

**HO CHI MINH NATIONAL ACADEMY OF POLITICS**

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**GUARANTEEING THE POLITICAL RIGHTS OF WORKERS IN  
INDUSTRIAL PARKS IN HO CHI MINH CITY AT PRESENT**

**DOCTORAL DISSERTATION ABSTRACT**

**FIELD OF STUDY: POLITICAL SCIENCE**

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## INTRODUCTION

### 1. The urgency of the topic

Political rights are among the fundamental and essential rights that constitute the system of human rights. They are widely recognized in international legal instruments as well as in national legislation, reflecting the level of democracy and civilization of a political regime. In the context of socio-economic development and deep international integration, ensuring political rights for workers, particularly those in industrial parks, is not only a legal obligation but also an inevitable requirement for maintaining socio-political stability and promoting sustainable national development.

Within the stratified social structure of modern industrialization, the working class in industrial parks has assumed a dual role: both as the direct productive force generating surplus value for the economy, and as a social group subject to multifaceted impacts from the restructuring of production spaces in the context of globalization. In the development process of the socialist rule-of-law state, guaranteeing political rights for this group has always occupied a central position in sustainable development policy. Recent studies on industrial democracy affirm the close correlation between workers' political participation and the quality of socio-economic development as well as political stability. Ensuring political rights for workers in industrial parks not only strengthens their role as political actors, but also serves as a vivid expression of the democratic, just, and progressive nature of socialist democracy.

The provisions of the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), particularly those concerning the rights of assembly, association, and participation in political life, provide an important international legal foundation to which Vietnam is committed. In domesticating these commitments, the 2013 Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has concretized the political rights of citizens-including workers in general and those in industrial parks in particular-through provisions such as: the right to vote and stand for election, the right to participate in state and social management, the right to freedom of expression, and the rights of association and demonstration...

In recent years, practical experience has shown that many guidelines and policies of the Party and the Government have been directed towards ensuring and promoting the political rights of workers, thereby making an important contribution to building a socialist rule-of-law state "of the people, by the people, and for the people." However, in the current context-when the Party and the Government are

pursuing the restructuring of the state administrative model, with the aim of establishing a centrally governed mega-city through the merger of three provincial-level administrative units: Ho Chi Minh City, Binh Duong Province, and Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, encompassing more than 60 industrial parks and nearly one-third of the nation's industrial workforce-Ho Chi Minh City is facing a critical challenge: not only to maintain economic growth but also to address the question of balancing political power amid administrative restructuring under the mega-city model. This situation requires comprehensive and appropriate approaches.

Moreover, the scale of population, territory, and governmental structure following the merger also poses the risk of widening the gap between workers and the local administrative apparatus; diminishing the representative capacity of the working class in elected bodies; and limiting their access to and exercise of political rights such as voting, candidacy, association, and trade union participation, ... At the same time, political apathy and the decline of cohesion between workers and local authorities may render industrial parks “gaps” in the practice of citizenship rights. If not addressed in a timely manner, this issue will not only affect social stability but also create conditions for hostile forces to exploit, thereby undermining public order and threatening the sustainable development of the Southern key economic region.

Ensuring and exercising the political rights of workers in industrial parks in Ho Chi Minh City is of utmost necessity for maintaining socio-political stability and for creating a democratic environment in which citizens can actively and proactively participate in the political process. Accordingly, conducting research on this topic *“Guaranteeing the political rights of workers in industrial parks in Ho Chi Minh City at present”* bears significance in both theory and practice.

## **2. Research objectives and tasks of the dissertation**

### ***2.1. Research Objective***

The purpose of dissertation is to analyze, assess, and propose solutions to ensure the substantive political rights of workers employed in industrial parks in Ho Chi Minh City, thereby contributing to the improvement of democratic institutions and the enhancement of representative capacity so as to safeguard the legitimate

rights and interests of workers in the current context of industrialization and deep international integration.

## **2.2. Research Tasks**

+ A comprehensive review of research findings pertinent to the dissertation topic;

+ Formulating a theoretical framework for safeguarding the political rights of workers in industrial parks within the context of urban governance transformation, an integration of industrial democracy theory (Pateman, 1970) and the multi-level governance approach (Hooghe & Marks, 2003);

+ Analyzing and assessing the current state of safeguarding the political rights of workers in industrial parks in Binh Duong Province prior to the merger, identifying the achievements as well as the existing limitations and their underlying causes, thereby providing the basis for proposing perspectives and solutions to ensure these rights for workers in industrial parks in Ho Chi Minh City in the coming period;

+ Proposing perspectives, orientations, and solutions to effectively safeguard the political rights of workers in industrial parks in Ho Chi Minh City in the forthcoming period.

## **3. Research subject and scope of the dissertation**

### **3.1. Research subject**

The object of this dissertation is the theoretical and practical issues concerning the safeguarding of workers' political rights in industrial parks.

### **3.2. Research scope**

- *In terms of spatial scope*, the dissertation investigates the safeguarding of workers' political rights in the industrial parks of the former Binh Duong Province.

