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REDUCING VIOLENCE TOWARDS U.S. CHILDREN:
TRANSFERRING POSITIVE INNOVATIONS FROM SWEDEN

Report of Sweden Study Visit

May 14 - June 16,
1988

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Partial fulfillment of Grant Award No. 90-CA-1331, Office of Human Development Services, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1987-1989.

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PREFACE

Traveling, one accepts everything; indignation stays at home. One looks, one listens, one is roused with enthusiasm by the most dreadful things because they are new. Good travellers are heartless.

Elias Canetti
The Voices of Marrakesh

In 1988 I was mindful of this warning from the 1981 recipient of Sweden's Nobel Prize for Literature just as I had been on a study visit in Sweden in 1981. I tried to be a "good traveller," an observant but objective inquirer, heartless to new experiences and observations or unwarranted value judgments.

By contrast on a subjective level I confess to unbridled warmth and gratitude to the many Swedish parents and professionals who welcomed me most hospitably and shared their time, their thinking, and their intimate feelings. Many also presented me with extensive materials which have proven helpful and for which I am most grateful. My appreciation must also note many, many cups of that superb Swedish coffee so graciously offered--and happily accepted! Any image of Sweden as cold and formal would certainly not characterize my experience.

I would especially acknowledge the invaluable assistance of the Swedish Institute, particularly Study Visits Section staff Catharina Mannheimer, in helping to plan my study visit interview schedule and facilitating arrangements.

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BACKGROUND AND STUDY VISIT OBJECTIVES

A child may not be subjected to physical punishment or other injurious or humiliating treatment.

(Parenthood and Guardianship Code,
chap 6, ¶ 3, § 2)

After Sweden added this law to its Parenthood and Guardianship Code in 1979, eyebrows were raised around the world in frank disbelief. Journalists typically poked fun at this extraordinary invasion of family privacy. The New York Times headlined an article: "Sweden's Spanking Ban Is a Bit of a Hit" in trying to explain the law to U.S. readers (October 19, 1980). The headline for an article in the San Jose, California Mercury probably summarized the U.S. reaction: "U.S. views Sweden's anti-spanking law skeptically" (May 15, 1981). However, over the past decade U.S. experts concerned about child abuse and other family violence have increasingly voiced objections to the widespread use of physical punishment in childrearing in the U.S.

While Zigler and Gil had identified this issue in the 70's, major impetus for professional concern emerged from the Straus, Gelles, Steinmetz 1980 publication, Behind Closed Doors. In 1981 Kadushin and Martin reported that "most instances of child abuse ... were, in effect, extensions of disciplinary actions, which at some point and often inadvertently crossed the ambiguous line between sanctioned corporal punishment and unsanctioned child abuse" (p. 263). Alice Miller's For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty in Child Rearing and the Roots of Violence published in 1984, gave unprecedented visibility to the issue from a psychoanalytic perspective. Most significantly the issue surfaced at the 1985 Surgeon General's Workshop on Violence and Public Health whose workgroup on Child Abuse Prevention recommended that: "... a major campaign should be carried out, with the help of the media, to reduce the public's acceptance of violence in general and violence against children in

particular, including physical punishment ... (and) the American people should come to understand and agree that corporal punishment of children should be abolished" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, p. 56).

Interestingly the workgroup on Assault and Homicide Prevention also recommended that: "... the cultural acceptance of violence be decreased by discouraging corporal punishment at home, forbidding corporal punishment at school ..." (*ibid*, p. 53). In a 1988 publication identifying and describing "Research Priorities for the Coming Decade" Finkelhor, Hotaling and Yllo discuss the need for an in-depth survey of parental attitudes toward corporal punishment (pp. 48-50).

Despite the experts' conclusions, public opinion in the U.S. clearly sanctions physical punishment of children in the name of "discipline" and provided it is not physical abuse, which most states would define as physical injury warranting medical treatment. The increasing public awareness of child abuse has not extended to any awareness of physical punishment as a possible precursor nor as a childrearing method which teaches an acceptance of force and violence.

Sensitivity to corporal punishment in our nation's schools does appear to be increasing, as demonstrated by the recent formation of the National Coalition to Abolish Corporal Punishment in Schools. However, as of this writing only eleven states prohibit physical punishment in schools even though various national organizations, including the national P.T.A., have adopted policy positions opposing physical punishment in schools. No major organization or agency has taken a policy position recommending that parents should also abandon physical punishment of children in the home.

In 1985 Straus and Gelles replicated their Behind Closed Doors research and found that there may have been some reduction in severe kinds of physical

child abuse in the ten years since the original research. They conclude: "... our findings provide a basis for believing that when a national effort is made about some aspect of intrafamily violence, a national accomplishment can be achieved. Moreover, the findings also show that an intensified effort is needed" (p. 475).

This project, REDUCING VIOLENCE TOWARDS U.S. CHILDREN: TRANSFERRING POSITIVE INNOVATIONS FROM SWEDEN, addresses the needed "intensified effort" and the recommendations cited from the Surgeon General's workshop. The project goal is to obtain information describing Sweden's experience in implementing the 1979 law specifying that "a child may not be subjected to physical punishment or other injurious or humiliating treatment," and to use that information which is positive for children and cross culturally applicable for reports, strategies, and model products toward innovating a national effort to discourage parental use of physical punishment in the U.S.

Having in 1981 completed an initial analysis of the impact of the 1979 law on Swedish families through a six week study visit supported by the Swedish Bicentennial Fund, I returned for four and a half weeks in 1988 to reassess my 1981 conclusions and to determine more recent developments now almost a decade since the "anti-spanking" law was passed. This was accomplished through a replication of the 1981 methodology and an extensive literature review, including some materials in Swedish.

The overall goal of both studies was to obtain data which, if favorable, would promote positive visibility of this Swedish law in the U.S. and garner U.S. support for the possibility of promoting U.S. parenting norms which avoid physical punishment. The intent is not to propose a similar law for the U.S. but to use the Swedish experience to inform U.S. professional, parent and

public opinion about strategies which might effect social control over parental use of physical punishment in the U.S.

Both the 1981 and 1988 studies viewed parental use of physical punishment as a continuum ranging from mild physical punishment (no injury and no more than momentary pain) to physical abuse (physical injury and/or more than momentary physical pain). "The existing social acceptance of minor physical correctives is the kingsway to a better understanding of the more violent and grave forms of child abuse" (Edfeldt, 1979, p. 16). The 1981 study addressed the initial effects of the law on both mild physical punishment and child abuse in Sweden. That study determined that Swedish parents and professionals delineate the difference between mild physical punishment and abuse according to the definitions provided above (Haeuser, 1982). The 1988 study, however, concentrated on mild physical punishment rather than physical abuse for three reasons: 1) Sweden does not routinely collect specific physical child abuse incidence data but rather data for "unsuitable environments," including neglect and other problems; 2) Studies, previously cited, by both Swedish and U.S. researchers conclude that mild physical punishment often escalates to abuse; and 3) Unlike child abuse, mild physical punishment continues to be sanctioned and generally "socially acceptable" in the U.S.

The 1988 study visit objective of describing and analyzing Swedish parents' use or disuse of mild physical punishment included consideration not only of the severity of physical punishment but also frequency and purpose, whether instrumental to change a child's behavior or expressive to relieve parent frustration or anger and under what circumstances. The objective was also to determine what facilitates Swedish parents' abandoning physical punishment and what, if any, alternatives to physical punishment Swedish parents have adopted.

Ideally one would like to assess how Swedish children who do not experience physical punishment are developing but this was impossible since controlling for all the variables affecting Swedish families and children, particularly a major change in social service delivery resulting from the Social Services Act of 1982, would demand time far beyond the scope of this study. As an alternative I looked closely at the Swedish childrearing milieu in terms of the probable effect it would have on children and sought Swedish experts' opinions about how Swedish children are faring.

A final objective was to learn what, if anything, Swedish professionals and parents wished to tell U.S. parents about this subject.

For applicability to the U.S. this report will be critiqued by a variety of U.S. expert researchers and practitioners concerned with child abuse or child development and also by some U.S. parents. Incorporating these expert and parent suggestions, the project will then produce a "popular" report for the media. Other products include: anti-physical punishment strategy tip sheets for specific audiences, a model policy statement for national organizations, model public service announcements, and an outline for discussion of physical punishment in parenting manuals.

METHODOLOGY

The 1988 study visit information was collected, as in 1981, through interviews and discussion with national authorities primarily in Stockholm, Source I, and local level authorities in five disparate municipalities: Umeå, Gothenburg (Göteborg), Jönköping, and Uppsala in addition to municipal personnel in Stockholm, Source II. See map, APPENDIX A. In addition I talked with parents throughout the visit, Source III. In 1981 I also had interviews with children but these proved, for a variety of reasons, unproductive. In 1988 my formal contact with children was limited to a fifty minute class session with 25 seventh grade children at Sävar School in Umeå. However, throughout the study visit I spent considerable time observing parents' and caretakers' interaction with children. See APPENDIX B for specific interviewees, their titles and affiliations, by date and site.

My interviews can be summarized as follows:

SOURCE I

NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

- 3 administrators national social welfare programs
- 4 directors/staff national private children's organizations
- 2 administrators national police
- 1 administrator & 1 editor national social workers union
- 1 nationally recognized child psychologist/consultant
- 4 professors

SOURCE II

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- 14 social workers
- 17 school administrators, teachers, counselors
- 2 psychotherapists
- 4 child care personnel
- 2 pediatricians and 1 pediatric nurse
- 2 district attorneys
- 1 social welfare board politician
- 1 private children's organization volunteer
- 1 police inspector
- 1 regional newspaper reporter

SOURCE III

PARENTS, CHILDREN & OTHERS

Impromptu interviews with 7 randomly selected parents/caretakers at playgrounds and with 4 mothers via appointment. Discussion with 25 children for an entire class period. Interviews with 4 divorced father members of the Sunday Parents Union. Discussion with additional mothers in day care centers and extensive observation of children with parents/caretakers in public places.

While I personally selected some of the specific professional interviewees, most were selected according to my general suggestion by staff at the Swedish Institute or by someone designated by the Swedish Institute in the various localities. Some professionals directed me to others who had not been previously identified by either the Swedish Institute or myself. In a few instances I spoke with some of the same professionals I interviewed in 1981.

Besides some prearranged interviews with parents I randomly selected some of the parents with whom I spoke. In general I chose parents/caretakers who looked Swedish--I confirmed that they were before proceeding--and whom I had seen admonish or correct their child at least once during my observation at a play ground. For toddlers in particular, this is not an infrequent occurrence! In addition my choice was admittedly dictated by whether the parent/caretaker looked approachable. Three mothers interviewed by appointment were selected by me simply because the opportunity for an interview presented itself while a fourth mother was selected by a school. A meeting with divorced fathers was arranged by the Gothenburg Social Welfare Board. Besides these enumerated interviews I had brief interactions with additional parents who chose to engage in discussions in day care centers. Obviously, many of the professionals interviewed are also parents and volunteered information from their personal as well as professional

perspectives. While I interviewed parents of toddlers, school children and teens, younger parents with young children predominated.

Most of the persons interviewed spoke some English, and the interviews were conducted largely in English. In Sweden, English has been a required subject from grade 3 through grade 9 since the 1950's. However, I usually began each interview in Swedish to promote a positive relationship, and as necessary, I was usually able to translate Swedish words which the speaker did not know in English.

I was cognizant of the methodological problem of getting honest and complete answers to questions about the sensitive subject of parents hitting or otherwise physically punishing their children, particularly in a country where it is illegal! However, professionals, as well as the parents, may have perceived me as a "safe" confidant since I was foreign and unlikely ever to see them again. I tried to promote frankness by explaining that my purpose was to help professionals and parents in the United States understand this Swedish law which is so contrary to accepted parental practice in the U.S. I also tried to promote empathy and honesty by indicating that as a mother myself I could share many of the feelings of parents or as a professional I could understand many of the professional issues common to Sweden and the United States. With some parents--depending on their comfort level--my questions were asked in a general way about Swedish families, not necessarily their families. Interestingly, in 1988 I did not encounter any parent who refused to talk with me or seemed uncomfortable in doing so whereas in 1981 some parents were a bit hesitant. The random parent interviews were generally brief, 15-20 minutes, but the prearranged parent interviews and interviews with professionals ranged from one to two hours.

Information from interviews was augmented by observation and varied social contacts. In Stockholm I lived with a family including a six year old daughter whereas in Jönköping I stayed with an elderly woman pensioner. In Umeå I rented rooms above a hairdressing salon and in Gothenburg I stayed in an empty apartment but had some contact with the tenant's family. In short, my information about Sweden derives from living briefly with Swedes as well as talking with them in official or random interviews.

In each municipality I also visited a local library to review the collection of parenting advice books, which were universally numerous though not necessarily recent. I found only a few published since enactment of the 1979 law.

This study relies on qualitative anecdotal evidence and careful observation. As such it is impressionistic rather than a quantitatively definitive answer to the questions of whether Swedish parents use physical punishment and how much, when, where, and why. Hopefully the reader will find the evidence sufficient to hypothesize some generalizations about parental use or disuse of physical punishment in Sweden. Hopefully, the reader will also find the evidence sufficiently convincing to inform strategies for discouraging physical punishment of children in the U.S.

THE SWEDISH CHILDREARING MILIEU

To understand Swedish parents' use or disuse of physical punishment in childrearing it is critical to understand the framework in which Swedish family life unfolds.*

Demographics

Although Sweden is the fourth largest country in Europe, it is sparsely populated with only 8.4 million inhabitants as of 1987. Over 85 percent live in the southern half of the country. (The Swedish Institute. "General Facts on Sweden"). Most Swedish families, 83 percent in 1975, live in cities and urban areas. (Sweden in Brief, p. 11). In fact, over a third of the nation's total population live in the three largest cities. Urbanization really took off in the decades after World War II and the rural areas of Sweden have very few young families.

The birth rate has been consistently low with relatively minor fluctuations since 1950. Total births numbered 97,064 in 1980 but went down to 93,889 in 1984 (Statistika Centralbyrån, Årsbok, p. 55). Family planning and contraceptive services are free, and contraceptives are dispensed on request from upper secondary (high) school nurses. Sterilization is permitted for those over the age of 25. An abortion law passed in 1974 permits abortion on demand up to the 18th week of pregnancy. It is estimated that about 35,000 abortions are performed annually (Wistrand, p. 69).

