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amongst a majority of members of the Committee. There would have been a strong majority vociferously against any interference in the rights of parents in this area and that group would have been strongly defensive of slapping as a means of discipline.

To develop our ideas on this it was decided that a delegation would visit Sweden where this legal change had been made many years before, and that there would be an attempt to include in the delegation representatives of both views on the issue. We had a very useful set of meetings with the Children's Ombudsman, the Dept. of Justice, the Dept. of Social Affairs and Radda Barnan. We returned from that more convinced than ever that we should proceed with our efforts to move along the road towards legal changes, towards a full ban on physical punishment of children.

Three legal people were approached to submit ideas as to how this might be done. This followed the passing of a motion that we would appoint barristers to prepare to implement the Law Reform Commissions recommendations and to look at our obligations under the UN Convention.

Looking at these obligations must inevitably mean moving even beyond the Law Reform Commission's recommendations. We have currently just received the interim report of the legal team and expect to meet in the near future to discuss this. The most critical point has yet to be reached when the Committee has the full recommendations and decides on whether they will adopt them in full or in part. There will be a second critical stage when these proposals will be sent on to the Minister for Justice and the Government who we hope will adopt them.

The Effects of Sweden's Ban on Physical Punishment

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The attitudes and experiences of children and adults towards physical punishment were examined in Sweden fifteen years after the introduction of a legal ban against it. The following is a summary of the research.

Introduction

According to a Gallup poll in 1965, 53% of the Swedish population were of the opinion that spanking was an 'indispensable instrument' in child rearing. A similar survey during the early 1970's reported that only one-third of the population considered spanking necessary and the most recent survey in 1979 found that a half of parents admitted to spanking their child. In 1979 Sweden introduced a legal ban on all physical punishment of children including spanking. This paper presents the results of two surveys carried out in Sweden for the Minister of Health and Social Affairs in 1994 and 1995 and looks at some of the effects of this ban. These surveys describe the experience of spanking and knowledge of the law that prohibits spanking, along with the opinions and attitudes towards spanking and other child rearing practices of adults and middle school pupils.

Description of Surveys

The surveys include data from adults between the ages of 18-74 years. Their data are presented by sex, education (elementary or university) and age-range (younger adults, middle age and older). The data from children in middle-school (13-15 years) are

presented according to sex, grade, whether born in Sweden or abroad, year when the pupil came to Sweden, whether parents are divorced or not and whether the pupil studies in a class where many pupils are non-nationals (or have an immigrant background). The survey questions included in this paper can be seen in Appendix I.

The Main Results of the Surveys

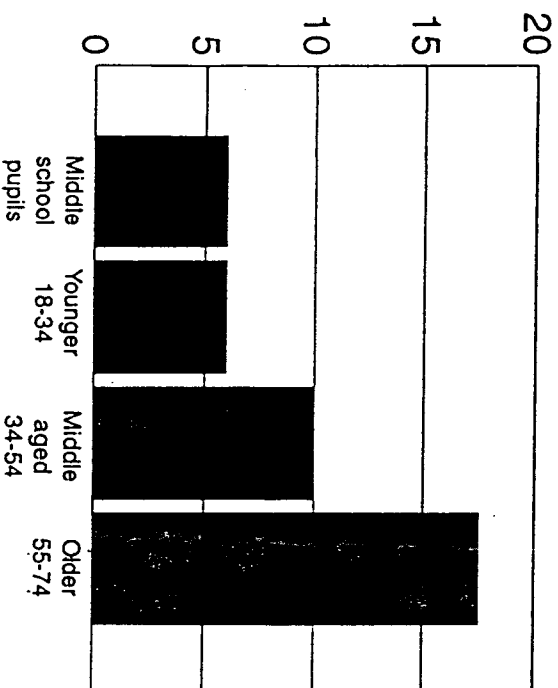
Attitudes towards spanking:

Analysis of the 1994/1995 data (Figure 1), reveals that 18% of adults in the 55 to 74 age bracket accept physical punishment. This number falls progressively with lower age groups such that only 10% of 35-54 year olds and 6% of middle school pupils (13-15 years) accept physical punishment.

