

Good example of argumentative essay on are sweatshops good or bad

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



The United States Department of labour defines a sweatshop as a factory that violates two or more labour laws. These laws range between a number of issues such as working conditions, working hours, abuse and the overall salaries for the work done. More often than not, it is a factory that exhibits all the traits attributed with poor working conditions and exploitation. Such enterprises are present globally from developing regions like Asia and South America to major cities in the developed world where the exploitation is centered on the immigrant population. Despite the obvious drawbacks, sweatshops do have their proponents. A notable argument for them being the article "Where Sweatshops Are a Dream" in the New York Times. Like other proponents, Kristoff argues that sweatshops provide a better source of income to most people in impoverished countries than the alternatives.

Using individuals who live off garbage in Phnom Penh, Cambodia as examples, he makes a strong argument for sweatshops by highlighting the fact that most, if the individuals in such situations would be better off in sweatshops. This paper wishes to discredit this school of thought and prove that sweatshops cause more harm than any real or perceived good.

The first argument against sweatshops is that they are inhumane. The fact that they offer a better option than dump sites is irrelevant in this argument.

The fact remains that there are certain minimum working conditions requirement as set by the International Labour Organization and these should be applicable to all. It is absolutely unethical to argue that an individual in Cambodia should be allowed to work in poor condition compared to a worker in New York because the only other options for the Cambodian worker is the dumpsite. For example, China has over the past

decade come under significant critics over the condition in its sweatshops. In 2008 David Barboza highlighted cases of poor safety standards, child labour and poor pay prevalent in numerous Chinese factories contracted by western multinationals. He points out that on average workers were losing or breaking 40, 000 fingers a year with working hours stretching to 16 hours a day. More recently, Apple came under scrutiny when 11 workers in Foxconn committed suicide. Work related stress and poor working conditions were touted as causes of these deaths with reports that workers in the company were forced to work for up to 34 hour shifts.

Secondly, despite the assertion by most proponents that sweatshops offer an opportunity for individuals in poor economies the truth is starkly different. Annabelle Wong points out that the minimum wage in Thailand, Philippines and China is \$1. 5, \$ 0. 69 and \$ 0. 67 per hour most sweatshops pay much less. She highlights the fact that the payment is so little that it is barely enough for them to survive on even in their poor economies. In essence, sweatshops are designed to keep the employees at a constant economic level. The individuals have no option but consume every amount they earn meaning that they are unable to save and invest. Two shocking facts can be used to highlight how lowly workers in such environments are paid. First of all, projections show that the price of the final product would only go up by an average of 1. 8% if the salaries of all employees in a sweatshop were doubled. Secondly, the National Labor Committee estimates point out that the women sewing NBA jerseys only make 24 cents per garment for an item that is going to be sold for \$ 140. Such huge margins highlight how little labor costs these factories incur due to the level of remunerations they offer.

Lastly sweatshops are not a secure source of employment. Most employees in such factories are employed on a contractual basis due to the volatile nature of the industries they serve. For example, an investigation into an Indonesian textile plant showed that 80% of all employees were hired on a contractual basis. Employers were free to hire and fire them as they pleased and in most cases this was done without any form of compensation. Such acts leave the employees with minimal sense of financial security.

Conclusion

Work Cited

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