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ELEVENTH COMMANDMENT, DON`T HIT ME

Abstract
This article aims to analyse the phenomenon of harming a child through the use of corporal punishment, which, in the opinion of parents, guardians, is part of the process of upbringing and is fundamental in the process of preparing him to be a decent and law-abiding citizen. The practice of corrective techniques, proudly called by adults, educational methods, and bearing the hallmarks of physical violence, are, in their view, a necessary and indispensable corrective action against the child. A common form of punishment is spanking, either with an open hand or sometimes converted to punishment, using leather objects. As a result, the child experiences negative physical and mental effects. This article seeks to highlight the urgent need for discourse that will raise awareness among parents and legal guardians about the destructive effects of raising children with love and peace, implemented through 'innocent' spanking, and the potential side effects of using physical violence on a child's development.

Keywords: violence, child, upbringing, love, respect, spanking, family.

1. Introduction



Source[1]: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Elogio_della_pazzia_123.jpg

The aim of this article is to explore the phenomenon of violence against children in order to show against this background the importance of its influence on their upbringing and the adoption of certain patterns. We will look at the adaptation mechanisms that a child subjected to violence undergoes, and we will attempt to explain the unreflective, glorified and salutary influence on upbringing of "innocent spankings". The content is situated in the field of social pedagogy, focusing on the family environment and its attitudes and values. Children belong to a group particularly vulnerable to the use of various forms of violence. Upbringing through punishment by means of spanking, in the view of adults, is aimed at maintaining greater discipline among children and making them aware that bad behaviour absolutely does not pay.

The very fashionable and widespread stress-free parenting of today has as many supporters as opponents. The modern parent tries to come to the upbringing of his or her child on an individual basis, not always guided by the child's welfare, trying to rely on his or her intuition or, unfortunately, on the accompanying emotions in which the use of spanking takes priority. To spank or not to spank: this paraphrased Shakespearean phrase can be pointed out today as an expression of the dilemmas of the modern parent between the choice of punishing the child (spanking) or not. Approaches to parenting are changing, depending on prevailing standards, the times in which we live and the demands of the adult world. It is nowadays pointed out that the parenting methods used by parents, vary according to the characteristics of the child they are targeting and the stage of physical and psychological development he or she is at.

Using physical force against a child as a method of upbringing, often viewed as violence legally, remains a contentious issue in society today. Supporters cannot imagine parenting without the proverbial spanking, after all: "a bottom is not a glass",

[1] https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Elogio_della_pazzia_123.jpg

"you have to bare your wits from your bottom to your head with a strap", "a twig has to be bent when you're young, because it can't be broken later", such "wisdoms" are mindlessly and unreflectively repeated from generation to generation, thus giving justification and permission to hit children, for the common good. Opponents, on the other hand, cannot imagine raising a hand against their own child, believing that they thereby fail as parents or legal guardians (Priestess, 2020, p.8). The family is the social cell which, in its basic function, has the task of raising and preparing the child to play certain social roles in adulthood, guaranteeing him/her a better quality of life in the process. While most parents understand the reasons against hitting children and the legal ban on corporal punishment since August 1, 2010 (per the Law of June 10, 2010), there remains a significant number of supporters for such disciplinary actions. Very often such actions are downplayed, explaining that sometimes it is necessary to spank a child.

1. Family

Janusz Korczak, an educator by vocation, wrote this about upbringing: "*The upbringing of a child is not a pleasant pastime, but a task into which one must put the effort of sleepless nights, the capital of hard experiences and much thought...*" (Korczak, 1993, p. 47). The family is for the child the first and most important environment in which he is born and in which he grows up. It is the cradle of each individual's personality development. It is there that the individual acquires the ability to use speech, forms attitudes towards caregivers and the environment in which he or she develops. Parents become guides to the world of values, culture and prepare for adult life. Through its systematic influence on the child, the family contributes to physical, psychological and social development, preparing the child for life in society. The added value for the child is that it is the family that is the first and earliest group that the child encounters as soon as he or she is born and the interactions that take place in this group. The development of the child in this group, which is its advantage, is that it takes place naturally and provides optimal stimuli. In the upbringing of children, the parents' pedagogical culture, i.e. the ability to respond in child-rearing situations in accordance with the child's needs, as determined by knowledge and the value system, is of great importance (Adamski, 1998, pp. 365-373).

