. War children as adolescents

The 1960 Census is our first 'electronic encounter' with the war children. It would of course have been interesting to examine their situation in connection with the corresponding censuses in 1946 and 1950, but the data in these were not registered electronically. We would have been faced with the almost impossible task of manually searching for the war children among Norway's then population of more than 3.1 million inhabitants in around 900 000 households (1946). However, the 1960 Census does not provide the same breadth of information as today's censuses, mostly because it was not possible to link the 1960 Census to contemporary registers of income, employment, education etc. Such electronic registers were almost unheard of at the time. Below, however, we will look at some of the indicators that can give an insight into the childhoods of the war children. In 1960, the war children were aged between 15 and 19 years old.

3.1. Who do they live with?

This is an important question. In their early years, most of the war children lived with a sole financial provider, i.e., a single mother. A family life with the German father was almost impossible for anyone other than the very few who travelled to Germany with their father (and usually their mother). Some of these women and children returned to Norway after the war and constitute an unidentifiable proportion of our sample.

Table 3.1. Care providers in 1960 for war children (the main sample) and the two control groups. Percentage

Care providers	War children	Peers	Children with a mother as sole financial provider
Mother only	19	7	100
Father only	3	2	
Other only	6	2	
Mother and father	58	81	
Other man and woman	11	6	
Institution	2	2	
All	100 (N= 737)	100 (N= 216 963)	100 (N= 5 939)

Source: 1960 Census.

Most of the children thus started life as the child of a single mother. Even today, with government support schemes for single parents that are a considerable improvement on those from 50–60 years ago, single parents and their children are regarded as a financially vulnerable group (Lyngstad and Epland 2003). It is also clear that the single mother or 'illegitimate child' status was much more of a stigma in those days. Add to that the problem of the child's father being one of the enemies.

An interesting question is how long the children lived as the child of a single mother. The qualitative interviews with Ericsson and Simonsen provide an insight into the diverse living and cohabitation arrangements and combinations they experienced throughout their childhood: some lived alone with their single mother for their entire childhood. Others eventually had a stepfather and then often half-siblings. Some lived with grandparents or other relatives. In such cases, the mother may be in a peripheral position, or she may be part of the household. Some children grew up in institutions or with foster parents, while others lived with adoptive parents.

In this context, there is no scope for a long discussion on the childhood characteristics that are associated with the different living and cohabitation arrangements. However, we should note the clear financial benefits of not having to be the sole provider. It is therefore interesting that, according to the 1960 Census, only 19 per cent of the original sample of children were still living in households with the mother as the sole financial provider, while 9 per cent were living with another single female or male care provider. These are proportions that are markedly higher than among

their peers, where just 7 per cent were living with a single mother and 4 per cent were living with another single care provider.

Over half (58 per cent) of the war children live with both a mother and father. We do not know whether these are their biological mother and stepfather, or adoptive or foster parents. We also do not know who is included in the description 'Other female and male care provider', a category that applies to 11 per cent of the war children, compared to 6 per cent of their peers. However, even if more war children lived in 'normal' families than perhaps expected in 1960, their living arrangements are different to that of their peers. In this group, over 80 per cent lived with their mother and father in 1960, and 6 per cent lived with another couple who were care providers. This information from the 1960 Census is not suitable for precisely defining who the war children actually lived with: biological parents, adoptive parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts, etc. However, we can conclude from the figures that most of them were in a family with both a male and a female care provider at this time. There is also reason to assume that many children were in a household with their biological mother. We can be just as certain, based on general knowledge of Norwegian-German relations in the post-war era, that the number of war children who lived with their biological father was negligible. The category 'Father only' from the 1960 Census only comprises of a small proportion, both for the war children and their peers, and is a 'technical' category that does not necessarily include single, biological fathers (Vassenden 1987).

3.2. A minority live with a single mother

The often-short-term nature of the single mother status is an impression that is confirmed in later research on unmarried mothers. In the 1960s, the sociologist Else Øyen conducted a survey of 224 women in Oslo who had given birth to a child out of wedlock in 1953. Ten years later, only about one-tenth of the mothers were still the sole financial provider for their child. More than a third had put up their child for adoption or placed him/her in an orphanage, while over half had either found a new husband or married the child's father (Øyen 1966). However, the proportion of adoptions and placements in orphanages may be somewhat higher among the war children than in this Oslo sample. Based on Øyen's results, it is therefore less remarkable that so many of the war children were no longer living with a single mother in 1960, and probably more surprising from the problem-oriented perspective on the war children that has been the subject of public discourse (see Chapter 1).

The information on the war children's care providers thus shows that only a minority live in households where the mother is the sole care provider and sole financial provider. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that they do not live 'normal' family lives. The category 'mother and father' must almost without exception consist of a father who is not the biological father, as there are very few cases where the German father is known to have returned to Norway in the post-war era to live with his child and its mother. We have not seen any such examples in our searches for identifiable war children. However, it is important to note that our searches were based on the children's status in 1960. Many of those who were incorporated into a more or less 'ordinary' family at this time had probably spent several formative years of their early childhood with a single mother before she 'managed' to find a Norwegian husband.

We must also be careful not to idealise life in the family with the mother's new husband. The impressions from the qualitative interviews by Ericsson and Simonsen (2005) clearly suggest that many of the stepfathers showed little willingness to care for the children. In the worst cases, the stepfather sexually abused the child, while in less blatant cases the child was expected to be grateful for having a roof over their head and food on the table. Ericsson and Simonsen point out here that the mother was rarely in a favourable position on the marriage market. She had a 'past' and a child who was clear evidence of her earlier mistakes.

The age of the care providers is also interesting. In 1960, most of the parents/care providers of the 'normal' children aged 15–19 were between the ages of 40 and 60. The war children differ somewhat here as well. On the one hand, far more of them have young care providers, i.e. in their 30s. This probably reflects the fact that many of the war children's mothers were young, sometimes very young, when they had the child. A large proportion of the mothers were born in the period 1920–1925. On the other hand, more than 10 per cent of the war children had care providers who were over 60 years old, something that is seldom seen among their peers. This is probably because many of the war children grew up in households with their grandparents.

An apparent problem is that a (small) proportion of the war children (the 1941 and 1942 cohorts) were just old enough in 1960 to already have started their own families or at least moved into their own home. However, only one household in the sample has a care provider below the age of 20, and some of the war children may have married a somewhat older partner. Only eight of the care providers are under 30, so this does not seem like a significant source of error either.

3.3. Early entry to the labour market

In the 1960s, many children and young people became full-time earners at a relatively young age. In the 1960 Census, around half (52 per cent) of all people born in the period 1941–1945 cited 'own employment' as their main source of subsistence. The proportion who was 'self-sufficient' is markedly higher among the war children: 60 per cent in the main sample. The relatively high proportion who started working at a young age is assumed to be a result of the fact that they had to contribute to the family's or household's finances, and that families with a single mother as the sole financial provider were particularly vulnerable. However, we also have to assume that there was a cultural norm in the social circles that the war children presumably moved in that dictated that you should earn your own living as soon as you finished compulsory education. A comparison with children with single parents is less interesting here, as half of these children were only 13–14 years old at this point in time. The oldest children in this control group also form a somewhat special comparison group here, in that they were relatively older when they moved away from home.

The female care providers of the war children, i.e., the mothers for the most part, were more likely than other women to support themselves by means of their own employment. More than one in five stated that their own employment was their main source of subsistence, compared with just over one in ten of other mothers of the same age.

3.4. Did they get themselves an education?

In 1960, the war children were between 15 and 19 years old. The 1960 Census only includes information on the respondents' completed education, not on education that they were currently undertaking. This of course reduces the value of this information for the children and young people, as many of them would be in education at that time. For example, with normal progression, only the 1941 cohort would have taken the university qualifying exam by then.

However, the numbers do provide some indication: the war children are somewhat under-represented among those who have completed some type of education beyond primary school. They attended continuation schools (*framhaldsskole*), lower secondary schools (*ungdomsskole*) and county schools (*fylkesskole*) to the same extent as their peers, i.e. around a third had completed such an education. All of these three types of schooling were relatively short extensions to primary schooling and were an alternative for those who did not go to middle school (*realskole*) followed by grammar school (*gymnas*). These schools were primarily found in rural areas. Fewer of the war children went to middle school (9 per cent compared with 13 per cent), and fewer also took the university qualifying exam (0 per cent compared with 2 per cent). There are also slightly fewer people with a vocational education beyond primary school (6 per cent compared with 8 per cent). A

comparison with our other control group, made up of children with single mothers, is also not relevant in this context, as they are either significantly older or younger than the war children.

3.5. The families' education

The war children's families seem to have a somewhat lower level of education than the families of their peers. Only 1 per cent of the war children's care providers qualified to go to university, compared to 5 per cent of their peers' care providers. The corresponding figure for continuation school or county school is similar (3 per cent compared with 10 per cent).

However, this comparison tells us relatively little about social background. Firstly, the care providers are in age groups where very few had an education beyond primary school, and this particularly applied to women. Secondly, there is also a large group here with an unspecified level of education. At that point in time, many of the war children and their parents/guardians were probably also living in districts where the proportion with an education beyond the compulsory level was generally small.

3.6. The family's housing standards

All of the censuses provided detailed information about the population's housing standards. In 1960, the war children's housing seemed, to some extent, to be rather more modest than that of their peers (here we use the total sample). Fewer lived in a detached house (26 per cent compared with 30 per cent), while more lived in blocks of flats (20 per cent compared with 13 per cent) or in low rise buildings with several flats (34 per cent compared with 26 per cent). Far fewer lived in farmhouses on farms (14 per cent compared with 26 per cent), and together with the proportion who lived in blocks of flats, this clearly indicates a somewhat more urban way of living for the war children and their households. This may be because many of the mothers sought the anonymity of the larger towns and cities, but it may also be due to the size of the household. Other children who lived with single mothers (control group 2) were much more likely to live in blocks of flats and low-rise buildings with several flats, and less likely to live in detached houses than the war children. However, more of them lived in farmhouses on farms.

Within the house's four walls, the standard was also somewhat lower among the war children. Fewer had a toilet in their flat (37 per cent compared with 41 per cent), fewer had a bath or shower (39 per cent compared with 48 per cent) and few had a telephone (26 per cent compared with 46 per cent). In terms of housing standards, other children living with single mothers are ranked somewhere between the war children and their peers.

War children's education, the education of their care providers and the standard of their housing will be influenced by where in the country they live. As we will see in Chapter 6, many of the war children lived in the northernmost counties. These are areas where both the level of education and the housing standard have traditionally been low, which we also comment on in Chapter 8.

4. Mortality and causes of death

The mortality rate in a population group is an important demographic indicator of health and socioeconomic status. People with poor health will be more disposed to an early death. The same applies to people without access to good health- and care services. Mortality is a good way to measure aspects of general living conditions. Mortality will be consistently higher in groups with poor living conditions, a low level of education and low incomes, and for a number of exposed occupations or where there is no attachment to the labour market (see e.g., Borgan 2004). Mortality is also a measure of behaviour, i.e., lifestyle. Consumption of tobacco and alcohol and unhealthy eating habits affect health and, in turn, mortality. The correlation for certain types of fatal accidents is clearest. For example, the mortality rate for boys and men from around the age of 15 to about 30 is two to three times higher than among girls and women in the same age group. Much of the difference is due to accidental deaths, particularly traffic accidents, but boys in this group also have an excess mortality rate for most diseases. Young men also have a higher suicide rate.

Suicide is in its own category in this context and is a cause of death that we will discuss separately. Taking one's own life can be seen as an indicator of both severe mental health problems and difficult living conditions, at least in the period leading up to the suicide.

Based on the above, a higher mortality rate would be expected among war children than among their peers, in line with our expectations of more difficult lives. And that is indeed the case. Among the roughly 1150 war children in our original sample, 120 died in the period 1960–2002, which corresponds to 10.4 per cent. Among their peers, 7.4 per cent died in the same period. Note that we have not had the opportunity to look at total mortality for the entire life course.

