



Non-Free Labor

Definition, Sectors, and Public Policies Around the World

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Contents

Introduction	2
Economic Sectors, Groups, and Regions: Non-free Labor in the World Nowadays	4
The Primary Sector: Tea Plantations in Asia and Cocoa Plantations in Africa	5
The Secondary Sector: Textile Industry	6
Women and Non-free Labor: Sexual Exploitation	7
Discrimination Toward “The Other” as a Source for Non-free Labor: Haitians in the Dominican Republic	8
Not Only a Problem of Poor Countries: Neoliberal Work Conditions in Rich Countries in a Context of Global Crisis	9
Legislation and Its Utility	10
Conclusions	11
Cross-References	12
References	12

Abstract

Non-free labor is unfortunately one of the biggest issues in the twenty-first century. Not only does it affect poor countries, but also it is possible to find examples in rich countries. One of the reasons for explaining this situation is that development and demand of different products in the global market makes it impossible for producers to meet the consumers’ requirements unless they cut down expenses in the production process. The working force is often the element in the production chain that suffers the cutting down of expenses the most, so that workers are paid less and less money, and in many cases no money at all, living in a near-to-slavery condition. The aim of this chapter is to define what non-free labor is, as well as to analyze the different economic sectors where we can find examples of non-free labor, describing in the end the main actions that governments undertake to stop such practices.

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Introduction

Though it is common to associate slavery to ancient times and to colonial times, especially in the shape of transatlantic slavery, slave condition survives in different job contexts nowadays. In fact, the United Nations (UN) has turned the struggle against it into one of its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the 2030 Agenda. To be precise, the UN specifies in its eighth SDG that it is necessary to promote “Decent Work and Economic Growth”. Different governments legislate to reach those goals; among them the Spanish Government, which has designed an action plan to carry out the 2030 Agenda. When it comes to non-free labor, the Spanish Government aims at abolishing it through three sets of initiatives: the ones that prevent non-free labor, the ones that protect vulnerable people against it, and the ones that compensate corporations in exchange for the total prohibition of non-free work (Spanish Government, 2019, p. 40). In spite of international legislation, according to the data that the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Walk Free Foundation (WFF), and the Organization for Migration (OFM) provided in 2017, in the previous year there were around 40 million people working under slavery conditions: 25 million people under forced labor, and 15 million under forced marriage. Women amounted up to 71% of those people, whereas children represented 25% (ILO et al., 2017, p. 5).

Humankind has used different concepts and expressions for referring to current non-free labor: modern slavery, contemporary slavery, forced labor, or non-free labor, for example. In 1930 the ILO proposed the term “forced labour,” defined as any job that people perform under threat and unwillingly (ILO, 1930; Rioux et al., 2020, pp. 709–731). According to the definition, human trafficking, debt obligations, servitude, and slavery were all part of the same reality. But there was a relevant aspect of it: only people made to work in such conditions against their own will could be regarded as slaves (ILO, 2012). It missed economic coercion (fear of hunger and of social destitution) as another reason for a person to become a slave or non-free worker, together with military service, prison work, children work, and free work with high levels of exploitation (Rioux et al., 2020, pp. 709–731). The concepts “modern slavery” or “contemporary slavery” are controverted, too: transatlantic slavery did happen in modern times, but calling present-day slavery “modern” might imply re-conceptualizing the latter as “pre-modern”. This is why Lamas criticizes the aforementioned terms (Lamas, 2019a). He shares the conclusions of the *Bellagio Harvard Guidelines on the Legal Parameters of Slavery* (2012), which describe the differences between legal property, peculiar to transatlantic slavery, for instance, and possession, which means a de facto subjection to another person without legal recognition. This definition presents a clear advantage compared to

the former: it regards as slavery any subjection to other people regardless of the will of the individual. In fact, it considers that one can become a slave on his/her own will, especially when he/she wants to improve his/her own personal condition (Sharma, 2005, pp. 88–111; Quirk, 2007, pp. 181–207).

