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Labor Rights, Working Conditions, and Workers' Power in the Emerging Textile and Apparel Industries in Ethiopia: The Case of Hawassa Industrial Park

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Abstract

To be able to participate in the global production network and enhance its manufacturing sector, the government of Ethiopia has been building industrial zones (Export Processing Zones) in various parts of the country. These zones have already attracted substantial investments into the country in the light manufacturing sectors, particularly, textile and apparel industries, as a result of which the country is gradually gaining the potential to become a global textile and apparel sourcing hub. Despite the governments' commitment to attract investments, the emerging manufacturing sector is now being under scrutiny for its abuse of basic workers' rights and its exploitative wage structure. This study aims to contribute to labor studies in Ethiopia by examining the current state of labor relations in the Hawassa Industrial Park (HIP) and exploring the ways in which workers respond to grievances around their workplaces. The research basically used both primary (interviews) and secondary data and information, and employed the Power Resource Approach as a theoretical model and a qualitative methodology to analyse the data.

The study has found out that the workers are being paid appalling wages and working conditions in the industrial park are generally poor. Though labor rights has been consistently compromised at the industrial park, the study revealed that the workers' grievances in the industrial park are not yet translated into a genuine industrial action due to lack of workers' structural and organizational power resources and thereby its usage. As a result, the utilization of secondary sources of workers' power at the factory level has waned. The national level unions are powerless to protect workers' exploitation at the grassroots level.

The research concludes that the combination of government policies fostering a capitalist social relation of production, hostility of employers to labor rights, impotence of the top-level trade unions, and limited consciousness of the workers at the grassroots level has left the labor with little possibilities to challenge the prevailing employment relations and labor practices in the HIP.

Keywords: workers' power, trade unions' power, labor practices, labor conditions, labor rights, Hawassa Industrial Park (HIP)

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List of Acronyms

AGOA- Africa Growth Opportunity Act

CETU- Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions

CSA- Central Statistical Authority

EBA- Everything-But-Arms

EPZs- Export Processing Zones

ETB- Ethiopian Birr

FGD-Focus Group Discussion

FDI-Foreign Direct Investment

GTP I-Growth and Transformation Plan I

GTP II- Growth and Transformation Plan II

HIP-Hawassa Industrial Park

ICFTU- International Confederation of Free Trade Unions

IFETLGWU- Industrial Federation of Ethiopian Textile, Leather and Garment Workers Trade Union

ILO- International Labor Organization

ITUC- International Trade Unions Confederation

MOLSA- Minister of Labor and Social Affairs

PRA- Power Resource Approach

PVH- Phillips-Van Heusen Corp

SNNPR- Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region

Background of the Study

1.1 Introduction

Historically, in many countries industrialization commenced focusing on labor-intensive industries, typically the textile and apparel industry (Fukunishi and Yamagata, 2014: 1). According to Gereffi and Frederick (2010: 1), this sector has been a springboard for national development and often conceived as the starter industry for countries engaged in export-oriented industrialization (Gereffi and Frederick, 2010:1; Fukunishi and Yamagata, 2014: 1). Since the early 1970s, the sector has shown a massive expansion, providing employment opportunities to millions of workers in the developing countries of the world. Fundamentally, the combination of national governments' interest to embark on industrialization and companies' interest of lowering production cost facilitated the sector's growth.

The expansion of this sector in the developing parts of the world, however, has its own negative repercussion. Among other things, the competition for investment has prompted national governments to roll back the legal protection meted out earlier for workers and pushing companies to shift their production to countries with the lowest wages and weakest unions (Seidman, 2007). Nevertheless, in order to compete in the global economy and attract investment in areas where they possess a comparative advantage, the governments of developing countries that are anxious to draw investment and create employment opportunities for their growing young population are advised to make such policy changes in line with the multinational corporate blueprints (Gothoskar, 1986: 1489). In addition to the policy advises of leading international development agencies (The World Bank and International Monetary Fund), economists like Hans-Werner Sinn also reinstates that "the labor markets under the stranglehold of the trade unions" are stumbling the creation of employment opportunities (Sinn, 2005:143 and 150 cited in Dörre, 2011: 24). However, according to Dörre (2011: 24), such kinds of policy and theoretical claims provided an ideological background for policy changes that have a detrimental effect on labor regulations and trade union activities. This is, of course, the case in many Asian countries which have been largely integrated into the Global Production Networks (GPNs) in the textile and apparel sector. Yet, labor standards can improve productivity and economic performance. For instance, fair wages and working conditions can be translated into greater workers' productivity and lower employees' turnover. This provides better opportunities for

workers to make further upward progress towards an income that offers them a minimally decent and secure standard of living.

After decades of large-scale integration in the GPN, with labor becoming expensive and regulatory standards getting stronger in the Asian countries, global textile and apparel producers have recently started to look for alternative locations in developing countries, particularly in Africa (Yost and Shields, 2017:6). As a result, a number of African countries are heavily utilizing this opportunity as a means to participate in the GPN and eventually enhancing their manufacturing sector. Hence, Ethiopia has shown interest to host these companies, and thereby gaining the potential to become one of the leading textile and apparel sourcing hub in the continent (ibid.: 5).

As the flow of foreign capital is increasing and most of the leading global textile and apparel manufacturers commenced their production in this country, many believe in the narrative that Ethiopia is becoming the “African lion” or “Africa's China” (Cowen, 2018 and Kushkush, 2015). However, according to Yost and Shields (2017: 6), it is the low production cost encouraged by various incentives that have been driving the global companies in the sector to establish their operations in this country. This study examines the labor rights and working conditions in the emerging textile and apparel industries in Ethiopia by giving due emphasis on the kind of power resources used by the workers to respond to their workplace grievances. To this end, this study has presented the Hawassa Industrial Park (HIP) as a case study, which has been deemed to be a flagship project in ushering a new chapter in Ethiopia’s industrialization effort in the textile and apparel sector (Mihretu and Llobert, 2017: 6).

The following section presents the background of the research problem and provides a brief description of the objectives, significance, and scope and delimitation of the study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Globalization has intensified spatial competition to attract capital, hence, potential locations of manufacturing production are often advertised on the basis of the availability of cheap, flexible, and unorganized labor force (Wills, 2002:680). With the corresponding interest of attracting capital for investment, countries around the world are are facilitating industrial interests at the cost of diluting labor legislation (Vishal and Shashi, 2014:52). Workers’ organization is also seen as an expensive luxury in the cut-throat battle to secure jobs and investment (Wills, 2002:680). Thus, with government and corporate hostility to workers

and trade union organizations, times are becoming harder than ever before for labor movements (Vishal and Shashi, 2014:52).

The case in Ethiopia is part of this global trajectory. The government has designed an aggressive plan to transform the agriculture-dominated economy into an industry-led economy (National Planning Commission, 2015: 16). This transformation is basically dependent on the attraction of Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) to selected industrial sectors in which the country has an abundant potential (ibid.: 28). Specific emphasis has been given to labor-intensive light manufacturing industries with the intention of creating jobs for the ever-increasing youth population in the country (IMF, 2018: 16). Accordingly, the flow of FDIs has been gaining momentum in recent years. Though the whole continent of Africa represents a negligible amount of the global textile and apparel export, Ethiopia has been identified as the top future global sourcing location and often referred as a largely untapped sourcing destination (Yost and Shield, 2017: 3–4). However, despite the governments' devotion to attract anchor investment that would meet its abundant labor force, the emerging manufacturing sector is now being under scrutiny as the basic workers' rights which includes freedom of association and right to collective bargaining have been grossly abused and the wages have been largely exploitative.

The right to form and participate in trade union activities is enshrined both in the national constitution and the international legal documents that the country has signed. On top of that, Ethiopia has local labor regulation namely, the Labor Proclamation (Proclamation No. 377/2003) that conceives collective labor rights as the legal rights of workers. Even though the country has the aforementioned legal instruments which protect workers from unjust labor practices, the employees in various industries of the country are not able to enjoy their legally given rights. Moreover, with the country's increasing engagement in the global network of the textile and apparel production in recent times, the abuse of workers' rights is growing.

Amid the growing concern, the International Labor Organization (ILO) has recently named Ethiopia among the top five countries known for serious violations of the freedom of association (ILO, 2012). In addition, the International Trade Unions Confederation (ITUC) has also expressed its concern about the lack of collective bargaining mechanism and the exploitative wages in the textile and apparel industries (Birhanu, 2018) and pleaded the state to protect the rights and dignity of the working people (Eskedar, 2018).

Against this backdrop, as Vishal and Shashi (2014:52) notes, it is the presence of a vibrant trade union movement in various industries that would enable workers to join forces in their

collective defence and advancement of their interests and ensure improvement in their living standards. Thus, in a situation where Ethiopia is aggressively engaging in GNP and as there exists little empirical research regarding the issues in question in the textile and apparel industries in Ethiopia, this research attempts to investigate the current state of labor relations as well as the kind of power resources used by the labor to respond to grievances around the workplaces and shed light on the state of labor movements in the country's textile and apparel industries by focusing on the case of Hawassa Industrial Park (HIP).

1.3 Research Question

With the help of primary and secondary data collected from various sources and content analyses through the lens of the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter 2, the study addresses the following research question: *What is the state of labor relations in HIP and by what means do workers respond collectively to grievances around their work?*

To facilitate the process of answering the main research question, the study has focused on the following sub-questions:

- What is the current state of working conditions and respect for labor rights in the HIP?
- How do workers respond to grievances around their work?
- What kind of power resources do the workers mobilize in their struggle against unfair labor practices in the industrial park?
- What are the challenges for the development of workers' collective actions in defense of their interests in the industrial park?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to understand the current state of labor relations in HIP and explore the kind of power resources used by the workers to respond to grievances at their workplaces. Apart from the aforementioned general objective, the study is guided by the following specific objectives:

- Examining the working conditions and the respect towards labor rights in the industrial park;
- Exploring the grievance mechanisms used by workers to express their complaints and voice their interests;

- Investigating the power resources utilized by the unions and the employees of the industrial park; and
- Analysing the challenges before the development of workers' collective action in the employment relations of the industrial park.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be a useful addition to the existing body of knowledge on labor studies in this country. Apart from its academic importance, the study will create awareness and provide insight to workers and trade unionists to explore which kind of power resources they are mobilizing or have not attempted in their struggle for gaining better working and living conditions in the industrial park. In doing so, it will pave the way for the utilization of potentially available alternative paths of actions in their future struggle to defend their interests. Last but not the least; the study will also be important in exposing the existing labor conditions to the local and international communities as well as civil society actors who are working for the betterment of the living standards of the working class population.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study is descriptive and exploratory in nature, consisting of 10 semi-structured interviews which were conducted with the workers of the textile and apparel industries located in HIP, during a two-month field stay in Ethiopia. Interviews were conducted with six workers of the industrial park to gather the relevant data that enables to address the main questions of the research. However, for the purpose of data triangulation and assessment of the respective role of the state and national trade unions, interviews were conducted with a government official, national-level trade unionists, and an expert in the field of labor study.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

Although the study mainly emphasizes on labor rights and working condition of the workers at the grassroots level in the HIP and the utilization of power resources to defend adverse practices in the industries, it transcends labor unions at the national level to locate their roles in advancing labor interests at the shop floor level. Therefore, the study is

fundamentally delimited to labor rights, working conditions, and workers' power in HIP. But, given the fact that national level unions have the responsibility of representing labor demands and industrial relations of the country, the study throws light on the availability and utilization of power resources at the top levels of the trade union structure in the country.

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1. The Power Resource Approach

According to Lévesque and Murray (2013:779), "power" is at the center of the recent debates over the future of trade unionism. The declining influence of unions is often echoed through their weakening capacity to protect and improve the working conditions of their members, diminished influence on the economic and social policy decisions that benefit workers, and declining ability to mobilize their members and maintain solidarity amongst themselves (ibid.). This process is largely associated with the expansion of globalization and its detrimental effect on the labor movements around the world (Silver 2003:1 and McGuire, 2014:45).

In the situation where "power" is taking the center stage in the debate on the future of trade unionism, the Power Resource Approach has been gaining greater acceptance, focusing on labor movements around the world. The approach provides a toolkit for identifying the sources of workers' power (Gallas, 2018: 348). Moreover, it serves as a theoretical model with which the weakening and strengthening of trade unions is analysed by examining the dynamics of trade unions' structure and agency, giving emphasis on the latter, in the wake of the highly globalizing world (ASU, 2013: 312 cited in Reuben-Shemia: 2017: 7). The research questions outlined in Chapter 1 of this study aspires to examine labor relations and the way workers collectively respond to grievances and attempts to ensure their benefits in labor relations which essentially depend on the availability of power resources at their disposal. Being a framework for labor studies that are focusing on workers' and labor unions' power, this approach, therefore, remains a more feasible and an important choice to answer the main and specific research questions in this study.

The Power Resource Approach is developed by the Jena School, building upon the traditional sources of workers' power. In doing so, the approach distinguishes four types of trade unions or workers' power, namely: structural, associational, institutional, and societal.

Structural Power

Silver (2003:13) defines structural power as "the power that accrues to workers simply from their location in the economic system". This type of labor power is related to the workers' capacity to disrupt the production process in the economy (Webster, 2015:1). For example, when workers in the strategic industries organize strikes and their disruption has far-reaching consequence in the economy or when labor power is scarce, it is called

structural workers' power (Gallas, 2016: 196). According to Dörre, et al., (2009: 35–6), structural power, therefore, has to do with the *status* of certain groups of blue collar and white collar workers within the economic system.

Silver (2003: 13) further classifies structural power into *marketplace power* and *workplace power*. The marketplace power is the power that results from tight labor markets while workplace power results from the strategic position of workers within the key industrial sector. She further breaks marketplace power resource into three different forms. First, workers' possession of scarce skills that are in demand by the employers, second, low level of unemployment in the economy, and lastly, the ability of workers to withdraw from the labor market entirely and survive on non-wage sources of income. Marketplace power is exercised subtly and its impact is usually felt by the employers indirectly (Schmalz, Ludwig, and Webster 2018: 117). For instance, when marketplace bargaining power is high, employees can just simply change their jobs without fear of unemployment thereby creating an extra training cost for employers (ibid.). Besides, Silver (2003:13) associates workplace bargaining power with workers entangled in the tightly integrated production process, where localized work stoppage would disrupt the production process.

By providing a more detailed explanation, Dörre, et al. (2009: 36) states that structural power could be exerted very spontaneously in the form of "labor unrest, sudden uproars and situational outrage" as well as "informal sabotage and absenteeism in the production process". They further highlight that unlike the organizational workers' power, which requires strategically planned collective action by formal organizations and the presence of professional representatives, structural power can do with and without the application of formal trade union apparatuses. Explaining what structural power can do without the application of the formal trade union apparatuses, Dörre, et al. highlights that the workers of a certain profession could use their structural power, for example, the skill they possess, without applying an overall principle of solidarity to assert their interest in the production process (ibid.). However, the successful application of structural power requires combining structural power with organizational capacities in the existing institutional setting optimally and to develop an effective strike strategy (Schmalz et al., 2018: 117).

Associational or Organizational Power

It is defined as "the various forms of power that result from the formation of collective organizations of workers' either in the form of trade unions or political parties" (Silver, 2003: 13). This power resource is associated with the ability of workers to form unions and

subsequently influence government policy through political processes (Webster, 2015:3). According to Schmalz et al. (2018: 118), associational power "pools the primary power of workers and can even compensate for lack of a structural power without fully replacing it". Following the work of Erik Olin Wright (2000: 963f.), they also distinguish the three levels at which associational power come into play at the national level. The first one is at the workplace in which unions can make use of it in connection with workplace bargaining power. The second is at the sectoral level in which unions can make use of it in connection with marketplace bargaining power, and third, in the political system, in which unions could make use of it in connection with societal power, whereby workers' parties represent the interest of wage earners (Schmalz et al., 2018: 118). They also explain that there are Global Union Federations (GUFs), above the levels that are described at the national contexts which are working transnationally and supporting wage earners in countries with weak organizational and institutional resources in their fight for higher wages and better working conditions. In times of globalization, it is argued that the construction of a multi-level linkage remains quintessential in strengthening the capability of trade union action and articulating the labor causes across the globe (Lévesque and Murray, 2010: 343 cited in Schmalz et al., 2018: 118).