Consequently, this means that the mortality rate for the whole group of war children is 40 per cent higher than that of their peers. However, this excess frequency is not necessarily relevant in itself. We first need to carry out a number of checks on the composition of our sample, and we will also make extensive use of the additional sample we drew from war children born in 1941 and 1942 (see Chapter 1 and Appendix A). Men generally have a higher mortality rate than women at all ages. We therefore need to compare the mortality for women and men separately. Furthermore, the mortality rate is of course higher among the oldest war children, i.e., those over the age of 60, than among the younger ones. Mortality also does not increase linearly at these ages. For example, a 57-year-old man has a 99.3 per cent chance of living one year longer, while a 62-year-old man has a 98.8 per cent chance of living one year longer. We therefore also have to compare the war children and their peers, cohort by cohort.

4.1. Highest excess mortality in people born in the early war years

The first thing we can say is that the excess mortality among war children appears to be traceable to some extent to the skewed gender representation in the sample. Among their peers, we find a slight preponderance of men: 50.5 per cent, compared with 49.5 per cent women. The male predominance is somewhat greater among the war children in our sample: 52.5 per cent compared with 47.5 per cent, but we have not been able to identify an apparent reason for this skewed distribution.

Table 4.1 shows mortality by year of birth. Here we use the total sample, i.e., the main sample plus the additional sample. We see that excess mortality for those born in 1941 is considerable and is even higher for those born the following year. Then we have the 1943 cohort, which has a considerable mortality deficit. The last two cohorts also have a clear excess mortality, on a par with the 1941 cohort, but less than for those born in 1942. A rather complex picture is thus emerging. In most contexts, the war children have excess mortality, and in some cases it is very high, such as for

men and women born in 1942 and women born in 1945. We can disregard the mortality rate among female war children born in 1945, as the numbers and identification rate are very modest. However, 1942 is a year in which we have a large number of identified war children and a consistently satisfactory identification rate. This is also the case for 1941, where the excess mortality is also considerable among the war children. This excess mortality is expected, based on our earlier reasoning that children born in the early war years will have had a tougher childhood than those born later. There is also a methodological factor: the German archives have the best level of information in these first two years of the war – information provided for 1941 and 1942 is sufficiently detailed to enable identification. It may thus be the case that the higher the proportion of 'children' we find, the more of the war children we find with serious problems – excess mortality in this case. In other words, those who are most vulnerable are the most difficult to find.

Table 4.1. The proportion of war children and their peers who died in the period 1960–2003, by gender and year of birth. Number of identified war children (N) in parentheses for each category. Total sample. Percentage

	War children	Peers	War children excess mortality/ mortality deficit
1941 in total (N=353)	11.9	8.7	+37
Men (N=178)	15,2	10.9	+39
Women (N=175)	8.6	6.3	+28
1942 in total (N=264)	15.2	7.8	+95
Men (N=143)	19.6	9.8	+100
Women (N=121)	9.9	5.7	+74
1943 in total (N=235)	4.3	7.3	-41
Men (N=117)	4.3	9.1	-53
Women (N=118)	4.2	5.3	-21
1944 in total (N=238)	9.7	6.8	+43
Men (N=137)	11.7	8.7	+26
Women (N=101)	6.9	4.7	+47
1945 in total (N=65)	9.2	6.5	+42
Men (N=41)	7.3	8.2	-11
Women (N=24)	12.5	4.7	+165
1941-1945 in total (N= 1155)	10.5	7.5	+40
Men (N=616)	12.7	9.4	+36
Women (N= 539)	7.8	5.3	+45

Source: Population statistics, Statistics Norway.

The mortality rate for the 1943 cohort calls for a separate explanation. Contrary to the other results, and the general expectation, the war children born in this year have a mortality deficit compared with their peers. The first assumption would be that the amount of data on war children missing for this cohort was particularly high, and that we must have failed to capture many particularly vulnerable people. However, although there is more data missing for 1943 than for the first two cohorts, there is less missing than for those born in the two subsequent years, see Appendix A. Thus, the scope of missing data does not really explain the mortality deficit.

A more obvious source of error lies in the nature of the missing data. More than half of the 1943 cohort originates from Lebensborn numbers that were poorly described in the Lebensborn protocol. Much of our information about these children is therefore derived from the index cards prepared by the Lebensborn organisation, as well as the information obtained about mothers and their children when the Ministry of Social Affairs worked on paternity cases after the war. The index cards have the best information about the mother, but often lack vital information about the child (name and date of birth). When trying to trace children in the population database BEBAS, it is easier to find those who are linked to their mother in this database. Where there is no link, e.g., because of adoption or foster home placement, the search will not be particularly fruitful. The Ministry of Social

Affairs' lists are most relevant and comprehensive in cases where the mother and child live together. Overall, the 1943 cohort may thus have an overrepresentation of children who have maintained a close connection to their mother throughout their childhood.

In summary, this implies that we have the most confidence in the results from 1941 and 1942, years for which we found a large number of war children. This is partly because we performed a special search for these two cohorts, but also because we have a higher identification rate. We also do not have the missing data bias that we seem to have in 1943. In order to get the best estimate of excess mortality among the war children, we therefore calculated the average of the excess mortality rates for the two years, which gave us the following result: the total excess mortality is 66 per cent: 70 per cent for men and 51 per cent for women. What do these figures tell us?

4.2. Higher excess mortality than comparable groups?

The mortality rate among war children is thus higher than among their peers, even when we factor in the age and gender composition of the group. But should we not expect this excess mortality based on the social and geographic (see Chapter 6) affiliations that war children seem to have?

Differences in living conditions and health often have a marked effect on mortality. For example, the mortality rate (controlled for age and gender composition) in the most vulnerable districts in Oslo is more than double that of the city's most affluent areas. Some of these same differences are found between counties. Mortality in Finnmark is well above the national average. For example, a 65-year-old man from Finnmark could expect to live for another 14.3 years at the end of the 1990s, while his male peers in Sogn og Fjordane could expect to live another 16.3 years (http://www.ssb.no/dode)

A study on male mortality in the period 1960–1990 for different occupation categories shows that the differences in mortality between occupational groups are also considerable (Borgan 1997). The working-age mortality of a seaman or hotel and restaurant worker was around 45–60 per cent higher than the average for working people, while the mortality of teachers was just under 30 per cent below average. These are, however, the most extreme results; no other occupation had, for instance, a mortality rate of more than 30 per cent above average in the same period. The mortality rate of unemployed men of working age was more than double the average for those in employment, which Borgan believes is because poor health is often the reason for their unemployment. The same picture emerges in an analysis of life expectancy for different occupational groups (Borgan 2004), but the differences are not so clear when ranking women's life expectancy by occupation.

As discussed, mortality varies considerably from a geographical perspective. It would therefore be interesting to compare county mortality rates for the war children and the two control groups. However, this has little value. The original sample (which is the least age-biased) consisted of 850 war children, i.e. around 40–50 per county on average. Just under 10 per cent of the war children, i.e. 84 people, are deceased. When these are then distributed across 19 counties, there will be an average of four to five deaths per county. The results would therefore mostly be statistically insignificant for our purposes.

We have also looked at how old the war children and their comparison groups were when they died. A marked excess of (relatively) early deaths among the war children (we do not know their mortality rate before 1960) would, in this context, support a hypothesis of poorer living conditions in this group. We find no significant differences in the age distribution here, but the analysis is complicated by the small population size.

4.3. Higher mortality than (other) children with a single mother?

Our control group, consisting of those who lived with a single mother, provides us with an interesting opportunity for comparison and to possibly control for some of the effect of social background on mortality. Like the war children, this group must have had a more difficult childhood than most children. However, the problem is that this control group consists of two groups who are older (born 1940) and younger (born 1947) than the war children. Furthermore, a meaningful comparison must also control for gender. We also have to remember here that we have a full count of children with single mothers, while some of the data is missing for the war children. Admittedly, the absence of data is lowest in the two oldest cohorts, but it is nevertheless sufficient to have potentially increased the mortality rate. Comparing the mortality among war children with the group of other 'children' with single mothers is therefore complicated. However, it is clear that the latter group has a higher mortality rate than their peers.

This then leads to the complex discussion of whether or not the mortality of war children is exceptionally high. For the group of war children as a whole, it is difficult to draw any other conclusion than that there is a clear excess mortality, but that it is not higher than that found among other vulnerable groups. The excess mortality is also lower than men's general excess mortality compared to women. Those with a clear excess mortality are thus those who were born in the early war years. The average for the overall excess mortality for war children born in 1941 and 1942 is thus 66 per cent. This corresponds to an excess mortality that is on a par with, and in fact slightly higher than, the excess mortality among those of working age in the most vulnerable occupational groups.

4.4. More suicides

For our purposes, we divided the causes of death into five main groups, see Table 4.2. Well over half of the deaths among everyone born in the period 1941–1945 and among the war children were due to cancer and cardiovascular disease. The war children are overrepresented for both of these causes of death, but the difference is only statistically significant for cardiovascular disease.

Among the war children's peers, one in seven deaths were the result of an accident, while the corresponding proportion among the war children was just one in twelve. Perhaps the most striking aspect of this figure is the excess mortality for suicide. Roughly 10 per cent of deceased war children died as a result of suicide, compared to 6 per cent of their peers. The proportion among children with single mothers is just under 9 per cent. Although these differences are not statistically significant, a statistically significant difference is found (with a 90 per cent confidence interval) when we compare the 1941 and 1942 war children's cohorts (12.5 per cent suicide among those deceased) with their peers (5.5 per cent). Our confidence in the results for war children is greatest for these two cohorts, as these are the cohorts with the best identification rate. Note also that in these cohorts there is an excess prevalence of cancer among the war children (as in the total sample), but no excess prevalence of cardiovascular disease.

An even more precise measure of excess mortality is the rate of deaths from this cause of death, measured as a proportion of everyone in each group. This calculation factors in both the general excess mortality among war children and the excess mortality for various causes of death. In this context, however, control group 2 (others with single mothers) must be excluded due to the different age composition.

Table 4.2. Causes of death among the war children and the two control groups in the period 1960–2002. Percentage

Cause of death	War children	Peers	Children with single mothers
Cardiovascular disease	28	21	23
Cancer	39	36	31
Other disease	13	22	21
Accident/violent death	9	14	17
Suicide	10	6	9
Total	100	100	100
N	117	19 621	541

Source: Cause of Death Registry.

Table 4.3. Mortality rates for a selection of diseases and categories of violent deaths. The war children and the two control groups. Percentage

Cause of death	War children (N=1155)	Peers (N= 268 545)	Other children with single mother (N= 5 797)
Cancer	3.98	2.66	2.88
Cardiovascular disease	2.86	1.57	2.10
Accident	0.78	0.96	1.31
Suicide	1.04	0.44	0.83

Source: Cause of Death Registry.

Using this measurement, suicide was the cause of death for 1.0 per cent of war children in the period 1960–2002. The corresponding rates are 0.4 per cent for their peers and 0.83 per cent for other 'children' with a single mother (the difference is not statistically significant). The excess mortality due to cancer and cardiovascular disease is somewhat more marked because these rates are the sum of a general excess mortality and an overrepresentation for certain causes of death. In contrast, the accident mortality rate among war children is lower than in both control groups. We do not want to read too much into this as the war children population is small.

4.5. Suicide among young people

From a 'modern' perspective, we could envisage the following objection: the suicide figures for the period 1960–2002 are of limited interest. In this period, some of the war children are past adolescence, a time when it is conceivable, based on recent suicide figures, that a number of them would already have taken their own lives. The war children had a tough childhood and adolescence, and the degree of adversity they would have faced as a young child would have put them at risk of suicide in young adulthood. We could have identified this if we had had information from before 1960.

If the war children had been born in the 1970s, this reasoning could have carried considerable weight. In the 1990s, the suicide rate among 15–19-year-old men was almost as high as among men in their 30s. The figures for women tend to fluctuate more, but here too we find years with high suicide rates among girls in their late teens (http://www.ssb.no/dodsarsak/).

In the 1950s, however, suicide among teenagers was almost an unknown phenomenon. In 1999, 27 men between the ages of 15 and 19 took their own lives. In the 1950s, the male average for this age group was 2, compared to 1 or none for the girls. The number of suicides among young people was roughly the same for the entire 1950s as for the year 1999. We cannot ignore the fact that the difference between the 1950s and the more modern statistics in this field may partly be due to the lower propensity to register deaths as suicides. Nevertheless, this is a source of error that would weaken our ability to shed light on this problem with register data from before 1960.

