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## The Swedish "Children born to women denied abortion" study: a radical criticism.

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Author: P. Cameron  
J C Tichenor

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Abstract: The data of a study conducted in 1966 of 120 children born to women denied abortion were reexamined. Forssman and Thuwe compared 120 children born to women denied abortions in Sweden and 120 controls on a number of variables on which, with but 1 exception, the group of children born to the mothers denied abortion compared unfavorably to the control group. If the control group had been equivalent in major respects to the group denied abortion, these comparisons would lead to the Forssman and Thuwe conclusion that the prospective child runs the risk of having to surmount greater social and mental handicaps than his/her peers. But the groups differed on 2 important dimensions: the group denied abortion was of lower socioeconomic status than the controls; and the mothers more frequently sought psychiatric assistances. Such differences appear to account for the differences in social outcome for the progeny of the 2 groups. Post hoc comparisons indicate that the mothers denied abortion had lower status than the general population but did not have a lower occupational status than the control mothers. Of progeny of the women denied abortion, 66% (versus 28% of the control progeny) met a least 1 of the criteria of what Forssman and Thuwe termed "circumstances pointing to an insecure childhood." These circumstances included: report to children's aid bureaus about unsatisfactory conditions at home; child removed from home by authorities; placement in foster home; placement in children's home; parents divorced before child was 15; parent(s) died before child was 15; and born out of wedlock and never legitimized. 48% of the mothers who were denied abortion and who maintained residence in Goteborg had sought psychiatric assistance at municipal facilities after denial of the abortion versus 16% of the control mothers. 10 of the progeny of women denied abortions and none of the controls' progeny visited municipal psychiatric centers. Of the 7 "circumstances pointing to an insecure childhood," the first 4 circumstances were most likely affected by the more frequent psychiatric consultation at municipal facilities of the mothers denied abortion. Forssman and Thuwe's occupational Group 3 includes practically all of the nonprofessional members of the working class ranging from skilled to semiskilled to unskilled to unemployed to unemployable workers. If Group 3 had been partitioned by kind of nonprofessional, the group denied abortion would almost certainly have disproportionately occupied the lower categories than the control group.

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