

HO CHI MINH NATIONAL ACADEMY OF POLITICS

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**POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN THE
DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIAL ZONES
IN HAI PHONG CITY AT PRESENT**

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Urgency of the Research Topic

In the context of industrialization, modernization and deep international integration, the development of industrial zones (IZs) has become one of the key drivers of Viet Nam's socio-economic growth. The system of IZs not only contributes to restructuring the economy towards a more modern structure, attracting domestic and foreign investment, expanding exports and creating employment, but also constitutes a spatial locus in which new economic, social and political relations emerge. After nearly four decades of formation and development, IZs have become central to Viet Nam's industrial development strategy, contributing to the goal that "by 2030, Viet Nam will become a developing country with modern industry and high middle income," as stated in the Resolution of the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party.

However, alongside these positive economic outcomes, the development and operation of IZs across the country have also generated a range of complex socio-political issues. Large-scale migration into localities hosting IZs has placed considerable pressure on social infrastructure, particularly housing, healthcare, education and transport; the quality of social welfare for migrant workers remains limited; conflicts in labour relations, strikes and collective disputes continue to occur; and risks of disorder, crime and social vices are increasing in areas surrounding IZs. Environmental pollution and violations of occupational safety regulations also remain widespread and difficult to control. These issues are not merely "social" in a narrow sense, but directly affect socio-political stability, workers' trust in the political system and the effectiveness of local governance.

Therefore, the accurate identification, in-depth analysis and proposal of feasible solutions to address socio-political issues associated with IZ development constitute an objective and urgent requirement. Such efforts aim to ensure a more harmonious relationship between economic growth and social progress and justice, in line with the Party's consistent directive that "economic development must go hand in hand with ensuring progress and social justice in every step, every policy, and throughout the entire development process."

As a major growth pole of the Northern Key Economic Region, Hai Phong has consistently been identified as an industrial, commercial, service and seaport centre, as well as a driving force for regional development. The city currently has 15 approved IZs, 14 of which are in operation, attracting more than 1,000 projects with a total registered capital of over USD 30 billion and creating employment for more than 200,000 workers. Large IZs such as VSIP, Trang Due, Deep C, Nam Dinh Vu and An Duong have provided strong

momentum for growth, placing the city's GRDP per capita among the highest nationwide.

At the same time, the rapid and large-scale expansion of IZs has brought to light numerous socio-political challenges: strikes and labour disputes continue to occur; environmental pollution, workplace accidents, crime and social vices in and around IZs show an upward trend; pressure on housing, schools, daycare facilities and cultural institutions for workers is increasing; and issues related to culture, ethics, lifestyle and the marriage and family life of migrant workers have become significant challenges to social stability and urban-industrial governance.

Resolution No. 45-NQ/TW of the Politburo, dated 24 January 2019, sets the goal of developing Hai Phong into a “modern, smart, and sustainable industrial city” by 2030, while emphasizing that industrial development must be accompanied by improvements in social welfare, the enhancement of people's living standards and the maintenance of socio-political stability. Notably, from 1 July 2025, the transition of the urban governance model from three tiers to two tiers places higher demands on local governance capacity, particularly in the management of socio-political affairs in IZs - areas characterised by dense labour concentration, cultural diversity and complex social relations.

Against this backdrop, conducting comprehensive, theoretically grounded and empirically informed research on socio-political issues in the development of IZs in Hai Phong is both urgent and of profound theoretical and practical significance. On that basis, and with a sense of attachment and responsibility for the sustainable development of her native city, the doctoral candidate has chosen the topic ***“Political and Social Issues in the Development of Industrial Zones in Hai Phong City at Present”*** for her dissertation in the field of Scientific Socialism.

2. Research Objectives and Tasks

2.1. Objectives

Building on a systematic theoretical and empirical examination of socio-political issues arising in the process of developing industrial zones in Hai Phong City at present, this dissertation seeks to formulate key requirements and propose feasible solution packages that can effectively and sustainably address these socio-political issues in the city's industrial zones.

2.2. Tasks

To achieve this overarching objective, the dissertation undertakes the following specific research tasks:

- To provide an overview and critical assessment of existing research related to socio-political issues in the development of industrial zones, with particular reference to Hai Phong City.

- To clarify and systematise a number of theoretical issues concerning socio-political problems associated with the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong City.

- To analyse the current situation and main manifestations of socio-political issues arising in the course of industrial-zone development in Hai Phong City today.

- To propose key requirements and a set of solutions aimed at addressing socio-political issues in the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong City in an effective and sustainable manner.

3. Research Object and Scope

3.1. Research Object

The dissertation focuses on **socio-political issues** arising in the process of developing industrial zones in Hai Phong City.

3.2. Research Scope

Content scope: In the course of industrial-zone development in Hai Phong City, a variety of socio-political issues emerge. Within the framework of this dissertation, attention is concentrated on several key groups of issues, namely: labour and employment; public security and social order/safety; environmental problems; workers' housing and daycare/childcare; and matters related to marriage and family life in industrial zones. These constitute the most pressing socio-political issues associated with the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong City at present.

Spatial scope: As of 1 July 2025, Hai Phong City hosts a number of operational industrial zones. Within the scope of this doctoral research, the analysis focuses on socio-political issues in such zones as Trang Due, VSIP, Deep C, Dinh Vu-Cat Hai, among others. These are industrial zones where socio-political problems tend to manifest more acutely and thus provide a representative empirical basis for the study.

Time scope: The empirical investigation and assessment of the current situation cover the period from 2019 to the present, while forecasts and proposed orientations extend to 2030, with a vision to 2045. The chosen timeframe is aligned with the issuance of Resolution No. 45 by the Politburo on the construction and development of Hai Phong City to 2030, with a vision to 2045.