There is a dynamic academic debate on whether “non-free labour” is compatible with modern capitalism. Despite the ideological and theoretical distance between Adam Smith and Karl Marx, both authors agreed on one point: capitalism and non-free labor can never go together. On the one hand, from Smith’s perspective, free labor is more efficient and productive than slave labor, in addition to generating potential consumers of the goods and services produced (Smith ed. 2003, pp. 91–121, 493–494). On the other hand, Marx argued that capitalism is built on the principle of freedom: the worker’s theoretical freedom to sell his/her work force in the labor market and to negotiate his/her salary (Marx, vol. I, ed. 1990, pp. 270–280). More recently, Lerche (2007) and Lamas (2019b) have agreed with them, but the latter makes a point following Marx’s arguments: the global market demands an increase in productivity that companies can only meet by using machines instead of human work force. Thus, the workers constitute an “industrial reserve army,” or a “population relative surplus value,” which companies use occasionally when global demand grows to a point that cannot be met by machines (Marx, vol. I, ed. 1990, p. 784). Therefore, a complex balance between unemployment and capitalism happens, and companies can preserve it while global demand grows faster than technical innovations in factories. Once machinery evolves to meet the increasing demand, human labor is not needed anymore, so the industrial reserve army turns into a permanent reserve force: a group of people that will not go back to work. Fear of not working anymore makes unemployed proletariat accept any job, no matter how miserable its conditions are, and in some cases people end up becoming non-free workers (Lipset, 1959, pp. 69–105; Lerche, 2007, pp. 425–452; Lamas, 2019b).

As a consequence of the aforementioned circumstances, recent evidence of capitalist evolution of job environments and relations shows that non-free labor and capitalism can indeed go together. It happens in a context of extreme need of the unemployed workers, the so-called permanent reserve force, who are ready to go back to work under any conditions. In poor countries their greed for a job may translate into the acceptance of work conditions that jeopardize freedom, but guarantee the survival of the family. In rich countries the latter situation may not be that frequent, but anyway workers will accept exhausting workdays, low wages, requirement of permanent availability by the employers. . . It is possible to argue that they preserve their liberty, unlike their fellow workers in poor countries. Nevertheless, economic pressure not to lose the job in a context of global crisis and high unemployment rates, added to the personal pressure to be economically independent and to provide for the family’s well-being, make people not feel totally free to quit their jobs. It is truly their decision, but that decision is conditioned by external factors that will keep them attached to poor working conditions, which clearly violate the workers’ basic rights, in terms of salary, workday, and the right to privacy and rest.

Economic Sectors, Groups, and Regions: Non-free Labor in the World Nowadays

Prior to analyzing the economic sectors and regions where it is common to find non-free labor conditions, it is convenient to discuss some concepts that are relevant in the universe of slavery. The people's over exploitation in the capitalist global market is usually linked to their mobility: enter into the circle of non-free labor often implies geographical and psychological alienation from their daily environment, as they are transferred to another place. On the one hand, when transfer happens in the geographical sphere, the person leaves his/her place to move to a different and alien one; on the other hand, psychological transfer means emotional alienation from the person's beloved ones, since he/she has a limited access to them, or no access at all. Two relevant concepts associated to human mobility are human trafficking and human smuggling. According to the UN's 2000 Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, human trafficking includes: recruiting, transporting, transferring, shipping, or receiving people under any kind of coercion, abduction, fraud, or any means used to get control over another person and exploit him/her. Exploitation implies prostitution, other types of sexual abuse, forced labor, slavery, servitude, and organs traffic. The UN's definition ignores the person's consent to any of these situations: if they have used coercion to make him/her work under specific conditions, it will be possible to talk about human trafficking (UN, 2003). Human smuggling presents one main difference with human trafficking: in the latter, the trafficker's ultimate goal is to get benefits from another person's exploitation, but in the former the smuggler's objective is only to make a group of people cross a frontier in exchange for money. Once they have crossed the border, the smuggler is not interested at all about their fate; by contrast, the human trafficker needs to make sure that those people will perform the economic activity that is demanded from them (Sharma, 2005, pp. 88–111). The reader will find more information about human trafficking in the chapter by A. Genova in this book (Genova, Forthcoming – 2022).