- *In terms of temporal scope*, the dissertation covers the period from 2013 (marking the enforcement of the 2013 Constitution and the 2012 Labor Code on May 1, 2013) to 2024, and further proposes orientations and solutions to safeguard the political rights of workers in the industrial parks of Ho Chi Minh City in the forthcoming period.

- *In terms of content*, the dissertation is confined to the examination of four core political rights of workers:

- + The right to vote and to stand for election;
- + The right to form and participate in trade unions and other representative bodies;
- + The right to demonstrate and to strike;
- + The right to engage in the formulation of labor and economic policies.

#### **4. Theoretical basis and research methods**

##### ***4.1. Theoretical basis***

This dissertation is grounded in the theoretical foundation of Marxism-Leninism and the thought of President Ho Chi Minh; the provisions of international legal instruments and Vietnamese law concerning the political rights of workers; as well as the guidelines, policies, and legal frameworks of the Communist Party and the Government of Vietnam on safeguarding the political rights of workers in industrial parks.

##### ***4.2. Research methods***

The dissertation employs the following specific research methods:

The dissertation employs research methods in political science and interdisciplinary studies; specific methods include: historical, logical, the combination of historical and logical approaches; analysis, synthesis, comparison; and systems analysis.

Expert interviews: The interviewees include trade union officials and management board officers in industrial parks, with an estimated sample size of approximately 15 to 20 participants.

A questionnaire survey is planned to be administered to workers in industrial parks in Binh Duong province, encompassing around 11 zones with an estimated total of 1,800 questionnaires.

##### ***4.3. Sources of collected data***

Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews and questionnaire surveys, while secondary data were obtained from the Vietnam statistical Yearbook,

the statistical Yearbooks of Binh Duong province (former) and Ho Chi Minh City, reports of local trade unions, the Management Board of Binh Duong industrial parks, and the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour...

## **5. New contributions of the dissertation**

An analytical framework is constructed by integrating Pateman's (1970) theory of industrial democracy with Schmitter's (1974) concept of "state corporatism" to examine the protection of workers' political rights in the context of Vietnam's transition toward a socialist-oriented model of urban governance. This theoretical framework not only elucidates the relationship between the exercise of political rights and governance structures, but also contributes to political science scholarship on labor rights under conditions of industrialization and globalization.

This research seeks to elucidate the concept of the "substantive protection of workers' political rights" within industrial parks, extending beyond the legal dimension to encompass its practical effectiveness as reflected in such factors as accessibility, the degree of participation, the effectiveness of representation, and the mechanisms of oversight.

A set of evaluative criteria is developed on the basis of four core political rights-voting and candidacy; participation in state administration; freedom of assembly; and collective petitioning-contextualized within the specific conditions of the mega-urban model and the ongoing process of administrative restructuring in Ho Chi Minh City.

## **6. Theoretical and practical significance of the dissertation**

### ***6.1. Theoretical significance***

The dissertation contributes to the development of political science theory in the following respects: it deepens the theoretical understanding of political rights in the context of industrialization; it analyzes workers' political rights not merely as a legal issue but as a constitutive factor of socio-political stability amid the transformation of urban governance models; and it integrates (Pateman, 1970) theory of industrial democracy with multilevel governance framework (Hooghe and Marks, 2003) to explain the relationship among workers, the state, and employers.

This study supplements the analytical framework of “substantive democracy” within political science research. It proposes evaluative criteria for political rights based on accessibility, degree of participation, and effectiveness of representation, rather than relying solely on legal provisions. It affirms the position of the industrial-park working class as a political subject playing a pivotal role in social stability and sustainable development. Furthermore, it analyzes the risk of political alienation arising from restricted participation, which may result in the erosion of institutional trust.

## ***6.2. Practical significance***

The findings of this dissertation will provide both theoretical arguments and empirical evidence to inform policy-making and urban governance in Ho Chi Minh City in the post-merger context:

*First*, with respect to institutional reform: the dissertation provides scientific grounds for improving the legal framework on labor rights, particularly in the context of the emergence of centrally governed mega-urban areas. It proposes flexible mechanisms of representation (for instance, increasing the number of seats for workers in local People’s Councils) in order to reduce the gap between workers and government authorities.

*Second*, with regard to socio-political stability: the dissertation highlights the risks of political instability if workers’ political rights in industrial parks are not adequately addressed, particularly as they risk becoming a vulnerable group amid the process of administrative restructuring. Accordingly, the dissertation suggests preventive solutions through mechanisms of social dialogue and the monitoring of workers’ political rights implementation.

*Third*, with respect to modern urban governance: the dissertation proposes strengthening the application of digital technologies to enhance transparency in the exercise of workers’ rights to vote and to file collective petitions in industrial parks.

*Fourth*, with regard to non-traditional security: the dissertation analyzes the risk that hostile forces may exploit democratic gaps in industrial parks to incite

unrest, and accordingly proposes solutions that link the protection of political rights with the safeguarding of political security.

The dissertation holds not only academic value in advancing theories of political rights and industrial democracy, but also strong practical relevance in the context of Vietnam in general and Ho Chi Minh City in particular, where efforts are being intensified to build a socialist rule-of-law state and to restructure the urban governance model toward a mega-urban framework, while continuously facing the challenge of balancing economic growth with political stability.