4. Theoretical Basis and Research Methods

This dissertation is grounded in the theoretical foundations of Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's thought, and the viewpoints and guidelines of the Communist Party of Viet Nam on modern-oriented industrial development. It particularly draws on Party orientations regarding the dialectical relationship between economic development and political stability, as well as the requirement to ensure progress and social justice throughout the process of building socialism in Viet Nam.

Based on dialectical and historical materialism, the dissertation adopts an interdisciplinary research approach within the framework of Scientific Socialism. It employs a combination of methods such as analysis and synthesis, statistical and comparative techniques, and sociological investigation. In particular, the sociological survey was implemented through a structured questionnaire. A representative sampling strategy was used to collect quantitative data and viewpoints from workers in industrial zones, residents living in surrounding communities, and managerial officials in selected typical industrial zones.

5. New scientific contributions of the dissertation

- The dissertation systematises and further develops a number of theoretical issues by clarifying key working concepts related to the research topic, such as *industrial zones* and *industrial-zone development*, *socio-political issues* and their concrete manifestations, as well as major groups of factors that shape and generate socio-political issues in the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong City at present.

- Drawing on secondary data, field surveys and sociological investigations conducted by the author, the dissertation identifies and analyses the main socio-political issues currently associated with the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong City, elucidates their underlying causes and highlights the most urgent problems requiring attention. On that basis, it proposes core requirements and a set of solutions for addressing these socio-political issues, thereby contributing to the effective and sustainable development of industrial zones in Hai Phong City.

6. Scientific and practical significance of the topic

- The findings of the dissertation provide additional arguments and a solid scientific foundation for formulating and implementing policies aimed at addressing socio-political issues in the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong in particular, and in Viet Nam more broadly.

- The research results can serve as valuable reference material for research, teaching and public communication on industrialisation and modernisation, the development of industrial zones, the construction of the working class as a genuine vanguard class, and the design of social policies for sustainable national development. They may also be used as a reference by the Hai Phong Economic Zone Authority in advising the city's leadership on policy-making related to the development of industrial zones.

7. Structure of the dissertation

In addition to the Introduction, Conclusion, list of the author's scientific publications related to the dissertation, References and Appendices, the dissertation is structured into four chapters comprising nine sections in total.

Chapter 1

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION TOPIC

1.1. STUDIES RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION TOPIC

1.1.1. On industrialization, modernization, and the development of industrial zones

To date, the themes of industrialisation, modernisation and the development of industrial zones have attracted considerable scholarly attention both internationally and domestically. Notable contributions include works by Nguyễn Thái Sơn, Phạm Thuyền, Phạm Thị Kiên, Trần Thị Vân Hoa, Vũ Văn Hà, N. Driffield and K. Taylor, Behzad Azahoushang, Arkebe Oqubay and Kenichi Ohno, among others. Taken together, these studies have laid important theoretical foundations for understanding industrialisation, modernisation and the development of industrial zones.

1.1.2. Politico-social issues arising in the process of industrialization, modernization development, and the development of industrial zones

With regard to socio-political issues that emerge in the course of industrialisation, modernisation and the development of industrial zones, a number of authors have made significant contributions, including Trần Nguyễn Tuyên, Hoàng Văn Toàn, Võ Văn Đức, Đinh Ngọc Giang, Nguyễn Bình Giang, Hoàng Thế Liên, Trịnh Thanh Hằng, Nguyễn Văn Đạt, Nguyễn Thế Anh, Lê Thế Phiệt, Nguyễn Trung Thành, Nguyễn Tô Lăng, Bùi Phương Chi, Đào Thị Tân, Harold Meyerson, Daniel S. Hamermesh, Daiji Kawaguchi, Jungmin Lee and Pieters J., among others. Overall, these works have examined socio-political problems arising in the process of industrialisation, modernisation and industrial-zone development, focusing in particular on issues of labour and employment; workers' housing; environmental challenges; cultural and spiritual life for workers; and various aspects of social welfare affecting the industrial workforce.

1.2. OVERVIEW OF THE RESULTS OF PREVIOUS STUDIES AND CONTENTS OF THE DISSERTATION THAT NEED TO BE FOCUSED ON

1.2.1. Overview of the results of previous studies

On the basis of systematising studies related to the dissertation topic, the author arrives at the following assessments and observations:

Firstly, regarding the theoretical foundations

Many studies have clarified the theoretical foundations of industrialization, modernization in the context of international integration and the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0), analyzing the relationship between socio-economic development and the industrialization process based

on Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's ideology, and the Party's resolutions. These studies have clearly defined the concepts, characteristics, and roles of industrial zones in economic restructuring, attracting investment, and participating in global value chains. In addition, numerous studies have addressed social issues arising from the development of industrial zones, such as migration, labor relations, gender equality, workers' family life and marriage, infrastructure and environmental pressures; therefore emphasizing the need to link economic development with ensuring social welfare, progress, and equity. Researches have also highlighted the roles of the state, trade unions, and politico-social organizations in managing and regulating labor relations and protecting workers' rights, providing an important theoretical foundation for identifying and resolving politico-social issues in the development of industrial zones today.

Secondly, regarding the current situation of politico-social issues in industrial zone development:

The practical development of industrial zones in Hai Phong shows that, alongside economic growth, FDI attraction and job creation, a range of socio-political issues have become increasingly evident. The material and spiritual life of most workers - especially migrant workers - remains difficult: incomes are modest while housing, healthcare and education costs are relatively high. The shortage of cultural and social facilities constrains community activities and contributes to psychological stress and family conflict.

Studies also point to numerous problems related to workers' family and marital life, particularly among female workers, including cohabitation without legal marriage, limited access to childcare services and unstable living conditions. In some industrial zones, strikes and collective complaints have occurred due to labour disputes, welfare-related grievances and concerns over working conditions, while residential management and databases on migrant workers remain fragmented and unsynchronised.