The way in which society regards the peoples who suffer human trafficking or smuggling is problematic. It is common for public opinion to consider them as victims, ignoring the person's agency in his/her own fate (Sharma, 2005, pp. 88–111; Quirk, 2007, pp. 181–207). Most people often become subjects to human trafficking or smuggling on their own will: they know the price they have to pay and they accept it, because they long to leave their former lives back and to purchase a better future. Therefore, one must not see them as victims of human trafficking or smuggling, but as people suffering really harsh working conditions that the capitalist global market has created: they are the products of an unbalanced distribution of global wealth (Sharma, 2005, pp. 88–111). Capitalism is not to blame for the appearance of non-free labor in present-day society, but capitalist conditions have made it possible for non-free labor to survive, especially in vulnerable human contexts (Lebaron & Phillips, 2017, pp. 1–21). In fact, silence around most non-free labor practices is motivated by the way in which it helps capitalist development (Bales, 2000, pp. 36–45). So, if society and governments insist on victimizing trafficked or smuggled people, instead of fighting the economic conditions that make human

trafficking and smuggling possible, they will end up designing migratory policies that depict illegal migrants as criminals (Sharma, 2005, pp. 88–111; Quirk, 2007, pp. 181–207). The situation becomes dramatic in sexual exploitation, a peculiar example of human trafficking. Besides, punitive laws move human traffickers, smugglers, and sexual exploiters to search for alternative methods to skip them, and trafficked, smuggled, or sexually exploited people will need to run higher risks to try and find a better life (Brysk, 2012, pp. 73–85; LeBaron & Phillips, 2017, pp. 1–21).

In the following lines there is an overview of the main economic sectors and social groups in which non-free labor practices can be traced nowadays. Moreover, a research is done about two specific cases: firstly, a region where non-free labor and discrimination are associated with ethnic identity, the island of Hispaniola, shared between Haiti and the Dominican Republic; in the second place, special attention is paid to job practices, environments, and legislation in neo-liberal contexts, mainly in rich countries. Before starting the analysis, it is important to underline that most non-free labor contexts happen in Asia, Africa, and South America (Hernández Peribáñez, 2017): most of these territories correspond to the so-called Third World. Thus, following Wallerstein's theory of the world system, one can easily perceive the unbalanced power relation between the periphery countries, the ones that provide raw materials and semi-elaborated products to the First World, and the core countries, the rich regions that get the benefits from that economic interaction (2004). However, as pointed out previously, rich countries are the scenarios of non-free or quasi non-free labor conditions, too.

The Primary Sector: Tea Plantations in Asia and Cocoa Plantations in Africa

Employers get profit from two main sources: the use of non-free workers cuts down production expenses; and lending money to non-free workers at over 100% interest provides them with even higher income. In Indian tea plantations, 47% of workers have no access to drinking water, 26% have no bathroom, 24% lack electricity, 54% are indebted, 59% never save money, and 15% have their earnings kept by employers, according to LeBaron (2018). Most people working in tea plantations, the author points out, belong to poor castes that generate 38.84 billion dollars according to 2013 estimates. By 2020 she believed that benefits derived from tea plantations would grow up until 47.20 billion dollars. Hence, tea is the economic activity that relies more on the private sector in India, a country that produces one sixth of the world's tea and exported 726.76 million dollars between 2017 and 2018. Around 10 million Indian people work in it (World Bank, 2019).