A child who experiences kindness, love and acceptance in the family grows in the conviction that he or she is loved and trusted, no matter what behaviour he or she exhibits. The dialogue between parents and children is also significant in parenting. The results depend above all on a correct understanding of the child's needs at a certain age. The overriding task of parents is to love their children and foster in them a sense of self-esteem and self-confidence. Children must not be treated under the

guise of parenting as parental property or some form of parental capital and a means to a parental end. The love and support a child receives from his or her parents will influence his or her socialisation process, during which he or she will inherit appropriate values and social norms that are acceptable in the environment where the process will take place. Disturbed socialisation has a negative impact on the child's development and interferes with the correct formation of personality. In such a family, the child learns attitudes that will allow him or her to survive; at the same time, the attitudes developed will disrupt his or her proper development in adulthood and become a source of difficulties in his or her daily functioning (Szatkowska, 2022, p.104). The role of the family is to educate the child to peace and to love towards others. According to the Encyclopaedia of Education, the term 'upbringing' means the intrinsic value of man (Lubomirski, 1912, p.203). It is the parents who give direction to upbringing by stimulating processes that involve motivating the acquisition of knowledge and instilling curiosity about the world around the child. The child's childhood period, during which the process of upbringing is implemented, is an important stage in the child's life, because in this process, not only the child's caregivers are involved, but the whole environment in which the child lives and develops.

The family home should be a place where a child feels loved and safe. The reality is often different: studies show that at least one child in a hundred suffers physical, psychological suffering, including sexual abuse and through neglect (Nikodemska, 2018, p. 15). Women and children are the most common victims of domestic violence. Domestic violence is an act or omission, carried out within the family by one of its members against the others, using an existing or created by circumstances advantage of power, or authority, which harms their rights or personal property, in particular their life or health, causing them harm or suffering (Mellibruda, 1998, p. 8). A lack of awareness on the part of the parents, of the role they play in the child's upbringing, can translate into the child's further emotional development and a limited sense of security, due to insufficient parental love.

2. Physical violence

When the subject of violence against a child is discussed, four forms of violence are most often mentioned. Thus, we have physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and sexual abuse (Lipowska, 1992, p. 8). It can happen that the forms of violence listed co-exist and complement each other. A distinction is also made between active and passive violence, where the former can include physical, emotional and psychological violence, and the latter, various forms of failure to respond properly (Herzberger, 2002, p. 16). If we consider physical violence, it occurs in two forms, when we punish the child and when we hurt the child, which often becomes a way of venting our anger,

and the behaviour of our child, is only a pretext for such behaviour (Graczyk, 2009, p. 4). Punishment belongs to negative behaviour. The parent feels an inner need to punish the child as a person who has violated or transgressed certain rules imposed by adults (Konarzewski, 1982, p. 62). Punishment constitutes punishment and is an undesirable act. Punishment, on the other hand, is a consequence of chastisement, which in its structure contains an element of unpleasant feeling. Punishment of children involves the use of corporal punishment, mental suffering and other forms of violation of the child's corporeality, which directly affect the child's physical and mental health.

Violence aimed at harming children can take many forms that are or can be devastating to the psycho-physical development of a minor. Violence against children occurs in every environment and is not related to the material or social status of the family (Kowalewska, 2012, p. 31). What, then, is physical violence? Ewa Jarosz distinguishes three levels of defining the phenomenon of violence against children:

- broad, general definitions that cover a wide range of behaviour towards children. They define violence as both intentional behaviour, with the intention of causing suffering or harm to the child, and unintentional behaviour. In these definitions, violence against the child is defined as behaviour such as excessive control, interference in the affairs of the child, overprotection, as well as the actions of institutions, society as a whole or the state (institutional violence, structural violence);
- mid-range definitions, defining violence against a child as non-accidental behaviour by adults that goes beyond functioning social norms and standards of behaviour;
- narrow definitions, in which violence against a child is included as deliberate and intentional behaviour of a drastic and extreme nature, with visible direct physical and psychological consequences (Jarosz, 1998, pp. 16-20).