Authorities concur that for the past two years Sweden has experienced at least a minor baby boom. Live births in 1986 totaled 101,950 (Statistika Centralbyrån, Barnfakta, p. 4). In 1988 I saw many more pregnant women

*This chapter includes updated material from the author's 1981 Swedish Bicentennial Fund Study Visit Report.

than I had observed in 1981. Various Swedish professionals suggested that the rising birth rate reflects both increased emphasis on family life and increased confidence in the likelihood of successful parenting.

Because of Sweden's traditionally low birthrate workers were needed for the rapid economic expansion of the past fifteen years. Sweden welcomed women in the workplace and also recruited immigrants from Finland, the southern European countries, the Middle East and elsewhere. Sweden has also welcomed political refugees from other countries. Net immigration accounts for more than half the population growth since World War II. (The Swedish Institute, "General Facts on Sweden"). Today one million of the population, or one of every eight persons in Sweden, are recent immigrants or children of post-war immigrants. Every fourth child now born in Sweden is of foreign extraction. For a nation which heretofore had been very homogeneous, the influx of foreign cultures, families and childrearing practices has presented some problems. Those problems specific to the 1979 law on which my study was focused are discussed in a subsequent chapter. The major focus of my research was on families with a Swedish background.

In Sweden, as in this report, "family" means with or without benefit of marriage. In Sweden cohabitation has both social and legal status. Many young couples live together, have a child and then marry. Thirty-seven percent of all infants are born to unwed parents, but these children have all the rights, including inheritance, as children born within marriage (Wistrand, p. 17). Swedes refer to cohabitation as "sambo," a shortened form of the Swedish word "samboende," which means living together.

I was told that as of 1988 more couples are marrying and doing so with an elaborate formality atypical of weddings less than a decade earlier. However, fifty percent of marriages end in divorce and a likelihood for remarriage or a

new sambo relationship. Men at the Sunday Parents Union for divorced or separated fathers seeking child custody cited data indicating that it takes divorced/separated mothers about six years to enter a new relationship with a man whereas divorced/separated fathers do this in six months. Another source reported that "after divorce or separation, the man finds another woman but the woman finds herself." While some believe the divorce/separation rate may be decreasing, there is widespread concern about the fact that many separations/divorces occur during the first year after a child is born. This is a major reason some prenatal clinics as in Gothenburg provide social work counseling to all pregnant women and their spouses or partners. Swedish professionals and others in the population speak often of Sweden's single mothers and their special problems. However, despite these reports 1985 data shows that most Swedish children 0-17 years live with two biologic parents (Statistiska Centralbyrån, Barnfakta, p. 10).

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| Both biologic parents | 81% |
| Biological parent & step parent | 6% |
| Single mother | 11% |
| Single father | 2% |

The average number of children per marriage or sambo relationship is less than two. "Families with one or two children predominate. Because young people, on an average, move out of their parents' home early, an average Swedish 'household' consists of fewer than three people." (Swedish Institute. Sweden in Brief, p. 52)

The Social Policy Framework and Values

Swedish family policy aims at giving families with children a living standard comparable to families without children through a combination of cash grants, social welfare services and insurance benefits.

The State pays a uniform, tax-free child allowance for each child up to age 16. Child allowance supplements are payable to families with three or more children. If children continue their education after reaching age 16, they are eligible for study allowances up to age 20 and so-called study funds within the higher education system Families with children and with below-average income are also eligible for housing allowances.

When a baby is born, its parents are legally entitled to twelve months' leave of absence between them, including nine months with an allowance that covers 90% (now 100%) of lost income in most instances. A parent without paid employment receives a fixed daily allowance. This same fixed allowance is paid in all cases during the final three months. (I was told the final three months are at 90% of wages/salary.) Out of their total of twelve months' leave entitlement, the parents may "save" six months for later occasions, until the child's fourth birthday. In addition, if a child is ill the parents are entitled to as many as 60 days' leave per year per child until age 12 with the same compensation as during their own illnesses. Mothers and fathers have equal rights to take advantage of these benefits (Ibid., p. 50).

I was told that parental leave is taken by mothers much more frequently than by fathers even though now there is no stigma or loss of respect for men employed in the public sector using this benefit. By contrast the considerably smaller private employment sector still does not accept without at least subtle disdain employee fathers' use of the parental leave benefit.

Nearly all Swedish families today enjoy a high standard of living as a result not only of access to publicly supported health and welfare services but also as a result of the nation's productivity. "In the past few decades Sweden has always been among the top countries in terms of gross domestic product per capita." (Sweden in Brief, p. 44). Most Swedish families live in a home or apartment built recently or within the past 20 years. Data from 1985 indicates that three out of four children 0-15 years live in small houses (Statistiska Centralbyrån, Barnfakta, p. 13):

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Free standing house | 61% |
| Rowhouse | 14% |
| Small apartment building | 17% |
| High rise apartment | 8% |

Many Swedish families own a car, at least one color TV, refrigerator, freezer, etc. Many have video equipment, a cottage in the country and/or a boat or van, and funds for vacations outside of Sweden. Thus there are variations in families' wealth, income and social status but the differences are not nearly as pronounced as in most other countries. It appears that no Swedish families live in poverty, and some of the few who are truly wealthy leave the country to avoid the high taxes. In general the least affluent are the more recent immigrants even though most health and welfare benefits are as available to immigrants as to Swedes.

It cannot be overemphasized that the Swedish people, even those who are not members of the Social Democratic party which created Sweden's present welfare system, value equality. Many persons told me in 1988 as in 1981 that while they certainly disliked their high taxes, they also believed it was necessary for the state to provide for the less fortunate who cannot meet their own needs. It is the family's right and the government's duty. Interestingly, however, this does not mean that Swedish people are lazy; in fact, the work ethic is very strong. By far the majority of families want to take care of themselves and there is some stigma to requiring social services. Nevertheless one senses, or reads in the literature, or is occasionally told that there is the possibility that some families abdicate some parenting responsibilities with the unconscious, if not conscious, assumption that their children will receive what they need from the government.

Most mothers in Sweden work outside the home after the one year parental leave, some for a six hour work day, which Swedish law dictates must be allowed if desired by mothers. Swedish women work not only for economic reasons to maintain family living standards despite the high taxes but also because Swedish legislation since the late 1960's has assumed that every

adult, married or not, ought to be responsible for his or her own support (Wistrand, p. 18). This is one basis for a very visible Women's Movement which emphasizes career development and women's access to professional as well as lower level positions. Several persons pointed out that laws relative to the family, such as the 1979 law, could be developed and passed because of the number of women in government. While total sexual equality is still an ideal with a disproportionate number of women holding menial or part-time jobs, a 1988 released study by the Washington, D.C. based Population Crisis Committee reports that of 99 nations "Swedish women have the highest status and greatest equality with men." (USA Today, June 27, 1988, p. 1).

Publicly supported child care has emerged in Sweden not only to accommodate working mothers but also to fulfill a legislative policy of "guaranteeing children a good growth environment" (Swedish Institute, "Child Care Programs in Sweden," p. 1). "Preschools are intended to equalize children's possibilities regardless of their families' income" (Pogrebin, p. 83). Local governments are responsible for providing an array of child care facilities, including:

- Day Care Centers - 6 a.m. - 6 p.m. care for children 1-6 years
(A few centers accept infants, but because of the one year parental leave most infants are cared for at home.)
- Family Day Care - Young children cared for all day or older children after school by a municipally employed "dagmamma" (day mother) in her home.
- Part Time Preschool - Three hour morning or afternoon activity program for children 4-7 years. Similar to U.S. kindergarten.
- Free Time Home - Before and after school group care for children 7-12 years. Often adjacent to a school or preschool.

Open Preschool - For infants and preschool children accompanied by a parent, caretaker or dagmamma to relieve parent isolation and promote positive child development. Typically staffed by both an early child development specialist and a social worker.

Sick Child Care - In home care by municipally employed nurse assistants for sick children of employed parents.

Arrangements for child care in Sweden are important to understanding childrearing since for the many children who spend many hours in care the modus operandi of the center often becomes the pattern of parent child interaction at home. For some parents child care staff are models. I was repeatedly impressed both by observation and in interviews with the frequent communication and close relationships between child care staff and parents. One center teacher, for example, noted a recent situation wherein a child had some suspicious marks on his body but the teacher was hesitant to contact the social work authorities for fear of spoiling the teacher-parent relationship. A teacher at another center said, "We don't walk on parent toes."

I visited many of these programs and was also consistently impressed with the high quality of staff, program, space, and equipment. However, the municipal child care systems still cannot accommodate all the children for whom care is needed. Current plans on the Social Democratic agenda call for meeting this need by 1991 while some members of other political parties are proposing the alternative of paying mothers to stay home well beyond the one year parental leave. As suggested earlier the Social Democratic purpose is not only child care but the promotion of equality at an early age.

Equality undergirds not only political values and the Women's Rights Movement but also the Children's Rights Movement. This movement has gradually shifted children from a powerless position to a position where they are

accorded many of the rights of adults. The 1979 law banning physical punishment expresses the right of children to be treated the same as or equal to adults with respect to any physical assault. The Children's Rights Movement, spawned from the value of equality, is the touchstone of the 1979 law.

Besides equality, it is necessary to understand another Swedish value in order to understand the 1979 law. This value is rationality, which influences both attitudes and behavior. While many persons spoke of this in various ways, a social worker perhaps described this best in saying Swedish people have "more mind than heart." Education for both children and adults is clearly a Swedish priority. I was struck by the educational or cultural nature of most television programs. The faith in rationality means that Swedish people tend to revere authorities and experts, including child guidance experts. This paves the way for acceptance of a law, such as the 1979 law, which emerged like most Swedish laws, upon recommendation of a number of authorities and experts. A journalist concludes that "Centrally, regionally and municipally employed experts have taken over large parts of the family's previous functions" (Ekselius, p. 7).

Rationality, combined with the equality principle, also extends to human interactions. Swedish people tend to fear behaving too differently from their associates. Risk taking is not a Swedish characteristic except for clearly socially sanctioned activity. Bingo and lotteries are extremely popular! In 1981 many persons, lay and professional, told me that Swedish behavior is guided by "lagom," which means "just enough, not more and not less." In 1988, interestingly, I did not hear much about "lagom" and the atmosphere generally seemed to allow for more expression of organized, if not spontaneous, dissent. With respect to political views this may be explained by Sweden's

upcoming parliamentary election in September.* However, I also heard about a growing number of fundamentalist religious groups and cults and a fledgling anti-government Family Rights organization which engenders little, if any, respect but is visible at least to human service personnel. There are also widely varying opinions about who killed Prime Minister Olaf Palme and why the murderer(s) has not been found. This is a very important -- and embarrassing -- issue for Swedes, and may be eroding some of the traditional reliance on experts. Nonetheless I conclude that with respect to childrearing, considerable reliance on expert opinion continues to prevail in 1988 and encourages behavioral conformity with accepted standards and laws.

*Postscript: The Social Democrats won enough seats in the September 18, 1988 election to maintain control of the government. However, for the first time the environmentalist Greens won 20 seats in the 349 seat parliament. The Greens are the first new legislative party in the parliament since 1917. "A voter turnout of 86%, although high by international standards, was the lowest in several Swedish elections" (Milwaukee Journal, September 19, 1988).

EVOLUTION OF THE 1979 LAW

Childrearing Practices

The 20th century has wrought tremendous changes in childrearing and educational practices in Sweden.* Sweden had swung from an extremely authoritarian and punitive approach to childrearing to the opposite extreme of making few, if any, demands of children in the 1960's and 70's. Some say this laissez-faire approach was a misinterpretation of the Children's Rights Movement. Now in 1988 parents appear to be finding a middle ground wherein parents are not punitive but do set limits.

As late as 1920 the concept of "husaga" (hus - house; aga - beating) or the domestic disciplining of a wife, children and servants was supported by Swedish law. This practice originated from an agrarian socio-political structure whereby landowners could use force to discipline their workers. The landowner role became a model for the father role in many families, particularly lower class families, a model which families later carried with them as they moved from the country to towns and cities. "Husaga" permitted keeping a household in good order through blows within reason.

The "husaga" practice was supported by strong religious belief and literal interpretation of biblical injunctions such as "den man älskar, den agar man," those one loves, one beats. Interestingly, two recent Swedish-English dictionaries, from different publishers, both offer this quotation as an illustration of the meaning of "aga" (Esselte Studium, 1976; Bokförlaget Presma, 1980). Harsh childrearing practices stemmed from Martin Luther's two Catechisms, which were published in 1529 but prevailed in Sweden at least through the first two decades of the twentieth century.

*This chapter includes updated material from the author's 1981 Swedish Bicentennial Fund Study Visit Report.

. . . In performing their wordly duties, the parents were brandishing the rod as a counterpart to the sword of the authorities. And they did not carry it just for the sake of appearances. It was considered the highest duty of the parent to break a child's own sinful will to make room for God's will. In Luther's opinion parents who did not fight for God in this way were fighting against him and for the devil. . . . Such a life could only lead to eternal damnation. The Lutheran doctrine was thus a strong force urging the parents to punish their children, better a bit too much than bit too little and better too often than too seldom.

(Edfeldt, 1979, p. 14)

Today, few Swedish people attend church or are religiously oriented, but this was certainly not so earlier. In fact many of the million immigrants who left Sweden for the United States in the nineteenth century did so for religious reasons. While membership in fundamentalist churches in Sweden is growing at present, their influence is not pervasive and significantly limited to Livets Ord (The Living Word) in Uppsala--discussed subsequently under "Some Problems"--and The Free Church, headquartered in Jönköping, which is popularly known as Sweden's Jerusalem.

The authority and obedience characterizing childrearing in the earlier years of the century are important to understanding the 1979 law. According to the "husaga" concept, beating children to correct their behavior--if not to drive out the devil--remained a common practice, particularly among the lower classes. A Gotland woman reported before she died in 1970:

. . . I don't remember much from the years before school - just the unhappiness. The birch (whip) in the corner by the stove, my smarting back and buttocks and how my brothers and sisters and I shrieked. I don't recall why we were beaten, just the pain and the soreness.

(Larsson & Olsson, p. 12)

These authors further report that "the birch was still being used in Gotland families until well in the 1950's." They also point out that children

suffered in these earlier years because all of Sweden suffered and life was very hard. Poor economic conditions prior to Sweden's industrialization meant sickness and starvation which "made people merciless. . . . Poverty breeds cruelty." (p. 2).