Although the structural and associational sources of workers' power are important in the workers' struggle against the interest of the capital, they are virtually under attack in the highly globalizing world economy. According to Webster (2015:1), while structural power has been weakened by neoliberal globalization, associational workers' power is being attacked by the ideologues of the "free market". Thus, under these circumstances, new sources of workers' power have emerged (ibid.). Under the umbrella of a strategic unionism, the Jena School has developed a heterogenous approach of power resources that could be important for union renewal in the age of globalization (Dörre, et al., 2009:35). Apart from the aforementioned primary sources of workers' power, the school has come up with secondary sources of workers' power called societal power and institutional power (Gallas, 2016:196 and Webster, 2015:1).

Societal Power

Webster (2015: 1) defines societal power as a power "which depends on unions' ability to frame their struggle in ways that aim at organizing a counter-hegemonic force, based on cooperative power through coalition-building with social movements or discourse power through influencing public discourses around issues of justice". Cooperative/Coalition

Power means “having networks with other social actors at one’s disposal and being able to activate these for mobilizations and campaigns” in a way that enables the partners to pursue their common goals and enter into mutual commitments (Schmalz et al., 2018: 122). On the other hand, discursive power is a power resource that is exercised through the ability of unions to intervene and express labor-related issues in the public debates. It builds on union issues being perceived as just by the general public and effective if the feeling of unjust treatment of the workforce coincides with perceptions of reality shared by the broader sections of the society (Haug, 2009: 890 cited in Schmalz et al., 2018: 123). According to Schmalz et al. (2018: 123), societal power requires the ability of unions to generalize the causes of labor as a political project so that society adopts it as its own. This shows that this power resource has a departure from the level of the workplace and opens up the social milieu as a battlefield for the trade unions’ movement.

Institutional Power

It is the fourth source of workers’ power which is associated with the “institutional capacities of workers’ organizations” and it results from the mobilization of three other sources of power (Gallas, 2016:197). The workers’ power sources are mutually interconnected and institutional power emerges from previous mobilization of other fundamental power sources (ibid.: 198). Thus, it is maintained through the incorporation of associational and structural power into institutions (Dörre, et al., 2009 cited in Webster 2015:9). Schmalz et al. (2018: 120) also explain that institutional power is “usually the result of struggles and negotiation processes based on structural power and associational power”. Accordingly, they assert that as a secondary form of workers’ power resource, institutional power constitutes a coagulated form of the two other primary forms of power. This power resource basically includes the likes of institutionalized labor rights and institutionalized dialogue procedures (ibid.: 115).

Finally, the Jena approach states that institutions shape the relationship between structural and associational workers’ power but, these power sources are not sufficient enough and need strategic capabilities that can detect power resources and make use of them (Webster, 2015:9). This approach states that the primary sources of workers’ power have an impact on the institutional power as well (Gallas, 2016: 198). According to PRA, a union which lacks organizational base will have a weak institutional capacity (ibid.).

2.2. Literature Review

The sections below illustrate issues related with the growth of EPZs in the global south and gives a brief explanation on the state of labor practices within these zones. Moreover, it introduces the core labor standards that are ought to be considered in labor relations. Finally, it addresses the expansion of globalization into the global south and the respective rise of labor movement within these economies.

The Growth of Export Processing Zones (EPZs) in the Global South

The establishment of EPZs in developing countries has been a salient feature of contemporary globalization (Ali, 2011: 23). The terminology used in referring to EPZs varies with the different countries that have opened up their markets for an export-oriented production system.[1] Various names are given to express the same idea, although there are minor differences in terms of subsidies and regulations provided in different zones (Assenza, 2010:9). Even if it existed, the real wave in the creation of EPZs started in Shannon, Ireland, in 1959 (Bendell el al., 2015:2). Being attracted by the positive outcome of the Irish experience, developing countries, mostly in East Asia and Latin America, started to induce the program of EPZs (ibid.). According to Smith (2016:54), 130 countries across the Global South have EPZs in 2006. Learning from the experience around the world, typically from East Asia, Ethiopia is also being engaged in the development of EPZs in the name of industrial zones. The establishment of industrial zones in Ethiopia has been aimed at increasing investment and bringing new capacities in the industrial sector of the country. Most importantly, industrial zones are being built with the aim of promoting the development of the private sector and ensuring the structural transformation of the country's economy (National Planning Commission, 2015: 9). According to the Growth and Transformation Plan II, the Ethiopian government is investing on industrial zones to address critical problems that private sectors face while investing in the country (ibid.).

Generally, EPZs are defined as "those regulatory spaces in a country aimed at attracting export-oriented companies by offering these companies special concession on taxes, tariffs and regulations (Milberg and Amengual, 2008 cited in Assenza, 2010: 9). They provide firms with free trade conditions and a liberal regulatory milieu to run their business (Smith, 2016:54). Among others, the EPZs are characterized by the following key features

[1] See McCallum (2011: 2) for the different names applied in different countries to explain the export processing zones and the commonalities and differences they uphold across contexts.

including duty free import of raw materials and intermediate inputs and capital goods, labor laws that are often flexible, long-term tax concession, development of infrastructure for the specific purpose of enhancing the growth of export, utility and rental subsidies, and employment of a young women workforce (ibid.). Thus, this list ranges from economic to social incentives. The social aspect has much to do with the exemption or limitation of the application of labor legislation in the zones, banning union activities, and promoting the submissiveness of their workforce and their aversion to unions (McCallum, 2011: 2).

Most developing country governments that embrace an export-oriented industrial growth strategy to development continue to see inward FDI flow as a crucial instrument to connect with the global economy through its global value chains (Milberg and Amengual, 2008: 2). According to Smith (2016:55), far from diminishing in significance, EPZs have experienced a fast growth over the decades. One of the indicators for its fast growth is the number of people employed in the zones, which nearly tripled between 1997 and 2006 (the last time the statistics are available) whereby 63 million workers were employed in EPZs located in 132 countries (ibid.). Smith asserted that Asia has a substantial number of peoples working in the EPZs, more than 53 million in 900+ EPZs among which China has over 40 million people working in the EPZs followed by Bangladesh with 3.25 million workers employed in the EPZs in the last statistics produced in 2005–2006. The World Bank estimates of 2008 shows that the EPZs have created over 68 million direct jobs across the world (McCallum, 2011: 2). According to Smith, in many countries including Kenya Malaysia, Madagascar, Vietnam, Dominican Republic, and Bangladesh, among others, EPZs are responsible for more than 75% of the export earnings (Smith, 2016: 55).

EPZs are frequently considered key instruments in the array of policies adopted by countries to attract FDI, boost employment in labor-intensive industries, stimulate exports and economic growth, and thereby, finally improve the transfer of technology and the acquisition of skills by the local workforce (Cling and Letilly, 2001:5). However, the debate over the costs and benefits of EPZs in developing countries has raged almost since the zones were first established in the late 1950s (Milberg and Amengual, 2008:3). According to Milberg and Amengual, a number of countries, especially in East Asia, have met their goals particularly with respect to increasing their exports of manufactured goods, but issues related to the quality of employment remains questionable in these zones. As SujataGothoskar observes:

> One important argument in favour of these ‘Free Trade Zones’ has been the employment opportunities[…] What is, however, more

> distressing is the nature of employment generated […] The reason why the multinationals are here in the first place is the abysmally low wages and the bad working conditions, they can get away with in these countries. Since much of the production process for these labor-saving devices is extremely labor-intensive, in the race to survive, labor costs have been the major target for economizing (1986: 1490).

Thus, looking at the social dimension, which is the most controversial side of EPZs, the employment it generates does not automatically lead to human development and poverty reduction in the developing countries of the world (Assenza, 2010: 25). Assenza notes that in order to evaluate the contributions of EPZs it is invaluable to investigate the quality of this employment by giving due emphasis on workers' rights, wages, and working conditions in the zones (ibid.). As the experiences around the world reveal, withincreasing competition for FDIs, there is a risk of not giving due attention to the social and labor-related implications that EPZs bring along (Romero, 1998: 391–92). The result is that the zones have become associated with violation of basic labor rights, poor working conditions, and tense labor relations (ibid.).

The State of Labor Standards and Working Conditions in EPZs

Labor right problems and exploitative practices have taken a new height in the era of globalization (Göbel, 2010: 17). This problem is caused by the growth of MNC activities in the production networks which, in turn, resulted in what is termed as "regime competition" among the developing countries of the world (Williams et al., 2013: 64). Regime competition is the manner in which countries feel obliged to compete with one another by offering more attractive employment regime in the form of weaker labor laws and other regulations to attract multinational investments. The governments of the developing countries come under pressure to relax the supposed regulatory burden for fear that if they do not do so, multinationals will opt to locate their activities to countries that are more pliable (ibid.). In this situation, countries such as Malaysia and Sri Lanka, whose economic development is centered on attracting multinational investments, went to the extent of promoting the advantage of their low-paid workforce and limited employment rights to draw investment opportunities to their economies (Caspersz, 2006:152). This kind of scenarios in the global economy intensified "the race to the bottom" in labor standards as

countries compete with one another to offer multinationals ever more weakened, and thus attractive, regulatory environment (Williams et al., 2013:65).

Against this background, if there is a phenomenon that helped to spur the ongoing debate on labor standards and working conditions, it is the expansion of EPZs all over the world (Romero, 1995: 1). As the number of zones and countries that are recurring to the zone trade is increasing over time, the international concern on workers' protection in the EPZs of the developing countries is also growing (Assenza, 2009: 9). The following section, therefore, provides a review of labor standards and working conditions in EPZs of the textile and apparel industries of developing countries. It covers some salient issues that reoccur in many studies including the freedom of association and collective bargaining, working time, health and safety, wage and benefits, and employment contracts among others.

A. Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining

ILO studies on EPZs reveals that some countries have adopted special labor codes which provide more flexibility to zone-based companies that ultimately have the tendency to reduce the scope of workers' rights in those very zones (Baldissera 2013: 59). There remains a wider understanding that many countries simply lack the resources to enforce labor laws in many EPZs (Milberg and Amengual, 2008: 32). However, it is not only the lack of resource to enforce laws, but some governments also do not have a strong desire to maintain law and order to protect workers' rights in these zones **(**Baldissera 2013: 59**).** Speaking of workers' rights, Ali (2011: 41) argues that there exists no uniform pattern of trade union and workers' rights in EPZs as the conditions vary from one country to another. Summing up the situation of workers in relation to their freedom of association, Gopalakrishnan states:

> Under the assumption that union-free zones would attract greater investment; some EPZ-operating countries have, under their laws, either deprived EPZ workers of their right to organize themselves or placed severe limitations on the free exercise of this right. Even when there are no such limitations under the law, EPZ workers in many countries are unable to effectively exercise their freedom of association on account of the anti-union discriminatory practices adopted by employers against EPZ workers engaged in trade union

> activities. These include; the unjust dismissal, suspension, transfer, and blacklisting of trade union officials and members. Employers in EPZ enterprises sometimes even resort to physical violence to prevent workers from forming and joining trade unions of their choosing. The problem is accentuated when there is a lack of effective enforcement of laws in the zones, as is often the case (2007: 1).

Despite the existing changes in the prior policies of some countries, for instance, Bangladesh, whereby workers' rights of unionization are legally limited, there are continued reports of systematic violations of freedom of association in EPZs throughout the world (Milberg and Amengual, 2008: 32). Countries such as Pakistan, China, and Nigeria, still levy legal restrictions that limit freedom of association for the workers in the EPZs (ibid.). International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) report of 2004 further asserts that in countries where there had been strong laws, these are often not enforced and in some others trade unions are denied access to the EPZs so that attempts atany organization are restricted (Perman et al., 2004: 7). Trade unions' entry access to zones are much difficult especially when the zones are physical enclaves (ibid.: 9). In discussing the EPZs in African countries, Romero (1998: 404) also states that there are certain cases where workers are organized and unions are recognized, but employers refuse to consult and negotiate with them. Overall, there are widespread violations of workers' rights in the EPZs, particularly freedom of association, which has a tremendous effect on workers' rights to collective bargaining and strike (Perman et al., 2004: 8). Moreover, due to unions' absence from the zones, workers are unrepresented and there is no meaningful social dialogue, which in turn, undermines the possibility of dealing with the causes of certain persistent problems continuing in the EPZs (Romero, 1998: 404).

B. Wages and Benefits

It is often assumed that wage rates are the principal determinants for the choice of the production platform, and they are often branded as enclaves of cheap labor (ILO, 1998: 28). Comparisons are often made between wages paid in the zones with those paid outside the zones of host countries. Studies reveal that minimum wage rates (where they exist) and take-home pay are most of the time higher than comparable factories outside the zone in the host countries (ILO, 1998: 28 and Cling and Letilly, 2001: 19). These studies reveal several

reasons why wages are higher in the zones than outside the zone premises. First, due to the negative connotations that zones have in some countries, employers are obliged to pay a premium to attract and retain workers. Second, the exploitation and greater productivity of labor in the zones have a natural tendency of increasing the wages inside than outside the zones. Third, firms in the zones often employ a remuneration system such as piece-rate or incentive schemes which give workers a higher take-home pay, although this entails intense exploitation of workers through long hours of work in the zones (ibid.). Even in a situation where the national minimum wage does not apply for the EPZs, for example in Bangladesh, zone-specific minimum wage systems are applied by zone authorities in a way that wages are a bit higher than outside of them (ILO, 1998: 28).

However, the generally higher wages in EPZs do not necessarily mean that wages that are being paid are "liveable" (Milberg and Amengual, 2008: 35). Rather, in many EPZs across the world, wages are not a "living" or "decent" wage and tends to underscore the poor remuneration of many workers in the zones (McCallum, 2011: 4). Göbel (2010: 17) also states that there are various instances where the minimum wage is below the subsistence levels. Besides, there also exists discrimination between male and female workers on issues of pay equity in the EPZs. Female workers in the zones are often paid less than men (Perman et al., 2004: 12). As McCallum (2011:4) states EPZs saw the initial femininization of labor as a result of low-skill, low-paying jobs which, in turn, drives the employment of young women to the industrial zones.

C. Working Time

Milberg and Amengual (2008: 34) argue that EPZs are characterized by long working hours, often in violation of national law throughout the world. The excessive overtime is often tangled with the nature of industries in EPZs, especially industries operating in the apparel sector having rigid shipping deadlines and seasonal peak demand peak periods (ibid.). ICFTU (2004) report also reveals that the tight delivery schedules encourage firms to force workers to work for extremely long hours, but in the EPZs overtime is often a major area of disagreement as it is often obligatory and unpaid, or paid at the basic rate (Perman et al., 2004: 12). With the absence of unions and labor inspectorates such practices largely go unchecked in the zones (ibid.). Generally, workers are forced to do more than the hours they would like or need to do, because the employers need overtime work anyway (Baldissera, 2013: 59: 83).

D. Health and Safety

Trends of health and safety in EPZs are less clear in comparison with working time and freedom of association (Milberg and Amengual, 2008: 35). However, firms in EPZs have poor health and safety conditions in many workplaces throughout the world as they typically fail to provide safe environments (ibid.). As noted in the ICFTU report, the weak enforcement of labor laws in the zones coupled with lack of labor inspections can often mean that health and safety legislations are violated in the EPZs (Perman et al., 2004: 13). The report asserts that lack of sanitary facilities and restrictions on their use are a cause of serious concern as employers limit workers' access to toilets with the intent of discouraging time-wasting and disturbance of work patterns in the industries. It also states that in some countries, like Kenya, workers are denied the right to sick leave (ibid.: 8).

Perhaps the most terrible breach of health and safety legislation in the EPZs is the practice by some firms of locking workers within buildings during working hours where there had been outbreak of fire. The typical example in this regard is Bangladesh (ibid.). Moreover, as the report reflects, due to low wages and excessive working hours many workers in the EPZs cannot get enough rest time nor can they afford decent food and medical care when they get ill. Overall, although health and safety violations are less documented by research, EPZs are usually unsafe for their employees (Göbel, 2010: 17).

E. Employment Contract

ICFTU report of 2004 reveals the pervasiveness of unjust employment contact situation of the workers in the EPZs. According to the report, few workers in the zones have long-term employment contracts; short-term contracts are used for flexible hiring and firing and for avoiding costs such as maternity and redundancy pay (Perman et al., 2004: 10). This situation puts the workers under constant insecurity and fear of losing their jobs. Furthermore, short-term contracts also permit employers to use the threat of dismissal when the workforce engages in union activity (ibid.). Romero (1998: 400) also reveals that certain workers in the zones are not given a written job contract which exposes them to wage-related irregularities as well as the possibilityof arbitrary dismissal.