In the case of African cocoa plantations, 23% of the workers admit to receive no salary at all in Ivory Coast and Ghana, 95% did not know whether the farm where they worked was certified, 60% have debts at 100% interest, and 55% have no savings at all. As in the case of tea plantations, figures speak by themselves: cocoa generates 195.8 billion dollar benefits in the world market, of which 60% come from

Ghana (10% of its GDP), where 25–30% of the people work in the sector (World Bank, 2019). LeBaron interviewed several workers from African cocoa plantations, who confessed different abuses: low salaries, or no salaries at all, and punishment for not achieving the production goals; almost no medical services; the use of debts to blackmail workers and to make them produce more; different levels of violence and coercion; and of course the impossibility to exercise the worker's basic rights. In Ghana there is an extra dramatic situation: that of women and children, meant to perform the hardest tasks in exchange for the lowest salaries, and the banning of both groups from posts of responsibility (LeBaron & Gore, 2019, pp. 1095–1117).

Despite the situation depicted, LeBaron saw with surprise that most workers interviewed rejected the definition of their situation as “slavery,” using other expressions that meant the same, but avoided to be so specific.

The Secondary Sector: Textile Industry

The impact of non-free labor in the textile industry is linked to downwards competition: companies exploit the advantages of poor countries, where there is no legislation to protect workers employed in near-to-slavery condition or to prevent harms to the environment, which reduces expenses (Merino de Lucas, 2008, pp. 4–20). Between 1974 and 2005 the Multi Fibre Arrangement operated in this sector, though its name changed to Agreement on Textiles and Garments in 1995. The Arrangement established a transitory period to suppress the limiting share import system imposed on certain Asian countries, namely, China and India, to the United States (US), Canada, and the European Union (EU). Meanwhile the offshoring process had progressed along the 1990s: most textile production was transferred to Bangladesh and other countries excluded from the Arrangement. The reason for the quick offshoring process was “fast fashion,” that is, massive production of textile goods that people buy and discard quickly (Martínez Barreiro, 2007, pp. 69–80).

Textile production has different phases, and in all of them it is possible to find non-free working conditions. Cotton growing demands big amounts of water, and overexploitation of rivers, seas, and aquifers have provoked the desiccation of the Aral sea, for example. Planters also use pesticides and herbicides to protect the crop, thus poisoning other herbal species and damaging the soil. Ambition to increase production drives certain corporations, like Monsanto, to design genetically manipulated seeds that planters are made to use, with a wide range of drawbacks for them: new plagues associated to the new seeds, the use of new pesticides to fight them, etc. Moreover, indebtedness reaches such high points for some farmers that they commit suicide because of the impossibility to pay the debts, which jeopardizes their personal and economic freedom (Hernández Peribáñez, 2017, p. 163).

Uzbekistan and India are the two countries that, according to Hernández Peribáñez (2017), present higher rates of non-free labor associated to the textile sector. Uzbekistan is the third country in cotton exports, which represent 20% of its GDP. Between 1.5 and 2 million children over 7 leave school between 1 and 3 months

every year in order to work in cotton fields with almost no food and in really harsh conditions. In 2011 the world market stopped importing cotton from the country, in order to pressure its government to respect human rights in cotton fields. Three years later the government welcomed observers from ILO and trade with the country was re-established in 2016. In India children are also used in the crossed pollination process to generate hybrid cottonseeds. In fact, 400,000 children work in this task, 50% of them under 14 years, most of them from the caste of the Untouchable.

Women are especially vulnerable in the textile chain production: in order to knit cotton, Indian economic elites use the *Sumangali* system (happy married woman). Recruiters look for girls between 14 and 18 among the poorest castes and tribes to take them to workshops far from their family. They are promised enough money for their dowry if they work for 3–5 years (Hernández Peribáñez, 2017, pp. 181–185). Though the Indian government officially forbade the practice in 1961, it survives in local culture of certain regions, for instance Tamil Nadu, where they generate 65% of the country's textile production. When the recruited girls reach their destination, they realize that none of the promised services exist in the workshops where they will spend the next years, often raped by their employers. Finally, textile factories in the cities are located mainly in Bangladesh, where there is a feminization of poverty: 80% of the work force consists of women, who work over 12 hours a day in exchange for low salaries, suffering a gender and class discrimination (Hernández Peribáñez, 2017, pp. 191–211).