I have seen a picture of a needle stitched wall hanging from these earlier times which says:

Ett Kok Stryck om Dagen
Lära Barn Lagen

(A Beating Every Day in the Kitchen
Teaches Children the Law)

Until World War II these severe Swedish childrearing practices, among other things, were significantly influenced by German practices. Society and family life was structured on authoritarian concepts undergirded by militarism and punishment. Up until World War II German rather than English was a required subject in Swedish schools.

After World War I and particularly after World War II, life in Sweden changed and so did childrearing practices. At least four changes combined to effect closure on "husaga" as a sanctioned and common childrearing practice:

1. Social democracy which evolved during this period was not only a political force but a philosophy giving all people, including children, rights and equality.
2. With social democracy, industrialization, and relatively static population growth came affluence. Poverty and the cruelty often born of poverty disappeared.
3. In moving from the country to work in industry in the towns and cities, families left their strong religious traditions behind. Rationality replaced the church. "Husaga" as a biblical injunction was less important, and extended families were not so available to encourage it.
4. Perhaps most importantly for a nation which believes in being guided by "experts," Swedish child psychologists, psychiatrists, pediatricians and educators promulgated widely publicized views that children should be allowed to express themselves. They should be given freedom to develop in their own way at their own pace with a minimum of rules and a milieu which avoided competition.

Public Opinion

With the dramatic change in childrearing practices a Swedish word describing these practices apparently began to shift meaning. "Husaga" gave way to "aga," and trying to pinpoint the precise meaning of this word haunted me throughout my 1981 interviews. Dictionaries define "aga" as "flogging, caning; receiving a beating" (Esselte Studium, 1976; Jan-Förlag, 1978). However, in 1981 some professionals told me "aga" had come to mean all physical punishment, whether mild or severe. My 1981 interviewees could not agree as to whether "aga" is child abuse. Professionals were more inclined to think it is, but parents defined it as a beating, more severe than mild, which might or might not be child abuse.

The meaning of "aga" is important for two reasons. First, a few professionals, many parents and most children refer to the 1979 law as the law which prohibits "aga." Secondly, a professional polling organization, Sifo, has since 1965 periodically sampled Swedish public opinion about "aga." Sifo, however, did not define "aga" for respondents so it probably meant different things to different people, particularly in the more recent polling years of public debate leading up to the 1979 law. Nonetheless Sifo's sampling from 1965 to 1981 indicates that Swedish people increasingly thought parents should manage child upbringing without "aga," be it a beating or all physical punishment.

| | <u>1965</u> | <u>1968</u> | <u>1971</u> | <u>1979</u> | <u>1980</u> | <u>1981</u> |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| "Aga" sometimes necessary | 53% | 42% | 35% | 26% | 29% | 26% |
| Parents should manage otherwise | 35 | 54 | 60 | 68 | 67 | 71 |
| In doubt, don't know | 12 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 3 |

(Sifo & Rädde Barnen, p. 3)

By 1979 when the law forbidding all physical punishment of children was passed, three-fourths of the Swedish people already disapproved of at least severe physical punishment. None of the authorities I met could explain the small increase in support of "aga" for 1980 but they did not think it was of any significance.

Demonstrating public support is the fact that when the 1979 law was voted on in Parliament, 259 members voted for it and only 6 against it.

Whatever the law's intent, Swedish people know there is such a law. Sifo results show that in 1981, 96 percent of the respondents knew that there was a law which forbids "aga" (*ibid*, p. 4). I met no one in 1981 or 1988, including children, cab drivers, store clerks, or chance acquaintances, who did not know about this law. However, Swedes take this law very much for granted with staff at the Swedish Information Service in New York now describing the law as a "non issue."

In my 1988 interviews I used "aga" to refer to severe physical punishment, that which leaves injury and/or more than momentary pain in contrast with "smisk och dask" (smacking and spanking), which is neither physically injurious nor more than momentarily painful, i.e., mild physical punishment. It was clear to me from the way both parent and professional interviewees also used these terms that we were in agreement as to their meaning.

Prior and Related Laws

In 1949 Sweden adopted a Parenthood and Guardianship Code which codified laws pertaining to the relationship between parents and children. Whereas previously parents had the "right to punish," this code specified a "right to reprimand," employing suitable parental means, including beatings. In other words, only ". . . the more violent forms of physical beatings should be avoided" (Swedish Information Service, p. 1).

Swedish law provides a Criminal Code which specifies those acts which are crimes and punishable, and until 1957 the Criminal Code specifically exempted from punishment parents who gave their children "minor" injuries while exercising their legal right to beat their children. In 1958 Sweden passed a law prohibiting physical punishment of students by school personnel, and by the early 1960's a similar law applied to child care institutions and correctional facilities for children and youth. A new Criminal Code in 1962 specified three levels of assault as punishable crimes, and technically these were also applicable to parents as punishable crimes. However, in actuality there were few, if any, such applications until 1966 when following several highly publicized cases of severe child abuse, the Parenthood and Guardianship Code was amended and several forms of severe physical chastisement were specifically defined as assaults punishable under the Criminal Code.

Thus, in 1966 the "right" of parents to beat their children laid down in the Parenthood and Guardianship Code was removed but beating as a disciplinary measure was not banned outright. This left a gray area where some beatings were assault or child abuse and punishable while others, delivered in the name of discipline, were not. One police official told me that until the 1979 law prohibiting all physical punishment of children, Swedish law did not provide an adequate basis for determining and prosecuting child abuse.

Many Americans and a few Swedes speculated that the 1979 law would produce unwarranted child abuse reports, particularly from children. This has not occurred. In fact in the nine years since the law took effect only two reports which were clearly not justified and worthy of investigation have been entered into records in the entire country. Local police and/or social workers may very occasionally get unwarranted reports which do not evolve into recorded investigations, but none noted this as sufficiently frequent as to represent even a minor problem.

Intended Purpose of Law

The 1979 law emanated from the 1978 Government Commission on Children's Rights report, entitled "Children's Rights: A Ban Against Corporal Punishment." This report states:

The primary purpose of the provision is to make it clear that beating children is not permitted. In fact, there are many who are unaware that it is not permitted. Secondly, the Commission wishes to create a basis for general information and education for parents as to the importance of giving children good care and as to one of the prime requirements of their care. The proposed provision should, in the long term, contribute towards reducing the number of cases of acts of physical violence on children.

(Swedish Information Service, p. 2,
underlining added)

Thus the primary intent is to prohibit beating and the secondary intent is to promote children's well being by prohibiting other physical acts of punishment and humiliating treatment.

Journalists in the United States quickly grabbed headlines by dubbing this law as the "anti-spanking" law. However, even the Swedish Information Service entitled a report explaining the law in English as "The 'anti-spanking' Law." In Sweden too this law is occasionally referred to as the "smisk och dask" or "smacking and spanking" law. This is undoubtedly because the Justice Department issued a booklet about the law entitled "Kan man klara barnuppfostran utan smisk och dask?" which means, as the English version of this booklet is entitled, "Can You Bring Up Children Successfully without Smacking and Spanking?" Thus in promoting this law, Sweden has emphasized the elimination of all physical punishment because of the experts' belief that this is a good standard for child care generally but also because it is a means to achieving the primary goal of reducing beatings. Fewer instances of physical punishment means fewer cases where mild physical punishment gets out of hand and becomes a beating.

If beatings are child abuse, then this law was intended first as an anti-child abuse law, with penalties provided for in the Criminal Code, and secondly as an anti-spanking law without legal penalties.

Since many Americans may find it strange to pass a law without penalties, I believe it important to repeat that this law does have penalties, the Criminal Code, for physical punishment which is identified as assault, i.e. child abuse. What this law does is to now provide a more identifiable basis for applying the Criminal Code. There is no intent to investigate or prosecute parents' childrearing methods unless they are suspected of being abusive. Besides reducing child abuse, the intent is to improve childrearing practices by establishing a standard of nonviolence which tells parents that physical punishment is not in the best interest of their children or Swedish society. This is somewhat comparable to the U.S. seat belt laws which educate drivers and passengers about protecting themselves but whose implementation is not pursued unless drivers run afoul of the law for some other reason.

In my 1988 interviews a police inspector suggested that without a more visible penalty the 1979 law is not sufficient to make parents change their behavior. A District Attorney also told me a penalty should be added to the 1979 law to make it more meaningful. On the other hand, Professor Åke Edfeldt, one of Sweden's well known researchers on parental use of physical punishment, points out that if a penalty were articulated in the 1979 law, the law probably could not be passed and certainly would not be as readily accepted by the Swedish populace.

Implementation

The Swedish government has done a number of things to promote understanding of this law and compliance. The booklet previously noted "Can

You Bring Up Children Successfully without Smacking and Spanking," was distributed shortly after the law was passed to a half million families with children and it was translated into the languages spoken by the largest immigrant groups. In 1981 I also saw it in many of the day care centers I visited. It informs parents of the risks in using physical punishment and demonstrates other methods of childrearing. It acknowledges that parents sometimes get angry but tells parents to relieve their feelings in ways other than physical punishment and where to go for help. Liberally illustrated and in color, it is an unusually attractive and informative public information tool.

The Justice Department which authored this law initially conducted a broad information campaign in the press and on radio and television. Initially there were also captions and brief explanations on milk cartons, which in Sweden often carry public service information. I was told that the rationale for this was that as a family sat at the breakfast table with the omnipresent milk carton, the captions would hopefully prompt family discussion.

As of 1988 the government booklet is out of print and there is no plan to reprint because, according to several sources, "it is no longer needed." However, discussion of the law has been institutionalized in two important areas.

The law continues to be discussed in parent education classes available to all expectant parents, in well baby clinics used by "99 and 99/100ths" of all parents, and as appropriate in the public health nurse's mandatory home visit during a baby's first month. It may also be discussed in the mandatory health screening of all four year olds.

Perhaps more importantly this law is discussed in the one hour per week parent education and child development classes for all students in grades 7

through 9 in the nation's school system. The law and suggestions for discussion appear in the National School Administration's 9th Grade Lesson Plan on Child Development (Skolöverstyrelsen, pp. 88-93). In addition some of the required English language classes use an exercise focused on attitudes towards physical punishment of children as a tool for expanding students' English vocabulary and syntax. The exercise includes an audiotape, vocabulary and suggestions for a class debate in English. This tape, "Spank them - don't spoil them," presents a conversation in which an English man and woman defend physical punishment while another woman without an English accent clearly disagrees. The tape has been transcribed and appears as APPENDIX C (Glover, et al.).

Parents in my 1981 study reported learning about the law primarily through television, radio and newspapers. Parents in my 1988 study also noted these sources but some, particularly younger parents, added "school" as a major information source about the law.

Perceived Purpose of Law

A notable change may have occurred between 1981 and 1988 in how Swedes perceive or accept this law.

In 1981 seven professionals and one parent described the law as intended only to prevent child abuse but only two persons noted that this law was intended to prevent all physical punishment. In 1981 most professionals and parents perceived the law as discouraging both child abuse and less severe physical punishment.

In 1988 nearly everyone, parents and professionals, described this law as prohibiting all physical punishment. Without my prompting no one referred to the law as a means of preventing child abuse although there were references to

preventing violence. This change may be an artifact of differing emphases in the interview process and/or it may reflect the fact that physical child abuse is not a media or professional issue in 1988 to the extent it was in 1981. I was told by several sources that in the interim attention has progressed from physical child abuse to sexual abuse to spouse abuse and as of 1988, to mobbing, which is youth gang violence. Several sources noted that Sweden has not discovered psychological/emotional abuse even though the 1979 law prohibits "humiliating treatment" as well as physical punishment. As will be discussed later, however, for most Swedes physical punishment is humiliating treatment.

Naturally social workers and other professionals continue to be concerned with child abuse. However, it was my impression that the average Swede does not now perceive the 1979 law primarily as a means to preventing child abuse. but rather simply as constructive childrearing. Swedes appear to have accepted the fact that childrearing without physical punishment is consistent with Sweden's long tradition of nonviolence externally in international relations and internally in management-labor negotiations. In separate interviews an official with the National Board for Health and Welfare and a professor both said that as of 1988 Swedes have "internalized" this 1979 law.

A COMPARATIVE SUMMARY OF 1981 AND 1988 STUDY
VISIT FINDINGS AND THE DEMISE OF "FRIA UPPFOSTRAN"

While some of the 1988 findings have been noted in previous chapters, the 1988 findings and conclusions are detailed in subsequent chapters. This chapter offers a baseline for the subsequent discussion.

1981 and 1988 Similarities

1. Swedish parents and children as well as the general population are aware of the 1979 law, and Sweden's socio-political-cultural milieu supports Swedish parents' acceptance of the law.
2. Most Swedish parents recognize that all physical punishment is undesirable and that what begins as mild physical punishment may lead to abuse. Thus for the most part they support and respect the 1979 law and never use physical punishment in public.
3. Children learn about the law in school, and parents do not seem to be disturbed by the fact that when necessary children remind their parents of the law.
4. Both parents and professionals are concerned about the physical violence Swedish children see in increasingly available videos. Professionals are also concerned about the physical punishment sanctioned in many of Sweden's numerous immigrant/refugee families.

1981 and 1988 Differences

1. In 1981 a very few Swedish parents either snickered about the 1979 law or were opposed to it. The snickerers said the law is superfluous because parents like themselves never use physical punishment anyway and others cannot be legislated into not using it. The opposers believed that

mild physical punishment is healthier than suppressing parental anger.

(This is a misunderstanding of the law. Information about the law mailed by the government to all parents of young children shortly after the law was passed clearly states that all parents on occasion feel angry and that the anger should be expressed but not as physical punishment.)

In 1988 I met no one who in any way ridiculed the law or expressed any opposition to it. Parents who do occasionally resort to mild physical punishment in private do so because they lose control and then feel guilty and/or because it gets fast results, not because they think it is healthy or constructive childrearing. These parents are inclined also to point out that the law is good because it discourages child abuse and violence in society.

2. In 1981 the law and social norms had already had some effect on parents' use of physical punishment within their homes. Many Swedish parents in 1981 claimed they "think twice" before striking their children. As a result if they did occasionally resort to physical punishment, it was not so severe and they felt very guilty afterward because they believed it was bad for children.

In 1988 parents apparently do not need to "think twice" to avoid using physical punishment; this avoidance is standard procedure. Professionals generally reported that if in desperation some parents do very occasionally use mild physical punishment at home, often described as pinching a child's ear, they not only feel guilty but generally recognize that they are ventilating their own anger or frustration rather than effectively teaching their children. Parents, randomly selected or otherwise, rarely reported using any, even mild, punishment. They are apparently so convinced of the rightness of this approach to childrearing that they do not recall having to "think twice."