## **7. Structure of the dissertation**

Apart from the introduction, conclusion, references, and appendices, the dissertation is structured into 4 chapters comprising 11 sections.

### **Chapter 1:**

#### **OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH ON THE DISSERTATION TOPIC**

#### **1.1. SCHOLARLY WORKS ON POLITICAL RIGHTS**

##### *1.1.1. Scholarly theoretical works on political rights*

##### *1.1.1.1. International research*

- *Democracy and the Limits of Self-Government*, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

- *On Democracy*, Robert, A.Dahl, Yale University Press, 1998.

- *The Spirit of Democracy*, Larry Diamond, Stanford University, 2009.

- *Theories of Democracy: A Critical Introduction*, Frank Cunningham, by Routledge, 2001.

- *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late 20th Century*, Samuel P. Huntington, University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.

- *Political Liberalism*, John Rawls, Columbia University Press, 2005.

##### *1.1.1.2. Domestic research*

- The book “*Quyền con người trong thế giới hiện đại*” [*Human rights in the modern world*], edited by Phạm Khiêm Ích and Hoàng Văn Hảo, Institute of Social

Sciences Information, 1995.

- The book “*Một số vấn đề về quyền dân sự và chính trị*” [*Some issues on civil and political rights*], edited by Hoàng Văn Hào and Chu Hồng Thanh, National Political Publishing House, 1997.

- The book “*ABC về các quyền dân sự, chính trị cơ bản*” [*ABC of fundamental civil and political rights*] authored by Vũ Công Giao and Lê Khánh Tùng, published by Vietnam National University Press, Hanoi, in 2014.

- The book “*Những vấn đề lý luận và thực tiễn của nhóm quyền dân sự và chính trị*” [*Theoretical and practical issues of civil and political rights*], authored by Võ Khánh Vinh, published by Social Sciences Publishing House in 2011.

- The ministerial-level scientific project “*Sự phát triển quyền dân sự và chính trị trong thời kỳ đổi mới ở Việt Nam (1986 - 2001)*” [*The Development of Civil and Political Rights in the Period of Renovation in Vietnam (1986–2001)*] carried out by the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics, 2002.

- The dissertation “*Thực hiện pháp luật về quyền chính trị đối với phụ nữ ở Việt Nam hiện nay*” [*Implementation of the law on political rights of women in Vietnam today*], authored by Nguyễn Thị Thu Hà, defended in 2018

- The article “*Quyền dân sự, chính trị trong xã hội ta*” [*Civil and political rights in our society*], authored by Vĩnh An, published in the *All-People’s National Defense Journal*, October 2011.

### ***1.1.2. Scholarly works on political rights in international human rights law***

#### ***1.1.2.1. International research***

- *The International Conventant on Civil and Political Rights: Cases, Material and Commenttary*, Sarah Joseph, Jenny Schults và Melissa Castan, Oxford University Press, Second Edition, 2004.

- *U.N.Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: CCPR Commentaries*, Manfred Nowak, N.P Engel Press, Germany, 1993.

- *International Human Rights in Context: Law, Politics, Morals*, Henry J. Steiner, Philip Alston & Ryan Goodman, Third Edition, Oxford University Press, 2013.

- *Routledge Handbook of International Human Rights Law*, Scott Sheeran và Sir Nigel Rodley, Routledge, 2016.

- *The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: Cases, Materials, and Commentary*", Sarah Joseph, Jenny Schultz & Melissa Castan, The Second Edition, Oxford University Press, 2005.

- *The UN Human Rights Treaty System in the 21st Century*, Anne Bayefsky, First Edition, Springer, 2012.

- *Human Rights and Politics: The Political Impact of Human Rights*, Darren Hawkins & Jack Donnelly, Springer, 2008.

Seminal studies worldwide have provided detailed examinations of international instruments on human rights in general and on political rights in particular. These works have articulated theoretical perspectives on political rights within the framework of international legal doctrine.

#### ***1.1.2.1. Domestic research***

- The book "*Giới thiệu các văn kiện quốc tế về quyền con người - An introduction to International Human Rights Instruments*", Center for Human Rights and Citizens' Rights Studies, Vietnam National University, 2011.

## **1.2. SCHOLARLY WORKS ON THE POLITICAL RIGHTS OF WORKERS**

### **1.2.1. Scholarly works on workers' rights**

#### ***1.2.1.1. International research***

- *International Labour Law*, Jean-Michel Servais, Seventh Edition, Kluwer Law International, 2022.

- *The International Labour Organization and the Quest for Social Justice, 1919–2009*, Gerry Rodgers, Eddy Lee, Lee Swepston & Jasmien Van Daele, ILR Press/Cornell University Press; Geneva : International Labour Office, 2009.

- *Decent Work: Concepts, Models and Policies*, International Labour Office, 2003.

- *The Core Human Rights Treaties and Labour Rights*, Ingrid Landau, Colin Fenwick & Kevin Kolben, office of The United Nations High commissioner, for

human rights 2011.