Safety is rarely guaranteed in the workshops where women spend their workday, and as a consequence of that accidents usually happen. The most dramatic episodes occurred in November 2012 in Dhaka, in the Tazreen Fashion factory, where a fire killed more than 100 people and injured around 200, most of them women. Some months later, in April 2013, the Rana Plaza building in Savar, where several textile workshops operated, collapsed due to damages and cracks in the building's structure. In this occasion, more than 1,100 people died and around 2,400 were injured. In order to avoid such catastrophes international textile companies, among them Inditex, Corte Ingles, and Mango, joined the ACCORD on Building and Safety in Bangladesh (2013). However, negligent building and textile production have traditionally ignored international and national regulation, so accidents have still happened in recent years.

Women and Non-free Labor: Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation constitutes a form of non-free labor that mainly affects women. Unfortunately women's marginal position in certain cultural contexts leads to their entry into prostitution and sexual exploitation networks. Nevertheless, it is not fair to link that kind of exploitation to specific cultural or geographic contexts, as rich countries are not alien to this phenomenon (Butler, 2005, pp. 8–35). There are two main ways of sexual exploitation: against the woman's will, or according to her will, in this case as a desperate scape to her previous condition. Regardless of the reason why women enter prostitution, they always suffer violence by procurers, clients, and

employers, as prostitution is not always explicit in work relations. For example, in African cocoa plantations and Indian textile workshops employers abuse young girls against their will. But women entering prostitution on their own accord to improve their economic condition in the mid and long term suffer abuses, too (Bales & Choi-Fitzpatrick, 2012, pp. 195–216). As stated before, it would be wrong to victimize women suffering sexual exploitation by exploitation itself: the consequence would be to create punitive laws that turned them into criminals. Instead, it is necessary to erase the causes that originate women's marginal position in their place of origin, turning them into potential subjects to prostitution networks that perform sexual exploitation (Lucea, 2016, pp. 6–19).

Discrimination Toward “The Other” as a Source for Non-free Labor: Haitians in the Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic and Haiti share an island, as well as a history of confrontation and mutual hatred that starts in colonial times. When Saint-Domingue's slave revolution (1791) gave birth to Haiti in 1804, people in the eastern side of the island did all they could to differentiate themselves from “the blacks,” a concept that the associated to Haiti though most of them were also of mixed race (Franco, 1971, p. 72; Moya Pons, 2003, pp. 133–157). Dominican distrust toward Haiti grew after the 22 year Haitian occupation of the whole island (1822–1844), and especially after Dominican independence in 1844. The Dominican Republic was traditionally a weak state until the early twentieth Century, when sugar production developed with US support, so it became the strongest economy in the place. Power and economic unbalance favored the Dominican people and turned their country into an attractive destiny for poor Haitian migrants, who crossed the border to work as cheap work force in Dominican plantations (Ceara et al., 2014, pp. 23–45).

The situation consolidated in the 1990s, when the Dominican Republic diversified its economic activities and the people started to work in other economic sectors different from the primary one. Need of Haitian cheap workers intensified, and in fact became a condition to balance the economic interaction between both countries: Dominican exports to Haiti represented 1,000 million dollars, but Haiti only exported a few tens of millions of dollars to its neighbor. The only way for Haiti to come even with the Dominican Republic in economic terms was to offer cheap work force for Dominican plantations (Ceara et al., 2014, pp. 23–45). It is not totally right to say that Haitian migrants in Dominican territory work only in plantations, as they participate in other economic activities, especially in the case of Haitian women. But a majority of Haitians are still linked to banana and sugar plantations in the Dominican frontier.