3. In 1981 both parents and professionals agreed that parents had not within the two years since the law was passed found constructive alternatives to physical punishment. For most parents the alternative was yelling and screaming at their children, and some believed this was equally, perhaps more, destructive.

In 1988 I found with considerable surprise--and not inconsiderable pleasure--that most parents are comfortable with alternatives and that at least one alternative is used almost universally. Many professionals and nearly all parents reported that when necessary, a parent holds a child still by firmly grasping the upper arms and with eye contact while the child is thus immobilized, talks to the child about changing his/her behavior. Some parents acknowledged that sometimes this process escalates from talking to yelling. However, they often articulated that it is important for the child to know the parent is angry and many added that an angry silence is worse than yelling. A few parents agreed with some professionals that occasionally the immobilizing arm hold might be slightly painful but they do not define this as physical punishment since the intent is to get the child's attention for verbal communication. As I observed parent-child interaction I occasionally saw this process in action, and it did not appear to me that the arm hold was generally more than a firm grip.

The Demise of "Fria Uppfostran"

A most remarkable change in childrearing appears to have transpired in Sweden since my 1981 study visit, a change with tremendous implications for the use or disuse of physical punishment. After dominating Swedish childrearing for several decades, "fria uppfostran" now appears to be dead.

"Fria uppfostran" literally means "free upbringing." Interpreted as permissive childrearing advice from experts it was the opposite of the old punitive "husaga" childrearing practices. It dominated Swedish childrearing theory and practice beginning with the late 1940's following the defeat of Germany in World War II when Swedes chose to abandon Germanic authoritarian practices as models in various areas of Swedish life. At the same time Dr. Spock in the U.S. was telling mothers to abandon four hour by the clock feedings, and Sweden listened. Permissive childrearing blossomed in Sweden.

As early as 1964 at least one expert tried to convey that "free upbringing" does not mean children should grow up without any norms and rules: "Few concepts have been more misunderstood than 'fria uppfostran.' Too often it has been interpreted as 'frihet från uppfostran (freedom from upbringing) or that children may do what they wish.'" (Liljeström, p. 164).

Two findings during my 1981 study visit forced me to conclude that Swedish children appeared to be experiencing a freedom from upbringing. First, parents, professionals and children universally agreed that "parents lack time for children." I had to conclude that parents might not be sufficiently involved in their children's lives either to use or not use physical punishment. Second, my own observation of parent-child interaction, confirmed by Americans and other foreigners living in Sweden, indicated that disciplining children by any means was not important to Swedish parents.

What by American standards would clearly be misbehavior or an unreasonable demand is often patiently tolerated or overlooked. Parents seem to want their children to have well developed "ids" rather than well developed "superegos." This may well be an effort to overcome the values of rationality, conformity, and "lagom" which have traditionally produced Swedes so often characterized by both themselves and others as "cold and formal." Several of the Swedish teachers and other professionals I interviewed suggested that a democratic society needs children who have learned at an early age to

think for themselves, to make their own choices, and to accept responsibility. Several parents told me one reason the birthrate is so low in Sweden is because Swedish parents spoil children, and coping with more than one or two children would be too difficult.

(Haeuser, 1982, p. 13)

Again I had to question the importance of the 1979 law and the issue of physical punishment in this milieu since a society which makes few demands of children has little reason to punish them, physically or otherwise.

In 1988 the picture is notably different, and parents are quite universally abiding by norms and imposing rules and limits on their children's behavior. The parents both talked about and demonstrated this while professionals confirmed this conclusion. At one school administrators and teachers agreed that "parents now dare to be parents." A day care center teacher said, "parents now dare to be grown-up." At various schools I was told teachers too are now setting more limits on children's behavior. Some teachers also noted that compared with 1981, children are easier to teach today because they have learned to accept limits at home. Several professionals specified younger parents in particular as being more demanding of children. An official at the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs said, "In the last three or four years it has become evident that young parents want their children to behave. Parents are tougher today."

No one was able to offer any particular time or event which prompted the change. However, several professionals attribute the change to the ever more extensive parent education and child development curriculum instituted in the public schools as well as in Sweden's few private church schools per directive of the National School Administration. The 1980's have also seen a concomitant structured emphasis on child development in teacher education

curricula in the universities. Concurring with my perception of a change from 1981, a professor of education noted that "fria uppfostran" was a longstanding "experiment that did not work."

The change may reflect a rather pervasive return to more traditional values and practices in various areas of Swedish life, evidenced by: a rising marriage rate with brides in white; junior proms complete with formal attire; written invitations for parties in homes; more neckties and three piece suits; some increase in use of the formal word for you, "ni" rather than informal "du"; the growing membership in fundamentalist churches; and greater use of grades for student work in schools. Sweden also has its share of yuppies, and several persons characterized Sweden, 1988 as less idealistic and more materialistic. Politically, an increasing, if uncounited, number of Swedes support Sweden's abandoning its nonalignment posture in favor of greater participation in European economic alliances. A social worker noted that conservative influences over the past ten years have resulted in more emphasis on individual rather than the collective good.

In this environment the notable end of permissive childrearing has significant implications regarding parental use of physical punishment. One can no longer conjecture that the 1979 law may make little difference in childrearing practices because Swedish parents do not set limits or discipline their children in any event. As of 1988 Swedish parents do appear to be disciplining their children. The miracle is that there has been no serious suggestion of reinstituting physical punishment to achieve this.

DO SWEDISH PARENTS USE MILD PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT
AND WHAT CHARACTERIZES ITS USE OR DISUSE?

In Public

Swedish parents or caretakers do not use any physical punishment in public, meaning in stores, buses, parks or wherever parents have little privacy. This was my conclusion in 1981 just two years after the law was passed, and it clearly remains so today. The universal awareness or "internalization" of the law exerts social control over the behavior of even parents who are very visibly angered by their children's behavior.

In 1988 I observed one incident in which physical force was perhaps used to change a child's behavior. This incident is the closest approximation of physical punishment I have ever encountered in Sweden. I was riding in a Stockholm subway car across from an older woman, perhaps a grandmother, and a young boy of probably four or five years. Despite the woman's repeated admonitions the boy was very openly picking his nose with no indication that he was listening to the admonitions. Finally the woman very forcefully grabbed the offending arm and hand and held them firmly in her control for a few minutes. Afterward there was no more nose picking and both continued the ride quietly if obviously irritated with each other. Some might say this woman grabbed and held the child's arm more forcefully than necessary but I am not sure. There were no marks on the child's arm. The boy did grimace though it was not clear whether this resulted from physical pain or anger. I note this episode because by American standards it was hardly physical punishment yet by Swedish standards it may have been.

A typical example of a frustrated, angry parent's behavior in public occurred in a park in a Stockholm suburb. On a lovely, very warm sunny day several small groups of mothers were conversing while their children--about

20-25 in all--played in and around a playground and sandbox area. One little girl, probably three years or a bit less, wandered away. Periodically the mother interrupted her socializing with other parents to call to the child to return to the play area. Each time the child stopped and listened to the mother but then continued on her way to an adjacent park area. Finally the mother gave her full attention to the child, not only calling her to return but waving a pointed finger warning. Undeterred, the little tot continued toward and soon turned on a sprinkler. At this point the mother ran to the child, picked her up, dried her off and calmly placed her in a fenced-in section of the playground. The mother's ultimate action was fast and firm but neither punitive nor excessive. Despite obvious anger the mother clearly had no intention to use physical punishment. This was typical of my 1988 observations in public. If "fria uppfostran" were not outmoded, this mother would perhaps have let the child play under the sprinkler for a while.

In 1988 I rather repeatedly saw a kind of parent-child interaction in public as well as in private which I had not observed at all in 1981. Toddlers and young children frustrated for whatever reason often hit their parents, not so hard as to inflict pain but continuously enough to be clearly annoying. If the parent were standing, a child might pound on the parent's legs or lower back, and if sitting, on the parent's chest. Most parents ignored this for a while and then eventually paid attention to what the child wanted by picking up and talking with the child to resolve the child's frustration or anger. Since I had not observed this at all in 1981, I conclude that it may demonstrate the previously discussed demise of "fria uppfostran" in that 1988 children, unlike their 1981 counterparts, have parents imposing limits against which to rebel. As a psychotherapist so

eloquently said: "Swedish parents now softly and with dignity put limits on their children's aggression."

Parental behavior in public was summarized by a national authority who said that Swedish parents disapprove physical punishment and avoid using it in public for fear of reprimand from onlookers whereas U.S. parents often do use physical punishment for fear of onlooker reprimand if they refrain from using it.

In Private

To understand Swedish parents' use or disuse of physical punishment in the privacy of their homes we need to remember that because of family planning and abortion services almost all Swedish children are planned and wanted. In addition their families can provide or depend upon receiving economic support for their basic needs. These factors contribute to reducing any stress in Swedish families, and it is stress, not generational childrearing patterns nor religious convictions, which as of 1988 most influences the use of physical punishment in Swedish homes.

Every professional and parent with whom I spoke reported that most Swedish parents do not use any physical punishment even in the privacy of their homes. The universally reported single exception is the use of occasional physical punishment by parents who are experiencing unusual stress in their own lives. This was inevitably identified as the exhausted working single Swedish mother with several young children or else Sweden's immigrants, discussed subsequently under "Some Problems." When stressed Swedish parents do resort to a slap or smack, the intent is expressive to relieve the parent's anger rather than predetermined or instrumental to teach the child. These parents feel guilty afterward and often apologize to their children according

to my sources. "Feeling guilty" was mentioned much more frequently in my 1981 visit, and I conclude that this absence in 1988 demonstrates less physical punishment to prompt such comment. Several professionals specified that in 1981 some parents still had some uncertainty about just what the 1979 law meant whereas now it is very clear that it means parents should not use any physical punishment.

Parents themselves reported almost universally not using any physical punishment though a few admitted using mild physical force, perhaps giving a quick shake or pulling on a lock of hair, to get a child's attention. Only one divorced father, who acknowledged he was under considerable stress, admitted using occasional physical punishment. This father who hits "a very aggressive son once or twice a year" noted: "A good smack says more than hours of talk but it's the wrong way to show you are stronger."

The emphasis on parental stress as the precursor of parents use of physical punishment is exemplified in a story related by a twenty year old. Shortly after this young woman took a position as a live-in caretaker for three boys, 7, 11 and 13 years, their father was killed in an automobile accident. The mother took over the father's business, was rarely at home, and expected the 13 year old to assume a paternal role in the household. When he wanted to go out with his friends, the mother insisted he remain at home with his younger brothers. He objected and nightly arguments ultimately erupted into the mother inflicting frequent beatings. The young woman implored the mother to seek counseling and tried to help the youth understand that his mother's behavior resulted from the stress of her situation. This young woman, who has had considerable babysitting and child care experience, is adamant that no child over three years should ever be physically punished, but on the other hand she does not understand how the 1979 law can be applied to

younger children who may need a "light smack" to prevent their reaching for something dangerous.

While this young woman's experience and her concern about application of the law to toddlers is atypical of what others told me, I include it and the divorced father's "good smack" comment by way of being a thorough and objective reporter. The other parents and most of the professionals with whom I spoke in 1988 denied that Swedish parents use physical punishment unless they are severely stressed by other problems for which, it was also noted, help is increasingly available.

In 1988 I heard much more about the role of children in deterring all physical punishment. Parents are pleased that children learn about the law in school and communicate with parents about it. One parent's rationale is probably typical: "This teaches children not to be violent." One professional said "children are the prime upholders of the 1979 law." (A police inspector decried the absence of reports of infant child abuse, some of which he is sure occurs. In his medium size city there were three substantiated child abuse reports in 1987, all with stepfather perpetrators and all reported by the abused children.)

Swedish parents' respect for children as a basis for not using physical punishment and the quality of family life as a societal value was a pervasive theme among my 1988 respondents. Both professionals and parents spoke of setting rules but respecting children. A psychotherapist noted that today the Swedish child is viewed as a creative member of the family. This therapist, who conducts Couple Enrichment Groups, also pointed out that Swedes perceive the world as increasingly insecure and the family nucleus is thus increasingly important. Family is beginning to be a higher priority than work or career because "stable families best cope with a changeable world." It was noted

that better educated persons in particular are giving more time and priority to family life, partly because salaries for professionals are not significantly larger than for manual laborers. (A similar U.S. shift in values away from "me-ism" to "the nesting syndrome ... of hearth and home ... (and parents) spending more time with their kids" is reported in U.S. News and World Report, August 8, 1988, p. 46.)

It was my observation that an important aspect of Sweden's emphasis on family relates to new roles and expectations for Swedish men as individuals, husbands, and fathers. Macho is out, and sensitivity to and expression of feeling is in. For example, for individual and group counseling men in the Sunday Fathers Union, some of whom may be divorced or separated because of spouse abuse, enlist older women volunteers to help them work through feelings about their own mothers. When I visited the Union, I saw two such volunteers. I also encountered some of the fathers giving an interview to a newsletter reporter from the nearby Volvo car manufacturing plant. The purpose was to alert Volvo's 25,000 employees, of whom 2,000 are divorced annually, to the availability of the Union program which focuses not only on the fathers but on recreation activities for the fathers with their children. The Union is primarily financed by public funding from the Gothenburg Social Welfare Board.

Conflict resolution without violence is also discussed in other programs for men or couples and helping all Swedes, but particularly men, to express feelings was noted by various professionals. Men are also increasingly reporting participating in family chores, if not to the extent their partners might desire. In one home I observed a father, who holds a high level government position, sorting outgrown children's clothes for about an hour. He also does most of the cooking. At a well baby clinic three unaccompanied

fathers brought their infants for check-ups and several came with their wives or partners. (Incidentally, the waiting rooms in the several well baby clinics I visited were lined with built-in diaper changing tables, and the doctor I saw doing check-ups did not place the baby on a table in the examination room but rather had the parent sit across from him so he could examine the baby in the mother's or father's lap.)

At least two persons in separate interviews noted that their children's grandfathers frequently lament the fact that they were not involved in childrearing in contrast with their sons who seem to enjoy it. These grandfathers now feel they missed something important.

In public, particularly on weekends, one sees many men pushing baby buggies or toddler carts. It seemed to me that compared with the U.S. I saw many more men unaccompanied by women doing this. However, I recognize that I may be less observant of U.S. practices without the parameters of a study visit.

My observations of fathers were summarized by a professional who said that today men and women in Sweden are equal, both work outside the home and both work at housekeeping and parenting.