The motives for using violence against a child vary. Among the negative phenomena associated with the maltreatment of younger family members, the following stand out above all: alcoholism of one (more often the father) or both parents, criminality and lack of a regular source of income. In families characterised by low social and economic status, the tendency towards physical violence and verbal aggression prevails (Błeszyński, 2012, p. 147). Table 1 shows the factors that protect the child from violence, while Table 2 shows those factors that favour violence.

Table 1 Factors protecting the child from violence.

Level ontogenetic	Level microsystem	Level ecosystem	Level macro system
- high IQ - positive experience with parents - special skills - good interpersonal skills	- healthy children - supporting spouses - economic security	- social support - few stressful events - membership of a religious group - positive school experiences, contacts with peers during childhood	- a culture that promotes a sense of shared responsibility for childcare - a culture that opposes violence - good economic situation

Source: Herzberger, 2002, p. 75.

Table 2 Factors contributing to harm.

Level ontogenetic	Level microsystem	Level ecosystem	Level macro system
- past experience of violence - low self-esteem - low IQ - low interpersonal skills	- arguments in marriage - child behaviour disorder - premature or sick babies - single parent	- unemployment - lack of social support - bad relations with peers during childhood	- acceptance of physical punishment in a given culture - treating children as the property of their parents - poor economic situation

Source: Herzberger, 2002, p. 75.

The situation of the abused child is aggravated by the fact that they are defenceless and unable to stand up for themselves. At the same time, he or she remains alone in the sense of the harm suffered, without the possibility of support or protection from other family members. On 10 June 2010, the Act on Prevention of Domestic Violence came into force. The preamble to the Act reads: "Recognising that domestic violence violates fundamental human rights, including the right to life and health and respect for personal dignity, and that public authorities have a duty to ensure that all citizens are treated equally and their rights and freedoms are respected, and in order to increase the effectiveness of the prevention of domestic violence, it is established as follows...". One of the consequences resulting from this law was the introduction of an amendment to the Family and Guardianship Code (Article 96) which reads: "Persons exercising parental authority and having custody or guardianship shall be prohibited from using corporal punishment" (Act of 25 February 1964). When using violence against a child, the perpetrator of this action must be aware that such action can lead to physical injuries such as swellings, bruises or nerve damage.

Such an action results in the transmission of an attitude of acceptance of violence from one generation to the next, destroys the child's confidence and shatters self-esteem, while at the same time the child learns that "the stronger is always right". Upbringing through fear creates in the child a sense of anger and resentment towards the parent, at the same time reinforcing bad childhood experiences. This breeds anger and frustration, which has nothing to do with education. Upbringing should consist of clarifying desired behaviour through dialogue and behavioural patterns and personal factors in the form of imitation, identification with modelling (Przetachnikova, 1979, p. 318).

3. Spank

A spanking is a stimulus intended to bring about a desired change in the child's behaviour, it is also intended to be a signal to the child to make him/her aware of the consequences if he/she does not comply with the changes expected by the parents. Adults are reluctant to admit that a spanking is most often used to discharge their own emotions, while at the same time forgetting that it is an unacceptable, prohibited by law, but also unethical, method of punishing children. A spanking causes pain not only physically, but above all emotionally and makes the child fearful. The spanking shuts down thinking about the reasons for its application and focuses on the consequences in terms of physical harm, violated dignity and value of the child. Punishing a child using this method, on a regular basis, can trigger positive thinking about the rightness of the punishment and reinforce the child's belief that he or she fully deserves the punishment. The fact that the spanking is administered by a person who is loved unconditionally by the child and who has a great deal of trust in him or her only makes it appear as normal behaviour on the part of the parent. The spanking, as one of the methods of punishing the child, in the opinion of its proponents, gives the illusion of its total effectiveness and creates the impression of having the power to change the child's behaviour to that desired by the parent.