Figure 1.

The proportion of persons in different age groups who report acceptance of physical punishment, at least in its milder forms:

Percent:



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It is impossible to state with certainty the impact of the law on the attitudes of each age-group. However, there is a clear difference between the oldest group of adults and those directly influenced, either as parents or as children by the introduction of the law in 1979 and the discussion which followed.

From an alternative perspective, the percentage of adults who are against physical punishment is expressed in Table 1. This reveals that 56% of adults are against 'all forms of physical punishment' while 22% are against 'all forms in principle but admit to using such punishment if upset enough'. 11% are positively inclined to 'milder forms of physical punishment'. Younger adults (59%+20%) are more opposed to spanking than older adults (49%+21%) while men (16%) are more accepting of physical punishment than women (6%). In addition, grown-ups with elementary school education alone are more inclined towards physical punishment (18%) than those with a University education (4%).

The survey of middle school pupils shows that a total of 87% (70% + 17%) are against spanking (Table 2) with a greater percentage of boys (8%) than girls (4%) in middle school being 'positively inclined to milder forms of physical punishment'. The small number of non-nationals in this sample are more tolerant of spanking (9%) than pupils born in Sweden (6%). Only 5% of immigrants who arrived before 1985 believe that physical punishment is appropriate while 13% of those who arrived in Sweden after 1991 are of this opinion. These figures may be interpreted as indicating that it is possible to influence attitudes towards physical punishment.

Overall, attitudes towards physical punishment change somewhat and become less absolute when questions are phrased in less principled terms. When asked more specifically about when slapping is acceptable, 61% of adults believe it is unacceptable when 'you are very angry' and 52% do not agree that 'mild or moderate physical punishment is sometimes necessary as a child rearing method but should be carefully considered and not the result of anger' (Table 3). These figures may be compared to those in Table 1 which show that 56% of adults are against all forms of physical punishment.

Table 1.
Adults' attitudes towards spanking children, by group and attitude, in percent.
"Which of the following groups do you consider yourself closest to?"

	Those who are positively inclined to milder forms of physical punishment.		Those who are in principle against all forms of physical punishment, but can use such punishment if upset enough.		Those who are against all forms of physical punishment and use only other child rearing methods.		None/Don't know	Total
	Father	Mother/Self	Father	Mother/Self	Father	Mother/Self		
All adults	11	22	56	10	100			
Of which:								
Men	16	24	50	9	100			
Women	6	20	62	12	100			
Younger (18-34)	6	20	59	13	100			
Middle age (35-54)	10	25	58	7	100			
Older (55-74)	18	21	49	11	100			
Elementary school	18	17	51	12	100			
University	4	25	65	6	100			

Table 2.
Middle school pupils' attitudes to spanking children, by group and attitude, in percent.
"Which of the following groups do you consider you and your parents belonging to?"

	Those who are positively inclined to milder forms of physical punishment.		Those who are against all forms of physical punishment, but can use such punishment, if upset enough.		Those who are against all forms of physical punishment.		None/Don't know/Do not live at home					
	Father	Mother/Self	Father	Mother/Self	Father	Mother/Self	Father	Mother/Self				
All middle school pupils	9	7	6	21	19	17	60	67	70	7	4	4
Of which:												
Boys	11	6	8	22	20	22	56	65	63	9	6	5
Girls	8	7	4	21	18	12	63	70	78	6	2	3
Grades 7	9	7	6	22	20	18	62	68	72	10	4	5
Grades 8	9	7	7	22	17	18	56	66	66	8	5	7
Grades 9	10	6	6	20	20	16	61	68	71	5	3	1
Born in Sweden	9	6	6	21	19	17	60	68	70	7	4	4
Born abroad	15	12	9	22	24	22	54	57	71	14	3	2
Of which came Sweden:												
Before 1985	11	5	5	22	24	22	59	59	68	8	3	3
1985 - 1989	16	4	12	16	32	16	56	60	76	24	0	4
After 1990	25	33	13	17	29	42	46	62	8	8	4	0
Parents are divorced	11	11	7	21	22	19	52	63	67	14	3	4
Parents not divorced	9	5	5	21	18	17	63	70	72	5	4	4
Live in urban area	5	6	5	21	17	18	64	72	72	7	3	2