Moreover, occupational safety conditions, production environments and waste-treatment systems in certain industrial zones are inadequate, directly affecting workers' health. Some studies have examined the implementation of social policies for migrant workers and proposed requirements and solutions to improve management effectiveness, ensure social welfare and maintain political and social stability in the course of industrial-zone development in Hai Phong.

Thirdly, regarding solutions to politico-social issues in industrial zone development:

Previous research has proposed multiple groups of solutions, generally emphasising the need for comprehensiveness and coordination. To improve workers' living conditions, scholars recommend focusing on the development

of social housing, kindergartens and cultural-sports facilities, thereby creating conditions for migrant workers and their families to stabilise their lives. Life-skills training, legal-awareness programmes, family and marriage counselling, and financial-literacy education are also suggested for broad implementation.

With regard to labour and employment, proposed solutions include developing vocational-training programmes aligned with the requirements of industrialisation and modernisation; strengthening linkages between enterprises and training institutions; enhancing preferential policies and support mechanisms for migrant workers; and establishing monitoring mechanisms to ensure compliance with labour laws, the protection of workers' rights and transparency in recruitment, wages and benefits.

In terms of state management and social policy, many studies stress the need for the involvement of three key actors: local authorities, enterprises and trade unions. Specifically, it is necessary to improve labour databases; strengthen inspection and supervision of law enforcement; and implement substantive social-welfare policies that ensure access to social protection, healthcare, education and cultural activities. Enhancing coordination between management agencies and enterprises is expected to facilitate a more comprehensive response to socio-political issues, reduce social risks, promote the sustainable development of industrial zones and improve the quality of life of workers in Hai Phong.

The above-mentioned research findings constitute a valuable reference source for this dissertation. However, to date, no study has specifically and comprehensively examined socio-political issues arising from the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong. This constitutes a clear research gap that the dissertation seeks to address, thereby contributing to the city's early realisation of its industrialisation and modernisation goals and its aspiration to become a "model city of the country."

1.2.2. The dissertation continues to examine the following issues

First, the dissertation focuses on clarifying theoretical issues related to industrialisation and modernisation, as well as socio-political issues in the development of industrial zones (IZs). In this regard, it provides an in-depth analysis of the views of Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's thought and the viewpoints of the Communist Party of Viet Nam on industrialisation, modernisation and the socio-political dimensions of IZ development. The dissertation elucidates key concepts such as *political issues*, *social issues* and *socio-political issues*; *industrial-zone development*; and the manifestations and roles of addressing socio-political issues in the current phase of IZ development. These theoretical foundations constitute the basis for studying,

analysing and assessing socio-political issues in the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong.

Second, building on the findings of previous relevant studies and combining them with empirical surveys and sociological investigations on socio-political issues in the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong City, the dissertation analyses and clarifies the current situation, identifies underlying causes and highlights the main socio-political issues arising in IZ development in Hai Phong. These analyses provide the analytical groundwork for formulating solutions to address socio-political problems in the city's industrial zones today.

Third, the dissertation proposes key requirements and major solution packages to effectively address socio-political issues in the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong toward 2030, with a vision to 2045. It sets out five core requirements and recommends five groups of solutions aimed at effectively resolving socio-political issues in IZ development, thereby contributing to steering Hai Phong City towards sustainable development.

Summary of chapter 1

Chapter 2

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIO-POLITICAL ISSUES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIAL ZONES IN HAI PHONG CITY

2.1. DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIAL ZONES AND SOCIO-POLITICAL ISSUES IN INDUSTRIAL-ZONE DEVELOPMENT

2.1.1. The development of industrial zones

An industrial zone is a clearly demarcated territorial area within a country, equipped with appropriate infrastructure for industrial production and established in accordance with state regulations.

The development of industrial zones in Viet Nam refers to the purposeful activities undertaken by various actors (the Party, the State, socio-political organisations, employers, employees, etc.) in organising and managing the operation of industrial zones in compliance with state laws, in a manner that seeks to harmonise the interests of all stakeholders involved.

2.1.2. Socio-political issues and the resolution of socio-political issues: concepts and components

2.1.2.1. The concept of “socio-political issues” and socio-political issues in the development of industrial zones

On the basis of the theoretical foundations of Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's thought, the viewpoints of the Communist Party of Viet Nam and the approaches of domestic and international scholars, the author understands

socio-political issues as those relationships, phenomena or situations arising in social life that directly concern class, national and state interests; political stability; social order; and the sustainable development of the country. Such issues require the State and the political system to identify, analyse and address them through appropriate instruments, policies and measures, with a view to ensuring political stability, strengthening social trust and promoting social progress.

Socio-political issues in the development of industrial zones in Viet Nam today refer to the relationships, phenomena and situations that arise in the process of establishing, operating and expanding industrial zones, which directly or indirectly affect political stability, social order and safety, the lives of workers and local communities, as well as the State's regulatory capacity and the leadership effectiveness of the grassroots political system.

From this perspective, and drawing on the realities of industrial-zone development in Hai Phong City, the dissertation focuses on clarifying socio-political issues in IZ development in Hai Phong through several main manifestations: issues of labour and employment; issues of security, public order and social safety; environmental issues; issues related to housing and childcare; and issues concerning marriage and family life. These, in the author's view, constitute the most pressing and salient socio-political issues in industrial-zone development nationwide, and in Hai Phong in particular today.

2.1.2.2. Resolving socio-political issues in industrial-zone development

The resolution of socio-political issues in the development of industrial zones may be understood as *a comprehensive process of management and coordination aimed at identifying, analysing and effectively addressing problems arising in the socio-political life of industrial zones.*

This process requires close cooperation among local authorities, trade unions, enterprises, workers and surrounding residential communities in order to ensure harmonious and sustainable development, as well as socio-political stability, in industrial zones.