Nevertheless, no matter what their economic tasks are, their rights are constantly violated and in Dominican institutions there is a permanent fear of a Haitian silent invasion. The fear inspired the Parsley Massacre in October 1937, which dictatorship Rafael L. Trujillo ordered to stop the potential risk of another Haitian occupation in Dominican soil (Moya Pons, 2005, pp. 356–380). And the same fear generates

conditions for the over exploitation of Haitian work force in the Dominican Republic. In most cases, Haitian migrants in the east are between 15 and 55 years old, and in recent years there has been a progressive feminization of the group. Against the common belief that Haitian women usually work as prostitutes in the Dominican Republic, in fact they migrate when they are under 15 years to work in different tertiary activities (Méroné, 2019, pp. 269–300). Regardless of their sex, most Haitians suffer the same abuses described in previous pages: employers keep their salary from them, they are made to work too many hours, extra hours are never paid to them, they have no holidays, and they have no access to basic services, for example healthcare (Muñiz & Morel, 2019, pp. 27–48).

The last step to discriminate Haitian migrants and their descendants in the Dominican Republic was taken in 2013, when the Dominican Constitutional Court declared that all Haitian descendants born in Dominican soil between 1929 and 2010 would lose their Dominican passport. If they wished to see their Dominican citizenship restored, they would need to go through a complex “regularisation plan”. By 2019, only 41.4% of Haitian Dominicans had already passed the re-nationalization process (Muñiz & Morel, 2019, pp. 27–48). The Latin American Commission for Human Rights concluded in 2013 that xenophobic attitudes were reaching worrying levels in the Dominican Republic (Dilla Alfonso, 2019, pp. 94–104). However, discriminatory attitudes toward “the other” and exploitation of Haitians in work contexts persist today in that territory.

Not Only a Problem of Poor Countries: Neoliberal Work Conditions in Rich Countries in a Context of Global Crisis

As has been previously discussed in the chapter the global crisis that shook the world in 2008, as well as the new episode of world chaos triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, have set a controverted scenario for work relations all over the globe. It is necessary to focus on some of the effects of the crisis in the job market of the rich countries, in order to underline the conviction that non-free labor and abuses in work contexts are not exclusive to the Third World.

Up until 1973 the post war development model, based on Keynes’ thesis and Ford’s production model, contributed to the countries’ recovery after two global armed conflicts: the First and the Second World War. Nevertheless, the Oil Crisis in 1973 exposed the weaknesses of the neoliberal model. It brought the diminishing of productivity and the falling of salaries, thus giving way to conflicts between employers and employees, while governments seemed unable to regulate the situation (Salazar Martínez de Iturrate, 2017, pp. 49–84). The three main initiatives to overcome the crisis were the cutting down of public expenses, the privatization of public companies, and the market liberalization. Besides, in order to reduce inflation the interest rates were raised and prices went up, so investments and consume contracted, and unemployment grew. It is true that governments accumulated money, but at a high price: the break of social harmony and the dissolution of

promises of full employment, regardless of the ideology of the government that carried out such initiatives (Arenas Posadas, 2003, pp. 237–238).

The result of neoliberal programs applied by governments around the world is the diminishing of demand of work force by employers, together with worsening work conditions. Employers wish to maximize their benefits, so they need to reduce production expenses, focusing on the cut down of salaries. But the increasing unemployment rates make workers accept any job, under any condition, to avoid social destitution. Therefore, the common features of new job offers are: pressure on the worker to stay more hours; permanent availability, which often violates the person's individual rights; work overload due to lay-offs; rejection of basic rights, for instance medical leaves, for fear of being fired; etc. (Salazar Martínez de Iturrate, 2019, pp. 95–100). Apart from the price that workers pay in terms of loss of individual rights and free time, there is an extra negative consequence of the conditions of the job market since 2008: an increasing demand of psychological help by people in places shaken by the crisis (Moya Ollé, 2017, pp. 45–56).