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Among middle school pupils, 68% are opposed to slapping 'out of anger' but only 47% are totally against the occurrence of 'physical punishment when it is carefully considered and not the result of anger'. This compares to 70% of pupils stating that they are totally against all forms of physical punishment (Table 2).

Table 3.
Agreement with statements defining when spanking can be justified, in percent.
"Do you agree fully, partly or not at all with the following statement?"

	If very angry at the child, it is acceptable to slap the child.				Mild or moderate physical punishment is sometimes necessary as a child rearing method, but should be carefully considered and not the result of anger.					
	Fully	Partly	Not at all	Don't know	Fully	Partly	Not at all	Don't know		
All adults	7	18	61	11	100	16	18	52	11	100
Of which:										
Men	9	21	57	10	100	20	21	47	10	100
Women	4	15	66	13	100	12	15	58	13	100
Younger (18-34)	3	19	66	10	100	12	19	56	12	100
Middle Age (35-54)	7	15	66	11	100	14	15	59	10	100
Older (55-74)	12	20	50	13	100	24	20	40	12	100
Elementary School	10	18	50	18	100	23	18	40	15	100
University	2	16	73	7	100	7	17	68	6	100
All middle school students	3	12	68	15	100	10	22	47	17	100
Of which:										
Boys	5	14	62	17	100	13	26	42	15	100
Girls	1	11	74	13	100	8	18	52	20	100
Grades 7	2	12	68	18	100	14	20	43	20	100
Grades 8	4	12	67	15	100	8	22	50	16	100
Grades 9	4	13	69	14	100	9	23	48	16	100
Born in Sweden	3	12	70	15	100	10	21	48	18	100
Born abroad	6	18	51	25	100	18	27	37	15	100
Of which came to Sweden:										
Before 1985	5	14	68	14	100	16	22	43	16	100
1985 - 1989	12	20	48	20	100	16	40	36	4	100
After 1990	0	29	29	42	100	25	25	25	25	100
Parents are divorced	3	9	70	17	100	11	21	48	17	100
Parents not divorced	3	14	67	15	100	10	22	47	17	100
Live in urban area	3	10	70	16	100	7	21	53	14	100
All pupils in classes with more than 50% immigrants	7	27	52	12	100	17	24	35	17	100
Of which:										
Born in Sweden	5	26	57	11	100	14	25	39	16	100
Born abroad	11	31	43	13	100	22	22	28	20	100
Of which came to Sweden:										
Before 1985	12	32	45	10	100	28	18	35	12	100
1985-1989	7	33	51	6	100	16	28	30	19	100
After 1990	9	30	38	19	100	22	17	23	25	100

* Information missing included in the total

Accepted Methods of Punishment

Material punishment, such as no weekly allowance, is the most recommended method of punishment and supported by 78% of adults (Table 4). Among the adult population, 11% believe that parents should use physical punishment while only 10% support a separation from the group, such as eating meals in a separate room as punishment. This method is recommended by 43% of middle school pupils.

Knowledge of the Law

In relation to the knowledge of the law among middle school pupils, 89% are aware that the law meant that physical punishment was prohibited while 5% think that it is against the law not to be allowed to go out with friends. (Appendix 1, question 4).