5. Family life

5.1. Many are married

The war children belong to a generation in which marriage is the norm, and cohabitation and divorce are the exception. The latter two phenomena only really took off among those born after the war. It is therefore not surprising when we find that as many as 88 per cent of the war children are or have been married, i.e., are currently married, widowed, divorced or separated. And 62 per cent of the 'children' are still married. The proportion of war children who are married today is around 5 percentage points lower than for others born in the same period, while the proportion who have been married at some point is almost the same as for that of everyone born in the same period.

This suggests that the war children may initially have been regarded as attractive life partners. They have, at one point or another, entered the socially important marriage market. Only 12 per cent have never been married, which is almost the same as for their peers. If a strong stigma had been attached to the 'war child' status at the time when they were of marriageable age (particularly in the 1960s), it is perhaps conceivable that the war children might have run a high risk of never marrying. This of course requires their potential partners, and themselves, to actually be aware of their status as a war child (see Chapter 1). The high marriage rates, with many married at a young age, also testify to a high level of activity on this front. This may indicate a less discriminatory marriage market.

Table 5.1. Marital status at 31.12.2002. The war children and two control groups. Excludes informants for whom marital status is not specified. Percentage

Marital status	War children	Peers	Other children with single mothers
Married	62.0	66.8	62.0
Divorced or separated	20.7	16.5	20.6
Widow/widower	5.1	4.9	4.7
Single	12.1	11.7	12.6
Total	100 (N=1 154)	100 (N=255 737)	100 (N=5 790)

Source: BESTAT.

One hypothesis could be that war children would have more problems with their own family life because they themselves have likely grown up in families with more problems than average. For shorter or longer periods, the children have lived in families with a single mother as the only parent, and many will have lived with stepfathers, half-siblings, etc. Many of them will thus have had a family life that was less typical for the period they grew up in.

One of the key findings from the qualitative interviews with war children with a difficult childhood (Ericsson and Simonsen 2005) was that the problems in the family sphere are often described as the most serious. The quality of family relations has had a bigger impact on the children's lives than, for example, the situation at school or in the local environment.

The hypothesis that difficult family circumstances in childhood will reduce the chances of marrying does not seem to be confirmed by the information on marriage rates. Here, the war children appear to be chosen as partners just as often as others, and this applies to both sexes. We know nothing about the more sophisticated aspects of the selection process and the outcome, for example whether they were encouraged to choose other 'outsiders'. However, the divorce figures tell a different story.

5.2. Married young

A relatively high proportion of the war children married young, but this proportion is similar to that of their peers. The early marriages may reflect the war children's socioeconomic status: young working-class people married earlier than their more affluent peers. Studies of fertility and marriage among 'the war children cohorts' clearly indicate that a low level of education increases the chance of marrying at a young age (Noack and Østby 1977, Blom, Noack and Østby 1993). We have no information on marriages before 1960, and it is therefore possible that some marriages, particularly those contracted at a young age, are missing from our data.

Getting married young can also be interpreted as an indication of a desire to leave home. Maybe some of them married young to escape a family they did not enjoy living with? Or did they have to leave the family home because there was neither the space nor the finances to accommodate them? Or did they have to leave home to take up employment? Or go to the cities to escape local gossip? It is also conceivable that forming their own family may have been particularly important for war children, given the problems many of them experienced in their original family.

5.3. Many women are separated and divorced

If it is assumed that war children have had more social problems than others, it is less surprising that the current proportion of divorced and separated people is significantly higher among war children than among their peers (21 per cent compared with 17 per cent). The proportion of those separated is the same in the three groups, at just under 2 per cent. This also applies to the proportion of widows and widowers, which is around 5 per cent. The overrepresentation of divorced people applies to all war children cohorts. The divorce rate is particularly high among the female war children – over 23 per cent, while the male war children's divorce rate is roughly the same as that of their peers. The gender gap in the divorce rate is also modest among their peers.

One problem is that the time and resources at our disposal did not allow us to examine how many of those among the war children and the control groups have remarried. The differences shown above could, in theory, be due to a lower remarriage rate as opposed to a higher divorce rate. We also had no opportunity to establish the number of people currently cohabiting. However, in general, we know from sample surveys that the proportion of cohabitants drops markedly with age. Among those aged 55–59 in 2002, 10 per cent of men and 6 per cent of women were cohabiting, and the proportions were even lower in the older age groups (http://www.ssb.no/emner/02/01/20/samboer/).

The 2001 Census shows that the war children live with a partner to the same extent as their peers. Just under 22 per cent of the war children were living alone at this point in time, compared to just over 18 per cent of their peers. The women in both groups are most likely to live alone, and more than one in four female war children live alone. This is probably due to the fact that most women marry or cohabit with men who are older than them, and that the chance of becoming a widow is therefore much higher than becoming a widower. Women also have the highest divorce rate. The fact that more of the war children are living alone than their peers is also because the war children sample is most heavily represented in the oldest cohorts (born in 1941 and 1942).

People who have problems forming stable relationships are also more likely to experience multiple broken relationships. Several of those interviewed by Ericsson and Simonsen (2005) characterised their experiences of relationships in this way. However, we were unable to obtain reliable data on this in our register-based study.

5.4. Many children

The war children also belong to a generation with a relatively high fertility rate. Their peers had an average of 2.5 children, and this was also the case for the war children. There is also no difference in the distribution of the number of children. The proportion of war children who have no children or one, two, three etc. children is about the same as for their peers.

For the indicators selected in this chapter, children of single mothers score approximately the same as the war children. We can briefly summarise this chapter on family life by stating that it is only when examining the divorce rate among women that we find clear differences between the war children and their peers. Other children with a single mother also have a higher divorce rate, but this applies to both sexes.

6. Geography and mobility

In a number of Ericsson and Simonsen's (2005) interviews, the war children described how they had moved frequently during their childhood. Some said this was because their mother had to live where there were job opportunities or the possibility of finding a husband, while others moved to avoid stigmatisation in small local communities. Although forming a broad overview of the war children's movement and settlement patterns in the post-war period is both demographically and sociologically interesting, it is a challenging task.

6.1. Many people lack knowledge of their place of birth

It is difficult to establish with any great certainty where the war children in our sample were born and spent their early childhood, and this applies to their geographic mobility in general. The 1960 Census lacks information on place of birth for over 40 per cent of this age group and for almost a third of the war children. The 1946 Census probably provides a more accurate picture of where they spent their childhood, but this is not yet available in electronic format. However, it gives us a better idea of where all the registered war children in this census lived (more about the 1946 Census in Chapter 1).

The Lebensborn material is also unsatisfactory in this respect. All these three sources (Lebensborn archives, the 1946 Census and the 1960 Census) are also affected by the considerable geographic mobility of many of the women during the turbulent war years and post-war period. Information on place of birth in the 1960 Census, for example, is characterised by the birth of many of the children in Lebensborn homes. For example, the county of Akershus is overrepresented as place of birth but this is not the case later. This seems to be because many children were born at the Lebensborn home in Hurdal. However, the mothers' place of residence and the children's later childhood home might be in completely different places. Many of the mothers travelled a considerable distance to give birth on account of the location of the Lebensborn homes. A number of the mothers undoubtedly thought it an advantage to give birth to their German-Norwegian child far away from their home town. A fair proportion of the mothers probably also moved to Oslo, Bergen and Trondheim in order to 'hide away' at the time of the liberation of Norway. A further complication was the evacuation of Northern Norway at the end of the war. Many people's homes were destroyed, and some people spent a long period of time in other parts of the country before returning home.

Some counties stand out as overrepresented in all three sources (Lebensborn archives and the 1946 and 1960 Census). This primarily applies to the three counties in Northern Norway as well as the counties of Trøndelag and Hordaland. In the 1946 Census, the high frequency of those resident in the northernmost counties is particularly clear – over 40 per cent lived in these counties (Table 6.1). A considerable percentage of the war children also undoubtedly lived in Oslo, but here there is no overrepresentation in relation to general population otherwise.

Why do we find this pattern of settlement? Generally, two factors appear to have impacted on the number of Norwegian-German relationships and resulting war children. Firstly, many relationships arose in areas with a large proportion of Germans in relation to the population. This applied particularly to the counties of Northern Norway, but also to many places along the coast of 'Fortress Norway'. In many small villages, Norwegians and Germans lived side by side for long periods of time. Secondly, social control and the weakening of this played an important role. Many women with a German boyfriend lived a long way from home, whether they worked as a housemaid in the towns or as a kitchen worker, office worker or cleaner in German military facilities. Social control partly took the form of opposition to the German occupation forces, which resulted in strong sanctions against different forms of interaction with the enemy. It is generally accepted that this was stronger

in central parts of Eastern Norway than, for example, in parts of Northern Norway (Eriksen and Halvorsen 1988).

Table 6.1. War children born 1942–1946 by place of residence. 1946 Census. Grouped by county. Percentage

Place of residence	Percentage of war children	Percentage of population
Oslo	7.0	9.1
Remainder of Eastern Norway[1]	27.8	44.5
Vestlandet[2]	24.6	24.8
Trøndelag and Northern Norway	40.8	21.7
Total	100 (N= 7 636)	100 (N=3 156 950)

[1] Østfold, Akershus, Hedmark, Oppland, Buskerud, Vestfold, Telemark and Agder.
[2] Rogaland, Hordaland, Sogn og Fjordane, Møre og Romsdal.
Source: 1946 Census, *Norge under okkupasjonen 1996* (Norway during the occupation 1996) (no information for children born in 1941).

Table 6.2. Place of residence 1960 for war children, their peers and children of single mothers. Grouped by county. Percentage

Place of residence	War children 1960	Peers 1960	Children of single mothers 1960
Oslo	12	12	19
Remainder of Eastern Norway[1]	32	39	36
Western Norway[2]	25	26	23
Trøndelag and Northern Norway	30	24	22
Total	100 N=1 071	100 N=221 001	100 N=5 797

[1] Østfold, Akershus, Hedmark, Oppland, Buskerud, Vestfold, Telemark and Agder.
[2] Rogaland, Hordaland, Sogn og Fjordane, Møre og Romsdal.
Source: 1960 Census.

Table 6.3. Place of residence 2001 for war children, their peers and children of single mothers. Grouped by county. Percentage

Place of residence	War children 2001	Peers 2001	Children of single mothers 2001
Oslo	11	10	14
Remainder of Eastern Norway[1]	40	46	45
Western Norway[2]	25	24	22
Trøndelag and Northern Norway	24	20	19
Total	100 N=961	100 N=206 100	100 N=4 945

[1] Østfold, Akershus, Hedmark, Oppland, Buskerud, Vestfold, Telemark and Agder.
[2] Rogaland, Hordaland, Sogn og Fjordane, Møre og Romsdal.
Source: 2001 Census.

The 1960 Census gives us the first reliable picture of where our sample of war children lived. Table 6.2 summarises the war children's place of residence in 1960 compared with the geographic distribution of the two control groups. To avoid categories with few informants, the counties are grouped geographically.

6.2. 1960: Many live in the northernmost parts of the country

The 1960 Census confirms to some extent the picture of the children's place of birth even though the information given there is incomplete. It also reflects the general impression given by the 1946 Census. There is a clear overrepresentation of children resident in the five northernmost counties,[1] and the same applies to Bergen and Hordaland, which are included in the Western Norway category. Large parts of Eastern Norway are underrepresented. However, the 1946 Census shows a much

[1] In 2004, what is now called 'Trøndelag' was made up of two counties: Nord-Trøndelag and Sør-Trøndelag, and Troms and Finnmark were two separate counties.

clearer overrepresentation in the five northernmost counties – a total of 40 per cent of the war children born in the period 1942–1946 lived there (place of residence is missing for the 1941 cohort in the 1946 Census). The proportion born in Oslo and the remainder of Eastern Norway was lower in 1946 than in 1960, while remaining almost the same for Western Norway. There may be two reasons for this: firstly, our sample of war children may underrepresent children born in the northernmost counties, and secondly, war children and their mothers may have been among the first to move from the northernmost counties.

6.3. 2001: More in the south

If we examine the current picture of where war children reside, the overrepresentation of the five northernmost counties (refer to footnote 1) is less clear. They are still overrepresented in these counties but not to the same extent as previously. The same applies to Hordaland (not shown), but in Oslo, they constitute the proportion of the population one would expect based on the distribution among their peers.