The significance of this discussion about Swedish men is three fold. First, the force which characterizes the macho man's predisposition to physical aggression is not a Swedish value. Second, male participation in parenting and household activities probably decreases family stress, the major precursor of physical punishment in Swedish homes. Third, couples who are able to express feelings and communicate effectively are probably more adept at conflict resolution both with each other and with children.

Conflict resolution with infants and toddlers in Swedish homes is largely avoided because these homes are very well child proofed according to

government standards enforced by public health nurses on home visits. If necessary the government provides the safety proofing materials, including plugs for electric outlets, child proof locks for windows, panels to encircle stove tops, thin wood beams to slip through drawer pulls so they will not open, locks for soap and medicine cabinets, etc. The intent is to provide a safe setting in which toddlers are allowed to explore and satisfy their curiosity.

With older children Swedish professionals and parents attempt to avoid stress and conflict in at least two notable ways which came to my attention. To counteract peer pressure to experiment with drugs and alcohol, particularly on weekend evenings in central city or town square areas, some social service departments employ outreach street workers for casefinding with an emphasis on prevention. They are aided by a program initiated by the national Home and School Association which trains parent volunteers, called Nightowls, who roam the streets from approximately 11 p.m. to 2 a.m. on weekends. The Nightowls' goal is to help teens and preteens talk about their problems and sometimes they escort children home.

For parents who do experience stress or for whatever reason fear resorting to physical punishment, help is readily available. Several professionals believe more help is available now than in 1981 and that this has had a direct effect on parent self confidence, enabling parents to abandon permissive childrearing without resorting to physical punishment. The nurses who visit homes and see children periodically in the neighborhood well baby clinics become well known to families and are always available for consultation. Some hospitals have also instituted hot lines during certain hours for calls from parents. One mother reported she surely would have abused her colicky baby were it not for the advice and support she got by using such a hot line. Day

care center staff may consult with parents daily when children are being delivered or picked up.

Some parents get assistance through a new and unique program I had not encountered in 1981, namely the "Öppna Förskolan" or open preschool for preschool children accompanied by a parent or babysitter, including municipally paid babysitters and their wards. These neighborhood centers are intended: 1) to break the isolation of mothers who are home either on parental leave or because they work part time; 2) to model positive parenting skills for both mothers and baby sitters; and 3) to stimulate both individual child development and cooperative play. Parents do not need to enroll; they just come when they choose. Parents both socialize over coffee and participate in activities with the children. Some of these centers are open all day while others are open only mornings. At one center I visited a mother, who arrived very early with her two year old son, announced it was good the center was open because her son was driving her "crazy" that morning. Staff at these centers, both an early childhood specialist and a social worker, appear to be not only capable but also unusually warm and accessible.

My conclusion that most Swedish parents do not use even mild physical punishment in the privacy of their homes for the variety of reasons previously discussed is consistent with a statistical survey of violence towards Swedish children conducted by Åke Edfeldt in 1980: "At the risk of over-generalizing from a cross-sectional survey, Swedish parents may be responding to the anti-spanking law and lowering their use of the less harmful forms of physical punishment" (Gelles & Edfeldt, p. 503). In my 1988 meeting with Professor Edfeldt he noted that the 1979 law has now created sufficient social pressure to make it easier for parents not to use physical punishment than to defend

using it. He also emphasized that prohibiting parental use of physical punishment is not a moral issue in Sweden but rather is simply intended to stop the transfer of this practice across generations.

I addressed the transfer across generations in my 1988 interviews with both parents and professionals. They were asked toward the end of each discussion whether their parents had used physical punishment on them. A few reported that as children they had never experienced physical punishment and a few recalled that it was used routinely. Most remembered well two or three occasions when they had been spanked or hit by a parent. Several suggested that their bitterness about these experiences is what prompts them to refrain from using any physical punishment now on their children. Interestingly, almost all these parents claimed that their parents, now Sweden's older generation, had experienced extensive physical punishment as children. At the risk of oversimplification the generational pattern may be summarized as follows:

| <u>SWEDISH GENERATION</u> | <u>PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT IN CHILDHOOD</u> |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Grandparents of 1988 Children | Much |
| Parents of 1988 Children | Some |
| 1988 Children | Little or None |

On the basis of my interviews Sweden appears to have demonstrated that given a variety of supportive conditions and public education the generational transmission of physical punishment in childhood can be broken. As of 1988 Swedish parents do not use any physical punishment in public and most refrain from using even mild physical punishment in private.

WHAT ALTERNATIVES TO MILD PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT HAVE BEEN ADOPTED?

Whereas many parents in 1981 claimed they had not found alternatives to physical punishment, a claim supported by professionals, this is not the situation in Sweden in 1988. Passage of the 1979 law, according to some, produced feelings of powerlessness for some parents in the early years of its implementation. A psychologist said that in the years immediately following 1979 many parents in treatment asked how to raise children without hitting them but now parents have "calmed down." Another professional said 1988 parents are less dependent on experts. The supports and assistance available to parents have enabled them by now to develop confidence in their ability to use means other than physical punishment to socialize, discipline and guide their children. Increasing approval of the 1979 law and disapproval of permissive childrearing may have promoted an active search for alternatives to physical punishment between 1981 and 1988 visits.

In the Home

The alternative Swedish experts encourage and Swedish parents in fact use can be summarized as communication. Parents universally told me they talk to their children to elicit a change in behavior. A professional said "Swedish parents now solve conflicts with words." This includes letting the child know why the behavior should change for the child's welfare and how the parent feels about the misbehavior. Many parents sounded like professionals in emphasizing it is important for the child to know the parent is angry. Some parents also speak of letting the child express his/her feelings, as in "We discuss our feelings."

Interestingly, one professional believes Sweden's pioneering efforts to universalize sex education contributed significantly to helping Swedes discover the benefits of communicating intimate feelings, now including feelings of anger. Another professional noted that contemporary life with family members each off in a different direction, in contrast with the family farm of earlier times, demands communication and discussion if the family unit is to be cohesive. No doubt "fria uppfostran" with its emphasis on helping children express themselves prevailed for so long because Swedes valued improving their ability to express themselves. Perhaps the success claimed by 1988 parents in using discussion to settle conflicts with their children attests to the effectiveness of "fria uppfostran," which these parents probably experienced as children. Sweden's concern that men as well as women should be able to express feeling, as described in a previous chapter, means that fathers may no less than mothers be able to employ the discussion alternative to physical punishment.

A professor pointed out that Social Democratic ideology does not permit humiliation and that parental use of discussion is the least humiliating alternative to the humiliation of physical punishment. A parent noted that Social Democracy gives everyone the possibility to participate in decision making and that Swedish parents must model this principle.

Many Swedish publications on parenting stress conflict resolution via discussion, including articles in the popular magazine vi Föräldrar, We Parents (Ljdbek). In addition Sweden's prize winning and highly revered children's author, Astrid Lindgren who created Pippi Longstocking, has published an adamant warning that children should be respected and raised without physical force (Naturia Förlag, pp. 6-7).

Many U.S. publications on parenting also highlight discussion techniques for resolving conflicts with children. However, I was particularly interested to find this most effectively summarized--with Suggested Readings--in the summer, 1988 newsletter of End Violence Against the Next Generation, an organization specifically devoted to ending corporal punishment in our nation's schools (Mauer).

When a parent's, "You heard what I said" is insufficient to change a child's behavior, Swedish parents have a very common response which was described to me repeatedly and which I observed frequently. The parent gets the child's attention and immobilizes the child by grabbing the child's upper arms. Then while insisting on eye contact the parent continues the discussion. It was suggested that this maneuver was not to force the child into a powerless position but rather to get the child's attention so the discussion and talking with eye contact "between equals" could ensue. Occasionally, though apparently rarely, a parent may if necessary to get the child's attention, give the child a little shake while holding the child's arms. One mother said she might very occasionally give a "slight" pinch to her child's ear before grabbing the child's arms so she could have a discussion with the child. Others noted that on occasion they might hold the arms forcefully enough to cause "slight" pain but they don't consider this punishment.

Some parents spoke of other alternatives such as sending a child to his/her room or depriving of privileges or simply controlling parental impatience by "counting to ten." However, I was astounded by the universal agreement that discussion is an effective alternative to physical punishment. Discussion apparently is effective in Sweden because Swedes respect equality--"We shouldn't use power on the powerless"--and children's rights and

because most parents apparently agree with the professional who told me it was important for children not to be afraid of parents.

Many parents and professionals admit that the discussion may escalate to yelling or that "yelling is a necessary start for discussion." However, many also noted they feel yelling while not particularly constructive is better than ignoring the issue or containing anger. It still deals with conflicts with words rather than physical violence and it is less humiliating. If nothing else, according to some, at least yelling communicates to the child that the parent is angry and lets the child know what the parent dislikes.

Family therapists and social workers who see families in crisis report that some of the parents they see may not be able to use discussion or yelling as an alternative to physical punishment. These stressed parents may on occasion use some physical punishment but on the whole more routinely try to bribe their children into behaving, ignore the misbehavior, give the child money to rent a video to be watched at someone else's home, or perhaps simply tell the child to leave the house. I was told these are clearly exceptions and linked to the family's problems.

The alternative to physical punishment with preverbal infants and toddlers too young to engage in discussion is, as noted in the preceding chapter, to child proof the home environment so the need for physical restraint and punishment is substantially eliminated. Furthermore, I got the impression that the general Swedish attitude toward infancy is indulgent. This is exemplified structurally in the one year paid parental leave--with proposals to extend this to at least eighteen months--and attitudinally in the comment of a well baby clinic director: "You cannot spoil a baby."

In Society

One alternative to expression of aggression and physical punishment in the home may be the rapidly increasing popularity of institutionalized power sports such as judo and karate. While I recall noticing some karate and judo schools in 1981, they were much more visible in 1988, and several professionals initiated discussion of these as being both fun and meeting a societal need to channel aggression and teach physical control. A pediatrician, who believes Swedes have too little physical contact in general and who sends his fourteen year old son to a wrestling school, periodically wrestles with his son to show that he, the father, is stronger. Others also emphasized the value in ritualizing physical activity. The karate and judo clubs to which many young boys belong have very strict rules about aggressive behavior outside the club and members are ousted for infractions. One professional believes the ritual in karate and judo are particularly important in Sweden because so many rituals, such as those associated with the king and the church, have been lost. This professional suggested that Sweden needs "transitional rites" and that karate and judo are such rites with respect to the 1979 law. A father, worried about the physical violence Swedish children see in videos, said karate only looks violent and in fact teaches self-control.

Whether in homes or in society, Sweden is clearly sensitive to finding alternatives to physical violence and parental use of physical punishment. On the basis of my 1988 interviews repeatedly emphasizing conflict resolution via discussion--and the prevention of conflict with very young children via home safety proofing--Swedish parents appear to have found an alternative which they feel is both effective in changing unwanted behavior and constructive in terms of child development. Obviously, the price they pay for this discussion alternative is their time. However, no one intimated let alone articulated

that parents begrudge the time discipline via discussion takes. This may well be a reflection of the previously discussed value Sweden currently attaches to family life. Taking time for children also reflects the respect and equality accorded to children in Swedish society. Furthermore, since children learn in school to talk to their parents about the 1979 law, children may facilitate parental use of discussion as an alternative to physical punishment.

THE CHILD ABUSE QUESTION AND SOME PROBLEMS

Child Abuse

Because data exclusive to child abuse and inclusive of both social service and police activity is not collected routinely in Sweden, no one knows exactly what effect the 1979 law has had on physical punishment severe enough to be reported as child abuse. Expert opinions vary. A few professionals estimate there has been a real decrease in physical child abuse since 1979 while others claim it has simply been overshadowed by other problems, particularly sexual abuse. Many professionals believe the law has had no effect on the incidence of physical child abuse. They generally believe that those who physically abuse children have psychosocial and family problems which the 1979 law obviously does not address.

None of the professionals indicated more concern about child abuse in 1988 than in 1981; none indicated that child abuse had increased in recent years. However, data from police records shows that for the year 1986 there was a 1% increase in child abuse cases over the prior year for the 0-6 year age group and 8% for the 7-14 year age group. The data is qualified though by a statement that the increase may simply represent cases not reported earlier (Statistika Centralbyrån, Barnfakta, p. 66). The qualification in the Swedish data is then followed by a restatement of the 1979 law with the inference that the increase may result from more reporting because of the 1979 law.

The total number of cases known to the police in 1986 was 1286 (ibid.). This is a child abuse incidence rate of 6.5 per 1000 population compared with a U.S. rate of 9.2 or 10.7, depending on methodology, per 1000 (National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, pp. vi-vii). Since the Swedish police data omits child abuse cases known to social services but not warranting police

intervention, the actual Swedish incidence rate is probably higher. The Gelles-Edfeldt cross cultural comparisons of violence towards children in the U.S. in 1976 and in Sweden in 1980 showed "no significant difference between the two countries in the rate of reported or abusive violence" (p. 501). The reader will recall from the previous chapter discussions of mild physical punishment that this study does conclude that Swedish parents may be decreasing their use of the less harmful forms of physical punishment (p. 508).

The 1986 Swedish police data is reported here because it is at least one window on the child abuse incidence question. The conclusion of a high ranking official on Sweden's National Police Board with whom I spoke in 1988 is that "regarding child abuse the 1979 law hasn't changed anything." It must be noted that Sweden made a major change in social service delivery with passage of the Social Services Act of 1982. This act requires that client participation in service delivery be totally voluntary with but few exceptions. As a result fewer children have been taken into custody, and it is quite possible that this act has affected both reporting and follow up of child abuse cases even though child abuse is one of the exceptions.

Our professional noted that the widespread and ever increasing prevalence of day care center casefinding and early interventions for physical child abuse. Staff, who may frequently see their charges naked while changing clothes, do not generally hesitate to report bruises, sores, etc., when parent explanations are implausible.

What does appear clear since my 1981 study visit is that while many parents continue to perceive violence or child abuse as one end of the physical punishment continuum, they no longer conform to the 1979 law primarily because they want to deter child abuse. Rather they conform because it is "natural" constructive childrearing.

The Immigrant/Refugee Problem

Sweden today is a multilingual society with a number of ethnic minorities whose life styles and childrearing practices may be significantly different from Swedish norms. With one-eighth of the population now immigrants or children with at least one immigrant parent, immigration policy has become very restrictive. The number of political refugees seeking asylum, however, is rapidly increasing, up to 14,600 in 1986 with the majority from Chile, Iran, Ethiopia, Poland and Lebanon (Swedish Institute, "Immigrants in Sweden").

