

Good example of essay on child labor

[Family](#), [Children](#)



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Despite the fact that the exploitation of child labor is a booming phenomenon nowadays, the stance of society as a whole seems to remain rather indifferent. Most studies that examine the issue tend to approach it through the « paradigm » of the scientific approach involved (e. g. sociology, human rights, psychology, political science) without proceeding to an holistic approach of the matter. Moreover, even the conclusions of those different approaches do not seem to be coordinated. Some endorse the belief that child labor must end immediately, without further discussion while others support that such views do not take into account the harsh reality that adolescents and infants are part of the economic and social reality especially in Third World countries and to that direction it has been hypothesized that the immediate abolishment of child labor is highly probable to drive many children to crime, prostitution and starvation.

While Edmonds & Pavcnik (2004) highlight the unfavorable results stemming from the premature beginning of child labor for the child as well as the adult that child grows to be, we must have in mind that child labor in some of its forms, for example agricultural child labor may be extremely difficult to be prohibited (Cigno & Rosati, 2005). Moreover, the gap between scientific and legal approach, sets obstacles in the effectiveness of the interventions made in order to record and study child labor.

(Cigno & Rosati, 2005).

Firstly, from the definition of the United Nations a child is every person under 18 years of age (U. N., 1992). In newer studies, an effort is being made for giving a more precise definition to the spectrum of ages between 5 and 15. It is the harsh reality, rather than the idealism combined with a certain degree

of ignorance of the West for the everyday life of the residents of the Third World, that makes it imperative for the United Nations to adopt some basic guidelines for the acceptable age limits. In that direction, the United Nations through the organization of several conventions followed a more realistic approach, presenting some of those guidelines as to what is the acceptable age limit for children to work. For example, in work involving hazardous activities, that is “ Any work which is likely to jeopardize children’s health, safety or morals” the minimum age accepted is 18 or 16 under strict conditions.

Theories of Child Labor

Having in mind the conflict theory, we will examine the origin of certain child labor theories, coming from scientists of various socio-economic and educational backgrounds almost always different than those of the children in question (Edmonds, 2007). Adam Smith firmly believed that the lack of manpower in factories would drive the birthrate up. Marx had noted that children would replace adults in the industry the same way adults were being replaced by machinery during the Industrial Revolution. Malthus, on the other hand believed that to growing family size would gradually drive families to failure in being self-sufficient and eventually straight into starvation. The above mechanism would later push the family as a system to utilize every resource available, thus turning to child labor. Later in the twentieth century, Gary Becker, Paul Schultz, Alexander Chayanov and Milton Friedman focused on the meaning of human capital, emphasizing on the resources that define the necessity for children to be put into labor, like time spent on education, free time, or time spent taking care of children.

Friedman claims that only through the mobilization of every family asset including children, we will eventually be able to eradicate poverty, poor education and forced labor.

According to the Economist, “ In 2012 there were 168 million child laborers a big decline from a few years ago, but still a huge number”. Indeed things have changed towards better figures, but still there is a long road ahead. The author points out that those policies have to be tested, because the question of what reduces child labor is an empirical one. According to a recent paper by the World Bank that reviews thirty different studies on the subject, conditional cash transfer programs do not increase child labor, and that can be said with a certain level of confidence. On the other hand, a Cambodian program that resulted in great child labor decrease, even though the cost covered by the program amounts to only 2 percent of the total expenditures of the average recipient.

Another drastic measure, in our opinion is the utilization of information. That is, actions to be taken in the direction of the public’s or the consumer’s interest to know if child labor is involved in the making of our everyday products although it has been noted that the boycotting of products made from children could lead them in turning to more dangerous professions like prostitution etc.

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