2.2. MANIFESTATIONS AND THE ROLE OF ADDRESSING SOCIO-POLITICAL ISSUES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIAL ZONES IN HAI PHONG TODAY

2.2.1. Manifestations of socio-political issues in the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong today

2.2.1.1. Labor issues in industrial zones

Grounded in the theoretical perspectives of Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's thought and the Party's viewpoints on the central role of labour in socio-economic development, the *labour-employment issue* can be regarded as a pivotal factor in the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong. Labour is

not only an economic resource but also a decisive determinant of socio-political stability, the quality of growth, social equity and community cohesion.

However, the expansion of industrial zones in Hai Phong has revealed numerous socio-political challenges, including: a labour force whose qualifications do not yet meet the requirements of modern industrialisation; unstable employment; inadequate incomes and living conditions for workers; increasing occupational stratification; and conflicts in labour relations accompanied by risks of social unrest. These challenges demonstrate that labour issues in industrial zones are profoundly socio-political rather than purely economic in nature, and they require a comprehensive approach that harmonises the interests of the State, enterprises and workers in order to ensure stable and sustainable development in Hai Phong.

2.2.1.2. Security, order, and social safety issues in industrial zones

From the perspectives of Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's thought and the Party's viewpoints on the crucial role of social stability in sustainable development, ensuring public security and social order is a fundamental precondition for the effective operation of industrial zones.

In Hai Phong, the rapid expansion of IZs, coupled with high labour density, cultural diversity and dynamic population change, has given rise to complex problems such as theft, drug abuse, criminal gangs, usurious lending ("black credit"), prostitution, violations of residence and traffic regulations, and land-related complaints and compensation disputes. These issues directly affect workers' lives and the local investment environment. They not only threaten public order but also expose limitations in local governance capacity and weaknesses in coordination among authorities, enterprises and law-enforcement agencies.

Therefore, ensuring public security and social order in IZs must be regarded as a strategic task closely linked to economic development, the maintenance of socio-political stability and the consolidation of Hai Phong's image as a safe and attractive destination for investors on its pathway towards industrialisation and modernisation to 2030, with a vision to 2045.

2.2.1.3. Environmental Issues in Industrial Zones

Theories and practical experiences of sustainable development affirm that environmental issues are a decisive factor for the long-term viability of industrial-zone development. In Hai Phong, rapid industrialisation has simultaneously intensified three groups of challenges: ecological pollution (of land, water and air) in IZs such as Dinh Vu, Nam Cau Kien and Trang Due; deteriorating living conditions for workers and nearby residents due to weak infrastructure, cramped housing and limited green space; and social conflicts related to pollution, land use, compensation and working conditions. These

problems directly affect workers' health and welfare, as well as social order, public trust and the city's image in terms of sustainable development.

Thus, environmental protection in IZs must be regarded as a priority task associated with green growth, circular-economy objectives and socio-political stability during Hai Phong's process of industrialisation and modernisation.

2.2.1.4. Housing for workers

Housing and welfare facilities for workers in IZs in Hai Phong are not only basic social needs but also major socio-political concerns in the industrialisation process. Both theory and practice show that workers' housing plays a fundamental role in the reproduction of labour, labour productivity, social stability and the effective governance of industrial zones. The shortage of social housing, kindergartens and welfare services has led to high living costs, deteriorating living conditions, increased social tensions, strikes and reverse migration.

The lack of coordination between IZ planning and social infrastructure development, together with the absence of mandatory housing criteria in project approval, highlights the tension between economic growth and social equity. Consequently, the development of housing and welfare services for workers must be regarded as a strategic task aligned with economic development, social justice and socio-political stability.

2.2.1.5. Marriage and family issues in industrial zones

Marriage and family issues in IZs in Hai Phong constitute an essential dimension of the social structure, directly influencing the stability of worker communities and the sustainability of industrial development. Empirical reality shows that workers' families face numerous challenges such as increasing divorce rates, long-distance marriages, a lack of welfare facilities (kindergartens, cultural centres), the double burden on female workers and cultural fragmentation. These problems reflect underlying imbalances between economic growth and social development.

Therefore, building stable, happy and gender-equal worker families should be treated as a strategic objective, closely connected with social policies and the sustainable development of industrial zones in Hai Phong.

2.2.2. The role of addressing socio-political issues in industrial-zone development

In Viet Nam, understanding and effectively resolving socio-political issues has been one of the major orientations and key solutions for national development on the path towards socialism, particularly in the period of *Đổi mới* (renovation). Addressing socio-political issues arising from IZ development is consistently regarded by the Party and the State as being of

special significance for ensuring sustainable growth, social welfare and stable living standards nationwide, and in Hai Phong in particular.

The dissertation clarifies three key roles of addressing socio-political issues in IZ development in Hai Phong today:

First: Contributing to economic growth

Second: Contributing to maintaining public security, order, and social safety

Third: Promoting human resource quality and ensuring social welfare.

2.3. SEVERAL INFLUENTIAL FACTORS GIVING RISE TO SOCIO-POLITICAL ISSUES AND SHAPING THEIR RESOLUTION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIAL ZONES IN HAI PHONG CITY

2.3.1. Natural, Economic, and social conditions of Hai Phong city

Natural characteristics:

After its merger with Hai Duong Province (July 1, 2025), Hai Phong City has an area of 3,195 km², ranking 33rd nationwide; a population of 4,664,124 people, ranking 4th; and its GRDP in 2024 reached 658,318.192 billion VND, placing it 3rd in the country. As the largest seaport city in northern Vietnam and an industrial center in the Northern coastal region, Hai Phong is currently the third largest city nationwide, after Ho Chi Minh City and Ha Noi, and is a centrally governed city classified as a first-tier national urban center.