Official government policy is to promote equality between Swedes and ethnic minorities but also to respect ethnic heritage and fund programs which maintain ethnic heritages.

Immigrant and refugee families tend to congregate in ethnic enclaves where mutual roots reinforce the ethnic norms and isolate families from Swedish values and practices. Despite provision of many governmental supports and services these families, according to every Swedish social worker I met in both 1981 and 1988, typically have more problems than the typical Swedish family. In many homes one of these problems is frequent use of physical punishment, rooted in ethnic beliefs about routine childrearing and prompted more than routinely by the stresses of immigrant life. Since immigrant children tend to learn Swedish and Swedish ways much faster than their parents, these children frequently assume family caretaker roles with the result that parents then use physical punishment to reassert their power and control.

Social workers tend to look at most immigrants' use of physical punishment as a symptom of family problems rather than as possible child abuse or an infraction of the 1979 law. The bind for social workers is maintaining respect for traditional ethnic practices--"We don't tell them how to raise

their children"--but at the same time discouraging use of physical punishment--"We do tell them about Sweden's 1979 law."

As previously noted, this study of physical punishment addressed native Swedish parents and children. The immigrant/refugee issue is noted because for Swedish professionals, particularly social workers, it is a significant problem.

The Video Problem

Ask any professional or parent in Sweden about family violence and the response will identify readily available imported video cassettes as the major culprit. Many Swedes think the positive effect of the 1979 law in discouraging the generational transmission of physical punishment and insensitivity to violence is more than counteracted by the violence children see in videos, particularly though not exclusively videos from the U.S. To date there is no effective censorship of these imports despite repeated government commissions charged to recommend a censorship plan. The Social Democrats favor censorship but they also fear the likelihood of a black market.

In the U.S. this would be the video and television problem, but Sweden's two television channels are government controlled and show little violence. A Swedish doctor described U.S. television as "a social misery." Parts of Sweden do now have cable TV beaming both violent programs and violent news from other countries, but to date this is not perceived as a major problem. One professional believes it will be a major problem when coverage is extended particularly because many of these foreign cable shows do not have Swedish text so it is not always easy to know who are the "good guys" and who are the "bad guys" or why.

I noted the video problem in my 1981 report, but it is clearly an even greater concern in 1988. Video rental stores advertising their wares via posters depicting violence are very common, even in smaller towns. Rental prices approximate those in the U.S. and Swedish children frequently pool their resources for a rental. A day care center teacher reported her charges are behaving increasingly violently because of the video they see at home. This teacher claims she can tell what videos even these young children have seen the preceding evening by the way they play at the center the next day.

School personnel believe videos promote mobbing, child-to-child violence in the form of one child's physical victimization by a gang. Mobbing is fairly common in all localities and appears to be the one area where Swedes believe they have not made major inroads in reducing violence towards children even though many parent study circles have addressed the problem with excellent materials (Naturia Förlag).

A major concern is that many parents are unaware of how much video their children are watching, and more importantly, how much violence video's portray. One Home and School Association developed a project in which typical videos were shown to parents who were shocked and then organized to collect petitions asking for government censorship. Their children were shown a film depicting a hospital emergency room handling victims of violent behavior, and posters showing resultant horrifying permanent disfigurement were posted throughout the school. The school nurse talked to both parents and children about how the body reacts to hitting, including references to the 1979 law and how physical punishment of younger children in particular can cause permanent damage.

In another town a group of incensed mothers threw paint on the windows of a video rental store promoting violent films. They were taken to court and

fined but had no problem quickly collecting sufficient funds for the fine from other equally incensed parents.

A father told me he condemned the violence in video because it does not teach any of the ritual which should delimit the use of physical force in behavior. He thinks boys' appetite for physical contact would not need to be satisfied via video with greater participation in the ritualized sports of judo and karate. As noted in the prior chapter, others concur with the importance of ritualized physical contact.

The video problem in Sweden includes concern about cartoons for very young children. I was told by two sources in separate discussions that Donald Duck is one of these. Since I had always thought of Donald Duck as relatively innocuous, I made a point of renting some Donald Duck cartoons upon my return from Sweden. From an adult perspective I saw poor Donald as the eternal victim and the films generally as fast paced action fantasy rather than realistically violent. For a child, of course, the fantasy may be reality. A U.S. colleague with young children agrees with the Swedes that Donald Duck cartoons are very violent.

I conclude these notes about video violence with a Swedish psychotherapist's questioning why it is permissible in videos to show violence or a death instinct when it is not permissible to show intercourse, the life instinct.

The Cult Religion "Problem"

During my 1988 study visit a conflict between the Swedish government and a small but growing fundamentalist religious group, Livets Ord (The Living Word), was very much in evidence. Livets Ord preaches literal interpretation of the Bible and permits or encourages parents to use physical punishment.

Livets Ord also operates a school in Uppsala where the teachers/principal use corporal punishment, which is what initially prompted government intervention. When a Livets Ord speaker answered the charges on national television, many Swedes were shocked that the media would permit espousal of physical punishment so contrary to their beliefs and law, and some claimed Livets Ord used the airways for proselytizing. As a result the issue now largely revolves around freedom of the press.

Livets Ord is but one small aberration compared to the total picture of Swedish childrearing practices. I was told this group is largely localized in Uppsala. It is noted here not only because it is a concern for some, not all, of the professionals I met but also because religion figures so prominently in the U.S. as a rationale for parental use of physical punishment. Biblical scholars in the U.S. have explained "spare the rod" as a shepherd's metaphor but their work may be too scholarly or inaccessible for public consumption. An excellent summary of the biblical issue appears in the June 8, 1988 Parent's Anonymous, Inc. Update newsletter (Fritz). An exhaustive discussion also appropriate for general audiences can be found in Maurer and Wallerstein.

Other fundamentalist religions, e.g. Jehovahs Witness, are also gaining members in Sweden. One professional thinks Swedes are increasingly turning to religion because they perceive the world as increasingly complex and conditions of life increasingly difficult with a growing gap between upper and lower income groups. It will be recalled that another professional linked such conditions to the emphasis on family life.

Several social workers, none of whom condone Livets Ord, do welcome the growth of other churches because many churches develop children's recreation programs serving an entire community not just members, and some provide family counseling programs.

At present Livets Ord is only a "problem," not a problem in Sweden. Time will tell, and the situation warrants watching.

WHAT SWEDISH PROFESSIONALS AND PARENTS THINK
THE U.S. SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THIS ISSUE

In 1988 I routinely concluded interviews with professionals by asking what message, if any, they would wish to send to the U.S. about the Swedish experience in banning parents' use of physical punishment. I was rather surprised by the absence of any hesitation in most of the responses. Some of these persons have visited the U.S., a few, several times. Depending on the interview context I asked the same question of some parents.

Accentuate the Negative

Only one professional, a professor, qualified his remarks by noting that it is unfair to compare countries so radically different in size and geography. "Sweden enjoys a sheltered part of the world whereas the U.S. is exposed." He nevertheless then went on at some length to recommend that the U.S. should become more aware and knowledgeable about the negative results of physical punishment. He also thinks U.S. parents' ability to stop using physical punishment depends on their developing more self-confidence as parents, which in turn depends on their getting more support for their parent role. His notion of at least one such support is day care as a supplement to parenting responsibilities.

Another respondent also recommended that the U.S. should provide more day care for two reasons: 1) it facilitates early interventions in dysfunctional parent-child relationships which engender physical punishment and 2) it supports parents by showing them that others care about their problems. When parents share responsibility with day care centers, a parent failure is not solely the parent's fault and parenting stress is reduced.

A somewhat related response to the professor's view of giving visibility to the negative results of physical punishment was expressed by an official with the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. He believes the U.S. needs to discover that not using physical punishment on children is cost effective prevention of subsequent problems and that we need U.S. research which clearly demonstrates this.

Another respondent emphasizing the importance of communicating the negative results believes the U.S. would benefit by more parenting education in the nation's schools. This politician thinks the main reason the current generation of young Swedish parents has been able to avoid using physical punishment is that they learned about the negative aspects--and the 1979 law--in parenting and family life classes in school. He emphasized that in recent years this has been carefully structured into learning plans by the National School Administration.

Reduce Competition

The most common message to the U.S. focused on changing societal macro structures in the U.S. to produce more equality and less competition for families. My respondents regularly noted the "unequal access to resources" in the U.S. and the resultant stress of poverty which may predispose physical punishment. Several specifically articulated that stopping physical punishment in the U.S. means winning the war on poverty, particularly for single mothers. A pediatrician said the U.S. needs to know it cannot significantly reduce parental use of physical punishment until it gives all parents "a decent life."

Most of these respondents also suggested that the inequality born of capitalism in the U.S. also promotes competitive individual rather than

collective or equality values. As a result they believe U.S. parents make too many demands of their children so as to assure both their children's and their own success in the eyes of the community.

One parent described a neighbor, a U.S. mother whose husband is studying in Sweden. This mother is "afraid" to return to the U.S. because of the competitiveness in childrearing and the fact that unlike the U.S. "Sweden is a children's country." A professional recommended that the U.S. reduce parent competitiveness so parents would not use covert actions like physical punishment at home "to cover up problems and look good."

In Sweden children whose after school hours may be filled with self-development activities such as piano, dancing lessons, etc. are described as "diary children" because their mothers can only keep track of them by writing down their appointments. Some professionals lamented that Sweden increasingly has some diary children but that the U.S. has many more. They inferred that if U.S. parents set fewer goals for their children, there would be less use of physical punishment for failure to achieve. One professional believes U.S. parents would exert less pressure and punishment on their children if college education in the U.S. were either free as in Sweden or much less expensive so U.S. parents would not feel their financial sacrifices for education must be rewarded with a child's success.

Think "Peace"

A child advocate volunteer wants the U.S. to know that children can be effectively socialized and disciplined via peaceful discussion. Physical punishment not only has negative results but is unnecessary. This respondent believes Sweden is now demonstrating that parents who take time to resolve conflicts through discussion do get desired results. Noting the fast pace of

urban life in both the U.S. and Sweden makes taking time for discussion difficult, this person thinks U.S. parents just need to be convinced that it is effective.

Also emphasizing the U.S. parents should know that discussion "works," a teacher noted that an important component of discussion is not only telling a child what the parents wants but also why the parents wants it.

Finally, one professional provided a response which I suspect others too might have suggested had they chosen to be less realistic. This professional fantasized that if she were in power in the U.S., she would disband the military and take away all nuclear weapons because a culture which tolerates destruction and violence is a culture which allows physical punishment of children.

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CONCLUSIONS APPLICABLE TO THE U.S.

The 1988 study visit confirmed for me that Sweden has been successful in substantially reducing parental use of physical punishment and that this appears to be having positive consequences for Swedish children, Swedish parents and ultimately for Swedish society. In any event there is no evidence of negative consequences. How Sweden's experience might be applied cross culturally to the U.S. is more problematic.

Some Caveats

Realistically, we must begin by acknowledging that the U.S. does not view violence in general with the disdain which permeates Swedish political and personal values. We must acknowledge that in the U.S. the widespread generational transmission of physical punishment in childrearing--"I got spanked and it didn't hurt me"--reflects a survival of the fittest and strongest ethos both politically and in popular culture.

The American national mood--one which underlies various cultural expressions of pugnacity and a lust for violence--is exemplified in the 1984 Olympic nationalistic fervor and celebration of physical superiority; the "heroism" of Bernhard Goetz, the subway vigilante who brutally shot his teenage assailants in cold blood in New York City in late 1984; in the cyclical popularity of G.I. Joe dolls, paraphernalia and breakfast cereal; the popularity of young women's fashion of shaved and short hair, neutered dress, and shoulder-padded jackets, emphasizing a more muscular, "aggressive" and "masculine" body image; the on-again, off-again popularity of army surplus, khaki fatigues, and camouflage dress among youth and adolescents.

(Scheper-Hughes and Stein, p. 344)

The U.S. economic system, moreover, is not conducive to macro social change to erase poverty and promote a childrearing milieu with more equality and less competition as in Sweden and as recommended by many of my interviewees. David Gil's generally unheeded efforts to "unravel" child abuse

in the U.S. along these lines for at least fifteen years both in professional literature and testimony for Congress symbolizes the enormity of this challenge.

Furthermore, in the U.S. family privacy is sacred. Invading family privacy to deter parental use of physical punishment was articulated and encouraged by the Feshbach's in the 70's and it continues to be discussed in professional literature today: "Much of society's indifference toward violence that does not result in a serious injury (e.g. slapping a child) is due to a societal understanding that we should defer to caretakers' judgment on how they manage their children" (Moelis, p. 2). U.S. parents are free to be "on their own" or if they choose, to adopt religious teachings which espouse physical punishment in shaping their childrearing practices.

This highly encapsulated description of the context for childrearing in the U.S. is intended to promote recognition of the complexity of this issue with respect to the U.S. While Sweden's neighbors, Finland, Norway and Denmark, have followed Sweden's lead and passed laws banning all physical punishment of children, some other countries have encountered resistance not amenable to reasoned argument. Failed efforts in New Zealand are well described by the Ritchies, whose analogy to "neurosis" I have used to describe "The Physical Punishment Neurosis" in the U.S. (Haeuser, 1988). I also believe that with a panoply of carefully devised strategies, which Sweden's experience may suggest, the neurosis can in time be cured.

What Purpose and Target Group?

We begin by clarifying why we want to discourage parental use of physical punishment and which parents should be targeted. Is our concern to reduce physical abuse, severe physical punishment and mild punishment which might

escalate to abuse, thus effecting an important but relatively small target group? Is our concern to reduce parental use of all physical punishment by all parents because even mild physical punishment teaches children that physical force is a sanctioned control over others' behavior and probably promotes an insensitivity to violence? The recommendations of the Surgeon General's Workshop on Violence reported under "Background and Study Visit Objectives" suggest the latter. A resource paper for the Massachusetts Committee for Children and Youth, Inc. also proposes the latter. Citing Garbarino's suggestion that "cultural acceptance of violence is a necessary condition for child maltreatment," this publication goes on to cite research substantiating that physical punishment of children "is both ineffective and dangerous to children's healthy development" (Meyers and Bernier, p. 77). Finkelhor, Hotaling and Yllo report, however, that "... an extensive literature has failed with any consistency to find that spanking has negative effects of children" (p. 49). Nonetheless in the same publication about family violence research they cite spanking as a "prime example (of) disagreements and uncertainties concerning how to delimit the key objects of study in this field ... Almost no professional would label moderate spanking as child abuse. Yet spanking is certainly a form of 'family violence'" (p. 28, underlining added).