Conceptualizing the "Core Labor Standards"

Established in 1919, the ILO is the leading international body responsible for promoting labor standards, which it does mainly by enacting conventions the member countries are

encouraged to obey and observe once they have ratified them (Williams et al., 2013: 86). In the face of globalization, where powerful set of rules and institutions promote liberalization of economies across the world, the organization has come up with a declaration that advances "core" labor rights via its declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at work in 1998 (Mosley, 2011:103 and Alston, 2004: 458). While leaving the pre-existing labor regimes intact, the declaration made it more flexible and effective in a manner that handles the force of globalization (Alston, 2004: 458).

According to Mosley (2011: 103), this declaration basically proclaims that all the ILO member states, even those that have not ratified the specific conventions associated with each of the rights, are obligated to respect the fundamental principles enacted in the 1998 declaration. The fundamental workplace rights that are advanced in the declaration of 1998 include the elimination of all forms of compulsory and forced labor (ILO conventions 29 and 105), the prohibition of discrimination in employment and pay based on race, gender, ethnicity or religion (ILO Convection 100 and 111), the elimination of child labor (ILO Convention 138 and 182), freedom of association and the right to bargaining collectively (ILO Convention 87 and 98) (ibid.:103). Basically, the obligation of member states towards these rights emanate from the governing constitution of ILO itself and the non-ratification of specific conventions would not serve as a defence for any discrepancies in complying with them (Mehari, 2015:47). According to Mosley (2011: 103), among the four core labor standards, the one that focuses on workers' collective rights, freedom of association and collective bargaining rights, remains the most controversial. She states that the "collective labor right basically focuses on the formal legal rights of workers to act collectively, including the formation and operation of labor unions, collectively bargaining, and strike activity; and the extent to which these rights (when present) are respected" (ibid.: 101). In Article 2 of the ILO Convention 87, issued in 1848, it is stated that workers and employers have the right to establish and join organizations of their own choosing without previous authorization from public authorities (ILO, 2005: 24 cited in Mosley, 2011:104). Convention 98, 1949, focuses on relations between workers and employers and provides that workers shall enjoy adequate protection against acts of anti-union discrimination that includes protection of individual employees from dismissal for participation in union activities, shielding of employers' from interfering in workers' organizations, and providing the right of collective bargaining (ibid.). Thus, among the core labor standards, it is the freedom of association and collective bargaining rights which are directly related to the

general capacity of workers to improve their treatment and achieve a more favourable outcome with respect to workers' interest in workplaces (Mosley, 2011:106).

However, the implementation of ILO conventions and core labor standards, even where formally subscribed to, is often not strongly supported and obeyed in both the developed and developing countries of the world (Wood and Brewster, 2007: 223). Most of the time, workers are not allowed to form unions, but if allowed, their unions are restricted in the scope of activities which, in turn, hinder their ability to effectively act as a bargaining machinery (ibid.). Basically, with the growth of EPZs across the world, the respect for fundamental labor standards has deteriorated heavily. The development of such institutional frameworks, which is aimed at inducing industrialization in Ethiopia, is also raising some questions over the labor standards in the industrial zones although the country is the signatory of ILO's core labor conventions. Correspondingly, this case has, therefore, attempted to see the status of the respect for the core labor standards in the Ethiopian textile and apparel industries by focusing on the HIP.

Globalization and Labor Conflict in the Global South

Drawing on the work of David Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital* (2011), Williams et al. notes that the potential for labor unrest under capitalism never goes away and conflicts can emerge as a serious problem "at any time and in any place" (2013: 222). According to them, globalization plays a big role in stimulating labor conflict around the world, particularly in the developing countries of the Global South (ibid.). For Williams et al. labor unrest is an integral part of the very process of globalizing capital itself (ibid.: 224). Thus, instead of being in decline at the age of globalization, labor movements and respective conflicts are being displaced to other parts of the world, particularly to the Global South. It is the structural change in the global economy and the resulting relocation of production industries that have exported labor unrest to other parts of the world in the Global South (Silver, 2003: 5 cited in Williams et al., 2013: 224).

In her detailed explanation, Silver (2014: 47) also notes that there have been widespread arguments in social science about the decline of class-based labor movements since the 1980s due to globalization, resulting in a downward spiral in workers' power and welfare, which came to be termed as a "race to the bottom". However, as capitalism firmly rests on the commodification of labor, the treatment of human beings as commodities would necessarily lead to grievances and resistance (ibid.). According to her, labor unrest is

central to the labor–capital relationship and could happen “any time anywhere” (ibid.). Capitalists pursue different strategies so as to combat strong labor movements. One of these strategies is the “spatial fix” or geographical relocation of production centers in search of cheap and controllable labor (ibid.: 49). But Silver states that historical evidencereveals different thesis that could be summed up in the phrase: “Where capital goes, labor-capital conflict shortly follows” (ibid.: 50). She adds that the move of the capital to new geographical locations in the hunt for cheaper and more docile labor does not create a straight forward race to the bottom, but it also creates “new working classes and strong labor movements” within each of the newly chosen site of production.

In explaining the case of two Asian countries, South Korea and Indonesia, Williams et al. (2013: 225) demonstrate how economic globalization has realized the creation of new working class which became conscious of its own interest very shortly after the countries integrated into the global network of production. In these countries, the growing integration in the global economy through export-oriented industrialization has generated widespread grievance and feelings of injustice leading to greater workers’ militancy and increasingly combative labor movements in the 1980s (ibid.). Silver (2014: 50) also reveals the emergence of strong militant labor movements in the environment of authoritative and labor repressive regimes in countries such as Brazil and South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s. Furthermore, the emergence of labor unrest in China since the mid-1990s following the integration of the country into the global economic order is also a prime example in this regard. According to Williams et al. (2013: 226), China has been witnessing a marked rise in the number of collective labor disputes signalling the upsurge in the worker's awareness of the exploitative conditions under which they labor. Silver (2014:50) also notes that it was assumed that it would take longer time (if ever) before the Chinese workers openly challenge their wages and working condition in the export-oriented industries which started to boom in the 1990s. But, within a short period, the movement of capital into China led to the creation of a new militant working class and a wave of strikes started to hit the factories in the country resulting in the rise of wages and recognition of trade unionization. Silver labels this as “the outcome of the creative side of the creative-destruction process” (ibid.: 51).

Furthermore, Silver indicated that capital moved from the Chinese coastal part to the interior of the country and other poor countries in the region including Cambodia, Vietnam, and Bangladesh. Almost immediately there were labor strikes in each of these countries (ibid.). As Silver puts it, this phenomenon made commentators argue that there is no

country “left to run for factory owners in Asia” as manufacturers realized that wherever they go in search of cheap and compliant labor, labor will not remain cheap and compliant for very long (ibid.). Overall, the strategies such as “spatial fixes” that are designed to bypass militant labor movements have unintended consequences: it rescheduled the time and place of mass labor conflict than simply eliminating it once and for all (ibid.: 58).

It is under these conditions of rising labor conflicts in the Asian countries that the capitalist started to move their production industries in the textile and apparel sector into African countries like Ethiopia in the hunt for cheap and compliant labor. As one of the least developed countries around the world, Ethiopia has been working towards increasing the share of the industrial sector in the economy. Consequently, the country is attracting massive FDI in recent times. So, what will be interesting to see is how the incoming investment is affecting the labor conditions in the country and, most importantly, how the working class is trying to overcome the unjust labor practices in the sector. As the industry virtually started to flourish in recent years, there has been a lack of sufficient academic works regarding the aforementioned issues. Apparently, the existing academic works (Redae, 2015; Menbere, 2016; Desset, 2013; and Mulubiran, 2016), does not address the research questions outlined in this study.Therefore, this study attempts to explore the largely unexplored issue and add some knowledge to the body of literature in the labor studies of this country.

3. Research Methodology

This chapter describes the choice regarding the methodologies applied in this research and explains the rationale behind them. Accordingly, it clarifies the research approach, the research design, the sources of data and data collection instruments, target groups and sample selection, data storage, and transcription, and the analysis strategy. Finally, it addresses the ethical issues considered in the process of data collection and analysis of the research data.

3.1. Research Approach

According to Creswell (2014: 3), research approaches are "plans and the procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation". He further notes that informing this decision should be the philosophical worldview the researcher brings to the research. As Creswell puts it, there are three approaches in conducting an empirical research namely, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed approaches. While qualitative approach ascribes to exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem, quantitative approach resembles toward testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. A mixed approach is an inquiry that involves both approaches having an assumption that the integration of both approaches could give a more complete understanding of the research problem (ibid.: 4).

This study employed a qualitative research approach to examine the problem in question. The selection of this approach is essentially aligned with the aim of the study. The study is aimed at describing the current state of labor relations, basically focusing on working conditions and the respect of workers' rights in HIP, and exploring the kind of Workers' Power Resources used by the employees while responding to grievances at their workplaces. Although one can measure the quality of respect of labor rights through quantitative approach, research questions in this study invites the researcher to have an understanding of the views of the interviewees. This, in turn, demands to collect empirical data through directly talking to people in the field and allowing them to express their opinions on the issue being examined. Thus, it is essentially a qualitative approach that enables the researcher to conduct an in-depth study based on empirical data from the field.

To collect the necessary data that helps to address the research problem, this study is centered on field interviews. Many other qualitative methods (among others, observation

and focus group discussion) that are available to collect data were not used due to the sensitivity of the research question being studied and the existing political situation in the country at the time of data collection.

Besides, the choice of qualitative approach poses both advantages and disadvantages. To start with the advantage, qualitative research approach enables the researcher to produce a detailed account of participants' feelings, opinions, and experiences, and provide the meanings of their actions (Blaikie, 2000: 251). Furthermore, it enables the researcher to holistically understand the human experience in specific settings. Beyond its advantage, there are some limitations of using a qualitative approach in research. Among others the difficulty of generalization is at the forefront of using this approach in researches (ibid.: 253).

Against this backdrop, the choice of this method is, therefore, related to the need to understand the context in which the participants in a study address the problem. To attain this end, the research incorporated a wide range of perceptions from different actors in order to produce a holistic view of the case being examined.

3.2. Research Design: Case Study

Implicitly or explicitly, every academic study follows a certain type of research design. Therefore, to address the research problem the present study employed a case study research design. Basically, the choice of research designs depends on the research problem and its circumstances (Yin, 2003: 5).

Case study research design is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases), through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports) (Creswell, 2007: 73). The distinctive need for case studies arises out of the desire to understand a complex social phenomenon (Yin, 2014: 2). Researches using this design make a detailed investigation of a particular event or issue (O'Brien and Williams, 2016: 26). Apparently, it is also a useful design when not much is known about an issue or phenomenon being investigated. Hence, the case study research design is chosen with the intention of shedding light on the problem which has been hitherto unexamined and requires studies that give an initial understanding of what is going on the ground.

Besides, case study design is mostly selected to narrow down a broad field of research into one or a few examples which can be researched upon easily. Accordingly, Yin (2014: 50) discusses two variants of case study research designs—single-case design and multiple-case design. This study followed a single-case design to address the research problem considering HIP as a case in point. In a single-case study, only a single case is examined (Gray, 2004: 131). In accordance with this, HIP is one of the twelve industrial parks Ethiopia has built to enhance the industrialization process of the country. Thus, being one of the many industrial parks in the country, HIP represents a single-case in this research.

There are three main reasons behind the selection of HIP in this study. First, this industrial park is the largest industrial park in the country, which solely specializes in the production of textile and apparel products. Second, the case seems most suitable for the non-probability method of sampling that the researcher has employed in the study. Third, the location of this industrial park, compared to others at the time of the data collection, seem to be relatively politically stable. Thus, due to these reasons, the study selected the case in point as a viable option to address the research problem in question.

3.3. Field Trip

The study included the collection of data from the field as the issue in question lacks relevant secondary data in the context of Ethiopia. The fieldwork for two months (from May 3, 2018, to July 1) enabled the researcher to collect firsthand information from relevant stakeholders through a semi-structured interview. The collection of data from the field was essential in that at the current stage of academic research in the field of labor study in the textile and apparel sector in Ethiopia, the use of primary data remains unquestionably decisive to lay groundwork for future researches.

3.4. Method: Sources of Data and Data Collection Instruments

A. Sources of Data: Primary and Secondary Data

A critical stage in any research is the process of selecting the people, events, or items from which the data will be collected (Blaikie, 2000: 29). The relevant data for the study is collected both from primary and secondary sources. The primary data is collected from workers in HIP, trade unionists at the sectoral and national level, a government official from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA), and an expert in the field of labor studies. Secondary data is obtained from books, academic journals and researches,

newspapers, and published or unpublished materials from different organizations to complement the raw data collected from the primary sources.

B. Data Collection Instruments

While doing a qualitative research, semi-structured interviews are more suitable if the intention is to get in-depth information about the topic of interest. One of the advantages of the semi-structured interview is that it does not limit respondents to a set of pre-determined answers. They are also more attractive because they enable a range of experiences to be documented, voices to be heard, representations to be made, and interpretations to be extracted (Smith, 2001: 29).

Accordingly, the study employed a semi-structured interview guideline to collect qualitative data from primary sources, workers, trade unionists, government officials, and the expert in the field of study. To this end, different semi-structured interview guidelines were prepared with questions that are specific to the various groups of interviewees. The semi-structured interview combined a pre-determined set of open questions (questions that prompt discussion) with following-up probes or additional questions which are not anticipated at the start (Berg, 2001: 70). Furthermore, Berg also asserts that if questions are to be standardized, they must be formulated in words familiar to the people being interviewed (ibid.). Accordingly, the interview questions are developed in a way that could be understandable for the interviewees using the local language (Amharic).

3.5. Target Groups and Sample Selection

The logic of using samples in research is to make inferences about some larger population from a smaller one (Berg, 2001: 31–32). According to Berg, social science researches often examine situations relying upon non-probability sampling strategy. This strategy offers researchers the benefits of not requiring the full list of target population from which the sample is selected and the ability to access otherwise highly sensitive or difficult to research target populations (ibid.). There are four types of non-probability samples, namely, convenience samples, purposive/judgmental samples, snowballing samples, and quota samples (Lune and Berg, 2017: 38). Among these four, this research used convenience, purposive, and snowballing sampling strategy.

Along with the selection of HIP (see Section 3.2.1), the firms included in this research were selected using *purposive/judgmental sampling method*. Purposive sampling strategy is used

for selecting some cases of a particular type that possess certain characteristics in which the researcher is interested (Blaikie, 2000: 205). Consequently, three firms—HH apparel, SS apparel, and EV firms were selected because of their being among the first comers to the industrial park.[2]

The interviewees were selected using *convenience*, *snowballing*, and *purposive* sampling strategy. Convenience and snowballing sampling strategies are used in the selection of workers of the industrial park. First, three workers are selected from each firm using the researcher's own network, *convenience sampling*. As Berg (2001: 32) argues, this category of sample selection relies on "available subjects—those who are close at hand or easily accessible". Thus, due to the sensitivity of the issue, it was necessary to identify workers using one's own network. Then, additional three workers from each firm were selected using snowballing sampling. *Snowball sampling*, also known as network or chain referral, is a strategy used when it is difficult to identify additional samples for the research (Blaikie, 2000: 205). These interviewees were referred to the researcher by the first batch of interviewees who were selected through convenience sampling. The reason for employing purposive and snowballing in the selection of sample workers in the study has also to do with giving due emphasis for the security of the research participants. Finally, the researcher used a purposive sampling strategy in the selection of key informants and expert for the interview. Accordingly, key informants from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA), Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU), and Industrial Federation of Ethiopian Textile, Leather and Garment Workers Trade Union (IFETLGWU) were interviewed to collect the necessary primary data for research. The selection of the key informants is related to the key possession of interviewees in relation to research topic. In addition, an expert interview was conducted to get the relevant information on the current state of industrial relations in the country.

Introducing the Interviewees

Table 3.1 presents the participants of the study and provides an overview of the participants, which will be useful during the analysis part of the research. For the sake of the interviewees' security as well as easiness to locate the respondents in the research, the study used anonymous characters or IDs.

[2]For reasons of confidentiality, the true identity of enterprises selected for the study has been deliberately withheld. Instead fictitious names have been attached to them.

Table 3.1: Overview of interviewees-anonymous

Description	Workplace/Factory	Interviewee ID	Remarks	Gender
Workers of HIP	HH	I1	Engineer	M
		I2	Operator	F
	EV	I3	Operator	F
		I4	Human Resource staff	F
	SS	I5	Engineer	M
		I6	Operator	F
Trade Unionists	IFETLGWU	I7	Trade Unionist	M
	CETU	I8	Trade Unionist	M
Government Official	MoLSA	I9	Government official	M
Researcher of Labor Rights in Ethiopia	Addis Ababa University	I10	Expert	M

*The table is the researcher own illustration based on field interviews. (Anonymous character is also used for the interviewees' workplaces).