The material as it is presented does not permit a satisfactory analysis of childhood circumstances and geographic mobility. However, we can outline some preliminary conclusions. Firstly, there appears to be a consistent overrepresentation of war children in Hordaland and the five northernmost counties. Secondly, the overrepresentation appears to be less now than when the war children were growing up. This indicates that they, and to some extent their mothers, have had much the same geographic mobility as their peers. Many people moved house during the urbanisation of the 1960s and parts of the 1970s. At that time, the war children were in the age groups that move most frequently, i.e. between 20 and 30 years of age.

Initially we assumed that it was important to control for the place of residence in the analysis of the living conditions of the war children. We expected there to be an overrepresentation of the three northernmost counties in particular, and we know from other contexts that these counties have, inter alia, a lower level of education and a higher percentage of disability pensioners than the Norwegian average. Mortality in the post-war period is also higher throughout, particularly in Finnmark. However, it now appears that the overrepresentation is not so marked over the life course as could be expected. And this brings us to some of the issues at the heart of the problem. By controlling for place of residence, we are also largely controlling for (lack of) geographic mobility. By taking into account the fact that many of the war children still live in the north of the country, we also control for important aspects of their living conditions: perhaps they have not had the social and financial capital or even education to make the big leap that is required in urbanisation, but have remained in municipalities with a one-dimensional and vulnerable economic base.

Interestingly, it seems that many war children made the leap, nevertheless. However, this gives rise to many questions: Did they move (perhaps to a greater extent than others) primarily because they had more opportunities and resources? Or is their mobility a result of something more negative, i.e. the need to get away from a stigmatising local environment? The explanation is probably a combination of both these factors, but we must once again stress that our empirical data in this field are much weaker than is desirable.

7. Health and disability

It is easy to argue that health is an important indicator of standard of living. If you do not have a certain 'minimum' standard of health, various other aspects of 'the good life' will be difficult or impossible to achieve. Poor health even appears to reduce the possibility of getting married and increase the possibility of getting divorced (Blekesaune 2003). When people were asked what they considered to be the most important factor in improving their lives, one in five men and one in four women between the ages of 45 and 66 answered that good health was the most important. This was the first choice for women, while men more frequently chose more leisure time. For those over the age of 66, good health was the clear first choice for both sexes (Barstad 1999). A survey of Norwegians' 'level of happiness' showed a clear increasing trend in level of happiness among those who had poor health, neither poor nor good health, good health and very good health (Hellevik 1999).

Unfortunately, we are unable to obtain a general overview of war children's health. When the aim is to give a general impression of the health of the population, interview surveys are used in which a representative sample of the population reports their self-perceived health status. As previously mentioned (Chapter 1), these samples are not big enough to allow us to draw a representative group of war children from such surveys.

We must settle, therefore, for data on the war children who have probably experienced (considerable) health problems. We have already looked at mortality rates and the causes of death. We will also consider the percentage of war children receiving disability pension, and the reasons for this.

7.1. Many war children become disability pensioners

An important variable is how many war children receive disability pension. They are now[2] of an age when the prevalence of disability pensioners is really starting to be high. In the interviews with Ericsson and Simonsen (2005), many of the war children also emphasise disability pension as an indicator of their problems in life. Our finding that the proportion of disability pensioners is higher among war children than their peers confirms our informed expectations: 28.4 per cent compared with 23.7 per cent. However, this result is derived from a total sample that is somewhat skewed in terms of age, which we will take into consideration below. Nevertheless, there was also an overrepresentation of disability pensioners among the war children in the main sample, which has a more even age distribution.

In general, more women than men receive disability pension. Among the war children's peers, almost 29 per cent of the women receive this welfare benefit compared with 19 per cent of the men. There is also a clear difference among the war children: 35 per cent of the women and well over 22 per cent of the men were disability pensioners in 2001. Thus the excess frequency applies to both sexes, but is clearer in the case of women than men.

[2] At the end of 2002.

Table 7.1. Proportion of disability pensioners as of 31.12.2002. The war children and the two control groups by sex and age. Percentage

Gender and year of birth	War children (N=961)	Peers (N=206 100)	Others with a single mother (N=4 945)
1940			32.6
Men			30.9
Women			35.1
1941	31.3	28.9	
Men	22.1	24.0	
Women	39.7	33.7	
1942	30.6	25.6	
Men	25.0	20.6	
Women	36.7	30.6	
1943	25.0	22.8	
Men	19.1	17.8	
Women	31.1	27.8	
1944	25.4	20.7	
Men	22.3	16.1	
Women	29.2	25.4	
1945	29.1	19.1	
Men	25.7	14.9	
Women	35.0	23.5	
1947			21.5
Men			17.1
Women			25.9

Source: 2001 Census.

In 2001, the war children are thus of an age when the proportion of pensioners rises steeply. Among their peers, 19 per cent of those born in 1945 were receiving a pension in 2001, while a total of 29 per cent of the 1941 cohort were in the same position. We must check, therefore, whether the excess frequency among war children is merely due to a skewed age distribution. This does not appear to be the case: for all age groups, and for both genders in each age group, there is an overrepresentation of disability pensioners among war children. However, there is one exception – men born in 1941. Here the incidence of disability among male war children is somewhat lower than among their peers.

Therefore, although disability pension is a benefit that varies according to gender and age, the geographical differences are also considerable. This shows that, as well as being a health indicator, disability pension also functions as a labour market indicator in the geographic area where the pensioner lives. It is easier to find alternative work in a more diverse labour market.

When comparing the prevalence of disability pensioners among war children and their peers in each county, we also consistently find that war children represent a higher proportion but that the differences are not statistically significant. There is a higher proportion in 15 of the 19 counties, while in three of the counties, the prevalence is almost the same, and in one county the percentage of war children receiving a disability pension is lower than for their peers. In this county, i.e. Finnmark, the dataset for the war children is small, and this also applies to the counties where there is a higher prevalence of war children.

Thus, we see a much higher percentage of disability pensioners among war children than among their peers, as was expected based on their background. We had actually expected to see a somewhat higher overrepresentation of disability pensioners among the war children, viewed in relation to, for instance, the clearer excess mortality. It is possible that this is partly explained by the fact that many of the deceased war children would have been disability pensioners if they were still alive. In simple terms, we can say that both those who are deceased and those who are disability pensioners represent groups with poor health, and if we combine these two percentages, the high incidence of people with poor health will be much more marked among the war children.

A reliable comparison of disability frequencies between the war children and the control group of 'children with a single mother' is difficult for the same reasons suggested in the discussion of differences in mortality.

7.2. Many disability pensioners with mental health problems

The registers contain information about why the pensioners were receiving their welfare benefit, i.e. the medical background. We had expected to find differences between the war children and comparable groups as we assumed that more of the war children would have retired due to a mental health disorder, and this was confirmed to a certain extent. The proportion who retired as a result of a mental health disorder or behaviour disorder is somewhat higher among the war children than their peers: 26 per cent compared with 23 per cent (not statistically significant). Among the children of single mothers (control group 2), we find an equally high proportion with the same problems as among the war children.

Diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissues are also disorders that indicate degradation, while at times the disorder may be of a more diffuse nature. Here the war children are not overrepresented in relation to their peers; on the contrary they are three percentage points below (36 per cent compared with 39 per cent – not statistically significant). The same applies to the children of single mothers. Musculoskeletal and connective tissue disorders are by far the two most common reasons for receiving a disability pension among war children and the control groups.

However, these are merely the principal diagnoses. People who retire with a disability pension often have complex health problems, and the principal diagnosis and secondary diagnosis may partly depend on how applicants describe their problems and how doctors classify them. In any case, this proved to be a source of error for all categories of disability pensioners. However, we cannot say that 'only' 26 per cent of the war children receiving disability pensions have mental health disorders as many may also have this as a secondary diagnosis.

Another source of error is the dual role of the disability pension as both a medical indicator and a labour market indicator: many people are also given a disability pension because there is no suitable work within a reasonable geographic distance. Although they have health problems, they might have been able to find work if the labour market had been better. However, at their age, it is not reasonable to expect them to commute or move house to adapt to the labour market.

Disability pension is a common phenomenon in the oldest age groups, and perhaps especially among women in specific geographic areas. We could say that disability pension is not necessarily always a prominent indicator of a marginalised health status. However, the situation is different when disability pension is granted at a relatively young age. Consequently, it is interesting to look at when the war children and comparable groups were granted this.

7.3. Many claimed disability pension at a young age

As pointed out, more than every fourth war child is a disability pensioner, which represents a higher proportion than among their peers. Being a disability pensioner at the end of your 50s or start of your 60s is not unusual or necessarily a definitive sign of poor health. It is more often the case that many Norwegians end their working career at this stage of life.

Table 7.2. Percentage of war children and the two control groups who retired with a disability pension at different stages of life. Percentage

Age	War children (N=961)	Peers (N=206 100)	Others with a single mother (N= 4 945)
Below 50 years	8.4	6.8	6.9
50-54 years	10.1	7.6	11.5
55 years and over	9.9	9.2	8.1

Source: 2001 Census.

A much clearer indication of ill health is receiving a disability pension at a young age, i.e. under the age of 50. Firstly, this means ending your working career early, if you have had any kind of working career, and is an indicator of poor health and often of poor social functional ability. Secondly, receiving disability pension early means fewer pension points in the National Insurance Scheme, and a correspondingly lower pension. Thirdly, a relatively young disability pensioner will have very many years with no attachment to the labour market – an attachment that has a strong correlation with good health (Borgan 2004, Dahl and Birkelund 1999). On the one hand, poor health increases the chances of being unable to gain a foothold in the labour market, while on the other hand, a lack of participation in working life can lead to isolation etc., which in turn may diminish health and quality of life more generally.

Therefore, the high percentage of war children who retired at a relatively early stage of their lives is a clear indicator of early exclusion. Table 7.2 shows the three groups of disability pensioners divided into three categories according to the age at which they retired: below 50 years, first half of their 50s, the second half of their 50s and the start of their 60s. Among the war children's peers, the proportion of new pensioners increases with age. Thus there are many more who retire at 55 or later compared with those retiring before they are 50 or in their early 50s. The distribution among the war children is more similar between the three age categories. Children living with single mothers in 1960 also show a varied distribution, with many relatively young disability pensioners, but here the majority retired in their early 50s. However, the percentage of 'young' pensioners (below 50) is not striking.

The gender distribution is interesting here. Women generally become disability pensioners at a younger age than men. Thus, among the war children's peers, over 30 per cent of the female pensioners retired before the age of 50 compared with less than 25 per cent of the men. Among the war children, both sexes retired at an early stage – well over 37 per cent of both men and women received a disability pension before the age of 50.

Disability pension is an indicator of health status among those outside the labour market. We also have some information about the health of those currently in employment.

7.4. Higher sickness absence

We looked at sickness absence in the period 1998–2001 among those in employment in 2001. We examined both the number of medical certificates, and the total number of days employees were absent from work. This applies to all medical certificates issued after the period of sick leave covered by the employer, i.e. 14 days. Therefore the actual absence from work will be higher, and many employees will also have had periods of illness that are not included here.

These measurements of health among the presumably healthiest employees also show a higher incidence of illness among the war children. Over half of these (54 per cent) had one or more such (relatively long) periods of sick leave in this four-year period compared with less than half (46 per cent) of their peers. The war children are also somewhat overrepresented among those with several

periods of sickness absence. Other children of single mothers have a sick leave frequency that is very similar to the war children's peers, but they belong to different age categories.

The same pattern is seen when we consider the total number of days of absence from work due to illness. The war children are overrepresented among those who have been absent from work for long periods, i.e. 100 days or more (39 per cent) in relation to their peers (32 per cent). Other children with a single mother also have the same 'profile' as the war children's peers.

8. Education

We have already noted that the war children's families had a low level of education (Chapter 3). In 1960, it also appeared that not many war children had begun a long education, but the data were insufficient and the 'children' too young to have made much progress in their education. Why do we focus on the education variable in our analysis of war children? There are two main reasons for this.

Firstly, education is a variable that is closely correlated to very many other key variables for living conditions. A high education level clearly gives greater opportunities for a high income, good health, a long life and long-term, regular work with little unemployment (although it is obviously easier for people in good health to complete a lengthy programme of education). Conversely, a low education level increases the likelihood of unemployment, disability and earlier death. Knowing how a large group of individuals scores on this variable often gives us a great deal of other information.