- *Labour Rights as Human Rights*, Philip Alston, Oxford University Press, 2005.

- The article “*Labor Standards and Human Rights: Implications for International Trade and Investment*”, Drusilla K. Brown, Alan V. Deardorff and Robert M. Stern, Tạp chí World Scientific Studies in International Economics, 2013.

#### **1.2.1.1. Domestic research**

- The book “*Bảo đảm quyền con người trong pháp luật lao động Việt Nam*” [*Safeguarding human rights in Vietnam’s labor legislation*], Lê Thị Hoài Thu (Chief Editor). Hanoi: Vietnam National University Press, 2014.

- Doctoral dissertation “*Pháp luật lao động Việt Nam về bảo vệ quyền của người lao động trong bối cảnh Việt Nam gia nhập Hiệp định đối tác toàn diện và tiến bộ xuyên Thái Bình Dương*”, [Vietnamese labor law on the protection of workers’ rights in the context of Vietnam’s accession to the comprehensive and progressive agreement for Trans-Pacific partnership], authored by Trần Tuấn Sơn, defended in 2022.

- Doctoral dissertation “*Bảo vệ quyền của người lao động làm việc tại doanh nghiệp có vốn đầu tư nước ngoài theo pháp luật Việt Nam hiện hành*” [The protection of workers’ rights in foreign-invested enterprises under Vietnamese law] by Trần Nguyên Cường, defended in 2016.

- The article “*Quyền của người lao động theo pháp luật quốc tế và pháp luật Việt Nam*” [*Workers’ rights under international and Vietnamese law*], authored by Nguyễn Bình An, published in *Democracy and Law Journal*, May 2016.

- The article “*Một số vấn đề về bảo vệ quyền của người lao động trong pháp luật Việt Nam theo cam kết của Hiệp định Đối tác toàn diện và tiến bộ xuyên Thái Bình Dương - CPTPP*” [Some issues concerning the protection of workers’ rights in Vietnamese law under the Commitments of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)], Trần Tuấn Sơn, “*Pháp luật và thực tiễn*” *Journal*, number 48/2021.

- The article “*Bảo vệ quyền của người lao động ở Việt Nam*” [*The protection of*

*workers' rights in Vietnam*], Nông Đức Tài, “Xây dựng Đảng” Journal, December 2024.

The aforementioned studies have extensively addressed workers' rights. Among these rights, certain aspects inherently involve political rights, such as the right to participate in trade unions and the right to assembly...

## **1.2.2. Scholarly works on the political rights of workers**

### ***1.2.2.1. International research***

- *Workers' Rights as Human Rights*, James A. Gross, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 2003.

- *The International Labour Organization and the Quest for Social Justice, 1919-2009*, Gerry Rodgers, International Labor Office, 2009.

- The article “*Legal Guarantee for Rights of Political Participation of Citizens in Harmonious Society*”, Zhang Shunqing, Yangtze Tribune, 3/2008.

- The article “*Trade, Employment and Labour standards: A study of core worker's Rights and Internatinonal Trade*”, OECD - Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1996.

- The article “*Understanding the right to freedom of association at the workplace: components and scope*”, M. Budeli, Nelson Mandela University Law Journal, No.1, 2010.

### ***1.2.2.2. Domestic research***

- The book “*Ảnh hưởng của thương mại đến nhân quyền*” [*The impact of trade on human rights*], edited by Lê Thị Hoài Thu and Vũ Công Giao, Hong Duc Publishing House, 2016.

- Doctoral dissertation “*Incorporating the core international labour standards on freedom of association and collective bargaining into Vietnam's legal system*” (Kiến nghị các tiêu chuẩn lao động quốc tế cơ bản về tự do hiệp hội và thương lượng tập thể vào hệ thống pháp luật Việt Nam) authored by Phạm Trọng Nghĩa (Brunel University – School of Law), defended in 2010.

- The article “*Pháp luật công đoàn của một số nước và kinh nghiệm cho Việt Nam*” [*Trade union law in some countries and lessons for Vietnam*], authored by

Nguyễn Hữu Chí and Đào Mộng Điệp, published in *Law Journal*, No. 6/2010.

- The article “*Tự do công đoàn và đình công dưới góc độ quyền kinh tế - xã hội của người lao động*” [*Freedom of Association and the Right to Strike from the Perspective of Workers’ Economic and Social Rights*] by Nguyễn Hữu Chí, published in *Law Journal*, No. 6/2012.

- The article “*Công ước số 98 về quyền được tổ chức, thương lượng tập thể và vấn đề pháp lý cần hoàn thiện ở Việt Nam hiện nay*” [*Convention no. 98 on the right to organize and collective bargaining and the legal issues needing improvement in contemporary Vietnam*], authored by Hoàng Kim Khuyên, published in *Law Journal*, No. 3/2019.

### **1.3. SCHOLARLY WORKS ON ENSURING THE POLITICAL RIGHTS OF WORKERS IN INDUSTRIAL PARKS**

#### **1.3.1. International research**

- *Workers’ Rights as Human Rights*, Lance Compa Cornell University Press, 2001.