Economic characteristics of Hai Phong City:

Hai Phong holds a strategically important position in the socio-economic development and national defense-security of the northern region and the entire country, located along the “two corridors - one economic belt” cooperation framework between Vietnam and China. The city is a key growth pole of the northern key economic region and a major national hub of industry, services, and logistics, serving as the economic - scientific - technological center of the northern coastal region. In 2024, the city's GRDP grew by 11.01%, maintaining double-digit growth for ten consecutive years. Total domestic budget revenue reached 50,068 billion VND, ranking third nationwide after Ho Chi Minh City and Ha Noi, and equaling 133.2% of the target assigned by the central government. The income of Hai Phong's residents has also continuously increased over the years.

Cultural, social, and human characteristics of Hai Phong City:

Hai Phong is a land with a long-standing cultural tradition and a place where inhabitants from many regions have converged and settled, creating cultural diversity and the distinctive identity of the Port city. The integration of communities from various regions has shaped the city's rich, dynamic, and interwoven cultural landscape, contributing to the unique beauty and deeply humanistic character of Hai Phong. However, this diversity also gives rise to various socio-political challenges.

The natural, economic, cultural, and social conditions outlined above create important foundations while simultaneously posing complex challenges for the city's industrial development, especially in the management of Industrial Zones (IZs).

2.3.2. Characteristics of industrial zone development in Hai Phong city

In the course of developing its industrial zones, Hai Phong City exhibits not only similarities with many other localities, but also distinctive features that reflect its particular position, role and development orientation within the Northern Key Economic Region and the country as a whole. A prominent characteristic of Hai Phong's IZs is the strong presence of global industrial corporations and a clear orientation towards high technology. This pattern of development is closely associated with ongoing urbanisation, the spatial expansion of the city and the strategic vision of building "green, smart and environmentally friendly industrial zones."

These features create a unique identity and distinctive position for Hai Phong on the current industrial map of Viet Nam, contributing significantly to economic growth. At the same time, they give rise to numerous socio-political issues that require focused, coordinated and timely resolution.

2.3.3. Globalization, international integration, and the fourth industrial revolution

Since 2019, globalisation and international integration have exerted profound impacts on the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong. On the one hand, they have strongly attracted foreign direct investment (FDI) and contributed to restructuring Hai Phong's economy in the direction of industrialisation and modernisation. This process has created hundreds of thousands of jobs for workers, helped increase incomes, improved living standards and strengthened social stability in areas where industrial zones are located. On the other hand, globalisation and international integration have also generated significant socio-political challenges in the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong.

Within Hai Phong's industrial zones - where large numbers of FDI enterprises and high-tech industries are concentrated - the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0) is evident in the shift from predominantly manual labour to higher-skilled labour, and from traditional production lines to automated and intelligent systems. This transformation offers many advantages but also produces new socio-political issues, requiring flexible adaptation and timely, development-oriented policy responses.

Summary of chapter 2

Chapter 3

SOME SOCIO-POLITICAL ISSUES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIAL ZONES IN HAI PHONG AT PRESENT: CURRENT SITUATION AND EMERGING CHALLENGES

3.1. THE CURRENT SOCIO-POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIAL ZONES IN HAI PHONG

3.1.1. Labor and employment issues

3.1.1.1. *Quantity and structure of the workforce in industrial zones*

First: The increase in the number of workers and its impact on employment

Statistical data show that the number of workers in Hai Phong's industrial zones increased from 141,767 in 2019 to 195,830 in 2023, equivalent to a 38% rise over five years. Notably, the period 2020-2021 witnessed a particularly sharp increase, with nearly 30,000 additional workers. This rapid growth in the industrial workforce has created both opportunities and pressures in terms of employment, social management and the provision of services for workers.

Second: labour structure and emerging socio-political issues

With regard to gender structure, a notable feature is that the proportion of female workers has consistently been higher than that of male workers throughout the period 2019-June 2024, ranging from 52% to 57% of the total workforce. This reflects the sectoral composition of industries located in Hai Phong's industrial zones, which are heavily concentrated in sectors employing large numbers of women, such as electronics, textiles and garments, and component assembly. High-tech industries still do not represent the majority, and as a result, the labour force is predominantly low-skilled.

With regard to sectoral labour structure, before 2019, foreign direct investment (FDI) enterprises in industrial zones mainly operated in small- and medium-scale processing and mechanical industries, employing relatively few workers. However, in recent years, FDI projects in industrial zones have expanded significantly in both scale and technological level. As companies increase their production capacity, recruitment needs have grown substantially, while the local labour supply remains limited - particularly the supply of high-quality, skilled workers. This mismatch between labour demand and supply is a source of potential socio-political tension.

3.1.1.2. *Quality of Human Resources in Industrial Parks*

First, Professional qualifications and industrial work discipline of workers

Although the number of workers employed in industrial zones is relatively large, the overall quality of the labour force remains limited. The

contradiction between the rapidly increasing recruitment demand of industrial zones and the increasingly scarce supply of suitable labour has led to a decline in the quality of available human resources. The vast majority of workers are recruited from agricultural provinces; as a consequence, they have had limited exposure to an industrial working environment and often display weak industrial work discipline and work ethic.

Second, Shortage of human resources, especially high-quality human resources

On average, Hai Phong City has approximately 20,000 people entering working age each year; however, most of them opt for university or college education, while the number choosing vocational training remains relatively small. In recent years, industrial zones in Hai Phong have only been able to recruit around 550 workers with intermediate-level technical qualifications. For managerial positions and high-level technical specialists, they have filled only nearly 200 posts.

