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The morality of current minimum wage laws in the clothing and textile industry in South Africa today

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Abstract

In this research report I question whether the minimum wage laws as applied in the clothing and textile industry in South Africa today are morally justified.

In answering the question, I examine the moral justification for minimum wage laws in general, namely the alleviation of poverty and the prevention of exploitation. I argue that in order for minimum wage laws in general to be morally justified they must meet certain criteria. I identify and discuss five criteria. I then apply these criteria to the minimum wage laws in the clothing and textile industry is South Africa. I argue that the laws do not meet these criteria fully and that they need to be amended in order for them to be morally justified. I then make some recommendations as to how they could be amended.