Experience of being Spanked

The 1979 survey showed that about half of all parents spanked their children. The results of this survey show that 30% of adults report having been exposed to physical punishment before they reached their teens. (Appendix 1, question 5). Physical punishment from fathers is reported by 25% of pupils as occurring 'once or twice', 4% as happening 'now and then', and by 1% as that it 'never' happened. One should keep in mind that these figures concern all of the period up to the pupils' teens which means that 65% of pupils have no experience of physical punishment when growing up and that 25% have this experience once or twice during that period. Focusing on the teenage years, 13% of pupils report receiving physical punishment 'once or twice' from their fathers during this time, while 2% report that it occurred 'now and then' and 1% 'every or every other week'. As 77% of middle school pupils report that they were never punished physically by their father as a teenager, one can draw the conclusion that there has been a considerable change in behaviours and attitudes in Sweden since 1979.

Types of Physical Punishment Used

Of middle school pupils who have been exposed to physical punishment, 39% report that they have been subjected to 'slaps, grabbing, rough handling or hair pulling' (Table 5). 19% report

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that they have received 'milder slaps with the hand', 3% report 'rougher slaps' and 1% being hit with an 'instrument, belt or cane'.

Table 4.
The proportion who are positive to different methods of punishment, in percent.
"Which of the following methods of punishment do you think parents should use?"

	Physical punishment	Verbal threats eg. no Christmas presents etc. . . .	Material punishment, eg. no weekly allowance	Separation from the group, eg. eating meals in room
All adults	11	22	78	10
Of which:				
Men	18	27	73	10
Women	4	17	83	10
Younger (18-34)	7	30	78	12
Middle age (35-54)	11	22	84	11
Older (55-74)	16	14	70	6
Elementary University	14	17	78	6
	9	22	75	17
All middle school pupils	4	39	66	43
Of which:				
Boys	6	40	63	41
Girls	2	39	70	46
Grades 7	4	34	66	40
Grades 8	4	41	64	37
Grades 9	4	43	69	50
Born in Sweden	4	40	68	43
Born abroad	10	33	53	44
Of which came to Sweden:				
Before 1985	5	32	59	38
1985 - 1989	20	36	48	52
After 1990	8	38	42	42
Parents are divorced	5	35	61	42
Parents not divorced	4	41	68	44
Live in urban area	3	31	70	45
All pupils in classes with more than 50% immigrants	11	34	54	45
Of which:				
Born in Sweden	8	34	57	48
Born abroad	15	32	47	39
Of which came to Sweden:				
Before 1985	12	38	55	50
1985 - 1989	15	39	54	34
After 1990	16	26	39	41

The Influence of being Subjected to Physical Violence

It appears that middle school pupils who have been punished physically are more ready to accept it and possibly use it themselves. The negative traditions seem to be passed on to the next generation. Positive attitude towards and experience of physical punishment is greater in the non-national (immigrant) population and this is probably a reflection of different cultures and traditions. (Figure 2).

Table 5.
All middle school pupils' experience of different types of physical punishment, in percent.
"If you have been exposed to physical punishment - which forms have you experienced?"