The shortage of labour - particularly high-quality labour - has thus become a pressing social issue. Because Hai Phong City is unable to supply a sufficient number of qualified workers, corporations and enterprises are compelled to recruit from many other localities. Moreover, both enterprises and the city have to incur substantial costs for training and retraining newly recruited workers so that they can meet production requirements. This significantly increases investment costs for investors as well as the overall development costs for the city at present.

Third, The widespread occurrence of “job-hopping” and collective work stoppages

Due to the rapid (even “overheated”) development of industrial zones and the persistent shortage of labour, a segment of workers frequently “job-hops,” showing limited commitment and weak long-term attachment to enterprises. This situation creates considerable difficulties for many companies in terms of training, stabilising and retaining their human resources.

Over the past five years, there have been 21 collective work stoppages by workers throughout the city, mainly in the leather-footwear and garment sectors. Although this number represents a reduction of 22 incidents compared with the previous term, it still contains potentially complex elements, and collective work stoppages continue to occur. If not properly controlled, these phenomena may lead to adverse socio-political consequences, such as the withdrawal of foreign direct investment enterprises or situations in which the State is compelled to provide compensation for damages.

3.1.2. Issues of Political Security and Social Order

3.1.2.1. Management of foreigners in industrial zones

Along with the attraction of numerous foreign direct investment (FDI) projects - especially those of multinational and transnational corporations investing in Hai Phong - a large number of foreign experts and workers have come to live and work in the city. As of December 2020, industrial zones in Hai Phong employed approximately 4,500 foreign workers.

The management of foreigners must strictly comply with legal regulations, while simultaneously ensuring their security and safety and maintaining overall socio-political stability. Although the majority of foreign workers observe the laws of the State and comply with the city's regulations, a non-negligible number of incidents involving foreigners have still occurred. Consequently, ensuring security, public order and effective control over foreign labour in industrial zones poses considerable challenges for local authorities.

3.1.2.2. Management of Temporary Residence and Temporary Absence of Workers

In addition to foreign workers residing and working in industrial zones, there are also tens of thousands of domestic migrant workers from other provinces seeking employment in Hai Phong. One of the most significant challenges is that many of these out-of-province workers do not fully comply with regulations on registering their temporary residence. Furthermore, sudden increases in the number of seasonal workers further complicate the management of temporary residence and temporary absence.

Moreover, each group of workers arriving from different regions brings its own customs, practices and lifestyles. While this enriches cultural diversity, it also gives rise to potential clashes in lifestyle and behaviour, thereby making population management and the maintenance of public security and social order more difficult.

3.1.2.3. Problems of Public Security and Social Order

In the context of industrial parks, issues relating to public security and social order manifest in several specific forms, including:

First, Property-related crime, such as theft and robbery.

Second, "Black credit" and usurious lending, involving informal, high-interest loans and associated coercive practices.

Fourth, Conflicts in labour relations and spontaneous strikes, arising from disputes between workers and employers.

Fifth, Physical altercations and interpersonal conflicts among workers, often linked to stress, living conditions, or cultural and lifestyle differences.

Sixth, Traffic safety issues within industrial parks, particularly during peak hours when workers commute, which increase the risk of traffic accidents and disorder in surrounding areas.

3.1.3. Environmental Issues

3.1.3.1. Environmental conditions within industrial zones

Regarding the environmental situation in industrial parks, several dimensions require attention:

Quality of water environment

Quality of soil environment

Management of ordinary industrial solid waste

These aspects collectively shape the overall ecological footprint of industrial parks and constitute key indicators for assessing environmental sustainability in these areas.

3.1.3.2. Living environment of local residents in areas hosting industrial zones

Residents living in localities where industrial zones are located are those most directly and severely affected by environmental pollution caused by industrial activities. This impact is reflected in the increasing number of people suffering from cancer and other serious illnesses attributable, at least in part, to adverse environmental conditions, as well as in the fact that the age at which such diseases are diagnosed tends to be progressively lower. These trends indicate not only a public-health concern but also a latent socio-political issue that may erode public trust and social cohesion if left unaddressed.

3.1.4. Housing Issues for Workers in Industrial Zones

3.1.4.1. Limited access to social housing for workers

Housing constitutes an urgent and essential need for workers, particularly for migrant labour from other provinces and for foreign workers residing and working in Hai Phong. Field surveys indicate that in industrial zones employing foreign experts, enterprises often arrange hotel accommodation and dedicated transport. By contrast, the majority of workers who are not native to Hai Phong must rent rooms in privately owned houses.

To date, meeting the demand for social housing for workers in industrial zones in Hai Phong City remains a major challenge. The supply of social housing is still limited and does not keep pace with the rapidly growing number of workers, thereby constraining their ability to access stable, affordable and decent accommodation. This shortfall in housing provision has direct implications for workers' quality of life and for social stability in areas surrounding industrial zones.

3.1.4.2. Inadequate living conditions in privately rented boarding houses

Due to the insufficient supply of social housing, most workers are currently compelled to rent rooms in privately operated boarding houses. While

this constitutes an important source of income for many local households, it simultaneously gives rise to a range of social problems.

Many boarding areas built by individual households do *not yet meet appropriate standards for use*: rooms are small and cramped, often poorly ventilated and excessively hot, and fail to adequately satisfy workers' basic living needs. Our survey shows that the majority of rented rooms have a floor area of only 12-15 m², typically accommodating 1-2 people, with monthly rents ranging from 1.5 to 2.5 million VND. Although the financial cost appears relatively low, living conditions are very limited, with a lack of essential services and inadequate guarantees of security, safety and hygiene. Such conditions may contribute to health risks, psychological stress and increased vulnerability to social vices and crime.