To conclude this section, an overview on three new phenomena will help to understand how work relations have worsened in the last two decades. Firstly, the appearance and proliferation of multi-utility companies harms the worker's interest, as recent legislation allows them to compete with each other cutting down salaries and offering worse work conditions in order to increase benefits (Barragán et al. 2017, pp. 313–324). Secondly, traditional companies entering the digital world change work conditions of their employees, demanding a bigger effort from them in exchange for lower salaries. Moreover, becoming digital means that work force in low qualified jobs is not needed anymore (it is usually mechanized), and that employees that stay in the company will carry out tasks related to creativity and management, which tend to be better paid. Therefore the breach between the non-digitally alphabetized workers and the ones that are will be broader. To sum up, web platforms have also contributed to the loss of rights by their workers: not only do they benefit from the lack of legislation about their activities, but they also take advantage of the present context in two different ways: on the one hand, they know that workers will not denounce the abuses they suffer for fear of losing their jobs; on the other hand, the absence of common spaces where workers share time erases the risk of class solidarity and of any kind of protest against the managers (Font-Mas, 2018, pp. 3–18).

Legislation and Its Utility

It is difficult to legislate certain practices that survive in the capitalist global market, which are a pre-condition for its existence in many countries. Western ethics demand that non-free labor be abolished at once. At the same time, consumer habits rely on that kind of work exploitation, one of whose motivations is to meet the quickly increasing demand in the global market. As individuals and as part of a human community, we might be ready to sacrifice our superfluous needs to emphasize the respect to human rights. Nevertheless, trade networks and economic interests

influence political decisions on the topic, at national and supra-national level, deterring governments and institutions from abolishing non-free labor completely.

Phillips, LeBaron, and Wallin (2018) concluded that legislation against contemporary slavery is controverted, as it relies on the will of private corporations, and on the judgment of public opinion. In the short term, abolition of non-free labor will cause the loss of benefits, but in the long term it will create a better society. That is why companies design complex strategies of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), which show consumers that they wish to act in a transparent and respectful way. Laws can be divided into different categories. According to their impact on the activity of companies, it is possible to find: type 1, laws through which governments ask for information about the production process; type 2, adds the requirement of specific information about CSR by the states; type 3, laws focused on sectors where non-free labor practices are commoner (Phillips et al., 2018).

Despite their limitations, laws against non-free labor are important steps toward its total suppression. Apart from actions by ILO and UN, which have been already mentioned, initiatives in specific economic sectors, designed by the corporations themselves, are relevant. An example is the Bangladesh ACCORD on Fire and Building Safety, approved after the fires in Tazreen Fashion (2012) and Rana Plaza (2013), which caused the death of hundreds of workers, most of them women. Relevant international corporations such as Inditex, Corte Ingles, or Mango have signed it (ACCORD, 2013). The main challenge is to create new laws that integrate the interests of states, employers, and ILO (Phillips et al., 2018). Moreover, it is necessary to find a balance between political interests, economic interests, particular consumer needs, and human integrity.

Conclusions

Non-free labor is an uncomfortable element of present-day society, but it goes with the demands and the speed with which the global market grows. Mobility is an essential component of it, as human trafficking and human smuggling show. Concerning both practices, it is necessary not to victimize the people who suffer them, as the only consequence of that attitude would be to develop punitive laws that would turn them into criminals. Instead, society's efforts have to be focused on fighting the conditions that put people in the path to becoming non-free workers in their places of origin. The main scenarios for non-free labor are Asia, Africa, and Latin America, but one must never conclude that it only happens when there is illegal migration: inside the country's borders, even in rich regions, there are situations than can be categorized as non-free labor, too.

The fact that agriculture and the textile industry concentrate the highest percentages of non-free labor tells about our habits and calls on our role as consumers. Thus, not only is it important to satisfy our needs, but also to do it in a responsible way, questioning ourselves about the source of the goods that we acquire. Hence, it is us who must demand initiatives from governments to dignify human work around the world, so they pressure companies in the same direction. Doing so, it will be possible

to overcome the handicaps to current legislation and to build a job market compatible with human dignity.

Cross-References

► [Human Trafficking in Modern World](#)

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