The inconsistency in the literature and the reluctance to explicitly specify parents in general as a target group may stem from the fact that for almost all of us, researchers and their human subjects included, childhood spanking experiences of pain, submission, humiliation, shame and perhaps rage are both repressed and revisited in adulthood. Greven claims:

"Sado-masochism may be one of the most significant and least studied consequences of corporal punishment" (p.3). Similarly, in discussing the

generational transmission of physical punishment psychoanalyst Alice Miller reports:

I have discovered that we are less a prey to this form of the repetition compulsion if we are willing to acknowledge what happened to us, if we do not claim that we were mistreated "for our own good," and if we have not had to ward off completely our painful reactions to the past. The more we idealize the past, however, and refuse to acknowledge our childhood sufferings, the more we pass them on unconsciously to the next generation. (p.xi)

In a discussion of child sexual abuse Summit draws a conclusion which may be equally applicable to parental use of physical punishment: "We have overlooked or outrageously trivialized this subject, not because it is peripheral to major social interests, but because it is so central that we have not yet dared to conceptualize its scope" (p. 3, manuscript).

Is banning all physical punishment Swedes dared to address the limited problem of physical child abuse and for the society as a whole it simultaneously dared to address one of the prime requirements of good child care in general. (See "Intended Purpose of Law" p. 25). I believe there are numerous reasons, including Sweden's overall satisfaction with their law, for the U.S. to dare to conceptualize the physical punishment of children with equal scope.

There are four fundamental purposes for educating all parents to desist from using all physical punishment:

- 1) It would likely prevent at least some physical child abuse because parents for whom mild punishment may escalate to abuse would be more likely to "think twice" before initiating physical punishment, as noted by Swedish parents in 1981.

2) For some, perhaps most, parents it would interrupt the generational transmission of physical punishment, which according to Hyman "appears to offer the single best explanation of the continued use of hitting to change children's behavior" (p. 227). The reduction in use of physical punishment across three generations was noted in Sweden.

3) It would universally promote disciplinary alternatives which do not have the negative effects attributed to physical punishment by some authorities and which are more effective according to most authorities. Sweden has now demonstrated that giving up parental use of physical punishment does not mean abandoning discipline and guidance.

4) It would deter acceptance of force and violence as a cultural norm. "In the United States where force and the threat of force constitute the main body of foreign policy and are the main components of all other forms of social control, to assume nonviolence is a cultural norm is to show oneself to be imaginatively gifted but intellectually 'short'" (Ray-Kiel, p. 225). While the 1979 Swedish law was not specifically articulated for this purpose, the comments of many respondents quoted throughout this report indicate that they relate their law to violence in society and support the law in part because of its potential to reduce societal violence.

A massive anti-physical punishment campaign targeted to all parents would have the advantage of promoting social control. As Sweden has demonstrated it can become easier for parents to avoid use of physical punishment than to defend its use.

With respect to physical child abuse and the uncertainty of whether the Swedish law has reduced this problem Sweden's experience suggests that for the U.S. a campaign to reduce physical punishment of children should perhaps not have the reduction of physical child abuse as its most visible purpose. From

Sweden's experience it appears that the extreme stresses which prompt severe physical punishment would be generally unaffected by any kind of societal norm discouraging physical punishment. On the other hand physical child abuse should not be totally ignored in a campaign against physical punishment. It is likely that such a campaign would deter at least some parents for whom mild physical punishment escalates to abuse. This may in fact be the case in Sweden even though we do not have the data to prove it. In addition we should include if not emphasize abuse because the public is already well aware of this problem and increasingly ready to buy into prevention. In fact, a study by De Ley found that in a nonrandom U.S. university student sample (n = 365) where 75 percent of the males and 68 percent of the females initially disagreed with legislation prohibiting physical punishment of children, a majority would favor such a law if it could be shown to reduce child abuse.

While the primary intent of the Swedish law is to prevent severe physical punishment, the public education materials have emphasized the negative aspects of all physical punishment (See "Implementation," p. 26). A U.S. campaign to deter parental use of physical punishment will need to do likewise since few, if any, parents consider themselves abusive. Furthermore since family violence and violence in general is increasingly recognized as a problem in the U.S., we may, unlike Sweden, want to explicitly focus an anti physical punishment campaign primarily on violence reduction and secondarily on child abuse. The issue is not just child abuse; the issue is violence and stopping parents from teaching children that force is an acceptable means for resolving conflicts!

How

If our purpose is to discourage all physical punishment and our target group all parents--with the understanding that very severely stressed parents may not hear our message--what can Sweden tell us about how to proceed?

Sweden's experience and my respondents' messages to the U.S. indicate that we need to make the negative results of physical punishment very visible. This includes but is not limited to child abuse. I would remind the reader that a Swedish official also urges visibility for the cost effectiveness of banning physical punishment. While much of our professional literature on child abuse discusses the expensive sequelae of severe physical punishment, we need more professional attention to the long term negative outcomes of mild physical punishment and subsequent outcomes of family violence and societal violence. Recently, both the National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse (Daro) and Finkelhor, Hotaling and Yllo have specified the need for physical punishment research. Visibility of our overburdened penal systems may be prompting increased receptivity to bold action for violence prevention.

One author, Quinn, details the negative results of both severe and mild physical punishment very comprehensively from the perspective of a victim. While Quinn's book is not scholarly and most appropriate for a general audience, it does suggest the negative results of physical punishment and the costs to society. A parenting program which emphasizes nurturing and clearly articulates the negative results of physical punishment has been developed by Bavolek. An evaluation of the Bavolek program at one Wisconsin site found that the area where parents showed greatest post-test improvement was "an increased belief in alternatives to corporal punishment" (Latton, p. 2).

A scholarly survey of 31 contemporary U.S. childrearing manuals reveals that "29% encourage the use of physical punishment, 35% discourage it and 35%

do not address the topic" (Carson, p. 7). The survey sample was obtained from a 1987 list of best selling paperbacks and hard cover books as well as from a 1985 list in McCall's magazine under the heading "Pediatricians Pick the Top Ten Child-Care Books." For the McCall's list by itself "11% encouraged, 44% discouraged, and 44% did not evaluate" (ibid.). American parents are obviously not getting a clear message about the effects of physical punishment.

Because Swedish parents do understand the message that their government and child development experts believe physical punishment has negative results, parental use of physical punishment in Sweden is almost always expressive of parental anger or frustration and unintentional. Swedish parents who may resort to some physical punishment know they are reacting to their own feelings rather than teaching their children anything. Thus besides deciding that physical punishment does in fact have negative effects on child development and communicating same, we should also focus our U.S. efforts on helping parents relieve anger, frustration and feelings of powerlessness constructively. Two recent studies supporting this approach emphasize promoting parental empathy.

Whiteman, Fanshel and Grundy compared three kinds of parent coping skills for parents at risk of abuse: cognitive restructuring to give a less negative meaning to the provoking situations; relaxation techniques to attenuate pressure; and step by step problem solving techniques. The intent across the three methods was to help the parents acquire a sense of control over anger by sensitizing them to cues to "stop and think." (This is reminiscent of the 1981 Swedish parents' comments that they "think twice.") The findings showed that both cognitive restructuring and problem solving were effective in reducing anger and increasing parental empathy with a less critical view of children's behavior ... Letourneau has also reported a study which supports "the theory that empathy mediates aggression and is positively related to nurturing styles of parenting" (p. 388) ... Empathy may be defined as "the ability to perceive, understand and experience the emotional state of another person" (Barker, p. 48). We may conclude that a parent who empathizes with a child perceives the parent-child relationship as co-equals rather than a powerful parent and a powerless child.

(Haeuser, 1988, p. 15) .

Swedish parents demonstrate equality and empathy values in their seemingly universal use of discussion as an alternative to physical punishment. A U.S. campaign to halt physical punishment might similarly highlight cognitive restructuring and conflict resolution techniques rather than possibly diluting or confusing the message with the myriad child management alternatives which focus exclusively on the child, as for example sending a child to his/her room or depriving of television, etc. Too often, I believe, the term "alternatives to physical punishment" connotes a focus on such options for managing the child. What we need to communicate is that it also means options for parent behavior and action. While the proverbial admonition to parents to "count to ten" may be somewhat helpful, they need more effective techniques.

The Swedish practice of immobilizing a child by holding the child's arms and maintaining eye contact during discussion might well be recommended as a way of reassuring the parent that he or she is not truly powerless. The study of U.S. childrearing manuals found that maintaining power, control or respect was the most popular reason for recommending physical punishment. According to the manuals:

... it is appropriate to spank a child who engages in willful disobedience. This is when the child directly confronts the parent's authority.... A few authors describe it as a way of communicating that the parent is serious or angry. Most agree that it is a technique for distinguishing power differences between parent and child. It helps the parent maintain control and respect (Carson, p. 8).

A campaign to reduce parental use of all physical punishment must clarify that parents should use firm physical control to remove a child who is in a dangerous situation. The campaign must emphasize the difference between authoritative control and the infliction of pain. "Many easily-learned restraint procedures are effective with both aggressive children and those who are in dangerous situations" (Hyman, p. 229).

For toddlers the lesson to be learned from Sweden is childproofing the home. A campaign in the U.S. will probably need to include childproofing as a major component. Strategies would include both childproofing tips for parents and public policy initiatives in human services, particularly public health. Perhaps the popular literature for persons considering having children should ask whether they are willing to sacrifice a "house beautiful" home environment for three or four years!

Other Cross Cultural Strategies?

Like Sweden a U.S. campaign will likely be more effective if it can focus on children as well as parents although there may be more resistance to this in the U.S. than in Sweden. Children who know that physical punishment is not sanctioned can remind parents, when necessary, not to use it and they mature into a generation of parents who avoid it. How to target U.S. children whether in schools or otherwise without incurring parent and public wrath needs more thought. Clearly, we will need to convince parents first.

Other strategies suggested by Sweden which require more thought for U.S. application include:

1. Using the Women's Movement as a primary context for discouraging physical punishment. U.S. historian Linda Gordon points out: "For most of the 110 years of this history, it was the women's-rights movement that was most influential in confronting, publicizing, and demanding action against family violence. Concern with family violence usually grew when feminism was strong and ebbed when feminism was weak" (p. 4). As noted earlier, feminism in Sweden is very strong.

2. Deemphasizing the macho male and helping men to express feeling without fear of a wimp label.

3. Using the burgeoning U.S. day care movement for parent support as well as child care, possibly providing a social worker for at least a network of centers if not for each center.

4. Determining how to most effectively link with organizations trying to curb violence in the media and in the entertainment industry.

5. Determining whether physical contact activities such as judo and karate should be actively encouraged as constructive channels for physical force and aggression.

6. Determining to what extent a U.S. campaign should be linked to peace movements. A current Cleveland, Ohio project, Parenting for Peaceful Families, teaches parents and children nonviolent conflict management and problem solving during library story hours as part of the Ohio Peacemaking Education Network (Fritz and Adler). Is this a model or hint for further action?

Since Sweden's cult religions espousing physical punishment are relatively new and only minimal in impact, Sweden cannot help us cope with this issue in a U.S. campaign to eliminate parental use of physical punishment. My bet is that parents in these faiths whether in Sweden or the U.S. will use physical punishment regardless of any biblical explanation or reasoned argument. Hence, my recommendation for a U.S. campaign is to raise the issue with explanations of the biblical proscription to spare the rod only minimally to influence the general public rather than members of these faiths. Ignoring the latter is unfortunate but if we influence all other parents, our campaign could hardly be accused of lacking impact. Too often, I believe, we use the intractability of the religious issue to do nothing.

The Journey Begins With A Single Step

It seems appropriate to conclude with a quote from an Introduction to the Report of the National Advisory Commission On Civil Disorders, the response to societal violence in the U.S. in the 1960's: "But a journey of a thousand miles, President Kennedy used to say, must begin with a single step" (Wicker, p. ix).

Sweden's success with the ban on parental use of physical punishment may both encourage and enlighten a U.S. journey toward a public education campaign to discourage parental use of physical punishment. The benefits for U.S. children, families and society warrant a commitment to the single step from which others will follow.

Comments and suggestions from readers are invited.

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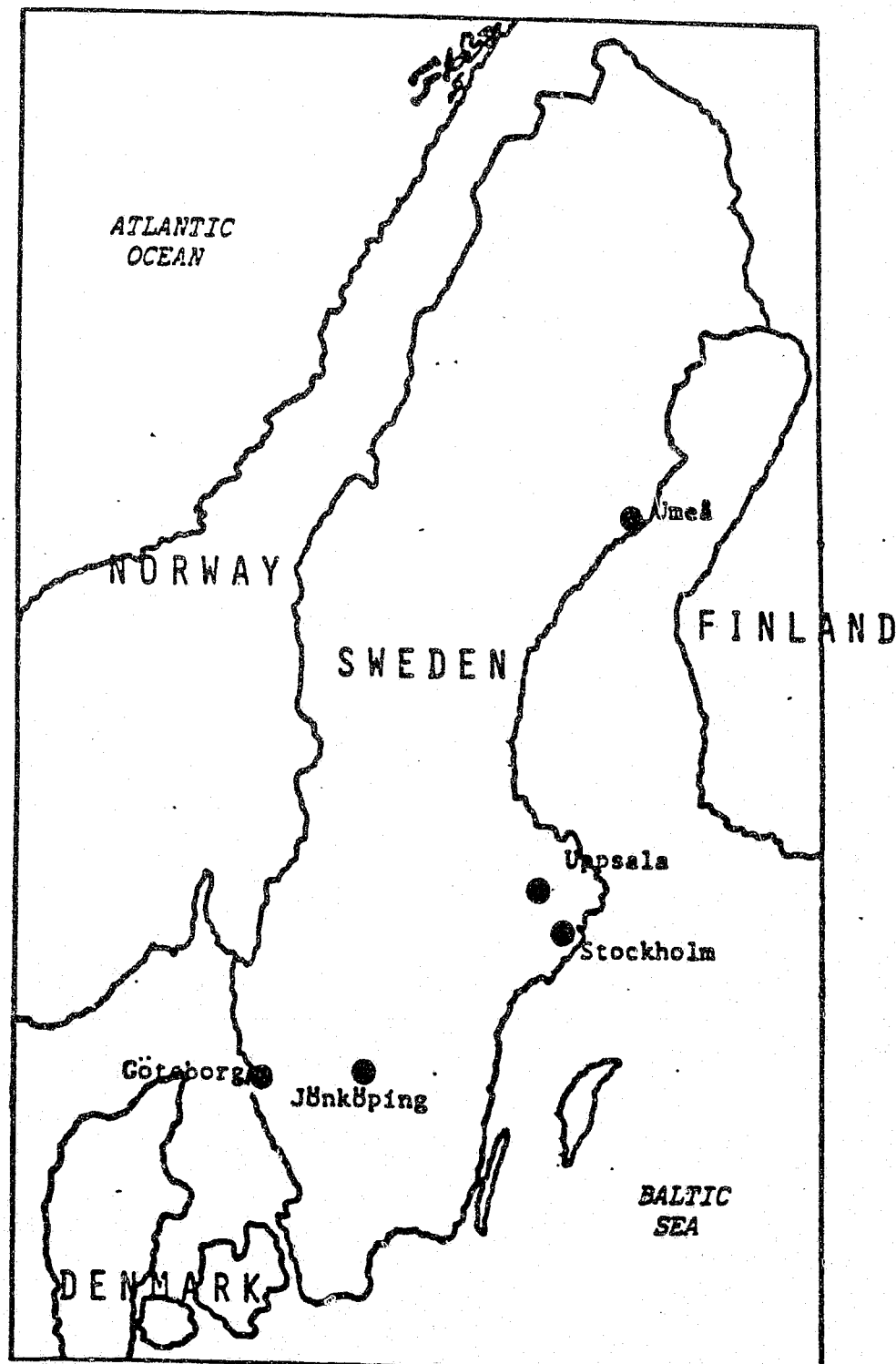
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DATES AND LOCATION OF INTERVIEWS:

| | | <u>Population, 1985</u> |
|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| May 15-23 | Stockholm | 659,030 |
| May 24-28 | Umeå | 85,108 |
| May 29-June 4 | Göteborg (Gothenburg) | 425,495 |
| June 5-8 | Jönköping | 107,362 |
| June 9-15 | Stockholm/ Uppsala | 154,859 |