3.1.5. Issues of Marriage and Family among Workers in Industrial Zones

The number of workers employed in industrial zones in Hai Phong City has been steadily increasing. At the same time, the gender structure is considerably imbalanced between men and women, and the proportion of workers with "foreign elements" (foreign nationals or those working for foreign-invested enterprises) is on the rise. Consequently, issues related to marriage and family life among workers in industrial zones have become particularly complex and pressing.

With regard to marriage, a number of notable phenomena can be observed: late marriage, cohabitation before marriage and non-marital intimate relationships; Marriages between local workers and foreign workers, which may give rise to a range of social repercussions (such as mixed-race children and children born out of wedlock); An increase in divorce and marital breakdown.

In terms of family life, several serious issues emerge: difficulties in the care and upbringing of children, as well as in maintaining family-based education; problems related to mixed-race children and the legal recognition of their civil status and identity; incidents of domestic violence and growing psychological instability or distress among workers, which adversely affect both family cohesion and social stability in industrial-zone areas.

These marriage and family-related problems underscore the need for more comprehensive social policies and support mechanisms targeting workers and their families, with a view to fostering stable, cohesive and resilient worker communities in Hai Phong's industrial zones.

3.2. CAUSES AND KEY ISSUES IN ADDRESSING SOCIO-POLITICAL PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIAL ZONES IN HAI PHONG TODAY

3.2.1. Causes of socio-political problems arising in the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong

3.2.1.1. The city's accelerated process of industrialisation and modernisation

In the course of promoting industrialisation and modernisation, Hai Phong City has expanded its system of industrial zones at a pace that has outstripped its capacity for management, spatial planning and the development of corresponding social infrastructure. This mismatch between rapid industrial expansion and lagging institutional and infrastructural readiness constitutes a direct driver of emerging instabilities in socio-economic relations across many localities.

3.2.1.2. The shift in social-class structure under the conditions of a socialist-oriented market economy

Whereas Hai Phong's economy was previously predominantly based on agriculture and traditional village communities, a new social space has now taken shape under the combined impact of industrialisation and international integration. Within this transformed context, the working class, migrant labour and industrial entrepreneurs have become the predominant social forces.

The rapid reconfiguration of class and social stratification structures has not yet been adequately regulated or mediated by corresponding social policies and cultural-political institutions. As a result, manifestations of social imbalance and latent socio-political instability have emerged, particularly in areas surrounding industrial zones.

3.2.1.3. Operation of the political system and the institutional and regulatory framework for industrial-zone development

First, although the leadership, direction and governance of industrial-zone development by the political system at different levels have received increasing attention, they remain insufficiently coordinated, coherent and effective.

Second, the institutional framework for state management of industrial zones still exhibits a number of shortcomings, including overlaps and inconsistencies among agencies and sectors, and the absence of a genuinely effective and seamless coordination mechanism between the city level, district and commune/ward levels, and the Management Board of Economic Zones.

Third, mass mobilisation, communication, dialogue and oversight regarding socio-political issues in industrial zones have not been conducted in a regular, continuous or substantive manner, thereby limiting the capacity to anticipate and resolve emerging problems.

Fourth, although the system of specific institutions and policies for the development of industrial zones and economic zones in Hai Phong has received attention from central authorities, it still reveals evident limitations and gaps when measured against the practical requirements of rapid and sustainable development.

3.2.1.4 Diversity of human resources engaged in labour in the city's industrial zones

The sudden increase in the so-called “mechanical” population due to inflows of migrant workers from other provinces and cities to work in industrial zones has significantly altered the social structure and cultural space of local communities in Hai Phong. While social infrastructure - such as housing, healthcare, education, culture and sports - has not developed commensurately, demographic pressure has continued to rise.

This has led to a series of consequences: shortages of housing for workers; overloading of public services; the emergence of social vices; and the intensification of community-level conflicts and tensions. These constitute latent factors of social instability which may crystallise into acute socio-political problems if they are not addressed in a timely and comprehensive manner.

3.2.1.5. International integration and globalization

The emergence of socio-political problems in the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong is also rooted in the multi-dimensional impacts of international integration and globalisation. This group of causes is essentially objective in nature, reflecting the interweaving of internal and external factors in the locality's socio-economic development process - particularly within the open environment of industrial zones, where high concentrations of foreign-invested enterprises, international labour and global governance standards interact with local institutions, communities and socio-political conditions.

3.2.2. Key issues in addressing socio-political problems in the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong today

3.2.2.1. Socio-political problems are becoming increasingly complex, while the awareness and understanding of the relevant actors regarding these issues remain limited

3.2.2.2. Addressing socio-political problems in the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong is an urgent requirement, yet the mechanisms and policies for industrial-zone development and for workers still exhibit numerous limitations

3.2.2.3. The growing demand on resources for resolving socio-political problems in the development of industrial zones contrast sharply with the current shortage of such resources in Hai Phong

3.2.2.4. Resolving socio-political problems in the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong requires the participation of multiple actors, but the degree of engagement on the part of some of these actors remains inadequate

Summary of chapter 3

Chapter 4

SOLUTIONS FOR ADDRESSING SOCIO-POLITICAL PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIAL ZONES IN HAI PHONG CITY BY 2030

4.1. REQUIREMENTS FOR ADDRESSING SOCIO-POLITICAL PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIAL ZONES IN HAI PHONG

4.1.1. Addressing socio-political problems in the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong must be aligned with the city's socio-economic development strategy to 2030, with a vision to 2045

4.1.2. Addressing socio-political problems in the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong City must be oriented towards the goal of developing the Vietnamese working class in the period of accelerated industrialisation, modernisation and international integration

4.1.3. Addressing socio-political problems in the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong City must be associated with the Party and State's principle of "leaving no one behind in the development process"

4.1.4. Addressing socio-political problems in the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong must be linked to the task of building a strong grassroots political system in localities hosting industrial zones

4.2. SOLUTIONS FOR ADDRESSING SOCIO-POLITICAL PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIAL ZONES BY 2030

4.2.1. Strengthening communication and raising the awareness and responsibility of relevant actors regarding the necessity of addressing socio-political problems in industrial-zone development

First, intensify dissemination and education concerning the role and importance of addressing socio-political problems in the development of industrial zones.