However, this gives rise to a problem: the war children belong to the cohorts born some years prior to the education revolution. Of the group of 50–59-year-olds in 2002, around 27 per cent of the men and 23 per cent of the women had completed a higher education. The proportion is much higher for their children, and here women dominate. The same year, 37 per cent of the women and 30 per cent of the men in the age group 30–39 had a higher education. Thus, the education gap is not so differentiated among the war generation than for those born in the 1960s or later. Nevertheless, there will be differences in how many have completed an upper secondary education and other education.

The other reason we focus on the education variable is that the war children themselves stress this. In Ericsson and Simonsen's book (2005), one informant says that for them, the war started at school. It was here that they suffered their most agonising and marked losses. Many found that their education was cut short, not because of a lack of ability but because their school days were characterised by bullying, shame and loss. There was no reason to spend more time at school than necessary. This picture of war children's school days is a recurring feature in Ericsson and Simonsen's interview material. We should also add that many people described a household economy that could not afford to provide for young people who, not only had no income, but whose education costs were a financial burden. Moving frequently may also have reduced the benefits of schooling for some.

Some war children were troubled by the fact that they had not received the schooling they were entitled to, and some had received ex-gratia compensation for this. However, a poll of the relevant public bodies did not provide figures indicating how many war children had received such compensation. Nor is it the case that war children received such compensation by virtue of their war child status.

However, we will not discount the possibility that the education of the war children may be more polarised than envisaged. On the one hand, we found many with a low level of education, but at the same time we identified a small group who had come a long way in the educational arena. Some perhaps took up education relatively late in their lives. A completed higher education can thus reflect an indisputable verification of one's own competence and be regarded as a victory in an arena otherwise associated with loss.

8.1. Few with a higher education

The 2001 Census includes information about both ongoing education and the highest level of completed education. Almost none of the war children or their peers were currently in education, which is to be expected for people in their late 50s and early 60s. The information about their education should therefore be more or less complete. In general, the level of education rose

somewhat through the 1941–1945 cohorts, but not to the extent that there is any reason to control for the year group.

Table 8.1 shows approximately what we could expect based on earlier data: the war children are overrepresented at the bottom of the education ladder but are underrepresented at the top. The war children have 'settled' for a short education to a greater extent than their peers, i.e. lasting 8 to 10 years. In modern terms, we would call this 'lower secondary school', but for the war children it was continuation school or middle school. The underrepresentation is particularly clear in higher education, i.e. education at university and university college level. The proportion of war children with such education is just over half that of their peers (13 per cent compared with 22 per cent). Here they also compare poorly with the other 'children' who were living with a single mother in 1960. The latter group is also not characterised by any material difference in education level between those born in 1940 and 1947. A slightly higher proportion of war children have an upper secondary education (11-14 years) compared with their peers, which probably reflects the fact that fewer have a university or university college education. Thus we find few people who have progressed very far in the education system, but this does not necessarily mean that none of the war children went further than they had expected in this arena. Simonsen and Ericsson's (2005) interview material contained several examples of educational pathways that may seem modest to others but represented an important victory to the person concerned.

Table 8.1. Highest level of education achieved 2001 for war children and the two control groups. Percentage

Education	War children	Peers	Children of single mothers
Not stated/missing	1.4	1.2	0.9
Primary school (1–7)	0	0.2	0
Lower secondary school (8–10)	31.7	25.1	26.6
Upper secondary school, basic education (11-12)	39.8	36.4	35.6
Upper secondary school, completed (13)	13.1	13.2	13,7
Supplementary studies, upper secondary school (14)	1.5	2.3	2.5
University/university college, lower level (14-17)	10.6	16.0	15.4
University/university college, upper level (18-19)	2.0	5.1	4.7
Research education (20)	0	0.6	0.5
Total	100 N=961	100 N=206 100	100 N=4945

Source: 2001 Census.

We examined gender distribution for the different education levels among the war children and the two control groups. There were no significant differences here: women were generally somewhat underrepresented at the highest education levels. Ideally we should also have controlled for the war children's specific geographic distribution. The opportunities for taking an upper secondary and higher education were very different for adolescents in the northernmost counties in the 1960s compared with their peers living close to the large towns in Southern Norway. However, controlling for this was complicated for two reasons. Firstly, our information about the war children's place of residence during childhood was insufficient, and secondly the sub-categories would be too small.

9. Employment, income, wealth and income protection

It is also easy to argue for the value of employment as a living conditions variable. Employment provides income, and the type of work greatly influences the income amount. Working life also has a very important social side: most people take pleasure in being part of a community of colleagues at a workplace. In surveys conducted in 1989 and 1997 respectively, a total of 75 per cent of Norwegians answered on both occasions that they would like to have a job even though they did not need the money (Kitterød 1999). On the other hand, some workplaces and occupations entail considerable health burdens. Nevertheless, we find that those who are not in employment have the poorest health (Dahl and Birkelund 1999), and this is also reflected in life expectancy, particularly among men (Borgan 2004).

There is a considerable gender gap in respect of working careers and employment rates in the age group to which the war children belong. Among men, we consistently found very high rates of employment, while women would enter and leave the labour market to a much greater extent, often working part time. This is a generation in which the mother's employment was extremely flexible in relation to caring for her husband and children.

9.1. Lower employment rate among war children

Table 9.1 reflects a familiar picture. As a group, the war children do not fare as well as other children of single mothers and much worse than their peers. We also see that the employment rate is almost a mirror image of the proportion with a disability pension. However, we must keep in mind that the term 'employed' must not be interpreted as 'in full-time paid work the whole year'. Everyone in income-producing work, whether as employees, self-employed or working for the family business, is regarded as employed.

Table 9.1. The proportion employed in the 2001 working year among war children and the two control groups. Total, men and women. Percentage

	War children (N=961)	Peers (N=206 100)	Children of single mothers (N=4 945)
All	73.2	77.5	74.7
Men	78.8	83.4	78.6
Women	67.0	71.5	70.4

Source: Census

9.2. A greater number of unemployed

Like poverty and the need for social assistance, unemployment particularly affects people who are considerably younger than the war children are now. To avoid random results for individual years, we examined unemployment from 1992 until 2000 for the war children and the two control groups. Unemployment was measured as a proportion of all (not deceased or emigrated), i.e. not just as a proportion of those employed. Most war children, like the people in the two control groups, did not experience unemployment in this period. But the proportion of unemployed people is higher among the war children (28 per cent) than among their peers (23 per cent). The war children also compare poorly with other children with a single mother, and are overrepresented among those who have been unemployed for a very long period, i.e. 1000 days or more during the period.

9.3. Income

There are many ways of measuring income. In this context, we use net income, see the box below.

Net income is calculated by adding earned income, self-employment income, investment income and capital transfers. Thereafter assessed tax and negative transfers are deducted.

Table 9.2 shows how the war children's individual incomes are distributed in relation to the incomes of the two comparison groups. Roughly speaking, the differences in income appear relatively modest when we categorise them fairly broadly. However, the war children are somewhat overrepresented in the second lowest income category, and somewhat underrepresented in the three highest categories. If we add together the three highest income categories, we find that this constitutes 34 per cent of the war children compared with 40 per cent of their peers and the group of other children with single mothers. The clearest differences between the groups are found among men, where the proportion of men with a modest income (under NOK 200 000) is higher among war children than among their peers and the other control group.

Table 9.2. Net income for war children and the two control groups. Total, men and women. Percentage

Income in NOK	War children	Peers	Other children with a single mother
Alle			
Not stated	1	1	1
0 – 99 999	14	13	12
100 000 – 199 999	52	47	48
200 000 – 299 999	25	29	29
300 000 – 399 999	5	6	6
400 000 or more	4	5	5
Total	100 (N=961)	100 (N=206 100)	100 (N=4 945)
Men			
Not stated	0	0	0
0 – 99 999	6	5	5
100 000 – 199 999	44	37	40
200 000 – 299 999	35	40	37
300 000 – 399 999	8	10	10
400 000 or more	7	8	7
Total	100 (N= 500)	100 (N=103 673)	100 (N=2 636)
Women			
Not stated	1	1	1
0-99 999	23	22	20
100 000 –199 999	60	57	57
200 000 – 299 999	14	18	19
300 000 – 399 999	1	2	1
400 000 or more	1	1	2
Total	100 (N= 461)	100 (N=102 427)	100 (N= 2 309)

Source: 2001 Census.

Table 9.3. Net income per person. Average. All, men and women. War children and the two control groups. NOK. 2001. Rounded up

	War children (N=961)	Peers (N= 206 100)	Children of single mothers (N= 4 945)
All	188 800	210 100	205 900
Men	227 900	265 600	251 800
Women	146 400	153 800	153 500

Source: 2001 Census.

9.4. Lower average income

As mentioned, the income categories are fairly broad. If the war children are overrepresented in the lower parts of the income intervals, the differences in income may be greater than Table 9.2 suggests. Measuring the average (the arithmetic mean) income for the war children and the control groups will allow us to see if this is the case. Table 9.3 shows that this measurement method shows clearer differences.

In 2001, the average income among war children was nearly NOK 189 000, while on average their peers earned NOK 210 000 in the same year. This is a relatively significant difference. As we see, the difference between all those born in the period 1941–1945 and those who lived with a single mother in 1960 is far less. The difference is greatest for men – a total of NOK 38 000 separates the average for the war children and that of their peers. The difference is far more modest for women: just under NOK 7 000. We note that the gender gap in income is far smaller among war children than among their peers. While the average man in this age group has an income of nearly NOK 111 000 more than the average woman, there is a difference of more than NOK 61 000 between men and women among the war children. Moreover, when we measure average income, there is less difference between the children of single mothers and their peers, and among the women there is almost no difference.

9.5. Few rich war children

However, such calculations of averages have their weaknesses. A few Norwegians have extremely high incomes, and if there is one or more multi-millionaires in this type of sample, it will raise the average considerably. This applies to the two smallest samples in particular: the war children and the children of single mothers. Those without income or with a very low income will counteract this but the effects will not be very great. To remedy this, we can measure the median income. This is the income that is produced by ranking all incomes in a group from lowest to highest, and then identifying the income that is at the mid-point. This method of measurement means that income differences are much more modest.

The difference for both sexes decreases to just over NOK 8000. The difference between female war children and their female peers is minimal, while the difference for men is reduced to just under NOK 15 000. This is because the average for the war children's peers must have been pulled up by a number of extremely high incomes, while this is far less the case for the war children. This is an interesting observation in itself. In other words, we found few rich war children.

9.6. Household income

The personal income of the individual war child is an important measure of their standing in working life, and often reflects the extent of their education and/or career. If the income is a pension, the income level will reflect their accrued contributions, i.e. earlier income level and length of employment career.

Consumption equivalence is a term describing the advantages of several people sharing the household expenses, for example, housing, TV, newspapers or washing machine. The number of items of consumption in a dwelling are calculated using an *equivalence scale.* There are many such scales. We have used the *OECD equivalence scale* which assigns a value of 1 to the household head, 0.7 to each additional adult and 0.5 to each child under the age of 17. For war children and their peers, most households will consist of two adults or one single person. The household with two adults must therefore have 1.7 times the income of the single-person household to have an equally good standard of living.

Table 9.4. Net income per consumption unit (OECD scale). Average. All, men and women. War children and the two control groups. NOK

	War children (N=961)	Peers (N= 206100	Children of single mothers (N=4 945)
All	206 100	218 800	216 700
Men	208 300	223 900	219 600
Women	203 700	213 600	213 300

Source: 2001 Census.

However, income does not necessarily give the full picture of a person's economic standard of living. On the one hand, we might have war children who earn little themselves but who have a spouse or partner with a good income. This probably applies to many of the women. On the other hand, many may have a good income themselves but share this with a person with a more modest income. This typically applies to a number of the men. In order to obtain a better measurement of this, we looked at incomes (net incomes, see box) in the households of war children. The total household income was then divided by the number of so-called consumption equivalents in each household. The standard of living in the individual household or family depends of course on whether one, two, three or more persons share the income. However, we cannot simply divide the income by the number of members of the household, as this would not take account of economies of scale. There are different scales for calculating these effects or consumption equivalents (see box).

When considering total household income, the gender gap appears to be far smaller than what we saw earlier. Female war children's spouses generally earn more than they do, while male war children's spouses mostly earn less than they do. This is in line with other gender gaps in incomes. The explanation for women's incomes being lower than men's is probably that more women are single with relatively low incomes. However, we note that the gender gap is smaller in the group of war children than among their peers.

