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# The Role of Trade Agreements for Better Labour Standards in the ASEAN Countries

Author: Võ Thị Đông Dương

Supervisor: Prof. Vania Brino

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## **Abstract**

The thesis discusses the role of trade agreements as an instrument in effort to promote labour standards, particularly in the ASEAN countries in where workers' rights are still not considered much enough. The paper will elaborate the history of debate to link trade and labour standards. In addition, the differences between models of trade agreements with included labor provision are also addressed in this paper. Significantly, the objective is to assess the role of trade agreements in contribution to improve the labour standards in the region and why they should be considered as a truly powerful instrument for that.

The frame of debate is about whether trade agreement could truly promote labour standards. On the one hand, the benefit offered in trade agreements will encourage developing countries to reform legislation in complying with labour standards. On the other hand, the lack of enforcement mechanisms or unfair dispute settlements are still key concerns in current trade agreements while some existing arguments point out that trade agreements are only products of politics rather than aiming to improve workers' rights. The thesis concludes that trade agreements play an utmost important role in improving labour standards in the ASEAN countries while there are still obstacles in practical.

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