Second, enhance the responsibility of local authorities in the management and oversight of industrial-zone development.

Third, heighten enterprises' sense of responsibility for sustainable development.

Fourth, promote the role of local residents and workers in monitoring and exercising social critique.

4.2.2. Improving mechanisms, policies and laws on industrial-zone development in close connection with addressing socio-political problems

First, improve policies for attracting investment in order to develop industrial zones in a sustainable manner.

Second, develop mechanisms and policies for the construction of technical infrastructure and social services in support of industrial zones.

Third, strengthen environmental monitoring and management in industrial zones.

Fourth, the legal framework governing the development of industrial zones.

4.2.3. Mobilising resources to meet the requirements of addressing socio-political problems arising from the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong City from now until 2030

First, mobilise financial resources.

Second, mobilise scientific and technological resources.

Third, train and develop high-quality human resources capable of meeting the requirements of industrial-zone development, thereby limiting the emergence of socio-political problems.

4.2.4. Enhancing the effectiveness of coordination among actors in addressing socio-political problems arising from the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong in the period to 2030

First and foremost, it is necessary to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each actor involved in addressing socio-political problems in the development of industrial zones.

Next, an effective coordination mechanism among actors must be established to ensure the timely resolution of issues arising in industrial zones.

Another important task is to focus on resolving specific socio-political problems that directly affect the living conditions of workers in industrial zones.

Finally, to ensure that the above measures are implemented effectively, appropriate policy support and robust mechanisms for monitoring implementation are required.

Summary of chapter 4

CONCLUSION

1. The development of industrial zones is an objective and inevitable requirement in the current stage of accelerated industrialisation and modernisation in Viet Nam, aimed at realising the strategic goal of “striving to become a developed country oriented towards socialism by the mid-twenty-first century.” However, the expansion of industrial zones inevitably generates a range of socio-political problems, including those related to labour and employment, public security and social order, marriage and family, workers’ housing and childcare, and environmental degradation. Effectively addressing these socio-political problems in the context of industrial-zone development is therefore of critical importance: it not only contributes to promoting socio-economic development, but also helps to ensure political stability, public order and social safety. Hai Phong is by no means an exception to this general trend. Opportunities and challenges arising from both domestic and international factors have given rise to increasingly complex socio-political issues in the development of industrial zones in the city. These issues require comprehensive and accurate identification so that feasible solutions can be devised, thereby fostering economic growth while simultaneously advancing social progress and justice and maintaining political stability in Hai Phong in the new phase of the country’s development.

2. The emergence of socio-political problems in the process of industrial-zone development in Hai Phong in the period of intensified industrialisation, modernisation and international integration is, to a considerable extent, an inevitability. Certain social issues generate positive effects for the city, while at the same time entailing significant limitations. Labour and employment are a typical example. On the one hand, industrial-zone development creates a large number of jobs, generates income, improves people’s living standards and promotes the training and upskilling of the labour force. On the other hand, it is constrained by a severe shortage of labour resources, especially high-quality human resources.

Issues of public security and social order also arise. The increasing presence of foreigners and out-of-province workers who come to live and work in Hai Phong can, on the one hand, stimulate consumption and increase demand for goods and services. On the other hand, it poses substantial difficulties for population management and the maintenance of public security and social safety.

The limitations in addressing socio-political problems in the development of industrial parks in Hai Phong stem from both objective and subjective causes. At the same time, they pose to the city a series of pressing issues, such as: socio-political problems associated with industrial-park development are

becoming more complex, yet the awareness and understanding of relevant actors remain limited; there is a mismatch between the urgent requirement to resolve these problems and the inadequacies of existing mechanisms and policies on industrial-park development and worker protection; there is a growing contradiction between the ever-increasing demands placed on the resolution of socio-political problems and the constraints on human and other resources in Hai Phong; and there is a discrepancy between the requirement for enhanced coordination among multiple actors and the still-limited level of cooperation on the part of some of these actors. These tensions call for appropriate and timely solutions.

3. In the coming years, given the rapid, complex and unpredictable changes in international and domestic conditions, in the broader region and within Hai Phong itself, socio-political problems related to the development of industrial zones will continue to unfold, exhibiting new substantive features, more diverse forms and greater speed. Issues such as labour and employment, environmental degradation and public health, labour disputes, and questions of public security and social order are likely to become more acute. Hence, there is a compelling need for appropriate and effective response measures.

In this context, the dissertation has proposed four principal groups of solutions:

(1) intensifying communication and education to raise the awareness and sense of responsibility of Party committees, authorities at all levels, relevant sectors in Hai Phong and the population regarding the importance of resolving socio-political problems arising from industrial-zone development;

(2) improving mechanisms, policies and the legal framework on industrial-zone development in close connection with the resolution of socio-political problems;

(3) mobilising and allocating resources to meet the requirements of addressing socio-political problems arising from the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong City from now until 2030; and

(4) strengthening coordination among actors in resolving socio-political problems arising from the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong in the period to 2030.

These solution sets are of equal importance and must be implemented in a comprehensive, coherent and mutually reinforcing manner; no single solution can be over-emphasised at the expense of the others. Only through such a synchronised approach is it possible to effectively limit the socio-political problems arising from the development of industrial zones in Hai Phong in the years to come.

**LIST OF THE AUTHOR’S SCIENTIFIC WORKS
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