The first group of interviewees constituted employees of the textile and apparel industries in the HIP. The study included six interviewees selected from the three firms (two interviewees from each) operating in the park.[3] The reason for the selection of these groups of interviewees was to get the required data regarding work conditions and labor rights in the industries and explore the power resources being utilized by the workers in their attempt to reverse the unjust practices in the industrial park. Of the six workers that were interviewed, there were four women and two men. The second group of interviewees comprises trade unionists at the national and sectoral level.[4] The interview with the trade unionists was intended to grasp valuable information about the role played by sectoral-level trade unions and national trade union in representing the cause of the labor force in the HIP. In this way, the interview enabled the researcher to capture data that serves to triangulate the information obtained from the workers. Furthermore, the data collected from trade unionists remains essential in connecting the practices of the trade unions and workers of the HIP with the theoretical approach used in the research.

The third interview was conducted with the government office responsible for labor issues in the country.[5]The MoLSA is selected to locate the role of the state in the industrial relations of the country, the HIP in particular. Specifically, the interview was conducted

[3]In the analysis, these interviewees will be referred as I1, I2, I3, I4, I5, and I6.
[4]In the analysis, these interviewees will be referred as I7 and I8.
[5]In the analysis, this interview will be referred as I9.

with a higher official from the department of Harmonious Industrial Relation in the MoLSA. Finally, the interview was also conducted with a researcher from Addis Ababa University.[6] This interview was particularly intended to get expert information as the case in question has not been much examined by the academic community in the country. Thus, the interview enabled to collect valuable information of the overall state of labor rights conditions in the country. The information collected from the expert has covered the broader context of the country, but for the purpose of narrowing down, the information was contextualized to the case of the HIP. Overall, the research included ten semi-structured interviews. While the interviews with the workers were conducted at the location of the case in point, Hawassa, the interviews with the trade unionists, government officials, and the expert was conducted in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia.

3.6. Recording and Transcribing Data

Data storage is an important part of qualitative research (Creswell, 2007: 141). For good analysis, involving the use of field data, the interviewer needs to capture the actual words of the person being interviewed (Patton, 1990: 347 cited in Gray, 2004: 227). Written notes are the most common way of capturing field interviews, but these could also be recorded through various modes. In accordance with this, based on the prior request and informed consent of the interviewees, audio-recording material has been used for nine of the ten interviews in this research using while taking notes simultaneously. For the remaining one interview, only notes were taken after the interviewee declined to provide his consent for the recording of the interview.

Besides, the interview was conducted in the local language, Amharic. Then, the interviews were transcribed into English in order to make the data usable and accessible for future references to key quotations and themes for analysis.

3.7. Data Analysing Strategy

Case studies, in their true essence, explore and investigate contemporary real-life phenomenon through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions, and their relationships (Yin, 1984: 23). Content analysis is defined as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorff, 2004: 18 cited in Lune and

[6]In the analysis, this interview will be referred as I10.

Berg, 2017: 184).[7] In content analysis, researchers examine written documents or transcriptions of recorded verbal communications (Lune and Berg, 2017: 184).

It is common that qualitative case study researches using semi-structured interviews produce a bulk of information. In an attempt to answer the research questions and paving the way for the overall understanding of the case, the researcher used key quotations from each interviewee (Baxter and Jack, 2008: 555). The central aim of this research is concerned with understanding the state of working conditions and the respect for labor rights in the HIP and exploring the approaches used by the workers in responding to grievances at workplaces. The first part of the question is addressed through content analysis of interview data and various secondary documents using the descriptive method as part of the initial opening to a more exploratory method in the second part of the research problem. The second part, the core part of the research problem, is then examined through the analytical guidance of Power Resource Approach; hence, the theoretical framework of the research and content analysis of the interviews is conducted using the exploratory approach in case study research analysis.

The very reason for the descriptive element of the first section of the research is to provide a backdrop to the second; thus an exploratory section of the research problem has been provided to outline the factors that could trigger workers' grievances at workplaces in HIP. As O'Brien and Williams (2016: 27) argue, the descriptive part of the case study research is useful as evidence for further analysis of the cases. Thus, the descriptive element is intended to support the output end of the exploratory analysis of the research problem.

3.8. Data Triangulation

To find out the research problem under investigation in this study, data has been collected from different players that have a role in influencing the employment relations in the HIP. The use of multiple lines of sight is usually called triangulation (Lune and Berg. 2017: 14). Combining several lines of sight regarding the same problem enables researchers to obtain a better and more substantive picture of the problem being studied. Apart from the triangulation strategy used within the primary data collected from the field, some supportive secondary data from various sources also enabled to make a more accurate account of the research problem in question.

[7]See also Patton (2002: 452–53) for a brief understanding of the idea of content analysis. Here, he explains that content analysis refers to analysing text (interview transcripts or documents) rather than observation-based fieldnotes. It is a qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings.

3.9. Ethical Issues

According to Creswell (2007:140), a qualitative researcher faces various ethical issues that surface during data collection in the field and in the analysis and dissemination of the qualitative report. The main reason for this is that social scientists delve into the lives of their study population and the large society (Lune and Berg, 2017: 43 and Gray, 2004: 58). Thus, due to this reason, qualitative researchers must ensure the rights, privacy, and welfare of the people that form the focus of their studies. On the basis of this, ethical standards such as informed consent, privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity were given due attention in this study (Creswell, 2007: 140).

The participants of this research have been informed about the aim of the research, who is being asked to participate, what kind of information is being sought, their right to decline answering for questions they do not feel comfortable with, how much of the participant time is required for the interview, who will have access to data once it is collected, and who is responsible to undertake the research (Gray, 2004: 60).

Moreover, in most institutionally sponsored research, consent must be ensured if the researcher promised to respect confidentiality and not to reveal the sources of certain pieces of information (Lune and Berg, 2017: 46 and Gray, 2004: 364). Given the research is being sponsored by the International Center for Development and Decent Work (ICDD) and in accordance with the informed consent made prior to the interviews, the confidentiality of the data and the participant's anonymity has been maintained in this research. To ensure the anonymity of the research participants, other identifiable characters are assigned to each interviewee. The rationale for keeping the anonymity of the participants, thus refraining from revealing their names, is related with a special consideration that the research has to undertake, that is to avoid causing any possible social or physical harm on the participants of the research.

Besides, it was also important to have a formal letter of support from the Universität Kassel in order to prove the credibility and legitimacy of the researcher for the key informant and expert interviewees. *Besides*, following the advice of Lune and Berg (2007: 43) for the social science researchers, this research has given due attention to issues of honesty, integrity, and responsible reporting of the collected data.

3.10. Limitations of the Study

The study has made an extensive effort to capture contemporary circumstances and conditions related to the research problem in the HIP, but it was not without limitations. Primarily, the research approach and the study design the researcher has followed allows collection of empirical data through various primary data collection instruments. However, the study is limited to semi-structured interviews due to the sensitivity of the issue and the intensity of the political environment at the time of data collection in Ethiopia.

Second, due to the lack of will to make the interview in the side of the employers' association of the HIP, the study was not able to incorporate the insight of the employers in the research. This, in turn, caused the problem of triangulating data as the association is one of the major players in the industrial relations of the industrial park in focus. Last but not the least is the lack of a sufficient amount of textual information on the country regarding the working class movement in the textile and apparel sector. Little academic work in this area mean the research has to rely heavily on primary data to explore the existing situation in the industrial park and to a certain extent reflect the situation with labor rights at the country level.

4. Country Context: an Overview

This chapter provides a brief explanation of the background concepts that lays the foundation for the discussion of results and findings of the research questions in this study. In doing so, it addresses issues including the emergence of EPZs in industrial parks, the leading role of the textile and apparel sector, and the labor resources and employment trend in the country. The chapter also gives a brief overview regarding how trade unionism has fared in Ethiopia over a period of time and the way it is structured to address the causes of labor force in the labor proclamation of the country.

4.1. The Evolution of Industrial Parks in Ethiopia

In 2000, at the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) meeting in Beijing, China agreed to share with African countries its experience in the field of investment promotion related to the establishment and management of special economic zones (SEZs) (Giannecchini and Taylor, 2018: 28). In the meantime, the proposal for the development of seven SEZs was approved by the Chinese government in six African countries including one in Ethiopia (ibid.). The Eastern Industrial Zone (EIZ) in the town of Dukem, the first of its kind for Ethiopia, was built through the China-Africa Development Fund as part of "China Goes Global Policy" (Arkebe, 2015: 88). This industrial zone was initially planned in 2007 and launched in 2009 (Giannecchini and Taylor, 2018: 29).

Inspired by the Eastern Industry Zone, the government identified industrial park development as the main strategy to scale up the role of the manufacturing sector in the economy of the country. Part of this move was the establishment of Industrial Park Proclamation No. 886/2015. The proclamation asserts the necessity of establishing industrial parks in strategic locations of the country to promote and attract FDIs and thereby generate employment opportunities in the economy (Federal NegaritGazeta, 2015: 8205).

The Proclamation is complementing the move towards the development of industrial parks in the country under the guidance of the Growth and Transformation Plan II. Accordingly, 12 industrial parks along the key economic corridors of the country were planned to be built under the Five Year Plan (ibid.). The development of the parks has been largely undertaken by government investment with the intention to provide investors with ready-made factory sites (Admasu, 2017: 7). This extensive development of industrial parks in this country is dedicated for specific sectors such as textile and apparel, leather and leather products, pharmaceuticals, agro-processing etc. and aimed at coordinated production along value

chains.[8]Apart from the industrial parks constructed by the federal government investment, there are also several private foreign-owned industrial zones and parks, some of which are already operational and some under construction and established by the regional governments (Zhang, X. et al., 2018: 19-21).

The industrial park development is devised along with subsidies and different forms of preferential treatment to the manufacturers. Exemption from income tax up to 8–10years; exemption from duties and other taxes on imports of capital goods;60–80 years' land lease term at a nominal rate;immunity from taxes on exports; and preferential customs facilitation are among the notable incentives provided by the state to the manufacturers in the industrial parks.[9] In addition, it included a preferential provision of infrastructure and various services needed for supporting the works of enterprises (Alebel et al., 2017: 118 and Zhang, X. et al., 2018: 41–43).

Overall, with this scheme, Ethiopia is seeking to replicate the experience of East Asian countries which have made an extensive use of industrial parks to attract FDIs and push the process of industrialization.

4.2. The Rise of the Textile and Apparel Industry in Ethiopia

The textile sector is one of Ethiopia's traditional domestic businesses which mainly relied on old and home-grown production system. The first modern textile industry, Dire-Dawa Textile factory, was established during the short period of Italian occupation in 1939 in the city of Dire-Dawa (CETU, 2016: 26). However, the industry remained loosely connected and growth was sluggish for more than half a century (Berg et al., 2015: 17). The switch to market-led economic policy in 1991 combined with the industrial policy, designed and implemented since the early 2000s, allowed the textile and apparel sector to grow (Startiz et al., 2016: 6).

According to Startiz et al. (2016: 10-11), the sector has gone through three important waves of growth in the twenty-first century. The *first* wave of FDI flow started in the early mid-2000s with the coming of few entrepreneurs from Indian and Pakistan. But the production was largely limited to the domestic market and little success was achieved in the attempt to push the factories to produce for the international market. The *second* wave, witnessed the

[8]See http://www.investethiopia.gov.et/investment-opportunities/strategic-sectors/industry-zone-development for the areas that are selected with reference to the development of industrial parks in Ethiopia.
[9]For more information, see Ethiopian Investment Agency (n.a). Industrial Parks in Ethiopia: Incentive Package: https://isid.unido.org/files/Forum-AIFE2/2.%20Industial%20Parks%20Incentives.pdf

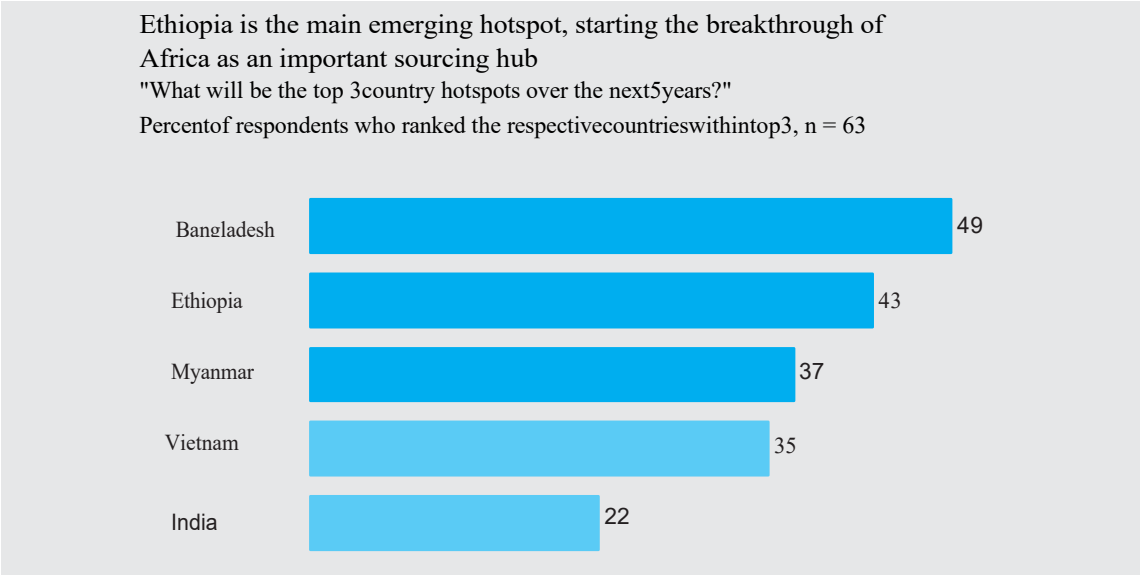
most substantial FDI flow, which was started in 2008 involving mainly Turkish textile firms. This flow of investment during this wave was a direct response to Ethiopia's government call for export-oriented productions in the sector. The active FDI attraction strategy marked by massive incentives, political stability, security, low labor, and energy cost coupled with the increase in wages in Turkey made the Turkish textile factories to relocate their production base to Ethiopia. The wave included the relocation of Turkish firms from Egypt to Ethiopia as well. The products are mainly delivered to German buyers and this fueled additional growth in the sector (Berg et al., 2015: 17). The *third* wave with large-scale flow of FDI in the sector started from 2015 onwards. Firms from countries such as India, Korea, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Indonesia, China, and Taiwan started to relocate their production centers into Ethiopia concentrating on two industrial parks called Bole Lemi I and the Hawassa Industrial Park. Firms from these countries have globally dispersed plants that are focusing on exporting to the global market.

Substantial growth that took off starting in 2010 resulted from the inclusion of the textile and apparel industry into the growth and transformation plan of the country (Berg et al., 2015: 17). The initiative was continued through the second phase of GTP in 2015 whereby the government further strengthened the support for investors in the sector to achieve highly ambitious plans (ibid.). Due to this, the sector has grown on an average of 51% over the last five to six years (Van der pols, 2015: 5). Over the last three years, in particular, there has been a lot of buzz about Ethiopia with the leading European buyers starting to source from this country and giant US players in the sector exploring the opportunity. European retailers like H&M, Primark and Tesco have established offices in 2012 and are buying clothing and finished products from manufacturers in Ethiopia (ibid.: 5). An American clothing company PVH Corp, which owns brands such as *Van Heusen*, Tommy Hilfiger, Calvin Klein, IZOD, and Arrow also started sourcing from HIP (Mihretu and Llobet, 2017: 48). In addition to the ongoing wave of growth in the textile and apparel sector, surveys conducted by the leading consultant firms also reveals that Ethiopia is becoming one of the top future manufacturing destinations in the textile and apparel sector. Although the country was selected as the seventh most attractive destination of the textile and apparel manufacturers in 2015 (Berg et al., 2015: 7), it became the second best attractive destination next to Bangladesh in the survey conducted in 2017 (Berg et al., 2017: 11).

According to Berg et al., countries such as China, India, and Bangladesh have been the leading attractive destinations for low-wage manufacturing, but due to the rise in labor cost, larger manufacturing firms in the sector started to explore opportunities outside Asia (ibid.:

25). Thus, having proclaimed that it can offer "cheap" labor, which is lower than Bangladesh as well as any of the African competitors and more similar to China in the 1980s, Ethiopia is becoming the center of future destination for the manufacturers in the sector (Gelb et al., 2017: 25 and Startiz et al., 2016: 8). Apart from the labor cost, high-profile industrial incidents in several Asian countries, involving violations of safety and labor standards, caused companies to search for untapped potentials in countries like Ethiopia (see Fig. 3.1) (Mihretu and Llobet, 2017: 15).

