

Argumentative paper



The aim of the paper is to look at the problem of forced elf labor from the viewpoint of the two different moral theories – Kantian and Utilitarian. It is essential to argue, whether forced elf labor is supposed to be moral or immoral in the light of both theories.

First of all, it will be beneficial to equal elf labor to the child labor; it will not be changed, but will be implied through the paper. Several sources have discussed this issue in relation to the opinions of Kant and utilitarian theory's supporters, but as child labor. This is why this explanation is necessary at the beginning of the work.

Utilitarian and Kantian theories seem to be absolutely opposite if applied to the discussion of the forced elf labor. They do have similar features, for example, both of them are based on judging the action and not the subject of this action, but while the Utilitarian theory looks at the consequences of this action, and is thus considered to be consequential, Kant based his judgments on the intentions of actions, which were more important for him than consequences.

The attitudes of Utilitarian theorists to the issue of elf labor would be seen as positive. (Rawls, 2000) Though there is ardent argument as for the real basis for such statement, but assuming that Utilitarian theory in itself approves striving for the mass welfare and maximal profit; some theorists argue that justification of the elf labor use might lay in the need for progressing and developing. In the light of the Utilitarian statements, the benefits which society receives as a result of using elf labor will overweight the harm which elf may experience through the participation in the forced labor. (Cornman, 1992) Utilitarian theory may be also used for the justification of the elf labor,

assuming that the denial of the labor participation of elf is the violation of the right of the elf to be autonomous and to make the choice in life, (Lyons, 1965) However it is hardly related to the issue of forced labor, and thus no choice can be mentioned here.

Utilitarian theory does not mention the issue of elf labor directly, and the assumptions of the present paper are based on the general principles of this theory, this is why it may seem that it is easy to deny them; however, it is difficult to state that Utilitarian theory does not use the principle of maximal profitability (utility) in all actions of a person, and the morale of the action is based on the intention of the person to achieve maximal utility. If elf labor is used for the maximal utility achievement, this labor is totally justified by the theory and is considered moral as long as it serves for this maximal welfare. (Singer, 1981)

Kantian theory may be supposed as absolutely opposite to that of Utilitarian character, as through it also makes action its central object, but Kant bases morality in rational considerations; thus respecting human rights is the integral part of Kantian theory. (Beck, 1960) This assumption is drawn from the one of basic Kantian statements, in which he makes accent on the necessity and morality of treating human beings as ends, and not as means. (Linden, 1988)

His idea is though, argumentative and can easily be based by Utilitarian theory's supporters – Kant keeps to the idea that not only it is moral to respect one's autonomy, but to give human beings freedom of making choice and decision-making. Thus prohibition of elf law even through the Kantian perspective may be seen as violation of the elf's rights to choose.

(Martin, 1970) However, Kant is rather clear and determining in his attitudes towards forced labor about which we speak here.

The Kantian would object to child labor because such practices violate our duty to treat children with respect. We violate the rights of children when we treat them as mere means to the ends of production and economic growth. We are treating them merely as means because, as children, they are incapable of rationally and freely choosing their own ends' (Kelly, 2002)

Thus, according to the Kantian theory, forced elf labor is immoral. It is interesting to note, that the argumentative sides of these moral/ immoral attitudes in both theories are mainly related to the elf labor which is not forced; in the issue of the forced elf labor the morale of the action is clear and meaningful in both Kantian and Utilitarian theories. It is possible to argue that for the general welfare of the world forced elf labor is not a significant issue to be taken into account (if based on the Utilitarian principles); but how maximal should welfare be in order to overweight the disadvantages and sufferings of elf it still under question – the theory does not give any answer to it. (Feldman, 1999)

Kant supports the meaning of any action and the possibility of performing this action as long as the person making someone else perform it understands that he (she) would perform the same action in the same situation – this is why elf labor is absolutely denied and justified by Kant on the basis of his theoretical drawings. ' To treat someone as a means or as an object is to deny to them this distinctive and essential human characteristic; it would be to deny to them their very humanity'. (Auxter, 1982)

Conclusion

It has been seen, that the view of the forced elf labor is different according to the Kantian theory of morale and according to the Utilitarian theory. It is interesting to see, that though forced labor is generally accepted as being immoral, there are theories which base their judgments on the different values. Ultimate maximal benefit (welfare) often prevails, and becomes a rational choice for using forced elf labor; the benefits are considerable, and the costs are high, but these costs are usually ‘paid’ by elf workers themselves, giving the user of their rights total freedom.

Kantian theory denies morale of using forced elf labor, but with even being so clear and determining in the views on elf labor, some of its statements can be used to support the possibility of using this kind of labor. Thus, both theories are highly argumentative; none of them supports only one side of the issue. It is important to create argument to come to the relevant conclusions as for the possibility of using forced elf labor.

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