9.7. Poverty

In its classic and absolute form, the hallmark of poverty was a lack of basic necessities: food, clothing, health services and shelter. In a modern context, poverty has become a relative, income-based measure. Poverty arises when a household has an income per member (possibly weighted by consumption equivalents) of less than a certain proportion of what the average household has to spend per capita. Average income is measured as median income, i.e. the amount that divides the income distribution into two equal groups, The reason for this, as previously mentioned, is to prevent very high incomes from raising the average excessively. The number of poor people in a society will then depend on the level of income at which the average (median) is set.

We examined the proportion of poor people among the war children and the two control groups using the OECD measurement of 50 per cent of the median income and formed two main impressions. Firstly, there are generally relatively few poor Norwegians in the age groups concerned. Among the war children's peers, 1.9 per cent fall below this low-income threshold. Secondly, there are extremely small differences in the proportion of poor people among the war children (1.2 per cent) and the other 'children' with a single mother (1.6 per cent) (the differences are

not statistically significant). Thus, low income or poverty have little impact on the 55–65 age group. Most people in this group are relatively well established and are often found in the types of household with the highest incomes, for example, couples without children living at home. Many in this group are disability pensioners, but the minimum pension is also above the low-income threshold. If we use a different measurement – the EU norm for a minimum income with a threshold of 60 per cent of the national median income – the proportion with a low income increases to just over 5 per cent for both the war children and the two control groups.

9.8. Less wealth

Wealth is usually accumulated over the course of a person's life and will normally consist of a dwelling as well as assets in banks, insurance companies, equities and bond funds or individual shares and bonds. In the context of living conditions, wealth is an expression of at least two underlying factors. The first is the accumulation of income. You pay off a loan or save part of your income. The amount of wealth a person accumulates is therefore a reflection of their determination and ability to spend part of their income on something other than consumption The second factor is inheritance. At some point in their lives, most people will receive some kind of financial transfer from deceased close relatives or relatives who give their heirs gifts or advancement on inheritance. The amounts given vary considerably. Thirdly, many will experience a considerable rise in value over the years, in relation to a dwelling or cabin, for example.

The war children are now in the age groups with the clearest growth in wealth. Many receive an inheritance, while the majority have repaid much or all of their mortgage. Nevertheless, our data are somewhat misleading as an expression of the true wealth situation. This applies in particular to housing wealth, which is clearly the most important for most Norwegians. Our data are based on tax assessments, and the assessed value of housing far from reflects its real value. Consequently, a problem arises that can be illustrated by the following example. Person A is a woman who lives in rented accommodation and has savings in the bank. The entire bank deposit (e.g. NOK 300.000) is calculated as wealth. Person B is a man who lives in a large house in one of the country's high-demand areas. The market value of his property is NOK 4 million, while the assessed value for tax purposes is NOK 450 000. He also has a mortgage of NOK 750 000 on the property, and therefore will have negative taxable assets of NOK 300 000. In our data, the woman appears to be the wealthiest, while the man's wealth is in reality more than ten times greater. However, these are problems that are common to both war children and the two control groups, and should not impact on the comparison to any great degree unless there are major differences in the proportions owning/renting their housing. In general, we know that almost nine out of ten people in the war children's age group are homeowners (2001 Census, tables created from StatBank, Statistics Norway).

The results are as expected on the basis of what we have presented (see Table 9.5). The average wealth of the households of war children is much less than that of their peers. Measured as an average, it amounts to approximately 60 per cent of what their peers have saved, and that represents a considerable difference. The difference is somewhat less when measured as median wealth (not shown), which indicates that there are fewer extremely wealthy war children to raise the average. It is also less than for the other children of single mothers. However, this group does not provide a good comparison as many of them were born considerably later or somewhat earlier than the majority of the war children.

The distribution of wealth in the three groups produces the same result: the war children are overrepresented among those with negative wealth, and particularly underrepresented among those with positive wealth over NOK 700 000. In contrast to the picture formed of incomes, it is the households of the women that have the greatest taxable assets. This applies to all groups and

reflects the fact that women generally live with men who are older than them, while the opposite is true of men. Thus, the households of the women are characterised by men with a long accrual period and a higher likelihood of having received an inheritance.

The lower level of wealth among the war children is probably a result of two factors: poorer income throughout their lifetime and less inheritance from their parents. However, the picture may be more complex: some may have inherited assets from relatively wealthy adoptive parents. These parents are probably generally older than the average for people in these age groups. On the other hand, we find war children who inherit assets from their relatively poor single mothers or must share the inheritance with a number of half siblings.

Nonetheless, we must emphasise that this is not an indicator of 'misery'. Firstly, two out of three war children have positive tax-related wealth. Nor is it a given that those with negative wealth actually have more debt than assets, see the reasoning above.

Table 9.5. Average net wealth for households by year of birth. NOK 1000. 2001

	War children (N=961)	Peers (N= 206 100)	Other children with single mother (N= 4 945)
All	398	686	561
Born 1940			752
Born 1941	453	702	
Born 1942	443	718	
Born 1943	373	700	
Born 1944	374	641	
Born 1945	122	674	
Born 1947			408

Source: 2001 Census.

9.9. Few with a very low standard of housing

Our home is important for our living conditions, and is most households' main asset. The 2001 Census also provides information about the standard of housing. We are not told whether a substantial sum of money has been spent on the property, if it is in a good location, or if is well or poorly maintained, etc. But we are informed about the presence or lack of a number of important qualities, such as a WC, shower or bath and a separate kitchen. In total, only 1 to 2 per cent of households lack these facilities and the proportion of war children living in such homes is not significantly different.

9.10. Social assistance

Social assistance tends to be people's last resort when it comes to getting money for their subsistence when all other possibilities have been exhausted. Many social assistance recipients will therefore be people without paid work who are not entitled to unemployment benefit, transitional benefit or disability pension during the period of unemployment. Some people will also receive social assistance because the other benefits are insufficient.

Social assistance is particularly relevant for the younger age groups. In 2002, for example, 7.5 per cent of all the country's 20–24-year-olds were receiving social assistance. In our material, we find that 0.7 per cent of the war children's peers were recipients. Among the war children, we only found 9 receiving social assistance in the whole of the material, i.e. 0.9 per cent of the 961 war children (total sample) for whom we have information in this area. The difference between them and their peers is therefore minimal and not statistically significant. There is a degree of difference when we count the proportion of war children (main sample) who received social assistance at least once during the period 1992–2001. Approximately 8.4 per cent of the war children did so compared with

6.5 per cent of their peers. The war children are not overrepresented among those who received social assistance on many occasions during the period.

It should be noted here that our data search may not have been exhaustive. If our method has failed to capture records for part of the most marginalised group, even just a small increase in the number of highly marginalised people identified would be enough to raise the proportion of social assistance recipients significantly. It may also be the case that the higher mortality rate among the war children has affected (potential) social assistance recipients to a particular degree.

We must also mention the stigma attached to social assistance, particularly because it is not rights-based, unlike disability pension, for example. We must assume that older people are generally more reluctant to apply for social assistance than younger people, both because the former belong to a generation where the social benefits office was perceived in the same way as the poor relief fund, and because they belonged to an age group that for the most part was expected to fend for themselves. The situation of the war children is particularly interesting in this respect. Many of them grew up feeling stigmatised and will perhaps be particularly opposed to having to claim social assistance. On the other hand, some of them perhaps grew up regarding this benefit as an alternative course of action for families with financial problems and may have been socialised into a culture with a lower threshold for claiming such benefits.

10. Short summary: War children and their vulnerability

10.1. A complex picture

It is important to keep in mind two pictures or perceptions when describing the living conditions of war children. On the one hand, we have a picture of a vulnerable group who score low on many of the living conditions variables, which is a clear sign of a vulnerable life. Perhaps the clearest feature is the high rate of mortality. Although we did not find many war children who had taken their own lives, the frequency is significantly higher than among their peers. Together with the receipt of disability pension, and in particular early disability pension, this creates a picture of a group with health problems. For many, poor health is perhaps the greatest hindrance to a good life. Moreover, we note that many of them have a relatively short education, while few have attained the highest levels of education. Their income is below average, fewer are in employment, and few have a high income or many assets. The divorce rate for the women is well over the norm for these age groups.

On the other hand, we also note than many war children seem to live like 'most people'. They are married and have children. Their incomes are normal, and their housing standard is satisfactory by Norwegian standards. Many are still in work. As is typical for their age group, there are few who are poor and few who receive social assistance or are unemployed. However, as we stressed initially, this is the external perspective on the war children. It is clear from the interviews by Ericsson and Simonsen (2005) that behind the 'facade' of reasonable living conditions, there may be considerable mental pain. Naturally we find this facade in many other social groups, but the chance of finding it in the war children is greater.

We must also keep in mind that the proportion with problems may be higher than what we found in our study. We were unable to find just under one-third of the war children in our total sample in modern registers. Therefore, we do not know if these have better or worse living conditions than the group we were able to analyse.

Within the framework of this study, the source data and resources have not allowed a comprehensive multivariate analysis of why the war children have had these experiences. Their living conditions might have been affected by growing up as a war child in a complex interaction with their social background generally, the area where they grew up, level of education etc. We are therefore unable to pinpoint precisely to what extent their living conditions were characterised by specific experiences as war children. On the other hand, it is tremendously complicated to isolate what could be called the 'war child effect'. The war child's situation partly seems to encompass a childhood of hardship, and school days with a risk of extensive bullying etc. Disparities in living conditions between war children and other groups we compared them with apply primarily to war children and their peers. The comparison between the war children and the control group of other children with single mothers is extremely complex on many levels, but several of the observed differences are not statistically significant. In addition, the sample of children with single mothers is heavily skewed, which reduces the value of the comparison.

10.2. Stigma and symbolic violence

Terms such as stigma and stigmatisation have gradually been adopted in colloquial Norwegian. In the sociology of deviance and criminology, the terms are linked to a more specific theoretical approach. The theory, which stemmed from studies by deviance theorists such as Becker (1963), Lemert (1972), Scheff (1966) and others, was highly popular in the 1960s and 1970s. In simple terms, the focus in these theories shifted from deviance to the reaction to it. Many people committed crimes, had mental health problems etc., but it was only when they were exposed to the reactions of their surroundings that the deviance became a serious problem. The person being stigmatised goes

from being known for their various roles and patterns of action to someone known for their criminal activity or mental illness. Not only do we, the surroundings, perceive him or her to be a deviant with all that entails, but the person concerned also adopts this perception of themselves. The core idea in this perception of the development of stigmatisation is found in the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's (2001) more politicised concept of 'symbolic violence'. Weak groups are assigned a number of characteristics by stronger groups, characteristics that they ultimately accept as true characteristics of themselves. They act within a self-understanding formulated by others.

In terms of our thematic area, these theories indicate that the war children with their vulnerable and stigmatised position are more likely to become members of socially marginalised groups than others. Our material has provided clear indications of this – perhaps we see this most clearly in relation to the excess mortality and the early receipt of disability pensions. Put bluntly: there was a clear expectation that the 'German kids' would not fare well, and for many, this is what happened. However, our interpretation of the empirical data on this is subject to various problems.

Firstly, many of them have done quite well, as we have summed up above. Secondly, why do things go wrong? Is it the reactions of the surroundings that is the problem or that the children are in a vulnerable position long before stigmatisation becomes a reality in their lives? Thirdly, and also linked to the previous problem, how can we test the hypothesis on the stigma's own effect empirically. The last two points are central in the critical examination of the labelling theory, see for example, Knutsson (1977). The limitations of our material as well as the framework of our study make it difficult to pursue these issues. But it is important to keep these in mind in an analysis of the living conditions of stigmatised groups.

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Appendix A: Data and method

The Lebensborn archives

As a data source, we took the German Lebensborn archives as a starting point. An important criterion for the choice of source was that the historical registration of the war children (and their mothers) had to be as complete as possible. Moreover, it had to contain enough information about the war children and their origins to enable us to find them as adults. It is important to stress the quality of the Lebensborn registers and the registration practice. An important point in connection with our study was that all German authorities were required to report any pregnancies resulting from relations between a Norwegian woman and a German man to the Lebensborn organisation. The Norwegian authorities were also required to report this for a long period during the war years (Olsen 1998, pp. 44–45).