Figure 1: Potential sourcing hotspots



Source: McKinsey Apparel CPOSurvey 2017

Several studies (Van der pols, 2015:5,Startiz et al., 2016: 7, Mihretu and Llobet (2017: 15) also reveal that duty-free access to the European Union and Unites States through Everything-But-Arms (EBA) and Africa Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA), respectively, helped the rise in investment and employment in the textile and apparel sector in Ethiopia. The same access to 16 other nations including Australia, Belarus, Canada, China, India, Japan, Norway, New Zealand, Russia, Switzerland, and Turkey is also an added attraction for firms to invest in this country (Startiz et al., 2016: 7).

Thus, with the growth of investment in the sector, Ethiopia hosted over 127 firms in 2016 and the export gain increased from US$3 million in the mid-2000s to US$117 million in 2015 (ibid.: 6). The target set for 2020 is to realize an export growth of 1 billion USD (Van

der pols, 2015: 5). Although the country's share in the global textile and apparel export market is still insignificant, the dynamics in the growth of investment shows that Ethiopia is gradually emerging as an important newcomer amongst the developing countries as exporter of textile and apparel products.

4.3. Labor Resource and Employment Trends in the Textile and Apparel Sector

One of the features that make industrial parks competitive and attractive for investment in the textile and apparel sector is the availability and abundance of labor resources in the host countries. The competitive advantage countries should possess with regard to the labor force includes the price of labor as well as trainability of the available labor.

Ethiopia is the second populous country in Africa next to Nigeria with a population over 100 million. Investors consider its 45 million young labor force as an untapped opportunity for the expansion of their production in the light labor-intensive manufacturing sector (Addis, 2018). Since the wishes of millions of young people were at stake, the need to somehow provide this group with employment was pressing for the government (Priewe, 2016: 13). Due to this, Berg et al. (2015: 18) highlight that investors in the textile and apparel sector leverage the large supply of labor to invest in this country. Revealing Ethiopia being one of the least urbanized countries in the world, a study by Gelb et al. (2017: 26) compares this country with China in the 1980s when it could offer a large pool of young female labor force that can be trained easily to fulfil the demands of investors in the sector.

With regard to employment, the urban labor market is evenly split between wage-employed and self-employed workers (World Bank, 2016: 65). Apparently, the employment share of the manufacturing sector is very low in Ethiopia. The study by Admasu (2017: 6–7) shows that the employment share of manufacturing remains below its 5% contribution to GDP. The survey result of the Central Statistical Authority (CSA) in 2015 also reveals that the unemployment rate at national urban level was 16.8%, where the corresponding rates for males and females remain 10.4% and 23.8%, respectively (Central Statistical Agency, 2015: 22). In some cities, the rate reaches as high as 24% (Andualem, 2017). The government is now working towards creating substantial employment in the labor-intensive manufacturing sector which is believed to be a key to reduce the high rate of youth unemployment in the country.

Meanwhile, a study by Staritz et al. (2016: 12) revealed that the number of workers employed in the textile and apparel industry, as of January 2016, was 55,076. But the growing investment has been increasing the level of employment thereby contributing for the increase in the size of the working class people in the textile and apparel sector. Although it does not reveal the current statistics in relation to the total number of workers employed in the sector, IndustriAll Global Union states that women comprise over 90% of the workforce in the textile and apparel industries in Ethiopia (IndustryAll, 2018b). By the end of the current five year plan, GTP II (2015–20), the government of Ethiopia aspires to create 350,000 more jobs in the sector (Nick, 2017).

4.4. Hawassa Industrial Park in Focus

The Ethiopian government has set out a very bold vision and put many schemes in place to support the expansion of the textile and apparel industry. The latest flagship project is the HIP (Berg et al., 2017: 11). In the time when foreign investment is flooding into this country, the HIP is taken as a key moment which is hoped to provide a blueprint for future industrial parks across the country (Mathews, 2018b). The city of Hawassa, the site of HIP, is a regional capital of Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR) located 275km from Addis Ababa. It has close to 450,000 residents. Located on the shore of Lake Hawassa, the city lies on the Trans-African Highway, which stretches from Cairo to Cape Town (Mihretu and Llobet, 2017: 31).

The HIP amasses a labor supply of close to five million people within a 50km radius and lies in one of the most densely populated regions of the country (Zhang, X. et al., 2018: 28). It is currently Africa's largest specialized textile and apparel industrial park, the first phase of which started in 2015 and inaugurated in June 2016 (ibid.: 29). The park is planned and designed as a world-class eco-industrial park focused entirely on the textile and apparel industries (Mihretu and Llobet, 2017: 34). As of this writing, 18 foreign companies from countries such as USA, UK, India, Taiwan, Belgium, Spain, France, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, China, and Hong Kong have started their operation in the park and many of these tenants are the suppliers of PVH company (ibid.).

By the end of 2020, the park has planned to host 38 factories (Mihretu and Llobet, 2017: 34). Besides, this industrial park has created a direct employment opportunity for 30,000 people as of March 2017 (Zhang, X. et al., 2018: 31)—current statistics not available—and by the end of 2018, it is supposed to employ 60,000 people (Berg et al., 2017: 11). To fulfil

the demands of the companies, 25 labor recruitment centers are established in the areas near to the industrial park (Haimanot, 2018).

4.5. Legal Background for Labor Standards in Ethiopia

Legal frameworks are an important part of the development or improvement of socially sustainable industrial relations. They help to promote a well-functioning dialogue between the partners in the labor market including the labor unions, employers and the state. Recognizing the value of social dialogue in the world of work, Ethiopia has ratified various conventions of the ILO and adopted local regulations (ILO, 2014a: 31).

To begin with the domestic laws, several articles of the 1995 constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) enshrine the protection of workers' rights in employment relations. In Article 31, the constitution stipulates that "every person has the right to freedom of association for any cause or purpose […]". Furthermore, in Article 42, the Constitution lays emphasis specifically on the rights of labor. Following this, Article 42 (1.a) reads that:

> Factory and service workers […] have the right to form associations to improve their conditions of employment and economic well-being. This right includes the right to form trade unions and other associations to bargain collectively with employers or other organizations that affect their interests.

Article 42 (1.b) guarantees that the "categories of persons referred to in paragraph (a) of this sub-Article have the right to express grievances, including the right to strike". It also states that "workers have the right to reasonable limitation of working hours, to rest, to leisure, to periodic leaves with pay, to remuneration for public holidays as well as a healthy and safe work environment (Article 42 (2)). The final section of Article, 42(3) specifies that the implementation of such rights stipulated in Article 42(1.a) shall establish procedures for the formation of trade unions and for the regulation of the collective bargaining process. Before briefing about labor rights, the Constitution also mentions about the role of the state in maintaining social and economic rights of the citizens. In relation to this, Article 41(6) mandates the state to pursue "policies which aim to expand job opportunities for the unemployed […]" while Article 41(7) requires the state to undertake "all measures necessary to increase opportunities for citizens to find gainful employment".

The second national legal framework is the Labor Proclamation No. 377/2003. This proclamation is a comprehensive legislation with provisions on labor rights, administration, and dispute resolution mechanisms**.** The Proclamation reflects the major principles of labor rights enshrined in the Constitution (ILO, 2013: 1) and provides the essential elements of the tripartite social dialogue on the basis of ILO conventions in which employers' associations and trade unions are involved in the management and decision-making processes of the labor administration system (ILO, 2014a: 31-32). Among others, Article 113(1) of the Labor Proclamation No. 377/2003 guarantees workers and employers their rights to establish and form associations and actively participate therein. Regarding the formation of trade unions, Article 114(1) proclaims that "a trade union may be established in an undertaking where the number of workers is ten or more". Furthermore, Article 125 enshrines that "trade union shall have the right to bargain a collective agreement with one or more employers or their organization". Finally, Article 157(1) further specifies that workers have the right to strike to protect their interest "in the manner prescribed" in the Proclamation.

Meanwhile, the country has also signed various international conventions which provide a legal framework for labor standards. Wheeler and Goddard (2013: 4) assert that the ILO Conventions defines workers' rights and standards and the government ratification of the Conventions is a formal commitment to adopting their principles in law and policy for implementation. Even not ratified, the Conventions serve as a framework for law and policy guidance (ibid.). In relation to this, Ethiopia has ratified 22 ILO Conventions including 8 Fundamental Conventions among which are the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948 (No.87) and the Right to Organize and Bargain Collectively Convention, 1949 (No.98)**.**[10]

The legal frameworks at both levels—international and local—underscores the importance of promoting freedom of association and collective bargaining as a necessary tool for workers and employers to negotiate wages and working conditions. They fundamentally insure labor standards to be met and provide workers the ability to deal with their employers on their own behalf through their unions. Overall, in principle, the aforementioned documents clearly provide an account that the Ethiopian workers possess wide-ranging legal protection in the industrial relations. According to Redae (2015: 132), the legal frameworks the workers have at their disposal provide support for unionization

[10]See: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:11200:0::NO::P11200_COUNTRY_ID:102950 for more details on the list of ILO Conventions Ethiopia has ratified.

and protection from anti-union discrimination, granting immunity from intervention from the government and employers in the union activities, however, the question arises over what impact the law has in practice. Corroborating Redae's argument, the report of the CETU (2011: 6) reveals that the task of organizing the workers who are eligible to unionization remains a daunting challenge to the confederation. In worst cases, where workers are already unionized, the employers are also reluctant to bargaining while law enforcement bodies are not able to prompt justice (ibid.).

4.6. Trade Unionism in Ethiopia

As it is mentioned above, Ethiopia is one of the oldest members of the ILO—joining the organization in 1923. Although the country has a long history of being the member of this organization, it took four decades to introduce a law (proclamation No. 210/1963) which allows the workers to form industrial associations and specify their mode of operation (Redae, 2013: 10). In the same year, the country has also ratified two important ILO conventions—Convention No. 87 and 98 (ibid.). Within a period of less than a year after Proclamation No. 210/1963 entered into force, 109 trade unions consisting of 60,000–70,000 workers were formed in the country showing how keen the workers were to form workers' associations, which later led to the formation of the Confederation of Ethiopian Labor Union (CELU) (ibid.: 11). According to Redae, the employers had also an organization of their own in those times (ibid.). However, the labor unions were not strong and independent during the imperial regime as the law was highly biased towards employers (Desset, 2013: 111).

The military regime, which dethroned the emperor in 1974, declared a socialist development path and set up the "dictatorship of the proletariat" by repealing the Proclamation of 1963 and installing another Labor Proclamation (No.64/1975) that single-handedly entitled workers to form trade unions without giving similar opportunity to the employers (Redae, 2013: 15). Being encouraged by the new socialist political setting and a more favourable legal framework, around 290,000 workers were organized under various industrial unions within a short period of time (Beyene, 2010: 165 cited in Redae, 2013: 15). During this period, there was overlapping of responsibilities in the sense that trade union leaders were at the same time influential political figures which led to the politicization of trade unions (Redae, 2013: 16). Given this trend, the so-called socialist regime itself did not bring about the desired change on the status of laborunions, rather it

used the unions as an instrument for the promotion of socialist ideology to serve its own political interest (Desset, 2013: 111-112 and CETU, 2011: 2).

The downfall of the socialist regime in 1991 brought economic liberalization and large-scale privatization of government-owned enterprises bringing a new path to trade unionism in Ethiopia (Redae, 2013: 17). Once again, a new labor proclamation was introduced in 1993, Proclamation No.42/1993, with the intent of accommodating the interest of both the workers and employers in the industrial relations (ibid.: 18). However, with the adoption of the Labor Proclamation No.377/2003, the previous proclamation was repealed again paving the way for further liberalization towards union formation; however, the new proclamation is not without a problem when it comes to the worker's unionization. The problematic of this proclamation was the exclusion of the "management staff" from joining trade unions and how the "management staff" is defined in it (Redae, 2015: 69). According to Redae, the Proclamation defines the management staff so broadly in a way that weakens the organization of workers and deprives unions of a substantial proportion of their present or potential membership (ibid.). Data from 2011 reveals that more than 370,000 (male=218,771 and female=151,229) workers were organized under CETU, which is the sole national center for unionized workers comprising nine independent industrial federations which are the umbrellas for 702 basic trade unions (CETU, 2011: 1).[11] According to Redae, although there is no consolidated data on union membership figure at the national level, this figure from 2011 reveals that the unionized labor force is only 14.9% of the total employees eligible for unionization while two million organizable employees are not yet unionized in the country (Redae, 2015: 132).[12] A more recent ILO statistics show that trade union density rate in Ethiopia is 9.6% while the collective bargaining coverage rate remains 9.8%.[13] This indicates that it is only less than 10% of the eligible workers who are organized under labor unions in the country.

One of the nine industrial federations forming the CETU is the Industrial Federation of Ethiopian Textile, Leather and Garment Workers Trade Unions (IFETLGWU). While there is no clear statistical data regarding the number of employees as well as the unionization

[11]ILO (2014a) Decent Work Country Programme 2014-15 for Ethiopia reveals that CETU has 915 Basic Trade Union under its forming Federations.

[12]Redae (2015: 132)notes that the figure on organizable employees mentioned here included employees of the civil service to whom the right to organize is not yet available in the current Ethiopian legal framework.This also indicates that the union density in the private sector could fall further down if the public sector unions are excluded from the given percentage.

[13]As indicated in the ILOSTAT database, trade union density rate conveys the number of union members who are employees as a percentage of the total number of employees and the collective bargaining coverage rate conveys the number of employees whose pay and/or conditions of employment are determined by one or more collective agreement(s) as a percentage of the total number of employees.

rate in the sector, some sources reveal that currently, the federation has close to 55,000 members of which 56% are women (Barrie, 2018). But, according to the interviewed trade unionist, the number of unorganized workers is much higher than unionized workers in the sector (I7, personal interview 2018).

Overall, when it comes to representing the causes and interests of both organized and unorganized workers, trade union activities, in general, were assessed to be weak in Ethiopia (Desset, 2013: 141). According to the report of CETU (2011: 2), the lack of the necessary human and financial resources as well as low technical capacity of the confederation coupled with the unhelpful attitude of employers towards unionization has become a big challenge for the trade unions to pursue the interest of the working class population in the country.

4.7. Trade Union's Structure and Functions in Ethiopia

Article 113(2) of the Labor Proclamation No. 377/2003 lays down the trade union structure in Ethiopia. Accordingly, it structures unions at three levels, i.e., trade unions, federations, and the confederation.

A. Trade Unions

These are commonly known as basic unions that are close to the workers and formed at enterprise or factory levels (Ahammad et al., 2017: 5). The unions at this level have direct information about day-to-day problems of the workers and take necessary measures to mitigate them. According to Article 114(1) of the Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No. 377/2003, a trade union could be established in an undertaking where the number of workers is ten or more. As proclaimed in Article 115 of this proclamation, the basic unions are responsible for observing the conditions of work and represent their members in collective negotiation and labor disputes with their employers. They are also responsible to ensure that laws, regulations, directives, and statements are known to the members and that they are observed and implemented by them. Moreover, they initiate laws and regulations pertaining to employers and workers and participate actively during their preparations and amendments.

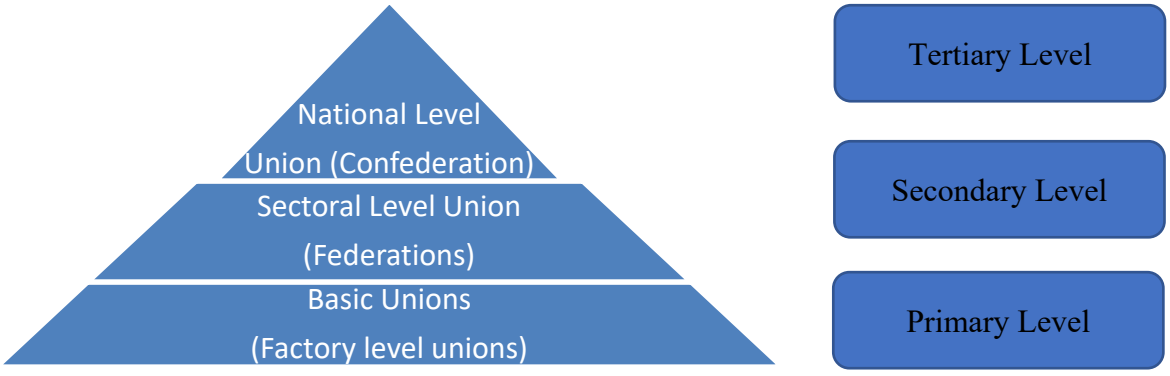
B. Federations

Article 114(3) stipulates that trade unions may jointly form a federation. Federations are commonly referred to as sectoral level trade unions. Such organizations are composed of different basic unions in a certain industrial sector. Federations provide a common platform

and a joint endeavour of workers employed in different enterprises of a particular sector (Ahammad, et al., 2017: 6). Furthermore, in Article 114(5), it is stated that no basic union may form a confederation without forming a federation. Thus, trade unions can only be a member of a confederation via the federation they form in their sectoral set-up.