- *The Political Economy of Labor Rights: Workers, the State, and Globalization*, David M. Trubek, Amy C. Kesselman, and John F. Schieman, Oxford University Press, 2007.

- *Labor Rights and the Social Clause in the WTO*, Gary P. Sampson, Kluwer Law International, 2003.

- *The Globalization of Labor and the Politics of International Labor Rights*, Robert J. Flanagan, Oxford University Press, 2004.

- *The Right to Organize: Labor Law and the Politics of Empowerment*, Jennifer L. Hochschild & Vesla M. Weaver, Oxford University Press, 2002.

- *The Labor Movement and the Politics of Rights*, Richard B. Freeman & James L. Medoff, Basic Book, 2006.

#### **1.3.2. Domestic research**

- The article: “*Bảo vệ quyền của người lao động trong các doanh nghiệp ngoài nhà nước theo pháp luật Việt Nam: thực trạng và kiến nghị*” [*The protection of workers’ rights in non-state enterprises under vietnamese law: current situation and*

*recommendations*] authored by Phan Thị Lam Hồng published in “Công thương” Journal number 12/2020.

- The article: “*Pháp luật về quyền thành lập tổ chức của người lao động tại doanh nghiệp – một góc nhìn mới về quyền công đoàn ở Việt Nam*” [*The law on workers’ right to establish organizations at enterprises – a new perspective on trade union rights in Vietnam*], authored by Trương Chánh Đức, Tạp chí “Pháp luật về quyền con người” Journal number 5/2023. The article: “*Bàn về vai trò của tổ chức công đoàn trong bảo vệ quyền của người lao động trong bối cảnh Việt Nam gia nhập hiệp định CPTPP*” [*On the role of trade union organizations in protecting workers’ rights in the context of vietnam’s accession to the CPTPP*] authored by Trần Tuấn Sơn, published in “Công thương” Journal number 9/2019.

- The article: “*Tình hình thực hiện quyền của người lao động tại một số doanh nghiệp FDI ở thành phố Biên Hoà*” [*The situation of workers’ rights implementation in selected FDI enterprises in Biên Hoà City*] authored by Nguyễn Quốc Định published in “Khoa học xã hội” Journal number 8/2015. The article: “*Thực trạng vi phạm quyền của người lao động và một số kiến nghị*” [*The current situation of workers’ rights violations and some recommendations*] authored by Phan Thị Lam Hồng published in “Dân chủ và Pháp luật” Journal number 9/2021.

*Firstly*, in terms of theoretical grounds: Establishing an analytical framework to ensure workers’ political rights in industrial parks.

*Secondly*, from a practical perspective: clarifying the gap between legal norms and political life.

*Thirdly*, **From a policy perspective: Proposing potential solutions**

#### ***1.4.2. Issues and research gaps yet to be explored***

*Firstly*, Theoretical gap: Lack of interdisciplinary approaches and specific concepts

*Secondly*, Empirical gap: Lack of in-depth qualitative data and case study research

*Thirdly*, Policy gap: Insufficient assessment of the effectiveness of experimental institutional models

### **1.4.3. Research problems addressed in the dissertation**

Based on the identification of theoretical, practical, and policy gaps in the existing literature, the dissertation chooses to conduct an in-depth study on the protection of political rights of workers in industrial parks in a typical locality for industrial development-Ho Chi Minh City following its merger with Binh Duong and Ba Ria-Vung Tau provinces-as a case study reflecting the relationship between economic development, labor organization, and the democratization process under a specific institutional context.

#### ***1.4.3.1. Research objectives***

##### **General objective:**

This dissertation aims to systematically analyze the nature, structure, and conditions for the implementation of guarantees of workers' political rights in industrial parks in Ho Chi Minh City (after the administrative merger), within the context of economic integration.

##### **Specific objectives:**

Systematizing the theoretical foundations for ensuring the political rights of workers from a political science perspective. Analyzing the current situation of political rights protection for workers in industrial parks in Ho Chi Minh City (with a focus on industrial parks formerly in Binh Duong province). Proposing specific policy directions and institutional reforms to effectively guarantee the political rights of workers in industrial parks in Ho Chi Minh City (post-merger), within the framework of socialist-oriented market economic development and the construction of a rule-of-law state.

#### ***1.4.3.2. Research questions***

##### **Theoretical aspect:**

How should the protection of political rights of workers in industrial parks be approached within the framework of modern political science theory?

How is the relationship between labor rights, civil rights, and political rights manifested under a specific institutional context, such as in Vietnam?

##### **Practical aspect:**

What aspects reflect the current situation of political rights protection for workers in industrial parks? How do these aspects demonstrate the political participation of workers in these parks?

Which institutional, legal, and social factors currently limit or influence the protection of political rights of workers in industrial parks?

**Policy aspect:**

What gaps or contradictions exist in the current legal and institutional framework regarding the protection of political rights for workers, particularly in the context of international integration?

What policy models or institutional reforms can be studied, piloted, or implemented to enhance the effectiveness of political rights protection for workers in industrial parks in Ho Chi Minh City (post-merger)?