Betty Chase, author of the acclaimed textbook 'Wise Love', writes that giving a child a spanking is a correction in parenting. According to the author, the said correction is intended to improve the child in the process of socialisation, which she strongly urges. The author has included detailed instructions for the correct execution of this form of punishment:

1. Go with the child to a secluded place so as not to embarrass him or her in public.
2. The question should then be asked, "What is our rule?", "What did dad or mum say?", before the parent starts to correct the child's behaviour, to make sure that the command has been understood.

3. It is necessary to ask: "What did you do?", the parent must assess whether the child has accepted responsibility for his/her behaviour and explained what he/she did wrong.
4. Then declare your love and explain why we need to correct your child's behaviour. Say: "I love you and I want to help you do the right thing next time."
5. Give your child a spanking. Deliver a few painful slaps on the buttocks. The child's angry, rage-filled cry should change to a soft cry containing a tone of surrender.
6. Comfort your child immediately after a spanking. Do not reject him/her. Keep him/her close to you and assure him/her of your love. Only the parent who gives the spanking should comfort the child.
7. If necessary, have the child repair the damage or compensate for the behaviour if possible. (Chase, 2006, p. 36).

At the end of the instructions, an additional statement has been included that the above procedure should be applied, without parental anger of course, to children between the ages of 18 months and 11 years (Chase, 2006, p. 37). The author adds that an exception to this rule may be when the child is too young to be physically punished and is just learning the meaning of the word 'no'. It is then appropriate to strike the top of the child's hand when saying the word 'no', so that the child learns to associate pain with the spoken word. The rule should be applied to children between 9 and 18 months of age (Chase, 2006, p. 37).

The problem with 'spanking' is not the physical harm done, but the perpetuation of a certain type of relationship where this behaviour gives only two messages to the child. One: I don't want you to do it, and two: I am hitting you because I can, and that I am stronger. This in turn perpetuates the child's perception of his or her relationship with the parent in terms of power and submissiveness, which can lead to the development of an authoritarian personality. The parent shows very little empathy and does not get into the psyche of their child. Child abuse does not usually result from ignorance, but from going along with it or a lack of adult reflection.

4. Sexuality of the child

Fagellation (Priestess, 2020, p. 15), is a variety of sadism manifested in flogging for sexual motives. The name comes from the Latin flagella - rod. When flogging is built into the educational system, then it is called dippoldyism or educational sadism, the name comes from Dippold, a student who, as a homeroom teacher with sexual motives, applied such a severe punishment of flogging that it caused the death of the boy he was raising (Priestess, 2020, p. 17). People with flagellant traits can only obtain sexual gratification by flogging themselves or others. (Imielinski, 1990, p. 85). The

essential arousal is the sight of exposed buttocks. Typical pretexts for flogging and rituals are playacting scenarios of judge and sinner, master and slave (or mistress and slave), educator and pupil. Since it has been proven that flagellantism developed in children as a result of corporal punishment, punishments of this kind in the upbringing process have been abolished (Imielinski, 1990, p. 87).