According to Article 116 of the Labor Proclamation No. 377/2003, the federations of basic trade unions and the confederation have the responsibility of discharging those functions as discussed in Section A. Moreover, under this article, they are also responsible for the following functions—strengthen the unity and spirit of co-operation of their members; participate in the determination or improvement of the conditions of work at the trade or industry level and represent their organizations in any conferences.

Figure 2. Trade Union Structure in Ethiopia



Source: Own illustration based on the Proclamation No. 377/2003

C. Confederation

In Article 114(3), the Proclamation further stipulates that federations may jointly form a confederation. Thus, a confederation is a union of federations of various sectors at the national level. Due to this, the confederation is usually referred to as a national level union (Ahammad, et al., 2017: 6). In Article 114(6), the proclamation also illustrates that any federation of trade unions and the confederation have the right to join international organizations of trade unions. Thus, this article provides sectoral or national level trade unions with the ability to form an association with trade unions at the international level. Similar to the federations, the confederation has the responsibility of undertaking those functions listed in Article 116 of the labor proclamation no. 377/2003.

Besides, the confederation has also the following activities. Primarily, they strive to realize workers' freedom of association and the right to bargain with their employers or effective implementation on the ground of what the Ethiopian Constitution and labor proclamation

have already granted. Second, they strive to build workers' capacity by organizing continuous education and training programs (CETU, 2011: 6).

5. Mapping the Working Conditions and Respect of Labor Rights in the HIP

At the expense of the economic advantage the zones bring to the host countries, the experience in the EPZs around the world reveals the low level of attention given to social and labor-related impacts (Romero, 1998: 392). The limited attention given to labor causes, in turn, resulted in poor working conditions and the violations of labor rights in the zones (ibid.). This argument by Romero conforms to what Benjamin Selwyn (2017: 76) calls "capital-centered development" in which labor is considered as an object of development. According to Selwyn, the notion of capital-centered development considers the human labor and workers as inputs into the development process thereby justifying the exploitation and oppression of the labor force and, most importantly, delegitimizing laboring-class attempts at collective self-amelioration (ibid.: 81). The problem of capital-centered development is related to the nature of employment it generates to the laboring class. Although it brings substantial advantage in terms of economic growth, it leaves the laboring class behind and creates poor workers in the economy. Thus, bearing in mind that the HIPis an export-oriented production zone and gives enormous privilege to the interest of capital, the sections below examines the social and labor-related impacts of the textile and apparel industry investments in the park. In doing so, it discusses major research findings related to the working conditions and respect of labor rights within the factories of the industrial park.

5.1. The Working Conditions in the HIP

This section provides a brief description of the working conditions of the workers in the factories in HIP based on the empirical data collected from the field in Ethiopia. The empirical data is collected from six factory workers in the industrial park. According to the data, there remains a broader consensus among the interviewed workers that the working conditions in the factories have been poor and of low quality compared to what they initially have anticipated while joining the workforce in the industrial park. Although the possibility to find jobs are limited in the market, discouraged by their working condition, the interviewees mentioned that they were looking for alternatives outside of the factories. In describing the prevailing labor practice in HH[14]apparel factory, one of the interviewed workers argued that "the working condition in the factory is so bad […] it seems like we

[14]Anonymous character given to one of the factories in the HIP. The full detail is found in table 3.1.

(the workers) are working in Arab countries […] It is so sad that we are being enslaved in our own country" (I2, Personal interview 2018).[15]

The responses of the workers regarding the working conditions in the factories have addressed a variety of issues ranging from low wages to the ill treatment they receive. Some of the major areas of labor practices in HIP revealing poor working conditions are listed below.

A. Wages and Benefits

Labor cost is the most important part of employers' expense in the production process. Hence, profitability has much to do with the wages the employer pays for the employees. From a labor cost perspective, Ethiopia has become a very attractive destination to investors and buyers alike. In comparison to other countries competing for similar investments in the sector, the country's wages for the workers are among the lowest globally (Berg et al. 2015: 19).[16] In relation to this, one of the factors that tend to attract investment is the lack of minimum wage provision for the workers of the private sector. Although the country has signed various ILO conventions, it is not a signatory of the "Minimum Wage Convention" (ILO Convention No 26) nor is there a minimum wage stipulated by law for the private sector employment. As a result, there are no wage levels except for very low ones that are considered to be a starting wage for workers in the HIP.

Given this background, workers in the HIP uniformly expressed their concerns that the wages are too low and not enough to meet their basic needs. As one of the interviewed workers in the HH firm explained, the operators (low skilled production line workers) are being paid 650 ETB ($23.53) and 260 ETB ($9.41) meal allowance per month (I1, personal interview 2018).[17] According to Dawit (2017), this level of starting wage was the first thing the tenants (employers) of the HIP has done so as to set the same scale of wages for all workers depending on their skill level and avoid variations in the wage payment among the

[15]The interviewee mentioned the level of torture women are facing in Arab countries, but she indicated that it is still better to go to Arab countries than working in the factories of the HIP due to the amount of money workers are able to make there. The interviewed unionist also mentioned that most of the women are waiting for their chances to go to the Arab countries due to the alleged better income they would be able to earn (I7, Personal interview 2018).

[16]The entry-level salaries for workers in Ethiopia's textile industry are lower than Bangladesh's minimum wage of $68 per month and far below the average wage of $500 in the Chinese textile sector. In fact, Ethiopia's high rate of unemployment means that workers are often forced to accept the low wages (Bizvibe Blog, 2017). Kenya has also comparatively high labor costs, with monthly wages for garment workers in the range of $120 to $150 range (Berg et al., 2015: 4).

[17]The amount in the US $ is a prevailing exchange rate during the writing of this study (8 September 2018).

industries in the park. However, apparently, there is variation among the factories in the scale of starting wages. As the interviewed worker from EV firm confirmed, this company is paying 700 ETB ($25.34) in basic salary and 300 ETB ($10.86) meal allowance as a starting wage (I3, Personal interview 2018). Although there are slight variations, the starting wages remains close to $1 or little over $1 per day, which remains one of the lowest wages of any garment factories in the world.

This, in turn, shows that the wages in the industrial park are nowhere livable and match the worker's dignity. In explaining about the wage she is being paid in the HH firm, I2 (Personal interview 2018) has stated that "the wage is too low to afford housing, food and other basic needs in the city. I live together with two other workers in a small one room which costs 1000 ETB ($36.2). My friends and I are still working in the factory because we do not want to go back to our families. But, the wage is not attractive at all". Another worker from SS firm also revealed that "the wage is too low to survive for a month. The salary would last for two weeks and we had to suffer to survive for the next two weeks" (I6, Personal interview 2018). Corroborating the argument of the workers from HH and SS factories, one of the workers of EV firm also asserted that "the wages are not livable […] the employers need to thank the government because they are getting our labor almost for free" (I4, Personal interview 2018). This interviewee further claimed that the wage is not enough for a person to live independently (ibid.). In the worst case, the workers are not able to get the whole amount of their monthly salary as they are losing some of it in the case of being late or absent irrespective of the reasons behind them (I1 and I6, Personal interview 2018).

According to the interviewed trade unionist from the CETU, efforts are being undertaken by the union to pressurize the government to set a minimum wage for the private sector workers, but the government has been asserting the argument that given the current position of the country in the global economy, the wage for the private sector has to be decided in the labor market (I8, Personal Interview 2018). In accordance to the position the government mentioned by this trade unionist, Vishal Bist, Business Head at Silver Spark Apparel Company, says that the wages that the company pays for its workers in the HIP is in line with the global market in which decisions are taken based on the forces of economics (Andualem, 2017). He also stated that "Ethiopia has still to go 20 or 25 years to reach the level of the countries that increased their wages for the textiles sector because in those countries the people have got other better-paying alternatives" (ibid.).

With regard to wage issues, the workers are not entirely blaming their employers. Rather, they are pointing their fingers towards the state. Having attended the meeting with ArkebeOkubay (Dr),[18] one of the interviewed workers mentioned that in his response to the questions raised by the workers regarding the wages in the park, Arkebe said, “the government has brought the investors after imploring them for a long time. Thus, the workers should stop complaining and better focus on increasing their productivity so that wages and other benefits shall get improved through time” (I4, Personal interview 2018). This interviewee further added that “the response of the government officials was never been helpful to the demands of the workers” (ibid.). The response of the employers is also the same when it comes to the worker's wage demand (I5, Personal interview 2018). According to this interviewee, whenever the workers request for an improvement in their wages, the managers respond back by saying “you need to raise your efficiency level first” (ibid.). However, contending the arguments being reflected by the employers and the state official, a trade unionist from the IFETLGWU argued that the worker's productivity should not be separated from their wages; rather, it is an integral part of the level of wages they earn in the factories (I7, Personal interview 2018). For him, the workers can enhance their productivity whenever they are able to get liveable wages that compensate their labor (ibid.).

Overall, the empirical data reveals that the workers are being exploited on the poverty wages in the factories of the HIP. With a starting wage close to $1 a day, the interviewed workers described thatthey were having difficulties to make a living in the city.

B. Working-time Arrangement and Overtime Payment

Although applications vary between studied factories, the actual implementation of the principles related to hours of work and overtime payment are amongst those subjects that characterize the poor working conditions of the workers of the HIP.

The ILO specified the principle of the eight-hour day and 48-hour week as maximum normal working hours (ILO, 2014b: 21). In relation to this, among the three factories involved in this study, only one, EV, has been properly implementing the standard working time principle (I3, Personal interview 2018). According to I3, overtime work is also being paid based on the hours the workers stay in their work beyond the normal working time.

[18]Arkebe Okubay (Dr) is advisor to the prime minister and chair of Industrial Parks Development Corporation (IPDC).

However, the problem with working-time arrangement in this firm is that employees are made to work on their rest day, i.e., Sunday (ibid.).

In the SS firm, the study found that employees work for more than 48 hours per week. In this company, the working time stretches from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with a 30-minute lunch break, i.e., work for eight and a half hours per day (I5, Personal interview 2018). In addition to this, according to I5, there are various occasions in which the workers stay half an hour or one hour longer than the "formal working time" of eight and a half hours a day (ibid.). He added that the workers, who make some faults while doing their specific jobs, in particular, are made to stay longer to correct their mistakes. But, in any of the above cases, the workers are not being paid for the overtime work (ibid.). This kind of practice is in violation of the ILO's eight-hour per day principle as well as one of the key features of working-time arrangements called the provision of adequate compensation for overtime work (ILO, 2014b: 21). Moreover, it also violates Article 66 (1) of the Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No. 377/2003 which proclaims that a "work done in excess of the normal daily hours of work fixed in accordance with the provisions of this Proclamation (eight hours per day) shall be deemed to be overtime" (Federal NegaritGazeta, 2004: 2470).

The daily working-time arrangement in the HH firm is also similar to that of the SS Company. The workers have a 30-minute lunch break in the middle of 8a.m. and 11p.m. (I2, Personal interview 2018). With regard to over-time work, this interviewee also revealed that "[…] at times we (the workers) are forced to work overtime, which is 4 ETB (0.14 $) per hour" (ibid.). Apparently, forced overtime work is also a clear violation of Article 67 (1) of the labor proclamation no. 377/2003, which allows employers to require their workers undertake overtime work, but not compulsory (Federal NegaritGazeta, 2004: 2470). In addition to this, another interviewee from HH firm also confirmed that workers are being paid the same amount of money for night-shift works (I1, Personal interview 2018) while they were ought to be paid at the rate of one and a half of the ordinary hourly wage according to Article 68 (b) of the Labor Proclamation No. 377/2003 (Federal NegaritGazeta, 2004: 2471).

The other most appalling feature of the working-time arrangement in HIP is the lack of adequate protection for workers during night-shifts. According to I2 (Personal interview 2018), there are occasions in which women are being raped on their way back home from night-shifts. I2 further claims that "the night-shifts are dangerous to work. Let alone the women's, men's are also being snatched their phone and anything they have with them by the local gangsters" (ibid.). Corresponding to this, I4 (Personal interview 2018) also

ascertained that there are various stories of raped women's being circulated in the park, but they were underreported by the victims. This interviewee notes that "the women's are shy to disclose it and, on top of that, they also do not understand that the employers are responsible for their security" (ibid.). Overall, the lack of adequate protection for the workers in the factories of the HIP is also a violation of another key principle on the working-time arrangement, that is, the need to warrant special protection for night-shift workers (ILO, 2014b: 21).

C. Occupational Health and Safety

Health-related issues are the other indicators of the poor working conditions of the textile and apparel factory workers in HIP. The interviewed workers expressed their concerns on instances of fainting of employees at workplaces as well as contamination of subsidized food that workers are eating in the cafés of the industrial park.

As one of the interviewed workers formulated, "the working condition is very intense and, on top of that, workers do not get enough diet which enables them to cope with it. Due to this, it is common to see workers faint at the workplace" (I1, Personal interview 2018). Supporting this claim, another interviewed worker has also mentioned that "it is familiar to see workers fainting at the workplace" (I5, Personal Interview 2018). The employees of the industrial park, particularly the low-skilled workers, are being paid close to $1 per day. With this level of payment, it is not difficult to suggest that the workers cannot afford to eat decent food and fulfil the minimum nutritional requirements.[19] This subsequently makes them weak and unable to undertake the strenuous load at workplaces.

The other common health problem mentioned by the interviewed workers was related to the contaminated subsidized meals that workers were served by their employers in the industrial park. The interviewees argued that the food has no quality and those workers who chose to eat from the cafés of the industrial park often get sick (I1 and I6, Personal interview 2018). According to them, many workers are forced to eat subsidized meals as the food allowance given when one opts out from eating in the cafés of the industrial park is not enough to afford foods outside the park for the whole month. In addition to the low quality food, the workers mentioned that they were drinking water stored in the containers, which is also dangerous to their health (I2, Personal interview 2018).

[19]As Andualem (2017) indicated, with the current wage in HIP most of the employees cannot even afford to eat twice a day the cheapest foods sold in the neighboring areas of the industrial park. See https://newbusinessethiopia.com/wage-concerns-employees-as-ethiopia-introduces-specialized-textiles-industrial-park/for more information.

Regarding the safety of the workplace, the interviewed workers asserted that it is not an issue the employees are currently concerned with. As I3 and I4 (Personal interview 2018) argued, the issue of safety has not been a subject of disagreement with employers in their workplaces and the issues related with safety standards may not be a burning subject for the workers of the HIP at the moment.

D. Employment Contract

In the HIP, the blue-collar and white-collar workers have to go through two separate procedures to get a permanent employment contract from their employers. The interviewed workers revealed that the blue-collar workers are given a permanent employment contract after 45 days of training depending on their level of efficiency (I1 and I4, Personal interview 2018). This includes two weeks of soft training related to work ethics and culture as well as two months' training on job skills (ibid.). According to I1 (Personal interview 2018), there are some low-skilled trainees who are sent back home if production managers decide not to hire them owing to their low levels of efficiency. He added that having the ambition of getting hired in the factories, the trainees "work like slaves" during the training period (ibid.). However, I4 (Personal interview 2018) argued that white-collar workers become employees after passing the recruitment examinations of the firms hiring them and are granted their employment contract soon thereafter.

In relation to the type of contracts, I5 (Personal interview 2018) said that the employees are being provided with an employment contract that has an indefinite period of time having details about conditions for the termination of the contract. Those who could read and understand the national language get themselves oriented with the conditions stated in the contract, while those who are unable to understand the language, the conditions are clarified by the Human Resource officers before they sign on the contracts (I4, Personal interview 2018). However, although the written contracts have some details, the workers are not cautious about it as securing the employment opportunity is the foremost objective for them (ibid.).