(Statistika Centralbyrån, årsbok, p.26)

SOURCE I - NATIONAL AUTHORITIES INTERVIEWED

May 17 Lisa Hellström, Children's Ombudsman
SAVE THE CHILDREN FEDERATION
 Stockholm

May 17 Sören Kindlund, Deputy Assistant Under-Secretary
 Sten Svensson, Deputy Assistant Under-Secretary
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
 Stockholm

May 18 Bengt Andersson, Director
 Berit Almqvist, Consultant
NATIONAL HOME AND SCHOOL UNION
 Stockholm

May 18 Iba Svahn, Senior Administrative Officer
NATIONAL BOARD FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE
 Stockholm

May 19 Margaretha Nykvist, Director
SWEDISH SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN'S
RIGHTS IN THE COMMUNITY
 Stockholm

May 20 Ulf Karlsson, Department Head
 Eva Brännmark, Staff Member
NATIONAL POLICE BOARD
 Stockholm

May 20 Christina Josefsson, Assistant Editor, SOCIO NOMEN
 Elis Envall, International Secretary
THE SWEDISH UNION OF SOCIAL WORKERS, PERSONNEL AND
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS
 Stockholm

May 23 Hellis Sylwan, Child Psychologist
 Stockholm

May 25 Bengt Börjesson, Professor
UMEÅ UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL WORK
 Umeå

May 26 Ingeborg Moqvist-Lindberg, Parent Education Specialist
 Boel Henschel, Child Safety Specialist
UMEÅ UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
 Umeå

June 14 Åke Edfeldt, Professor
UNIVERSITY OF STOCKHOLM, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
 Stockholm

SOURCE II - LOCAL AUTHORITIES INTERVIEWED

May 19 Karin Antonopolus
STOCKHOLM SOCIAL WELFARE BOARD, DISTRICT 18
 Spånga (Stockholm suburb with many immigrants/refugees)

May 19 Cristina Moberg, District Attorney
 Stockholm (telephone interview)

May 20 Birgitta Cronier, District Attorney
PROSECUTION AUTHORITY
 Stockholm

May 24 Birgitta Stenudd, Child Care Consultant
SOCIAL WELFARE BOARD
 Umeå

May 24 Agneta Westman, Director
OPEN PRESCHOOL AND FREE TIME HOME GRÖNSTENEN
 Umeå

May 24 Lilian Johansson, Director
STENGÅNGEN DAY CARE CENTER
 Umeå

May 25 Harry Strandberg, Social Democrat Politician Member
SOCIAL WELFARE BOARD
 Umeå

May 25 Henny Andersson, Volunteer
UMEÅ SAVE THE CHILDREN FEDERATION
 Umeå

May 26 Karl-Gerard Olofsson, Superintendent
 Helena Ranneby, Social Worker
 Fredrik Westman, Science Teacher
 Sune Jonsson, English Teacher
SÄVAR SCHOOL
 Umeå

May 27 Gösta Hellberg, Detective Chief Inspector
POLICE DEPARTMENT
 Umeå

May 27 Anders Sjöström, Social Worker
 Siv Britt Larsson, Social Worker
SOCIAL WELFARE BOARD
 Umeå

May 30 Suzanne Nylin, Nurse
WELL CHILD CLINIC
 Gothenburg

SOURCE II - LOCAL AUTHORITIES INTERVIEWED (cont'd)

May 30 Monika Havel, Social Worker
OPEN PRESCHOOL FLEKIS
 Gothenburg

May 31 Bertil Sanden, Psychotherapist
 Lennart Andersson, Psychotherapist
FAMILY ADVICE BUREAU
 Gothenburg

May 31 Gunnar Norvenius, MD, Ph.D., Director
GOTHENBURG CHILD HEALTH CARE
 Gothenburg

June 1 Agneta Braun-Hagström, Social Worker
 Barbro Berndtsson-Boss, Social Worker
SOCIAL WELFARE BOARD SERVICES FOR FUTURE PARENTS
 Gothenburg

June 2 Eva Örtegren, Social Worker
 Ingrid Wiberg, Preschool Teacher
OPEN PRESCHOOL KNUTEN
 Gothenburg

June 2 Ritva Holmström, Social Worker/Director
HOME FOR (BATTERED) WOMEN
 Gothenburg

June 6 Stig Jonsson, Director of Education
 Sven-Olof Petersson, Deputy Director of Education
 Aina Bosnyr, Nurse
JÖNKÖPING EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION
 Huskvarna-Jönköping Kommun

June 6 Inge Rahm, Headmaster
 Hans Junedahl, Director of Studies
 Kerstin Ljungberg, Special Education Teacher
 Gun Svensson, Fifth/Sixth Grade Teacher
STENSHOLMS SCHOOL
 Huskvarna-Jönköping Kommun

June 7 Torgil Danielsson, Headmaster
 Kajsa Gafvert, School Counselor
 Jan Stenvall, Special Education Teacher
 Berit Widlen, Junior High School Teacher
 Britta Skogsmo, Junior High School Teacher
 Ulla Strandler, Fifth Grade Teacher
 Gunilla Malm, Parent President, Home and School Association
SODERGÅRD SCHOOL
 Huskvarna-Jönköping Kommun

SOURCE II - LOCAL AUTHORITIES INTERVIEWED (cont'd)

June 7 Steffan Gustavsson, Director
 Jan Igefjord, District Director
 Eva Mörlid, Social Worker
 SOCIAL WELFARE BOARD
 Jönköping

June 8 Jan Igefjord, District Director
 Iris Råsbrant, District Director
 Birgitta Sjögren, District Director
 Birgitta Ander, Social Worker for Crisis Intervention
 SOCIAL WELFARE BOARD
 Jönköping

June 8 Nina Strachal, Reporter
 SMÅLANDS FOLKBLAD (Regional Newspaper)
 Jönköping

June 13 Goran Kjellberg, Pediatrician
 UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL
 Uppsala

SOURCE III - PARENTS, CARETAKERS AND CHILDREN*

- May 16 KUNGSTRÄGÅRDEN, Toddler/Child Playground, Stockholm
Two hour observation and brief interviews with two couples and one mother.
- May 23 PRIVATE HOME, Stockholm
Brief discussion with physician mother of three teens.
- May 26 SÄVAR SCHOOL, Seventh Grade Class, Umeå
Discussion for an entire class period with 25 students.
- May 27 & 28 UMEÅ TOWN SQUARE, Toddler Playground
Two hour observation.
- May 31 WELL BABY CLINIC, Gothenburg
Observation and discussion with pediatrician Gunnar Norvenius while he examined 15 babies and talked with their mothers or fathers.
- June 1 SUNDAY PARENTS UNION, Gothenburg
Interviews with four divorced fathers.
- June 2 OPEN PRESCHOOL KNUTEN, Gothenburg
Discussion with four mothers of toddlers, observation of parent child interaction, and participation in parent/child/staff activities for entire morning.
- June 7 SÖDERGÅRDS SCHOOL, Huskvarna-Jönköping Kommun
Discussion with Gunilla Malm, President, local Home and School Association.
- June 9 NEIGHBORHOOD TODDLER PLAYGROUND, Lidingö (Stockholm suburb)
Ninety minute observation of eight mothers and fifteen children probably 18 months - 5 years.
- June 12 PRIVATE HOME, Stockholm
Discussion with a twenty year old babysitter who had previously been a live-in child care helper in this home and at another time in another home.
- June 13 KUNGSTRÄDGÅRDEN, Toddler/Child Playground, Stockholm
One hour observation of many parents and toddlers as well as children probably 5-6 years. Discussion with one mother of toddler.

*Visits to day care centers, schools and clinics where the primary discussion was with staff rather than the parents or children are listed under Source II. Only Swedish parents/caretakers were interviewed at public sites and most of these discussions were conducted partly in English and partly in Swedish.

SOURCE III - PARENTS AND/OR CHILDREN (cont'd)

- June 15 KUNGSTRÄDGÅRDEN, Toddler/Child Playground, Stockholm
Ninety minute observation of many parents, caretakers and toddlers as well as older children. Discussion with caretaker of four girls 7-11 years.
- June 15 STORTORGET, Gamla Stan, Stockholm
One hour observation of parents and children in Old Town Marketplace. Many toddlers were chasing pigeons while parents chased toddlers.
- June 15 PRIVATE HOME, Stockholm
Discussion with mother of six year old girl and observation of parent child interaction in private home.

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An English language class exercise about physical punishment
as used for language instruction in some Swedish schools.

Spank them—don't spoil them!



*Attitudes towards the physical punishment of children vary
between individuals, generations and countries.
You can hear how opinions differ in the following argument.*

spank
spoil
attitude
physical punishment

ge stryk, klå
skämma bort
attityd, inställning
(kropp)saga

individual
opinion
differ
argument

individ
åsikt
skilja sig åt, vara olika
diskussion; ståndpunkt

SPANK THEM -- DON'T SPOIL THEM
(Transcription of an audiotape used in English language
classes at, among others, Sävar School, Umeå.)

Attitudes towards the physical punishment of children vary between individuals, generations, and countries. You can hear how opinions differ in the following argument.

T: Tracy
P: Pheona
E: Englishman

T: By the way, did you read that article in the paper yesterday?

E: Which one was that?

T: You know, the one that describes how many American parents believe in beating your children.

E: Oh yes.

T: It's become popular among some Christian groups in America to believe that if children do something wrong, they should be beaten, I mean really beaten hard with a stick or spanked. Oh, it was horrible. There was a drawing of a little boy bringing a broken toy or something to his father and saying, "I'm sorry father, please beat me."

P: I don't understand.

T: You know, the idea is that the father is like God and if the child is punished, then the father forgives the child and there's also love all around and the child doesn't feel guilty anymore and he feels loved again. I think the whole idea is just awful. For Americans, Christian Americans, to be believing things like this that children should be beaten, I don't think anyone should ever hit a child. It's wrong.

E: I'm afraid I don't agree, Tracy. My father beat me when I did something wrong. I do the same to my boys. Always have done, ever since they were small. But they know I love them and I do it because I love them. I want them to grow up knowing what's right and what's wrong. I do it for them.

T: Really!

E: Pheona, you're pretty quiet. What do you think? You've got children.

P: Well, I don't know, really. I mean I'd never use a stick. I couldn't do that. But well, I do smack them sometimes. Quite often I suppose, but not that hard. It's usually when I'm tired or angry or something like that. But if you ask me, it doesn't do much good. Well, what I mean is, it might make me feel better but it often makes them worse. I sometimes wonder if it doesn't make them more aggressive.

- T: Exactly! And the more you hit them, the more they'll hit others. That's where violence starts. It's not just on the television, it's at home. Anyway, it's not right. It's unfair because there are two standards: if grownups are allowed to hit children, why shouldn't children be allowed to hit grownups, and grownups are telling the children not to hit other people. Parents aren't perfect, they're not God. Why shouldn't children be allowed to hit parents then if parents do something wrong?
- P: Yeah, I see what you mean. I haven't really thought about it much, but, well, it's not quite that easy. What do you do when your children shout at you when they refuse to do what you asked them? It's all right for a while, but then you've got to do something or you go crazy!
- E: You're quite right, Pheona. I've no time for this idealistic talk, especially when people don't have children. And if you don't have children, you can't understand them. You can't know what it's like to be in a family. Parents must have authority. But on the other hand, I don't think you should hit a child when you are angry because to go back to what you said Pheona, it's for your self that you are doing it--not for them. You feel better if you hit a child when you're angry, but that's not the point. No, I beat my children calmly and I do it as a punishment. My sons expect it and they accept it. I'd say they respect me for it.
- T: Surely you can't mean that! That's horrible! It's cruel! They might pretend to respect you for it, but deep down they probably don't. They just feel like doing it to somebody else and when they're older, they probably will start hitting other people or trying to get power over people who are weaker than them. In my opinion, you're a monster if you really believe what you say. I don't think you should be allowed to treat your children like that!
- P: No neither do I. I agree with you completely there Tracy. I don't think I could ever hit my children in cold blood. I think they can understand it when I'm tired, as I said before. And they know when they've pushed me too far as well. But just like that, cold, no I couldn't. Well it would be better, surely, to cut their pocket money or something like that. You know there are lots of ways--no television all evening, or staying in on a Saturday night.
- E: No. Absolutely not. You women are really being naive and sentimental. Now what I say is spank them, don't spoil them. And believe me, Tracy, if you ever have any children of your own, I think you'll find that is very good advice.
- T: Never! I think your ideas are horrible and dangerous and if I do ever have any children of my own, I'll never let you near them.