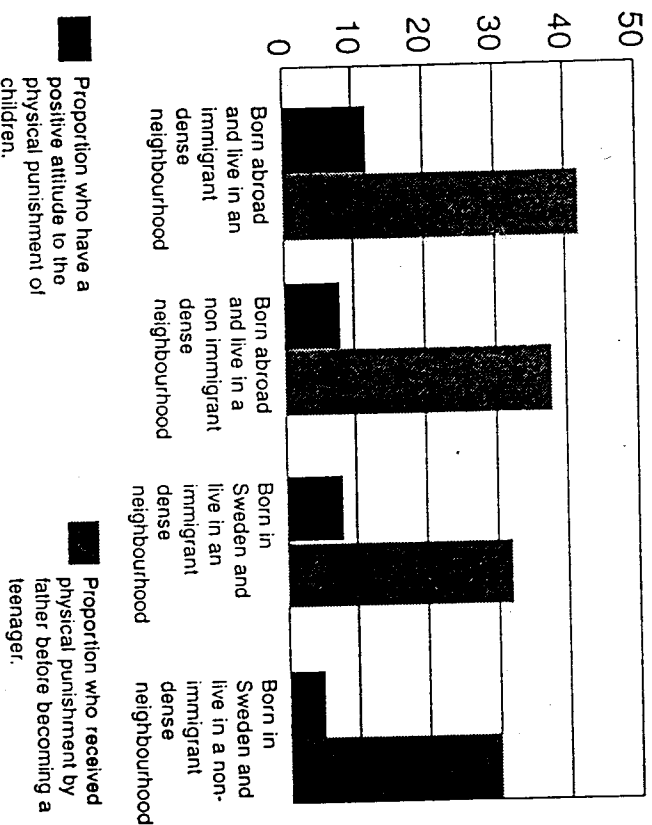
	Slaps, grabbing or rough handling, hair pulling.	Milder slaps with the hand	Rougher slaps no restraint used.	Hit with an instrument, like a belt or cane.
All middle school pupils	39	19	3	1
Of which:				
Boys	38	15	2	1
Girls	39	23	5	2
Grades 7	34	18	2	1
Grades 8	40	15	2	1
Grades 9	41	22	5	2
Born in Sweden	39	18	3	1
Born abroad	39	27	11	8
Of which came to Sweden:				
Before 1985	46	11	8	3
1985 - 1989	44	40	16	8
After 1990	33	36	8	12
Parents are divorced	43	19	4	2
Parents not divorced	*37	19	3	1
Live in urban area	38	18	5	1

Summary

These findings suggest that the law, which prohibits the physical punishment of children, has served to change the behaviours and attitudes of adults in Sweden. According to this survey more than half (56%) are against spanking children. Overall, there appears to have been a major change in the attitudes of adults to physical punishments since 1965 when 53% of the population considered it to be an 'indispensable instrument' in child rearing. This study also revealed differences between older adults and younger adults with the former being more accepting of spanking than the latter.

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Figure 2.
The proportion middle school pupils who have been spanked by their fathers before reaching the teen years and their attitudes towards spanking. Pupils born in Sweden and abroad, living in various neighbourhoods. Percent.



It is possible that older adults are more tolerant of smacking because it was perceived as an "indispensable instrument" and a normal practice for a significant portion of their lives whereas younger adults are less familiar with this attitude.

The majority of middle school pupils (87%) are against spanking and while it is difficult to estimate the degree to which the law influences this opinion, it is useful to consider the data from non-national children even though the sample is very small. A greater percentage of non-nationals (9%) are positively inclined to milder forms of punishment than Swedish-born children (6%). When data from the non-nationals is sub-divided, only 5% of those who entered Sweden before 1985 are tolerant of mild physical punishment while 13% of those who arrived after 1990 feel this

way. This difference is likely to reflect variations in the degree to which the new culture, which is influenced by the laws, had been adopted.

In short, surveys carried out in Sweden during 1994 and 1995 provide evidence that the law prohibiting physical punishment of children has been successful in bringing about a change in behaviour and attitude towards this form of punishment.

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APPENDIX 1

Questions included in Surveys

- (1) Which of the following groups do you consider yourself closest to? See tables 1 and 2 for choice of answers.
- (2) Do you agree fully, partly or not at all with the following statements? See table 3 for statements.
- (3) Which of the following methods of punishment do you think parents should use? See table 4 for choices.
- (4) What do you think is against the law on spanking:
 - (a) physical punishment;
 - (b) verbal threats, for example no Christmas presents;
 - (c) no weekly allowance;
 - (d) not allowed to go out with friends.
- (5) How often did you receive physical punishment (i) from your father (ii) from your mother?
 - (a) never;
 - (b) once or twice;
 - (c) now and then;
 - (d) every week or every other week;
 - (e) can't remember / no information.
- (6) If you have been exposed to physical punishment - which forms have you experienced. See table 5 for options.