Moreover, there were important incentives for the Norwegian mothers to inform the organisation. These included the option of giving birth at one of the organisation's maternity homes, staying at a home for mothers before and after the birth, and receiving relatively favourable financial support after the birth. The financial benefits were themselves important, but the other options were attractive because the mothers could then escape local stigmatisation. The standard of the Lebensborn homes was also deemed to be high, as they were chosen through a selective application process (Olsen 1998).

Identification work

The work, therefore, began with the so-called Lebensborn archives. These mainly included material gathered by the German authorities in Norway. The central parts of the archives are now in the National Archives of Norway in Oslo. Although some of the junior staff in the Lebensborn system were Norwegian, the management was German (Olsen 1998). Lebensborn was a project that originated with and was mostly implemented by the German Nazis with a view to protecting the racially valuable children that resulted from relationships between Norwegian women and German men. A considerable amount of knowledge was gathered about the mothers and fathers to ensure that it was indeed children who were considered racially valuable who were taken care of under Lebensborn. However, in Norway, Lebensborn never quite functioned in accordance with its racist aim and became more of a function of social policy.

It is beyond the scope of this project to examine the purpose of Lebensborn more closely, and what the system entailed in reality. Firstly, we wish to emphasise that the Lebensborn project provided a body of information that allowed us to trace the war children (and many of the mothers) in current population registers, and thereby link them to their mother's current national identity number.

In principle, we carried out the work in three phases:

Phase 1: Work on the archives

First we searched the Lebensborn archives and found vital information about the children we wanted to find. The archives contain a range of data sources, and we primarily focused our efforts on the two main protocols (Main protocol, *Abteilung Lebensborn, Reichskommissariat*, National Archives of Norway, where key data about the cases were entered, and also the index card systems categorising the archives. In this protocol, all relevant pregnancies have a separate serial number. First the information about the mother and father was entered, followed by information about the child. The index system was arranged by the name of the mother and the father respectively, and these index cards provided us with good supplementary information when the protocols were

inadequate (Index cards of mothers and fathers, *Abteilung Lebensborn, Reichskommissariat*, National Archives of Norway).

We could not use the personal/case files that constitute the basic material in the archives because the task of finding all these files was too extensive. The majority of the files are stored in regional state archives or possibly also the offices of county governors around Norway because they were used by the county governors in the years after the war in connection with efforts to obtain child maintenance from the German fathers. A considerable proportion of the files from Oslo and Akershus were also destroyed in a fire at Victoria Terrasse in Oslo at the start of the 1950s. The missing files, however, were compensated (for our purposes) by the fact that we could use the 'lists' from the Ministry of Social Affairs and the county governors' efforts to trace people in the immediate post-war years (New 1st social benefits office A, case file Da, Boxes 106, 107 and 108, Lists of war children sent to the counties, National Archives of Norway). During their efforts to trace people, the county governors used the original files to obtain the vital information they needed, which was also vital information for us.

The Lebensborn sources we used contain (mostly) information about:

The child
- Date of birth
- Name
- Place of birth
- Place of residence after the birth
- If relevant, death during the birth or in the years immediately following

The mother
- Date of birth
- Place of birth
- Place of residence during the war
- Name
- Occupation/place of work

The father
- Name
- Date of birth
- Place of residence as a civilian
- Civilian occupation
- Various military information

We also found out some information about the couple: whether they were intending to get married, if they actually did so, and if they travelled to Germany together. In a number of cases, it was also stated that the child was adopted or placed with foster parents, and the names and place of residence of these parents were often given.

However, there was considerable variation in how much information we had in each case. Sometimes we had almost all the information given above. Often we had to be satisfied with the mother's name and date of birth, the father's name and an assumption of when the birth would take place. In most cases, however, the date of birth and name as well as geographic data were available for the mother, child and father. These were also the most important data for the identification process.

In summary, the most important information in identifying the children was:

- Mother's name
- Mother's date of birth
- Child's date of birth
- Child's name
- Mother's place of birth/place of residence
- Father's first name

Phase 2: Identification work

These data were then used as search information in a population database called BEBAS, a version of the national population register used for statistical purposes. It contains vital demographic data on everyone with a Norwegian national identity number, i.e. they must have resided in Norway after the 1960 Census. However, the amount of information provided also varies here. In the most comprehensive personal files, we found names (including the maiden names of many of the women), national identity numbers, marital status, place of residence, parents, children if any, and immigration, emigration and death, if applicable. For very many of the people in our age group, there will be no connection to the parents. In the case of many of the war children, this is because they have not had any relationship with the mother or particularly the father. Even for people who may have had a 'normal' relationship with their biological parents, this link may be missing for practical reasons. These 'links' were added in 1970, mainly for people born in 1953 and later.

In practical terms, the searches in BEBAS were carried out as follows: if we knew the child's date of birth, we searched on this. If this did not lead to any plausible hits, we carried out the same search for the mother. If we found the mother, we often found her new surname (many of the mothers married a Norwegian man after the war). The 'new' data about the mother often provided new and valuable help to find the 'child'. If we did not find the mother, or did not find any connection between the mother and child, we searched on the father's name, both first name and surname. A considerable number of the war children added the father's first name or surname to their own, or have an almost German-sounding name with the father's name forming part of this. Some gave their own children their father's first name or surname. This finding concurs with what several of those interviewed by Ericsson and Simonsen (2005) recounted. The war children said that these new name connections were often created to show that they had had contact with the biological father that had been absent during their childhood. For some, introducing a German name marked distance to their own family and Norwegian society.

How could we ascertain that we had found the person we were looking for? Many cases were straightforward and required a minimum of searching. We entered the child's first name and date of birth as search criteria, and the only plausible person retrieved had to be the person we were looking for. Here we have a person born on the correct day with the correct first name and the correct sex. As a rule, the surname also tallied with the mother's surname (as unmarried or married) or with the father's name or with the name entered for the adoptive parents or foster parents. Sometimes we found a direct link between the mother and child if the child was found in the mother's file or vice versa.

Sometimes personal identification was less certain. For example, where people had changed a very German-sounding name or taken a surname that was not their mother's. Nonetheless, there might be a link to the mother if she was registered in the child's file or vice versa. Several identifications were confirmed because the child's place of residence was the same as the mother's.

In some more unusual cases, a link was added to BEBAS after the mother had died. One person who was not registered as the mother's child was registered at a c/o address in connection with her

estate. A search on this person showed that he or she, or their spouse, proved to have the same date of birth as the war child. In addition, information about names might match.

In the many cases where there were no direct links in BEBAS between the mother and child, we adopted the following procedure: generally we required that at least three of the following criteria were met before we considered the identification to be certain:

- The child's first name was correct, and the name or composition of the name was not too common.
- The child's surname was the same as the mother's maiden name, married name or the father's surname.
- The child's first name was the same as the father's (this applies to boys).
- The child's date of birth was the same as in the Lebensborn protocol or in one of the other historic sources. Sometimes we also accepted dates that were very close, as at times the information provided to the German registers was not always precise. We also accepted dates that might be due to writing errors. For example, those who kept the war protocols (or we) may have changed 9.6 to 6.9 or 19.6, or 1941 may have become 1942.
- The child's place of residence was the same as the mother's place of residence during or after the war, or at the present time.

A dilemma arose in the final stage of the second round to identify the war children (additional sample).

One particular group caused perplexity. We were left with five–ten people who generally had the following characteristics:

- They were born on the day indicated in the German archives.
- Their first name also tallied with the same source.
- Their first name was relatively rare, or an unusual combination (e.g. Dag Fredrik or Siv Marianne). No one was born on that day with a name that was at all similar.

However, the problem was that they could not be linked to the mother in any way. Those who had given the names of their parents in the population register had parents who were considerably older than expected. We assumed, therefore, that they were adopted, and they were often the only child of these elderly parents (aged around 40 when the child was born).

According to the German sources, some were sent to an orphanage almost immediately. According to these sources, the mother had a bad reputation or was involved in *mehrverkehr* (promiscuous activity), as they describe it.

The dilemma was: on the one hand, the identification was too weak and on the other hand, the identification was even weaker for those who had completely lost the 'link' to their mother. Moreover, this was a group that it was vital to include in the sample. After conferring about this with colleagues, we decided to include the group in the sample but with the designation 'uncertain'.

Similar problems also arose in the main search. Out of just over 1150 war children identified in the two searches, we were absolutely certain that 979 were correctly identified. For the remaining 176 cases, something did not quite match. For example, the date of birth was slightly different from what we had found in the war registers, or the name was different. However, we were very confident that the identification was correct.

We were able to test the reliability of some of these more uncertain identifications in practice. The identification process consisted of different search stages. Sometimes we made an extra search in

the war registers to further identify people we were uncertain about and other times we tried new search options in BEBAS. These processes did not result in the rejection of any of the uncertain identifications – on the contrary they confirmed identifications of which we were uncertain earlier.

The preliminary search and main search in BEBAS were carried out by Turid Sætre, a senior executive officer in Statistics Norway's Division for data collection. Sætre has extensive experience of searching in this and other registers. The additional search was carried out by the person responsible for the project (Ellingsen), assisted by Marianne Lilleaas, a politics student. Ellingsen received thorough training from Sætre, and Elingsen and Lilleaas both knew the source material well as they had carried out the groundwork in the National Archives of Norway.

Phase 3: Register links and analysis

Finally, we created a register of the war children whose national identity number allowed us to link demographic information about them (marriage, divorce, children, mortality, house moves etc.) and income, employment, receipt of social welfare benefits, etc. See the respective chapters in the report for more details of this.

In principle, the three phases form the main approach in our methodical work, but the work has been more difficult in practice than it appears.

Preliminary search

The first step was to undertake a preliminary search with the aim of testing whether the method was feasible. The Lebensborn protocols were the starting point here. In the preliminary study, we extracted every 25th child, giving us a total of approximately 340 registrations. The information from the protocol was then submitted to the Division for data collection, Statistics Norway, in order to trace it in the population register.

This first review of the protocol revealed that the extent and legibility of the registrations here varied considerably. The protocol had serial numbers from 10 to 10 000. The registered data are very comprehensive until about serial number 2500, after which there is a long period with almost no data up to serial number 5250. This is followed by a period up to around serial number 7300 with relatively comprehensive data until the data capture gradually tails off. From approximately serial number 7800, there are only sporadic entries.

The protocols were written by hand and legibility varies considerably for a 'modern' reader. At the beginning and end of the two protocols, legibility is good. The style of writing is fairly similar to that used by elderly Norwegians today, and some of the protocol writers may well have been Norwegian women and men born in the first decades of the 1900s. However, for long periods of time, the protocols were in all likelihood kept by German workers using a gothic-style handwriting (*Sütterlin*) that requires some expertise to decipher. In addition, German recording clerks had problems with Norwegian names such as 'Kyrkjeøra' or 'Sæterdal', or they Germanised names ('Marie' became 'Maria').

Thus in the preliminary project, the protocols were supplemented by information from the index cards of the mothers (Index cards for mothers, *Abteilung Lebensborn, Reichskommissariat*, National Archives of Norway). Here we could find information about the cases where nothing was written in the protocols or where the information provided was insufficient. Meanwhile, the index cards were typed, thus eliminating problems linked to difficult handwriting styles. We supplemented this with information from the 'lists' mentioned previously, i.e. the overviews from the offices of the county governor around Norway used in the work to request child maintenance from the German fathers when relevant.

The main search
We adopted the opposite approach in the main project. We began with the index of the mothers and picked out all those with a Lebensborn reference number that corresponded to those we had decided to use, i.e. every fifth number. Then basic information from these cards was registered and used in the first, very broad identification round carried out by Statistics Norway's Division for data collection. Next we used the protocol to obtain further information, and carried out a new search in BEBAS. Lastly we looked at the so-called 'lists' and a final search was implemented.

The main search was also far more comprehensive than the preliminary search. Where this had picked out every 25th registration in the Lebensborn archives, we now chose every fifth registration but excluded every 25th registration which had been included earlier.

The additional search
After a preliminary analysis of the original sample of around 850 war children, we decided to add a smaller sample of around 300 'children'. There were two main reasons for choosing this solution. Firstly, we quickly saw that children were documented differently in the German archives at different stages of the war. It was far easier to find a high proportion of children from the first two relevant years of the war (1941 and 1942) than the last two years (1944 and 1945), and it was particularly complicated for 1943. This also affected the results of the first survey, as we have seen earlier in this report. Secondly, part of the analysis had to be controlled for a number of variables. Neither mortality nor receipt of a disability pension could be analysed without looking at age and gender composition in the samples. Therefore many of the sub-categories could consist of too few people to enable us to make statistically significant findings.