According to I5 (Personal interview, 2018), the problem related to the employment contract is that "it does not specify details about how the wages (basic salary) of the workers could increase in the course of time". Corroborating this, another interviewee also added that as the issues of wage are not clearly specified in the employment contracts, the workers are obliged to beg the production managers for the improvement of their salary (I4, Personal interview 2018). Whenever there is a strong claim by individual workers, the production

managers decide to add efficiency allowance money rather than raising the basic salary of the workers (ibid.). According to this interviewee, the allowance money is only a temporary solution to pacify an efficient as it does not last for more than a month or two (ibid.). In the same context, a worker of HH firm also pointed out that employees have to deal on an individual basis with their respective production managers to secure an increment in their basic salary (I1, Personal interview 2018).

Overall, the lack of detailed explanation on the wage situation of the workers makes the contact poorly drafted and inadequate for workers to make claims for the increment of their wage. It leaves the workers in a precarious situation without any prospect of improvement in the wage levels they were employed at the start of their job career in the factories of the industrial park.

E. Unfair Treatments and Sexual Harassments

The other indicator of the poor working conditions is related to the unfair treatment the employees receive at their workplaces, as narrated by the interviewed workers. Even though the white-collar workers are also subject to ill treatment in the factories of the industrial park, the empirical finding indicates that the blue-collar (low-skilled machine operators) workers are much vulnerable to mistreatments. Many of the interviewees reported that they were disrespected by their foreign production managers, often mentioning being shouted at by them.

As one interviewed worker of SS firm formulated: “If there is any other job out there in the market, I would never hesitate to leave the factory work. The production managers shout a lot and they do not respect us.” (I6, Personal interview 2018). Another worker from the same firm argued that “they insult workers using words like ‘idiot or ‘stupid’. I was one of the causalities of these words and it is humiliating and demoralizing” (I5, Personal interview 2018). Raging about the workers' treatment in this firm, the same interviewee asserted that “the relation between the production managers and the workers has never been good. They do not have any respect, particularly to the low-skilled workers. The manner they act against the workers is so bad” (ibid.).

The same holds true in the case of EV and HH firms. I4 and I2 (Personal interview 2018) confirmed that the employees are being shouted at and insulted by the production managers and they are not given enough respect. One of these interviewees stated that due to the verbal abuses the workers are facing and the immoral treatment meted out to them by the production managers, it is common to see some women crying in the workplace (I1,

Personal interview 2018). This interviewee also mentioned that most of the women's are sensitive and only a few are capable of handling such treatment in the factories (ibid.).

With regard to sexual harassment, I1 (Personal interview 2018) argued that where the production managers are interested in a female worker, they try to take advantage of their poverty. In most cases, "good looking" girls are often targeted by them. The production managers provide those girls with additional allowances that are typically offered to active and efficient workers (ibid.). According to him, the women themselves are more open to such kinds of relations with the intention of fulfilling some of their material needs (ibid.).

Generally, the poor treatment and labor practices in the factories of the industrial park are exacerbated by the lack of adequate supervisory mechanism in place. According to I2 (Personal interview 2018), the government bodies barely supervising the way managers treat the workers in the factories. This, in turn, shows that the government gives minimal attention to labor causes and focuses on employment creation alone.

F. Dismissal and Employment Security

Arbitrary firing and lack of employment security also remain one of the features of poor working conditions addressed by the workers of the HIP. In relation to this, Mulubiran (2016: 22) argues that the labor law of the country, Article 26 (1) of the Labor Proclamation No. 377/2003, has a weakness in the sense that it allows random dismissal and termination of contracts in cases of quarrel at workplaces, absenteeism without good cause, and workers' manifestation of loss of capacity. According to him, the provision in this article is open to different interpretations and abuse by the employers (ibid.).

As one of the interviewed workers puts it: "Whether it is during the training or after being employed, workers do not have job security […] During the training, they (employers) fire the so-called inefficient workers and after signing the contracts, they fire those workers repeatedly complaining and raising questions related to wages" (I2, Personal interview 2018). Revealing the prevailing practice in HH Company, this interviewee also added that "on the occasion of a group attempt to raise questions related with salary increment, the production managers immediately fire those whom they believe to have organized the group. More often, the male workers are the main casualties of this sort of dismissals" (ibid.). In connection to the unfair dismissals in the workplace, I5 (Personal interview 2018) argued that there are some procedures that have to be followed to fire a certain worker including three consecutive warnings for the offenses at work, but, "in practice, there are

various occasions in which the workers are being fired for silly disagreements with the production managers at the workplace".

According to the interviewed workers, the lack of employment security in the factories of the industrial park is worsened by the lack of adequate protection from the human resource departments. The people in the human resource department are themselves worried about their job security so providing fairer decisions to the causes of the labor in the factory is a distant thought for them (I1, Personal interview 2018). In any situation, they sided with the employers than the workers (ibid.). Generally, the data with workers of the industrial park reveals that the practices in the factories do not provide workers with a sense of job security. The defenceless workers are being dismissed without adequate reasons as well as proper procedures.

5.2. Conditions of Collective Labor Rights in HIP

The right to freedom of association and bargaining collectively are the two ground rules on which other rights of workers are established (Seleshi, 2012: 101). These rights guarantee the ability of workers to join and act together to defend their interests at the workplaces and moreover, they give protection against arbitrary actions and different kinds of abuses against the workers. The freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining are legally recognized rights of workers in Ethiopia. As it is discussed in Chapter 4 (Section 4.6) of this research, Articles 31 and 42 of the national constitution of Ethiopia explicitly guarantees workers' rights to form or join associations of their interest. The Labor Proclamation No. 377/2003 also reaffirms these workers' rights in a detailed manner. The proclamation stipulates that the employees are entitled to form associations of their own choice without interference from any corner. Additionally, Ethiopia has also ratified a number of relevant ILO conventions, including two fundamental conventions: The Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948 (No. 87) and the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).

Apart from the aforementioned legal provisions, Article 28 of the Industrial Park Proclamation No. 886/2005 underscores the applicability of the country's Labor Proclamation in the industrial parks (Federal NegaritGazeta, 2015: 8228). However, the labor rights to form associations and collectively bargain the terms and conditions of work have been under attack both by the employers and the state in the HIP. As indicated by I3 (Personal interview 2018), "the workers do not have any right at workplaces except for the

duties they are required to fulfil in the factories". Thus, emphasizing on the core labor standards the following sections address how the labor rights are being respected in the HIP.

A. Freedom of Association

The notion of freedom of association is an important subject in the field of industrial relations. Its importance essentially lies on its contribution to the strengthening of the workers bargaining power and advancement of their interests. Basically, unions are often formed when workers agree that they need the strength of numbers and a collective voice on their job (Glass, 2013: 3). While examining the case of the HIP, all the factories studied in this research do not have workers' associations which represent the interests of the workers in the employment relation. As a result of this, workers lacked the means of expressing their collective voice without the risk of retaliation.

Workers' grassroots initiatives are so important in the formation of labor unions. However, the result of the empirical data reveals that there has been no attempt made by the employees to form the workers' association in the factories of the HIP. In stating his view on the employees' rights to form workers' association in the workplace, one of the interviewed workers asserted that " I do not think that the majority of the workers are aware of what an organized labor mean […] They (the workers) do not have a clear understanding of the extent of their rights yet" (I5, Personal interview 2018). Another worker, who was interviewed, also noted the lack of workers' initiative to form a collective organization that addresses issues of workers' concern at the workplace (I4, Personal interview 2018). This interviewee argued that there have been no instances in which the workers in the factory have made an attempt to organize themselves under such structure (ibid.).

A more illustrative response regarding this issue was given by a worker from the HH firm. In explaining the labor right conditions in this company, I1 (Personal interview 2018) specified that "there are labor rights guaranteed in paper and, in principle, workers are allowed to voice their demands collectively, but there is no platform to do so. Workers do not have any place to meet together. The rights are there on paper, but do not work in practice". Although it was not intended to organize the workers in the form of a union, the interviewees mentioned about the selection of workers' representatives through the initiative of the employers during the time the factories just started their operation. But, the representatives were never been assertive of the workers' interests and currently, none of them are actively working in their position (I1 and I3, Personal interview 2018).

Looking from the workers' perspective, according to I1 and I5 (Personal interview 2018), most workers are literally unaware of the extent of their rights as workers in the factories. But in situations where workers are not able to form unions by themselves, Glass (2013: 3) states that there should be assistance from the already existing unions. Thus, drawing on Glass's argument, the responsibility to assist workers of HIP to organize themselves under a trade union rests upon the sectoral and national unions of the country. Responding to the question regarding the respect of collective labor rights in HIP, the interviewed national and sectoral trade unionist affirmed that both the state and the employers' association of HIP are hostile to the unionization of the workers in the industrial park (I7 and I8, Personal interview 2018). According to them, this has been affecting the rights of the workers to organize themselves under a trade union. The unionists further claimed that there was a joint attempt by the national and sectoral unions to organize workers of the industrial park, but the request was declined by the employers' association of the HIP and the state department responsible for the administration of the park called the IPDC (ibid.).

In revealing the weakness in the actual implementation of the labor laws in the country, the interviewed expert also described that "it is hard to argue that the workers' rights are being respected in the private sector […] Both the state and the employers in the country are hostile to the unionization of workers" (I10, Personal interview 2018). Although this respondent indicated his utmost doubt on its practicability, he noted that the applicability of the Labor Proclamation in the industrial park would give the unions a solid base to undertake their organizing activities (ibid.). According to him, unlike most of the countries in Southeast Asia which legally banned union activities in the EPZs, the Ethiopian government decision to apply the labor laws in the parks could be taken as a positive move by the state with respect to legally recognizing the workers' rights to form labor unions. However, in his general assessment on the freedom of association, he argued that "as the state delves deep into liberalization, unions are getting weaker and so does the representation of the workers" (ibid.).

Although this study is not able to integrate the assertions of the employers' association in the HIP, their resentment towards unionization of workers was mentioned in the interview with the government official from the MoLSA. According to this interviewee, the employers of the industrial park are resisting the unionization of the workers as they fear unionized workers would disrupt the production process in their infant industries (I9, Personal interview 2018). This government official has also provided a genuine reflection on the position of the government. Accordingly, he stated that even though workers have

the legal rights to form associations when organized, they get into unnecessary conflict with their employers (ibid.).

The position of the government in relation to the workers' rights to form their unions is mainly related to the fear of losing the country's competitive advantage in attracting FDI. Justifying why the government is more cautious to the unionization of workers in the industrial park, I9 argued that:

> "In the age of globalization, capital is mobile and investors have a multitude of options regarding where to invest. In our case, most of the investors do not want an organized labor at the moment. With the intention of attracting more investment to the country, the government does not want to put pressure on them. […] Moreover, our experience with trade unions has not been good. Once workers form unions, they become very hostile towards the employers" (I9, Personal interview 2018).

In general, although there has been no clear attempt of unionization among workers of the HIP, the hostility of the employers and the state towards workers' rights to organize themselves remains crystal clear. The empirical findings show that the effort to organize workers of the industrial park by the national level unions has been declined by the employers in the industrial park and the state. This, in turn, raises a question against the legal rights of the labor in the industrial park to form associations of their own without the interference and any prior authorization of the state and employers in the industrial park.

B. Collective Bargaining

The Labor Proclamation No. 377/2004 ensures the workers to engage, through their lawful elected representatives, in the collective bargaining process with their employers. Among others, Article 128 of this proclamation illustrates that "matters concerning employment relationship and conditions of work as well as relations of employers and their organizations with workers' organizations may be determined by collective agreement" (Federal NegaritGazeta, 2003: 2487).

Virtually, collective bargaining is one of the mechanisms through which workers' organizations ensure that the rights of workers are respected. In its basic essence, the very first step in the bargaining process is the presence of an officially recognized trade union representing the interest of the workers. Collective bargaining takes place at various stages—national, sectoral and factory levels. At the factory level, it requires legally

recognized unions representing the workers and company managements. Looking at the case in point, as it is indicated above, none of the factories studied in this research have a trade union representing workers, nor do they have collectively bargained agreements.

Non-union locations often subject the workers to super-exploitation through unilateral decisions made by the employers. For instance, in the case of the HIP, the workers are forced to accept wage rates that are being imposed by the employers without any kind negotiations and collective agreements (see Section 5.1 (A)). Moreover, there is no collective agreement at the industry/sectoral level (I7, Personal interview 2018). Thus, with no binding agreement between the employers and trade unions of the textile and apparel sector, the employers in the industrial park exploit the workers at will. Although wage is the most important component of collective bargaining agreements, it is not the only subject workers need to negotiate with their employers. There are many other concerns of working conditions, including work time, work schedule, breaks, workers treatments, etc., that has to be negotiated with the employees. Reflecting on this situation, I5 (Personal interviews 2018) argued that "we (the workers) do not have anyone on our behalf to negotiate with the employers, so that we work the way the employers ordered us to work".

Overall, the employment relationship in the HIP is being underway without any agreement or negotiation between the employers and the employees on a set of rules that governs the working conditions in the factories. Decisions are unilaterally made by the employers in a way that meets their best interests. In fact, in the absence of trade unions, workers would not be able to engage in the bargaining mechanism that addresses their needs at the shop floor levels.

C. The Right to Strike

Article 157 (1) of the Labor Proclamation No. 377/2003 asserts that workers have the right to strike so as to protect their interests in the industrial relations. Although the proclamation allows workers the right to strike, the provision is full of restrictive Articles which deny workers from taking such actions.[20]According to the Ethiopian Labor Proclamation, workers must follow lengthy and complicated procedures which make legal strike action difficult (International Trade Union Confederation, 2011). Due to this sort of restrictive provisions, the country has not seen a legal strike since 1993 (Freedom House, 2018).

Against this background, in the case of the HIP, there has been no real strike made by the workers demanding respect of the labor rights or an improvement in their wages and

[20]See articles 158–60 of the Labor Proclamation No. 37/2003 (Federal Negarit Gazeta 2004, 2496).

working conditions. The workers mentioned that a number of unauthorized job actions had broken out in some of the factories including those mentioned in this study, but they were neither protests against rights abuses or directed towards gaining improved conditions. Rather they were broken in demand of salary payments for the celebration of the national holidays (I1, I3, and I5, Personal interview 2018). According to I3 (Personal interview 2018), these strikes often started in a certain factory and had a contagious effect on others. As the demands have usually been nothing more than a timely payment of their salaries, the strikes quickly settle whenever the management of the factories decides to pay as per the demand of the workers (I5, Personal interview 2018). This shows that strategic questions which have a substantial bearing on the interests of the workers are not being the subject of workers' strikes in the industrial park.

Further, the industrial park is being guarded by the regional police force and federal police members to shield any attempt by workers to disrupt the production processes of the factories of the industrial park (I5, Personal interview 2018). The presence of the security forces means workers are being threatened from taking any industrial actions that could enable them to voice their demands and defend their interests in the industrial park.

In conclusion, although the gloomy working conditions and the lack of respect for the labor rights in the HIP remain the source for great concern, the interviewed government officials state that the youth are the main beneficiaries of the incoming investments in the industrial park (I9, Personal interview 2018). However, as Kidanemariam (2013: 19) argues that the creation of employment for the youth, though to be welcomed, by no means justifies the inferior labor conditions in the industrial park. Rather, the poor labor practices in HIP needs to be addressed. Rectifying them, in turn, requires sufficient resistance and capability of the labor. Thus, the following chapter examines the ability of the workers and trade unions to enforce their demands and interests through the employment relations of factories in HIP, using the theoretical lens of the PRA.

6. Assessment of Grievance Mechanisms and Workers' Power in HIP

The discussions in Chapter 5 illustrated the abysmal working conditions of the employees in the selected factories of the HIP. Moreover, it also highlighted the prevalence of poor implementation of the legally granted rights of the workforce in the industrial park. Based on this background, this chapter explores the grievance procedures in place for the workers to address issues of injustice and unfair treatments at the workplace. Most importantly, it also discusses the ways in which workers respond to grievances in light of the theoretical framework—Power Resource Approach—which underpins this study. In doing so, this chapter examined the availability and utilization of workers' power resources to influence decisions that affect the labor conditions in the industrial park.

6.1. Assessment of Grievance Mechanism

Labor discontentment usually emerge from workers' dissatisfaction with the compensation they are paid for their labor, the conditions in which they are obliged to work, and the violation of their basic rights at workplaces. In order to address these problems, there needs to be an industrial relation system whereby the core workers' rights are being respected. As Wubie (2013: 41–42) states, labor relations can be managed effectively only when justice is ensured for both the employers and employees in the industrial relation system. This, in turn, requires the availability of a just grievance mechanism as well as a meaningful engagement of the labor force in it.

