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Child Domestic Laborers' Vulnerability To Horizontal Inequality

Grace Butler

DEFINITION:

Horizontal inequalities are inequalities among groups with similar social, political, or economic backgrounds.

BACKGROUND

In the North Africa region, gaps in laws and a lack of sufficient resources to enforce laws leaves some children vulnerable to labor exploitation. Child domestic labor commonly involves long hours and may expose children to physical and sexual exploitation from their employers. In this case, the exploitative conditions of child labor contributes to a lack of access to early educational opportunities which leads to increased labor discrimination and structural oppression for these laborers in the future.



Figure 1: Wikimedia Commons. Digital Image. Mount Holyoke News. April 9, 2019. <http://www.mountholyokenews.com/oped/2019/4/9/north-africans-identities-as-african-should-be-respected>

LEGAL PROTECTIONS

Three key international conventions ratified by North Africa concerning child labor include:

- ✔ Article seven of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) establishes “the right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work.”

- ✔ Article thirty-two of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) establishes minimum age requirements and penalties to encourage labor regulation and protect children “from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education.”

- ✔ Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention establishes that prohibited labor includes work that exposes them to abuse, forces them to work unreasonable hours, or confines workers to their employer’s premises.

METHODOLOGY

To analyze the respect to child labor laws and their enforcement in the countries of North Africa ranging from 2009 to 2019 one must:

- A) Read through Section 7 (Worker’s Rights), Subsection C (Prohibition of Child labor and Minimum Age for Employment) of the *US State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* with particular interest in the countries’ child labor laws and practices.
- B) Assign scores from 0 to 2 for each country in each particular year using the *Coding Guide: The National Worker Protections (WorkR2) Dataset*, created by David Cingranelli and Brendan Skip Mark.

To address the connection between child labor and lack of early educational opportunities one must:

- A) Read through relevant literature, as well as, the Department of Labor’s Child Labor and Forced Labor Reports, specifically the *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor*, which encompass data on the distribution of work done by children, education rates, laws and regulations, and subsequent enforcement efforts.

What do these scores tell us about the exploitative conditions of child labor in North Africa?

How do these conditions create an environment that prevents these child laborers from attending school?



Figure 2: Fralein. Digital image. GFA Special Report. July 9, 2019. <https://www.gfa.org/special-report/child-labor-today/>

CODING SCHEME

Coding Scores:	0	1	2
<u>Law:</u>	Not protected in law.	Somewhat protected in law.	Fully protected in law.
<u>Practice:</u>	Not protected in practice.	Somewhat protected in practice.	Fully protected in practice.



SCAN TO ACCESS SCORING SHEETS

FINDINGS

- ✔ Regional assessment of North Africa indicates widespread legislative failure and rights violations.

- Domestic laborers are often excluded from laws protecting child laborers.

- ✔ Little has changed from 2009 to 2019 in terms of legislation and enforcement of child labor rights, as scores tended to remain the same.

- These scores demonstrate little to no respect for international children’s rights legislation and they were rarely effectively enforced.

- ✔ Parents often pulled their children out of school to help support their family.

- “Poverty has led many families not to be able to provide basic needs for their children and there is no support from the government” so “many children end up not continuing their education and joining the work force in their early age” (Chaney, 2017).

- There is no time for children to attend school as they worked long hours in the domestic sector of employment.

- ✔ This lack of education inhibits child laborers from learning new skills that would allow them to enter the formal sector of labor as adults.

- Child laborers experience horizontal inequality based on their economic background.

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