The additional sample was thus drawn from children mainly born in the first two relevant years, i.e. 1941 and 1942, while 1943, the 'difficult' year is not included as many of the values are missing and apparently skewed. Here the protocols were the starting point. The Lebensborn protocols are not systematically ordered according to the date of the child's birth, and are arranged both geographically and chronologically, based on when the mother reported her pregnancy to the Norwegian or German authorities. Based on our earlier experiences, we reviewed the first 750 entries, which produced an additional 240 children born in 1941, 65 in 1942, as well as six born in 1943 and one in 1945.

We registered 593 entries in the Lebensborn protocol (the first 750 entries, minus 20 per cent of those we had registered previously, minus 7 we could not identify).

Analysis of records not found
In an analysis such as this, it is impossible to prevent people and cases being excluded from the analysis. We could not undertake a full count of all children with a Norwegian mother and German father born in the years 1941–1946. The first reason for this is that there is no register of all these children, because many mothers probably found ways of ensuring that their child was not registered as a war child. For the same reason, no one knows exactly how many war children there are. Our estimate of 10 000 to 12 000 children is based on the registrations in the Lebensborn archives and the knowledge acquired from child maintenance cases in the years after the war, as well as the identification of German fathers that has been taking place since the mid-1980s.

The closest we can come to a full count would be to identify all the children registered in the Lebensborn protocols – a total of 8 500. However, this task is impossible within the framework of the project. The protocols have large gaps in many places, open fields, where supplementary sources must be used to find the necessary personal information. This is a very time-consuming process.

Consequently, we decided to use the Lebensborn protocols as a starting point for drawing a random sample of cases. We assumed that a random sample would be representative of the cases in these protocols. Roughly speaking, the children were entered by district on an ongoing basis throughout the war years.

Lack of data when choosing sources for drawing a sample

Our choice of sources naturally meant that we failed to capture any records for those who evaded German registration. Some mothers probably gave birth to war children without this being noted in the German war archives. The question is the magnitude of the non-registration. The German authorities were keen to know about all cases where a Norwegian mother was expecting a child with a German soldier. As previously mentioned, this had to be reported to Lebensborn by the German authorities and, in due course, the Norwegian authorities. Also as mentioned earlier, there were important incentives for the women who registered: relatively generous financial support and the opportunity to give birth at separate facilities outside local communities. Many of the women who evaded registration by the German authorities probably also failed to inform the Norwegian authorities about the German parentage of their child. Perhaps no one apart from themselves was aware of the father's background. As a result, we were left with a group that would be excluded from most registrations. It is also possible that these children had a different and less problematic childhood.

Which other groups of war children did we fail to find by using the Lebensborn protocols?

We failed to find children born after May 1945

The Lebensborn organisation was put out of action relatively quickly after the liberation in May 1945. Meanwhile, German-Norwegian children continued to be born. Most were conceived during the war, and children were being born up to the winter of 1945/1946. It also took a considerable length of time to send all German soldiers home, and children were conceived as a result of associations between Norwegian women and German men in internment camps. However, there is no complete, collective registration of these children that can form a basis for retrospective registration.

We assumed that this lack of data would mainly mean excluding children who perhaps had fewer problems during their childhood than those born during the war. Children born in 1945–1946 would, for example, start school in 1952–1953. We assumed that it was somewhat easier for them to start school than it was for those who started shortly after the war in 1948–1949 and who were known as the 'German brats'. The exclusion of children who were not known to be war children was probably also at the 'good' end of the scale: if the mother had managed to keep the child's German parentage a secret from both Norwegian and German authorities during the war, it was probably more likely that those around them were also unaware of this. The fact that the mother succeeded may tell us something about her social qualifications, position and network. On the other hand, a small group of women may have associated with so many men that they did not know for certain whether the father was Norwegian or German and therefore failed to report the pregnancy to Lebensborn.

Lack of data within Lebensborn samples

The following groups are not included in our data material of persons registered with a national identity number because they were not identifiable, or we were unable to find them.

Those who were not identifiable

- Persons who emigrated during and after World War II, mostly to Germany. However, we were able to find those who returned to Norway, but it is possible more returned from Germany than we found. An 'advantage' in relation to those who returned, however, is that they often had their

father's first name and/or surname, and that their return was noted in BEBAS (if they returned after 1960). As a result, they were easier to find than many others.
- Registrations in the Lebensborn archives without an ensuing pregnancy. Sometimes it is stated explicitly in the protocol that this was the case, but at other times we had no way of knowing if this was what had happened. The same applied to stillbirths and abortions.
- Those who died in infancy. In a few cases, these deaths were recorded in the German archives. The mortality rate would be relatively high because infant mortality was generally relatively high during the war, and also because the risk was particularly high for the war children. On the one hand, their mothers led turbulent lives that may have made the children more vulnerable. On the other hand, the standard of the Lebensborn institutions was relatively high.
- In some cases, case processing in the Lebensborn system was concluded on the grounds that the father was (probably/allegedly) Norwegian. We do not know if this is correct, but when the German authorities discontinued the case processing, vital data needed in the identification work also disappeared.
- Those who died in the period from the end of World War II up to 1960 when everyone in Norway was given a national identity number. National identity numbers were first introduced in 1964 but were based on status in the 1960 Census. Normal mortality for 'our' cohorts in this period was between just over 6 and just under 9 per cent (Mamelund and Borgan 1996), depending on gender and how early or late they were born in the war years. It is possible that many of the people we could not find were young people with a difficult childhood who had either emigrated or died in accidents or as a result of suicide in the 1950s. As we indicated (Chapter 4), the suicide rate among young people was very low at this time. However, the accident mortality rate for this age group was much higher than it is now. This was also an era when going to sea was a very common 'escape valve' for young men in particular. Most of those who went to sea came back, or at least kept their status as Norwegian citizens with a home address in Norway. But it is possible that some war children left Norway permanently in this manner or lost their lives in a foreign country.
- Numbers in the Lebensborn protocols that were not used for actual registrations. Towards the end of the war in particular it appears that many of the register numbers were never used. Different parts of the country were allocated a quantity of register numbers based on the expected number of registrations in the ensuing period. Some areas were probably allocated more case numbers than required.
- Through our cooperation with historian Lars Borgersrud, we were also able to extract a number of people who were placed with adopted parents in Sweden immediately after the war and who grew up there (see Borgersrud 2002 and Table A1).

Those we were unable to find
- Those that the German archives give insufficient information about, or the information given is incorrect or imprecise. It seems clear that the registration of war children and their mothers was carried out with greater enthusiasm and precision at the start of the war than the end.
- Persons who were living in Norway after 1960 but whose name and birth data, etc. were changed, possibly as a result of details being obscured upon adoption. Many of the war children changed their names, and this is another group with a possibly vulnerable childhood that we may have failed to identify. Some took/were given different names upon adoption or being put into foster care. Some have uncertain birth data, for example it was unclear where and exactly when they were born. Yet others changed a German-sounding name (Heinz, Fritz, Ursula etc.). However, a surprising number appear to have kept their German names. As adults, some even took their father's surname as their middle name, or named one of their own children after the grandfather. These are perhaps people who have found their German father and his family, and want to mark their affiliation to them.

We can also assume that the names of many children who grew up in orphanages, foster homes or other homes for adolescents were Norwegianised to a lesser extent, perhaps because they had no adults in their lives who took the initiative to do this. But the opposite may also be true: immediately after the war, public discourse was calling for a collective Norwegianisation of the names of war children (Simonsen and Ericsson 2004). This initiative was never fully realised but may have been implemented to varying degrees in some orphanages, for example.

Table A1. Identification process in numbers and percentages. Main sample and additional sample

	Main sample	Additional sample	Total
Protocol registrations	1 718	593	2 311
-Not actual cases	173	1	174
-Emigrated to Germany	103	64	167
-Norwegian father	4	6	10
-Stillbirth, abortion	33	19	52
-No pregnancy	37	19	56
-Adopted in Sweden	2	1	3
-Died during the war	41	23	64
-Remainder assumed dead	78	25	103
Possible to identify	1 247	435	1 682
Found	844	311	1 155
Identification rate	68 per cent	71 per cent	69 per cent

The identification rate fell steadily from the beginning of the war to the end for reasons discussed previously.

On average, therefore, we found more than two out of three persons who it was theoretically possible to identify. In reality, there are reasons to believe that our identification rate is higher than this conservative estimate. A key question is the proportion of people who died or emigrated before 1960 as our estimates here may be too modest. Should we be satisfied with this identification rate? A key question relates of course to the number of records not found. How skewed is this? Is it the case that we have failed to capture certain groups? The degree to which we can control for records not found is restricted, as our knowledge of the totality, the universe, of war children, is limited. However, we were able to analyse the composition of the sample in relation to when all the war children were born during the war. As we pointed out earlier, our data collection did not manage to capture the children born after the war.

Those we succeeded in finding

Earlier in the report (Chapters 1 and 6), we explained the tabular presentations of the findings from the 1946 Census in respect of the war children. These tables allowed us to examine the bias in the sample we found. On average, our first main extraction of war children, which should not have a skewed age distribution, constitutes barely 13 per cent of the universe of war children born during the war.

Table A2. The number and proportion (percentage) of war children born in the various years. Our main sample compared with the 1946 Census

Year of birth	Census 1946	Main sample	Percentage
1941	728	112	15.4
1942	1 367	199	14.6
1943	1 897	229	12.1
1944	2 081	238	11.4
1.1.–7.5.1945[1]	625	64	10.2
Total/average	6 698	844	12.6

[1] Estimate based on total number born in year in question.

Source: 1946 Census, Norway during the occupation 1996.

As the table above shows, there is an overrepresentation of those born during the first years of the war, and then an underrepresentation of those born towards the end of the war. Those born after the war are not represented at all. Much of the bias was caused by the differences in the quality of the registrations made in the German archives during the war. Overall, this overrepresentation probably means that we have included more of those who had the most damaging experiences in their childhood. As mentioned earlier, we assumed that it was more challenging to be a war child in a Norwegian school playground in the later years of the 1940s than the first years of the 1950s. Emotions cooled as the 1950s progressed. Public attention had increasingly turned away from the 'hot' war experiences to the dangers of the Cold War. Translated to our field, this could mean, for example, that a communist's child could have attracted some of the attention that would otherwise have been directed at the war children. On the other hand, those born in the early war years were born at a time when many thought that their fathers would be the victors. Many were also born before the Norwegian Resistance movement had properly established itself in 1942/1943. These cohorts may therefore have had an advantage in that their mothers may have been in a stronger position during their pregnancy and in the important first months and years of their lives.

One unanswered question is also whether those who were not included in our sample are people who have suffered greatly. This seems clear in some cases. We unavoidably failed to find those who died prior to 1960. In all likelihood, this was a very vulnerable group. Moreover, as indicated earlier, we may have been unable to retrieve groups that lived very turbulent lives. These groups were in and out of institutions, foster children, adopted etc. This may have led to name changes or lack of clarity in respect of birth data. In cooperation with Lars Borgersrud's project (Borgersrud 2004), we had the opportunity to search for a (small) group that we know were institutionalised at birth. Some still live at the institution. We searched for 23 people, and we quickly found 20 who were undoubtedly correctly identified, as well as one person we were in doubt about. We must be very cautious not to extrapolate from this example but at least it indicates that particularly vulnerable groups are not necessarily those that are most difficult to trace.

In addition, we extracted an additional sample with a clear focus on cohorts born in 1941 and 1942. This is clearly an age-biased sample that in many respects must only be compared with others born in the same two years. The advantage of this additional sample, as mentioned earlier, is that we have a high identification percentage, which appears to give the most realistic picture possible of mortality among the war children in particular. To summarise what has been written about the sample and missing data, it is interesting to return to what was said earlier about the curse of the biased sample. Our sample has also biases – biases that are almost unavoidable when attempting to reconstruct a historic course of events in this way. Thus we cannot speak of a representative sample of war children in the classic understanding of what a representative sample is. However we can claim that we have a sample that is as indicative of the war children's situation as seems possible. Furthermore, it is far broader than any other known sample of 'children' in this situation.

List of tables