The skills gained by children through work such as being hardworking, learning because they want to emulate their role models, or older people (the learning of important skills, pitching in to help adults, and learning how to do it) is evident involving children in work is used for a variety of reasons including done in more rural, farming ones. In researching “chore curriculum” (activity) societies (1996). There are fewer anthropological studies focused on adolescent and child education, denies their rights to seek personal gain, and sometimes denies them of responsibility, socializes them, trains them for the work force, as well as helps their families. Others argue against the use of children on farms because the work is strenuous, dangerous, conflicts with normal childhood activities such as education, denies their rights to seek personal gain, and sometimes denies them opportunities to experience other fields of work/study. In public discourse, negative perspectives of child labor more often refer to the work done by children of migrant farmworkers while positive perspectives often refer the work done by children of farm owning families. This study seeks to understand the cultural distinction between “chores” and “labor” concerning the tasks done by farm owning families. In this instance, regulations aimed at protecting the adolescent labor. In 2011 the Department of Labor (DOL) introduced new child labor restrictions on farm work. Interview data was also analyzed by identifying themes and coding text to identify differing conceptions of “chores” and “labor” (Phase 2: Interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted among members of farm families to elicit definitions and perceptions of children and adolescent work on family farms. Interviews were conducted among members of Appalachian farm families (N=12). Interpretive analysis included identifying themes and coding text to identify differing conceptions of “chores” and “labor” that were seen as “labor.”

After examining the online discourse about child and adolescent farm labor in the United States, we identified two different perspectives: (1) a valorization of child and adolescent farm labor and (2) a critical view of child and adolescent farm labor. Textual analysis uncovered a key difference between valorizing and critical discourse on child farm labor. Analysis of this identified a lack of cultural distinction between what work is seen as “chores” and what work is seen as “labor.” Texts that focused on the children of families who owned identified child farm work as “chores” “to build character.” Interviews among members of farm families in North Central Appalachian also followed this trend. Interview data suggests that farm owning families define the farm work that is completed by children as “chores.” Chores were defined as small tasks, that often done daily and that are important for subsistence. Tasks that are considered to be “labor” are tasks that required more effort (i.e. more time spent doing the jobs, more laborious tasks) and sometimes machinery. These tasks are less regular and are usually profit-generating. When asked about child labor on their own farms, it was laughable to many of them. From their own experiences, the work done on their own farms by their own children (or related ones), is not culturally seen as labor. When asked about labor, they were more understanding of the questions, and did consider some of the tasks they completed or did daily were more laborious than they would consider chores to be.

This study examines child labor use in agriculture and its effects on the children’s opinion on farming into adulthood. The purpose of this research is to understand what the aspects of work on the children’s opinion when they have worked on a farm during childhood. In order to conduct such research, we first did literature reviews and found what others thought of child labor in America. Interviews inform us on the North Central Appalachian perspective of child and adolescent farm work. Discourse and interview data was analyzed to determine what seems to be the cultural distinction between children participating in labor and children completing chores. The research shows a difference between definitions of chores and labor, specifically when it comes to difficulties, who does the work, and how the task effects the children who have participated in it.

Results

After examining the online discourse about child and adolescent farm labor in the United States, we identified two different perspectives: (1) a valorization of child and adolescent farm labor and (2) a critical view of child and adolescent farm labor. Textual analysis uncovered a key difference between valorizing and critical discourse on child farm labor. Analysis of this identified a lack of cultural distinction between what work is seen as “chores” and what work is seen as “labor.” Texts that focused on the children of families who owned identified child farm work as “chores” “to build character.” Interviews among members of farm families in North Central Appalachian also followed this trend. Interview data suggests that farm owning families define the farm work that is completed by children as “chores.” Chores were defined as small tasks, that often done daily and that are important for subsistence. Tasks that are considered to be “labor” are tasks that required more effort (i.e. more time spent doing the jobs, more laborious tasks) and sometimes machinery. These tasks are less regular and are usually profit-generating. When asked about child labor on their own farms, it was laughable to many of them. From their own experiences, the work done on their own farms by their own children (or related ones), is not culturally seen as labor. When asked about labor, they were more understanding of the questions, and did consider some of the tasks they completed or did daily were more laborious than they would consider chores to be.

Conclusions

• There is a generational difference in how they way child farm work is discussed.
  • Older farmers and farm workers seemed to see the work differently from those who were college-aged. Older people tended to see the work as necessary and many explained when they were younger the work was done out of necessity, or the farming had to be done to survive. To younger generations, however, the work was done because their parents told them to or because they wanted to provide help or take care of animals or crops. Those college-aged informants did the work out of pleasure or as actual chores.
  • Culturally, in Appalachia, the difference in child labor suggests perceptions of child and adolescent farm work differ whether on depending on whether the child is a relative or an employee.
  • Child and adolescent labor — especially what is conducted by migrant children — is dehumanized in the media. However, interviews among members of farm families suggest that work done by children related to the farm owner is not labor, but chores that benefit child development.
  • The impact of this effects farmers’ views on labor laws concerning migrants. Past experiences have led farmers to think about labor laws differently. These perspectives — different definitions of chores and labor based on who is doing the work — may impact how farm owners perceive employees.

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