**Chapter 2:**

**SOME THEORETICAL ISSUES ON ENSURING THE POLITICAL RIGHTS OF WORKERS IN INDUSTRIAL PARKS**

**2.1. CONCEPT, DISTINCTIVE FEATURES, AND THE ROLE OF SAFEGUARDING WORKERS' POLITICAL RIGHTS IN INDUSTRIAL PARKS**

**2.1.1. Concept of safeguarding workers' political rights in industrial parks**

***2.1.1.1. Concept of political rights***

Political rights constitute a foundational concept in political science, defined in multidimensional ways by scholars and international legal instruments. In essence, they represent a set of fundamental rights that guarantee citizens' participation in the political life of the nation, while simultaneously reflecting the relationship between the state and the individual within a democratic institutional framework.

The ICCPR does not provide a precise definition of the concept of political rights; rather, it stipulates them in clusters of rights, including: the right to freedom of expression (Article 19); the right of peaceful assembly (Article 21); the right to freedom of association (Article 22); and the rights to vote, to stand for election, and to have access to public office through free, universal, and equal elections (Article

25). In Vietnam, the 2013 Constitution codifies these rights comprehensively in Chapter II, encompassing the rights to freedom of the press, freedom of expression, access to information, association, and demonstration (Article 25); the rights to vote and to stand for election (Article 27); as well as the rights to participate in the management of the state and society, and to discuss and petition state authorities (Article 28)

#### ***2.1.1.2. Concept of workers' political rights in industrial parks***

From the conceptual approach to workers' political rights and the status of workers in industrial parks, one may formulate the following understanding of workers' political rights in industrial parks: these rights constitute the totality of entitlements recognized by national legislation and international treaties, ensuring workers' active, free, and equal participation in political and social life. Such rights include the rights to vote and to stand for election; the right to participate in the management of the state and society; the rights to freedom of expression, association, assembly, and demonstration; the right to join and establish trade unions; and the right to participate in mechanisms of social dialogue.

#### ***2.1.1.2. Concept of safeguarding workers' political rights in industrial parks***

On the basis of the foregoing conceptual foundations and in light of the particular characteristics of workers in industrial parks, this study advances the following conceptualization: *The guarantee of workers' political rights in industrial parks refers to the totality of measures, mechanisms, and conditions instituted by relevant actors to actualize the political rights enshrined in law, thereby ensuring that workers are able to exercise those rights fully and effectively in practice.*

### **2.1.2. Defining characteristics of the guarantee of workers' political rights in industrial parks**

#### ***2.1.2.1. Characteristics of workers' political rights in industrial parks***

*Firstly*, the political rights of workers in industrial parks are formally acknowledged and institutionally safeguarded by the legal framework.

*Secondly*, these rights are intrinsically linked to the economic and socio-cultural rights of workers.

*Thirdly*, the political rights of workers within enterprises embody both an international dimension and a universal character.

### ***2.1.2.2. Characteristics of safeguarding the political rights of workers in industrial parks***

*Firstly*, safeguarding the political rights of workers in industrial parks entails ensuring the rights of a social group that plays a significant role yet remains highly vulnerable in the political sphere and possesses numerous distinctive characteristics.

*Secondly*, safeguarding of workers' political rights encompasses a relatively broad range of entitlements.

*Thirdly*, the political rights of workers in industrial parks need to be actualized through a coherent system of mechanisms.

### **2.1.3. Role of safeguarding workers' political rights in industrial parks**

*Firstly*, Ensuring the political rights of workers in industrial parks contributes to the realization of grassroots democracy.

*Secondly*, Ensuring the political rights of workers in industrial parks helps to consolidate their role as political actors and reinforces their position as the leading force of the working class.

*Thirdly*, ensuring the political rights of workers in industrial parks contributes to enhancing the effectiveness of the political system.

*Fourthly*, Ensuring the political rights of workers in industrial parks constitutes both the protection of human rights and the promotion of sustainable national development.

## **2.2. CONTENT AND MECHANISMS FOR SAFEGUARDING THE POLITICAL RIGHTS OF WORKERS IN INDUSTRIAL PARKS**

### **2.2.1. Content of safeguarding workers' political rights in industrial parks**

#### ***2.2.1.1. Content of workers' political rights in industrial parks***

*Firstly*, the right to political participation

*Secondly*, the right to form and join representative organizations

*Thirdly*, the rights to demonstration and strike action

*Fourthly*, the right to participate in the formulation of labor and economic

policies

### ***2.2.1.2. The content of ensuring workers' political rights in industrial parks***

*Firstly*, enhancing the leadership role of the Party in ensuring workers' political rights in industrial parks

*Secondly*, recognition of workers' political rights in industrial parks

*Thirdly*, respecting workers' political rights in industrial parks

*Fourthly*, safeguarding workers' political rights in industrial parks

*Fifthly*, realization of political rights

### **2.2.2. Mechanisms for ensuring workers' political rights in industrial parks**

*Firstly, explicit laws and policies*

*Secondly, promoting the role of representative organizations in safeguarding workers' political rights in industrial parks*

*Thirdly*, intensifying legal dissemination and education to raise awareness of workers' political rights in industrial parks

*Fourthly*, application of information technology in safeguarding workers' political rights in industrial parks

*Fifthly*, enhancing international cooperation mechanisms in safeguarding the political rights of workers in industrial parks.

