

Dangerous jobs essay



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The notion of exporting dangerous jobs is one that is deeply associated with business and organisational ethics, especially in the contemporary global condition wherein corporate outsourcing on an international and trans-cultural scale is becoming a burgeoning reality. From this perspective, we can see a rationale for businesses exporting such jobs. In terms of the key financial incentives, which are the essential components to an organisation's very existence, this can be seen as beneficial in that it will render all responsibility for accidents obsolete.

Furthermore, it will lessen the organisational costs for such jobs. However, when considering this decision in terms of ethics and factors relating to ethical concerns, then this simple decision becomes somewhat compromised. For example, by considering the factors of social responsibility and extrinsic reward over financial gain we see that this is very irresponsible and based upon self interest (Hartman & Desjardins, 2007). On further examination we can perhaps see reasons why other areas and groups involved in international outsourcing may wish to receive such dangerous jobs.

For instance, less affluent areas pertaining to cultures that have strong associations with treacherous histories, traditions and conditions may well be socio-economically inclined to take on such jobs. These jobs may increase employment in such areas and so increase affluence and so chances for potential and opportunity in the regions. However, even if this was accepted and perceived as of mutual benefit by both parties, would this mean that it was an ethical decision? By looking at the rest of the world we can see many ways in which this would not be an ethical decision to make.

For instance, on considering globalisation, the potential for harm and particularly the exploitation of the vulnerable and the weak, then we see that this is also not a valid decision to make on the basis of business ethics. In truly assessing the ethical implications of exporting dangerous jobs before making a decision we naturally find ourselves confronted by social philosophy. For example, the philosophical doctrine known as the social contract is frequently cited when considering such types of ethical questions.

For example, Professors Donaldson & Dunfee (1999) suggest that a version of the social contract, which they refer to as 'integrative social contracts', posits conflicting interests as being resolved through a 'fair agreement' between both parties. Essentially, they suggest that by way of appealing to both rational and universal principles and those maintained by mutually extending contracts that people will agree and thus adopt an approach to an organisation or institution's resolution or goal.

However, although this may indicate a mutuality of interest, the question still remains as to whether this can be called ethical or not. Indeed, it could be argued that this depends heavily upon a power differential between a corporation's affluent and dominant position and the position of a less affluent and so more dependent business. Therefore, the extent to which this may be accepted from a rationally based decision making process is somewhat compromised. Furthermore, when we consider the validity of certain principles being universal, we see a great deal of problems in accepting this as a good decision.

For example, cultural business theorist and practitioner Geert Hofstede states that even truth is relative, as it is supported by an axiom that is dependent upon culture. Providing evidence for this he explains that ' If A is true non A, which is the opposite of A, must be false. Eastern logic does not have such an axiom. If A is true, non A may also be true, and together they create a wisdom that is superior to A or non-A. Human truth in this philosophical approach is always partial' (Hofstede, 2001, p. 363).

So should we simply decide that exporting dangerous jobs is unethical and completely without justification? For this we can turn to the ways in which leadership can be exacted within an organisation. Due to the growing ethical demands in the globalising world, many social groups and political bodies have suggested that organisations should be run via an overriding corporate entity, such as a central executive akin to a state or government. It is often said that this should be a body of leadership based upon a fixed ideological framework or code of morality known more commonly as a state.

Essentially, all decisions would be based upon such ideologies as humanity and compassion, which are highly ethical in their philosophical perspective. However, there are two problematic factors associated with this idea. Firstly, the issue of universality re-emerges, in that an ideology of humanity is a philosophy based upon the assumption that human values are universal. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, exporting dangerous jobs would be seen as just one issue amongst a greater good (Donaldson & Warhene, 1987).

Essentially, the business would be an all consuming state apparatus. All decisions would therefore rather ironically be based upon a non-human system according to strict hierarchical roles. It is perhaps then with something akin to Rawls position that we see the best way to make our organisational decision on the ethics of exporting dangerous jobs. Rawls suggests that any executive body must be neutral in its decision making. That is to say, that it is between rival individual notions of goodness and value that decisions are made (Rawls, 1993).

Although it would be naive to think that this is a form of natural balance or order, it is from this neutral perspective that we can see the components of each issue. Essentially, by considering the potential effects put forward by a litany of representative bodies who stand to be affected by the decision, we gain insight into the practical impacts. This position of organisational neutrality would then constitute a principle of constraint over the permissible or legitimate involvement of corporate moral action. The constraint was said by Rawls to be understood in the formulation of three positions.

These positions are the central executive not promoting the good; not aiming to promote good unless there is an organisational consensus and not justifying itself on the basis of the good. Crucially, it is only after evaluating the concerns and impacts of an action across those who it will affect that a decision can then be made on the basis of ethical concerns. It is with this in mind that we can say that it is unethical to make a decision on the potential export of jobs without first hearing the voices of those involved and weighing them up against an array of established ethical factors.