The child's sexuality is very malleable and eroticism can take firm root in the child through beating on the buttocks and humiliating the child. The eroticism evoked by buttock-spanking stems from the imprint of childhood sexuality. If it is strongly imprinted in the psyche, it can accompany it throughout life. If an adult woman has the right not to wish to be slapped on the buttocks, so does a girl. Sexual violence in the form of a socially acceptable spanking is a taboo squared, because people who have experienced it claim that a common punishment such as a spanking can have the hallmarks of rape and that this touch is always a violation of intimacy to some extent. There is a paradox in the use of spanking. When applied to a child, where it touches an intimate place, it is interpreted as physical violence, while when applied to an adult, it can be a sign of erotic behaviour. A pat on the buttocks to a child is no longer socially acceptable (Obuchowska, 2002, p. 11). In his book, Andrzej Jaczewski argues that a child is a sexual being from the very beginning, from the moment of birth. In the light of today's sexology, this fact should no longer raise any doubts in anyone's mind (Jaczewski, 2014, pp. 13-17). This issue is also raised by Maria Beisert in her work Sex Your Child, drawing attention to the need to popularise data on psychosexual development, especially from childhood and adolescence, because these areas, covered by a strict taboo, are the precursors of many dramas and problems. The author refers to prevailing myths, which, rooted firmly in the social consciousness, curve strongly on the subject of child asexuality, including the asexuality of a spanking, when administered to a child (Beisert, 1991, p. 14). If spanking affects a child's sexuality, all children should be guaranteed safety from physical and psychological stimuli, which in practice means a total ban on touching intimate places.

Children's sexuality is very delicate and the first experiences in this matter, provoked by corporal punishment, can take root in the child's psyche in the form of fetishes that will accompany them into adulthood (Zielona-Jenek, 2010, pp. 98-99), so a spanking on the buttocks may be the child's first erotic experience. The German physician Magnus Hirschfeld warned against the sexual impact of spanking on child development. In Poland, the same ideas were preached by Dr Albert Dryjski. He argued that a spanking on the buttocks brings a large flow of blood to the spanked part of the body, which spreads around the rectum, then reaches the area of the reproductive organs and causes excitement and sexual desire, as a result of which many completely healthy children show strong masochistic tendencies. They experience their first sexual sensations in life under the influence of a beating on the buttocks (Dryjski,

1948, p. 245). The author argued that such cases are not uncommon and at the same time explained the physiology of this phenomenon: "The beating and flogging of the buttock causes an irritation of the ejaculatory centre in sensitive individuals, as a result of which the sensation of pain easily transforms into a feeling of sexual pleasure. In this way, punishment for some misdemeanour becomes the starting point of sexual irritation and algolagnic deviations" (Dryjski, 1948, p. 331).

Summary

If, in the opinion of parents, punishing a child with a spanking is so effective, why not apply it to adults? Maybe let's not limit its "salutary" effect to children only. Let's imagine a situation where a policeman stops a driver for speeding and spanks him as a punishment, or an employee, notoriously late, who is also punished by his superior by a spanking. The practice of such actions, would be met with great criticism and indignation in the adult world. Thus, we come to the conclusion that it is permissible to hit a child and violate its corporeality, while it is no longer appropriate to hit an adult. By giving ourselves the green light, we hide behind the fact that the child has a different mental construction, which constitutes consent to such behaviour.

There are widespread declarations among parents claiming that it is only thanks to the spankings they received as children that they are law-abiding citizens today, that they have, as they say, "come out as people". Aversive incentives, which are supposed to bring about a change in a child's behaviour, in retrospect do not bring about these changes, because after receiving a fine, do we not commit further offences or wonder what to do to avoid being caught the next time by the police. In that case, can a spanking teach anything?

Definitely no. It only shows that a parent or guardian can inflict punishment without considering his or her own child's opinion, and when that same child is spanked by his or her peers, paradoxically that same parent raises the alarm because harm is being done. Implementing the so-called humanistic approach, which involves constructive discussions with the child and analyzing the situation, is the best way to resolve conflicts between parents and children. This is not easy to implement, as it requires a lot of commitment, but it helps the child to internalise norms and rules, which is the main objective of parenting. While it's impossible to claim that every spanking causes an unforgettable trauma for the child, it's crucial to label spanking for what it is and consistently assert that it is wrong; otherwise, its boundaries may be dangerously extended. Moreover, if a large part of society perceives spanking as innocent, then perhaps verbal violence, often dismissed as mere words, is also considered harmless to the child's psyche

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