## **2.3. FACTORS INFLUENCING THE SAFEGUARDING OF WORKERS' POLITICAL RIGHTS IN INDUSTRIAL PARKS**

- Political factors
- Legal factors
- Economic factors
- Cultural factors
- Educational factors and legal awareness
- Scientific and technological factors

### **Chapter 3:**

## **THE CURRENT SITUATION OF SAFEGUARDING THE POLITICAL RIGHTS OF WORKERS IN INDUSTRIAL PARKS IN HO CHI MINH CITY**

### **3.1. OVERVIEW OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, INDUSTRIAL PARKS, AND THE SITUATION OF WORKERS IN INDUSTRIAL PARKS IN HO CHI MINH CITY**

#### ***3.1.1. A general overview of the current socio-economic context of Ho Chi Minh City***

The administrative merger between Ho Chi Minh City and Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province represents a strategic step aimed at establishing a mega-urban area serving as the economic locomotive of both the nation and the Southeast Asian region. Upon the completion of the merger, the newly established city will not only expand in terms of territory and population but also generate significant synergies in socio-economic development, infrastructure, and key industries. With a total area of approximately 30,000 km<sup>2</sup> and a population exceeding 20 million, the new Ho Chi Minh City will become one of the largest metropolitan regions in Southeast Asia.

#### **3.1.2. An overview of the current industrial parks in Ho Chi Minh City**

The merger of Ho Chi Minh City and Ba Ria-Vung Tau has expanded the spatial scope for industrial development.

As of now, Ho Chi Minh City accommodates 3 export processing zones and 14 operational industrial parks, Ba Ria-Vung Tau comprises 13 active industrial parks, while Binh Duong encompasses 29 industrial parks currently in operation.

#### ***3.1.3. The Situation of workers in industrial parks in Ho Chi Minh City***

As of the present, Ho Chi Minh City comprises 17 active industrial and export processing zones, encompassing 1,330 enterprises and employing approximately 276,698 Vietnamese workers. Binh Duong accommodates about 300,000 workers within 3,807 enterprises, while Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province has an estimated workforce ranging from 180,000 to 200,000 individuals.

### **3.2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND LIMITATIONS IN SAFEGUARDING THE POLITICAL RIGHTS OF WORKERS IN INDUSTRIAL PARKS IN HO CHI MINH CITY**

#### ***3.2.1. Fundamental achievements in ensuring the political rights of workers in industrial parks***

- Political rights as enshrined in the Constitution and the legal system of Vietnam

- The Constitution and laws embody respect for political rights

- Mechanisms have been established to safeguard the political rights of all citizens, including workers in industrial parks

- Significant achievements have been attained in the realization of the political rights of workers in industrial parks

### ***3.2.2. Constraints in safeguarding the political rights of workers in industrial parks***

- *Political rights have not yet been fully recognized in accordance with international conventions*

- *The mechanisms for safeguarding political rights remain incomplete, and therefore their functioning has not been truly effective*

- *The extent to which the political rights of workers in industrial parks are realized remains limited.*

## **3.3. CAUSES**

### ***3.2.1. Causes of the achievements***

*Firstly*, the progressive improvement of the international legal system constitutes an important and objective factor contributing to the safeguarding of workers' political rights, particularly in the context of globalization.

*Secondly*, the sound policies and guidelines of the Party and the State have provided a crucial political and legal foundation for the achievements in ensuring the political rights of workers in industrial parks in Ho Chi Minh City.

*Thirdly*, the impact of policies aimed at expanding workers' political participation in industrial parks across Ho Chi Minh City has significantly reinforced these achievements.

*Fourthly*, the application of digital transformation in administrative reform and the implementation of smart city development policies in Ho Chi Minh City have made substantial contributions to safeguarding the political rights of workers in industrial parks.

*Fifthly*, the activities of trade unions represent a fundamental factor contributing to the achievements in ensuring the political rights of workers in industrial parks in Ho Chi Minh City.

### ***3.2.2. Causes of the limitations***

*Firstly*, legal barriers arising from the legal system and enforcement mechanisms concerning the political rights of workers in industrial parks.

*Secondly*, causes derived from socio-economic factors. The limitations in safeguarding the political rights of workers in industrial parks are not only dependent on legal or institutional factors but are also profoundly influenced by the economic conditions and social context in which workers live and work.

*Thirdly*, the awareness and attitudes of the actors involved in ensuring the political rights of workers in industrial parks.

*Fourthly*, trade unions remain largely formalistic in their operations, failing to function effectively as a bridge between workers in industrial parks and the Party and the Government, and not fully protecting the legitimate and lawful rights and interests of workers.

