

Week 7 Discussion: Child Labor in the United States

Child labor is not a current problem we associate with the United States and statistics on the matter are dubious. However, The New York Times reports under aged factory workers all over the United States, mainly focusing in the Grand Rapids, Michigan area for companies such as Hearthside, Chewy, Nature Valley, Cheetos, Ford, General Motors, and Lucky charms (Dreier, 2023). There is a plethora of reasons for children to be driven into the workforce as minors and in this report, we can see the risks and exposures minor immigrant children face. Child labor stems most often but not limited to familial financial poverty/uncertainty, loss of a primary wage earner, or illness of a caregiver (Dreier, 2023). The contributing factors are noteworthy, but the consequences are overwhelmingly shocking as child labor can result in slavery as well as exploitation (economical or sexual), physical/mental harm, and even death (unicef, 2023). The World Health Organization (WHO) (2020) defines the most vulnerable children to include refugees, migrants, living without parental care, homeless, and living in high conflict areas.

As a result of industrial revolution, child labor has evolved from working in agriculture to working in urban factories. This abhorrent trend continues since children are considered profitable assets, for they are less likely to strike, easily manipulated, and receive very low pay for long hours of work (Radfar, Asgharzadeh, Quesada, & Filip, 2018). There are also issues with cultural and religious backgrounds imposing perspectives where these beliefs can be misguided and fail to demarcate the limits of child labor (Radfar, Asgharzadeh, Quesada, & Filip, 2018).

Unfortunately, to date there is no international agreement to fully enforced child labor leading to the demand from public health offices of the development of comprehensive child labor laws and regulations (Radfar, Asgharzadeh, Quesada, & Filip, 2018). How can the development of these