

Abstract

The issue of collective punishments is still relevant today. For example, if one child broke something and parents or teacher cannot find out who did it, what is the best to be done? Punish no one or all group, innocent including? According to the law of our society the innocent should not be punished but it is not relevant for school or family. On the contrary the collective punishment is common there. It is a matter of opinion and of course there are another circumstances in each particular guilt so it is difficult to say what kind of punishments is adequate and righteous which is not always the same thing. However what is the opinion of children themselves? And what does it tell us about their moral development? What is the school age children judgment of collective punishments and the collective responsibility? Jean Piaget asked these questions himself in his research of the collective responsibility in the moral judgment of school age children.

His expectation was that the children's understanding of the collective responsibility will be similar as the understanding of „primitive” society. That means at first place there will be a believe in a punishment as a mystical act which will clean the society contaminated with a crime and does not matter who will be punished. However this expectation has not been confirmed. The questioned children were on various stages of a moral development but their judgment could not been compared with the judgment of „primitive” man. On the other hand Piaget find another challenges which children in this age have to overcome. The first is a transition from believe in necessity of a punishment which has to come even though it will hit the innocent including to believe that innocent could have never been punished. The second is a transition from a compulsory solidarity to the solidarity willed and voluntary.

Piaget obtained these results from interviews with children who shared with him their opinions and feelings about justice or injustice of the collective punishments.

My aim was to do a critical replica of Piaget's research and talk with children about the collective responsibility using his research situations and try to complement and deepen our knowledge about how children understand the issue of the collective responsibility and what does it tell us about their moral development.