## **3.4. FACTORS INFLUENCING THE SAFEGUARDING OF WORKERS' POLITICAL RIGHTS IN INDUSTRIAL PARKS IN HO CHI MINH CITY**

*- The level of completeness of the legal and policy framework on political rights*

*- The capacity and level of participation of the actors responsible for ensuring these rights*

## **Chapter 4:**

### **ORIENTATIONS AND SOLUTIONS FOR ENSURING THE POLITICAL RIGHTS OF WORKERS IN INDUSTRIAL PARKS IN HO CHI MINH CITY IN THE COMING PERIOD**

#### **4.1. STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS FOR SAFEGUARDING THE POLITICAL RIGHTS OF WORKERS IN INDUSTRIAL PARKS IN HO CHI MINH CITY**

- Continuing to thoroughly implement the Party's viewpoints and the Government's policies and laws on safeguarding the political rights of workers.
- Strengthening the role of the Government in ensuring the political rights of workers in industrial parks
- Enhancing the role of trade unions and workers' representative organizations in safeguarding the political rights of workers in industrial parks
- Expanding workers' rights to political participation
- Improving the legal framework for the protection of workers' political rights in industrial parks

#### **4.2. SPECIFIC SOLUTIONS TO STRENGTHEN THE SAFEGUARDING OF WORKERS' POLITICAL RIGHTS IN INDUSTRIAL PARKS IN HO CHI MINH CITY IN THE COMING PERIOD**

- *Continuing to recognize political rights in accordance with international conventions to which Viet Nam is a signatory, and institutionalizing the principles of human rights and citizens' rights as enshrined in the 2013 Constitution.*
- *Improving constitutional principles relating to the protection of human rights.*
- *Strengthening the institutional framework for the protection and realization of political rights.*
- *Enhancing institutional mechanisms to safeguard rights and improving the quality and effectiveness of their operations.*
  - Diversifying the mechanisms for safeguarding rights
  - Promoting and enhancing the responsibility of industrial parks management boards and employers in ensuring the political rights of workers in industrial parks
- *Strengthening the operational capacity of trade unions and socio-political organizations in protecting workers' political rights.*
- *Raising awareness and enhancing the capacity of workers in industrial parks to safeguard and exercise their rights*

#### **CONCLUSION**

In the current process of socio-economic development, industrial parks have

played and continue to play a pivotal role in Vietnam's overall growth strategy, particularly in Ho Chi Minh City. The robust expansion of industrial parks has generated hundreds of thousands of jobs, attracted a diverse labor force from various localities, fostered urbanization, enhanced labor productivity, and facilitated the restructuring of the local economy toward industrialization and modernization. However, alongside these achievements, the issue of safeguarding the political rights of workers in industrial parks has posed significant challenges that require comprehensive, strategic, and sustainable solutions.

Through the process of survey, analysis, and evaluation, this dissertation demonstrates that although Vietnam in general, and Ho Chi Minh City in particular, have made significant progress in improving the legal framework and working conditions, considerable institutional and practical gaps remain in safeguarding the political rights of workers. The absence of independent representative organizations, limitations in mechanisms for dialogue and collective bargaining, the dependence of grassroots trade unions on employers, as well as workers' apprehension, lack of information, and limited political knowledge, have collectively shaped a constrained political environment characterized by weak dialogue and a lack of bottom-up critique.

The dissertation proposes a comprehensive system of solutions, emphasizing the pivotal role of domesticating international conventions on labor rights-particularly ILO Conventions No. 87 and No. 98 - so as to establish a clear and transparent legal framework that enables workers to form associations, to be protected when voicing their concerns, and to engage in policy critique or collective bargaining over working conditions without fear of reprisal or discrimination. In parallel, it calls for the reform of labor governance models toward reducing mere administrative intervention, strengthening tripartite dialogue mechanisms (Government-employers-workers), and instituting independent and transparent monitoring systems to address violations of workers' political rights, especially within the private sector and foreign-invested enterprises (FDIs).

Another important aspect underscored by the dissertation is the necessity of enhancing the role of trade unions and workers' representative organizations. In the

new context, trade unions are not merely institutions representing material interests but must also function as genuine socio-political entities that engage in policy critique and act as a bridge between workers, the Party, and governmental authorities at various levels. In particular, the training of trade union officials, the dissemination of legal knowledge, and the promotion of workers' civic and political consciousness should be regarded as a long-term strategy aimed at gradually fostering a working class that is knowledgeable, organizationally capable, and effectively engaged in political life.

Safeguarding the political rights of workers in industrial parks in Ho Chi Minh City is not merely a legal requirement but a long-term strategic political task aimed at constructing a fair, democratic, and stable labor environment. This constitutes the foundation for building a modern society in which economic development is intrinsically linked to human development and the substantive protection of political rights for all social strata.

In the future, if these solutions are implemented in a serious and synchronized manner, Ho Chi Minh City may become a paradigmatic model of democratic, effective, and human-centered labor governance, thereby contributing to the realization of the goal of building a socialist rule-of-law state and a socialist democracy within the context of a socialist-oriented market economy pursued by the Party and the Government.

## COMPILATION OF RESEARCH PERTINENT TO THE DISSERTATION TOPIC

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