According to the interviewed workers of the HIP, labor dissatisfaction is growing as the workers are being paid poverty wages and treated with less dignity. As it can be drawn from Chapter 5, the appalling wages are one of the leading reasons for the poor working conditions of the workers in the park. Non-paid and forced overtime works are also becoming common practice in the factories in the industrial park. Moreover, unfair treatments based on gender differences as well as arbitrary dismissal are being featured under poor labor practices in the industrial park. Apart from the prevailing poor labor practices in the factories, the workers are also in the dark over the grievance procedures that they are supposed to follow in order to file their complaints. The interviewed workers lament the lack of a clear decision-making process that addresses problems which are brought up by the employees (I1 and I3, Personal interview 2018).

The empirical result reveals that the workers of the industrial park lack clear grievance procedures in order to express their voices regarding matters that are negatively affecting

their working life. Subsequently, this is leaving them with a little or no responses to their demands and interests (I1 and I5, Personal interview 2018). Some of the interviewed workers explained that workers might report to their fellow employees who are higher in their rank, the human resource department or the production managers, but they never had the chance to forward their grievances to the people at the higher level of factory management (I1 and I3, Personal interview 2018). In relation to unfair treatments, I1 (Personal interview 2018) pointed out that "in most cases, the workers lodge their complaints to the human resource department, the staff filled with Ethiopians, who has neither the capacity nor the competence to respond to the workers' demands". He added that the staff in that department only reacted to situations where workers had disagreements within themselves (ibid.). But for wage-related questions, the workers approach the production managers with the hope of convincing them to increase their remuneration. As one of the interviewed workers puts it, workers pleaded their production managers demanding an improvement in their wages, but the managers simply ignore their demands and tell them to focus on improving their productivity (I2, Personal interview 2018).

Similarly, referring to the EV firm, I3 (Personal interview 2018) described that workers' complaints are forwarded to the production managers through the line supervisor,[21] but few of them are brave enough to pass the workers' demands to the respective production managers. She added that whenever the line supervisors document the worker's complaints, they were not given any response back. Due to this, none of the workers trust any of the existing procedures in place to address their interests in the workplaces (ibid.). Making the situation worst, I4 (Personal interview 2018) revealed that the line supervisors are easily manipulated by the production managers. According to her, the production managers provide the line supervisors with some gifts and allowances to stop them from bringing any complaints of the workers. Additionally, she mentioned that workers go to the extent of the IPDC in the case of unfair treatments in the workplaces, but the corporation has always been siding with the employer's decision (ibid.). In explaining the situation in the SS firm, I5 (Personal interview 2018) argued that although the workers are complaining about their wages, they did not receive any helpful answers or follow-up actions that address their concerns. He claims that neither the employers nor the human resource departments have the interest to listen to the workers' complaints (ibid.). According to him, the human resource department is only serving the best interest of the employers and basically, it has no capacity to respond to the demands of the workers (ibid.).

[21]The line supervisors are mostly graduated employees having a degree or diploma.

Another feature of grievance mechanism that needs to be mentioned is the lack of collective action by the workers while lodging their complaints. The interviewed workers mentioned that most often the employees try to file their complaints on an individual basis than in an organized manner (I1 and I5, Personal interview). This, in turn, makes workers weaker to achieve their demands. In industrial relations, grievances are often dealt through the consultation between trade unions, which represents workers and employers. In relation to this, the preamble of the Labor Proclamation No. 377/2003 guarantee the right of workers to form their respective associations and to engage, through their lawful elected representatives, in collective bargaining, as well as to lay down the procedure for the expeditious settlement of labor disputes, which arise between workers and employers (Federal NegaritGazeta, 2004: 2454). However, in the absence of unions representing the workers, the powerless employees are severely disadvantaged and are made to deal with their powerful employers on an individual basis in the factories of the HIP.

In general, the empirical finding of the research reveals that there is a growing level of complaints among the employees of the park. However, plant-level dispute mechanisms are completely absent in the industrial park. As a result of this, the workers' demands are either not heard or simply ignored by their employers as well as the state agency, the IPDC. According to I3 (Personal interview 2018), the workers, therefore, are left with two options; they either have to accept the existing labor conditions or leave the factory jobs.

6.2. Assessment of the Utilization of Power Resources in the HIP

A counter movement against the growing power of capital is not a simple spontaneous response to its negative impact against the working class people. Rather, such mobilization is part of a process that demands resources, capacity, and the development of collective power by the workers (McGuire, 2014: 47). Moreover, the mobilization of a counter movement against the power of capital is essentially embedded within the social, institutional, political, and economic context within which the workers and unions operate (Hyman 2001 cited in McGuire 2014: 47). Against this backdrop, the development of the power resource remains an essential tool for labor researches in explaining the sources of power that workers and unions are using and able to draw in their day-to-day struggle against unjust labor practices in the industrial relations. In addition to this, the PRA makes explicit how these power sources are affected by the external context and unions' internal capacity in making the strategic choices (McGuire 2014: 61). According to Schmalz and

Dörre (2017: 1), the main objective of PRA is to analyse the spaces of action of trade unions and employees under the given circumstances. Thus, by considering the basic assumptions within the different sources of workers' power, the sub-sections below illustrate which power resources the workers of the HIP and the trade unions at the national and sectoral level are utilizing in their struggle to enforce the labor demands and interests in the prevailing industrial relations within the industrial park.

A. Structural Power

The PRA stipulates that the structural power of workers arises from the specific incorporation of a country into the global capital accumulation (Schmalz, Ludwig, and Webster, 2018: 124). Consequently, the approach asserts that workers with sufficient structural power are able to push forward their interests and secure concessions in the industrial relations (Xu and Schmalz, 2017: 1034). According to Xu and Schmalz, workers who are holding a key position in a certain economy can challenge capital through the disruption of the production process (ibid.).

Taking the aforementioned assumptions into account, given the vulnerability of the textile and apparel sector for disruption in the production process, its importance to the economy of the country, and the position the employees possess as workers in the sector, workers of the HIP may have potentially a greater possibility to exercise the disruptive power. However, the empirical findings of the field interview reveal that the structural power of the workers of HIP remains reasonably very weak. The weakness of workers' structural power can generally be drawn from the very shortage of wage jobs in the country and the fragile economic status of the workers.

There are two forms of structural power the workers can make use of to influence the industrial relation—the workplace and marketplace bargaining power. Looking at the workplace bargaining power, it fundamentally depends on workers' ability to refuse to continue working, strike, and sabotage at workplaces (Brinkmann et al 2008: 27 cited in Schmalz and Dörre, 2017: 2). As the interviewed workers of factories in the HIP revealed, although they are applied in rare cases, these strategies are being used by workers as a means of responding to their grievances. According to I1 and I2 (Personal interview 2018), the employees of the HH firm influenced decisions in the factory through work stoppage and sabotage, but none of the interviewees mentioned that the strategies had a significant impact in disrupting the production process. Rather, the interviewees stated that the workers who were participating in those activities were being blacklisted (I2, personal interview

2018) or got demoted to more physically demanding positions in the factories (I1, Personal interview). Thus, due to this kind of counter action by the production managers, many of the workers remained reserved and refrained from being part of such actions at their workplace (I2, Personal interview 2018).

Work stoppage and sabotage were also exercised in the EV firm demanding timely payment of salary (I3, Personal interview 2018). However workers who took part in the stoppage received threat of losing their jobs and ended up receiving a warning letter (ibid.). The same interviewee mentioned that the production managers took this sort of action as a threat to influence future actions of workers (ibid.). Although the actions had no significant effect on the employer's interest, it was found that workers were increasingly participating in strike activities (I1, I3, and I5, Personal interview 2018). As mentioned in Chapter 5 (section 5.2 (c)), the strikes had never been strategic and had no significant impact in terms of disrupting the production process. Although the aforementioned industrial actions made use of the workplace bargaining power, it was only through a strategically designed and targeted use of strikes that workers could shake up the asymmetric power relation between workers and employers in the industrial park. As Schmalz et al. (2018: 117) argued, conflicts in the industrial relation can be dealt more efficiently by deploying the weapon of striking in a targeted way instead of using it repeatedly without any real effect. In the case of the HIP, even if workers had grievances on various practices in the factories, none of the interviewed workers mentioned that employees were involved with the causes of the striking activities or were in favor of a more progressive labor question including improvement in wages, the betterment of their working conditions and respect of their fundamental rights. However, as stated by Schmalz and Dörre (2017: 2), through a work stoppage, workers in the highly integrated production process can cause major costs for employers and force them to offer better remuneration or working conditions.

The empirical result shows that the workplace bargain power of the employees in the industrial park is largely affected by the weak marketplace power the workers possess in the labor market. This is consistent with the analysis of Silver (2003: 93) which states that the relatively weak workplace bargaining power of the textile workers is not generally counterbalanced by a strong marketplace bargaining power. Confirming this trend, I4 (Personal interview 2018) asserted that “the workers are worried of their job security and they fear any negative relation with the employers would result in the loss of their jobs”. This kind fear among the workers has an impact in holding them back from workplace actions. Moreover, the aforementioned quote indicates that workplace bargaining power,

which largely draws on the industrial action like strikes, is not an automatic choice for workers of the HIP as it relies on the marketplace power of the workers.

The second form of structural power is called marketplace bargaining power. According to Silver (2003: 13), this power resource depends on the existence of tight labor market, the workers possession of rare qualifications and skills demanded by employers, low level of unemployment in the economy, and the ability of workers to fully withdraw from the labor market and survive on non-wage sources of incomes. Although this form of structural power has an indirect influence over the employers, its strength has a major influence on the worker's ability to exercise their workplace bargaining power. For instance, the fears of being dismissed and the subsequent unemployment negatively impacts the capacity and willingness of workers in the industrial park from exercising their production power.

Looking at the marketplace bargaining power of the works in HIP, as the level of unemployment is strikingly high and the labor force is increasing at an alarming pace (see Section 4.4) in the country, employees in the factories are fairly lacking the bargaining power that enables them to assert their demands and improve their fundamental working conditions in the park. This power resource essentially depends on the structure of the labor market. Thus, the scarcity of jobs in the economy means that the workers are extremely lacking their leverage in the labor market. Explaining the weak marketplace power of the employees in the industrial park one of the interviewed workers described the situation as:

> "In order to secure their jobs, the workers keep working hard even under massive pressure and violation of their rights. When we (the workers) complain, the production managers respond by saying 'GO HOME, we could bring 10 others who could replace you'. They use these words very frequently. They do not care about the experience we acquired. Their threat usually silences workers not to push on their demands" (I2, Personal interview 2018).

Employers are quite aware of the workers' weakest position in the labor market and use the threat of firing them to rationalize the prevailing low wages and poor working conditions in the factories. Complementing the aforementioned comment, all the interviewed workers mentioned the issue of job security as a major challenge in the worker's attempt to assert their demands and interests in the workplaces. One of them argued that "the lack of enough alternative employment opportunity in the market is the reason for the whole misery of the workers in the factories" (I5, Personal interview 2018). Thus, there is a fear of retaliation and loss of jobs among the workers which further causes the workers to be too much

subservient than being active in taking industrial actions. The employers also draw greater leverage against the workers due to the prevailing economic context of the country. Thus, as survival is their main target, the workers are left with no chance other than accepting the low wages as well as the poor working conditions in the industrial park.

In relation to the ability of employees to survive on non-wage sources of income, the workers, particularly the blue-collar employees, enjoy a relatively modest power although it still remains unclear whether it is causing a genuine damage against the employers of the industrial park. Ethiopia has somehow a large informal economy that absorbs the growing number of unemployed youth population. Citing the Central Statistical Agency (CSA: 2010), Kumie et al. (2016: 19) indicated that about 51% of the urban labor force in Ethiopia is engaged in the informal business sector. Although studying the relative difference of the wages in the industrial park vis-à-vis the income the labor can generate in the informal economy would be subject to further research, the aforementioned statistics reveals that workers in low-skill occupations in the park have greater potential to exercise this form of marketplace power. However, this has also its own problematic. As one of the interview workers described it:

> "Some of the workers, usually men, who are fed up with the work in the factory 'go home' if they had a prior experience of working in the informal sector where they would be able to generate better income than working in the factory. But it is difficult for women to easily leave their current jobs and join the informal economy" (I2, Personal interview 2018).

Apparently, there are reports showing the high levels of low-skilled workers' turnover in the park.[22] But, given the excess supply of unskilled workers in the market and the relatively low level of skill required to replace the departing workers, the employers have a better bargaining position than the workers in the industrial park. Moreover, the economy of the country is far from having a tight labor market whereby workers possess rare qualification which is demanded by employers. This also undermines the marketplace bargain power of the workers in the industrial park. Thus, because of the unfavourable

[22]For instance,HaimanotAshenafi (2018) indicated that the high workers' turnover led the IPDC to recruit potential workers from the outskirtsof the city of Hawassa. See https://allafrica.com/stories/201804190811.html for the detail.
See also http://capitalethiopia.com/2017/11/16/employee-turnover-textile-apparel-industry-parks-plagues-performance/#.W1H3OPZFzIU

labor market, the employees in the factories do not enjoy a distinct marketplace bargaining power.

Indeed, workers in developing countries have little power to influence the working conditions as they work in "market labor control regimes" in which the unfavourable labor market conditions—including fear of losing jobs and prolonged unemployment—disciplines the labor (Anner, 2011: 292-293). Complementing Anner's argument, one of the interviewed workers asserted that:

> We (the workers) are worrying about losing our jobs. Survival is our prime target. Job loss and unemployment are inline if somebody dares to speak against the injustice at workplaces. With lack of any organization we could rely on to protect our rights, we do not have the confidence to react […] Workers also can see what happened to fellow employees who are vocal but treated poorly" (I5, Personal interview 2018).

In conclusion, as Mosley (2008: 684) postulates, the high level of unemployment and a large pool or surplus labor in the developing economies have a detrimental impact on the bargaining power of the workers. The empirical finding of this research also attests this fact. The weak labor market conditions in the country remains a constraint that restrains workers of the HIP from exercising their structural power. This, in turn, is severely reducing the worker's ability to impose their demands as well as forcing them to accept unfair labor conditions in the industrial park.

B. Associational Power

Associational power consists of the various forms of power that result from the formation of a collective organization of workers, most notably trade unions (Yun, 2017: 4). Essentially, this form of power resource requires an organizational process to take place and collective actors to emerge which are capable of producing and executing strategies (Schmalz and Dörre, 2017: 3). According to Silver (2003: 90-94), history reveals that workers in the textile industry relied on this form of power resource in their struggle to secure benefits and push their interests. As it is discussed in the theoretical framework, although it never completely replaces it, having an associational power enables the workers to partly compensate for their low levels of structural power (Xu and Schmalz, 2017: 1035). In this regard, the organizational source of worker's power remains crucial in the workers' struggle for the betterment of their wages and working conditions. To achieve this end,

unions at different levels can, therefore, play an important role. Thus, for the purpose of understanding the level of organized struggles at the various levels of labor union structures and locating their importance in reflecting the causes of the labor at the grassroots level, the sections below illustrates the utilization of associational power at the factory, sectoral/national, and supranational levels.

Utilizing Industry Level Associational Power

In the midst of the weak structural power they possess, in order to influence the various decisions in the factories of the industrial park, workers need to have the workers' associations which are capable of representing their collective voice in the workplaces. It is through the availability of organizational power and the emergence of collective actors that the employees in the park would be able to enforce their shared interests in the existing employment relations. However, the finding of the interview with the workers revealed that the factory-level worker's associations are virtually non-existent in the HIP.

As illustrated in Chapter 5, there is a growing level of complaints among the workers of the industrial park regarding wages and working conditions. However, the grievances are not yet translated into genuine and organized labor movements. According to I2 (Personal interview 2018), "the workers do not have solidarity and the commitment for collective actions. Thus, more often than not, they prefer to use individual channels to express their grievances or demands (I1 and I5, Personal interview 2018). But, virtually, it is difficult for individual employees to raise their complaint against the employers and get favourable responses for their demands. In order to be assertive, the workers rather need to forge a strong solidarity among them. In accentuating the importance of collective voices, one of the interviewed workers argued that:

> "To defend our rights, we need to have unity. But, we do not have the platform that unites us together […] Moreover, when we claim for our rights to be respected, there needs to be an organization that backs us. If there is no one on our behalf, we cannot protect our rights by ourselves" (I1, Personal interview 2018).

It is also mentioned that the majority of the workers in the factories have not yet developed an understanding about labor unionism. One of the interviewed workers claimed, "Unionization is something that workers never tried and even thought about it" (I5, Personal interview 2018). Echoing the lack of awareness among the employees, another

interviewee also argued that most of the workers do not have the know-how about what labor unions are all about (I4, Personal interview 2018).

Overall, in the absence of union representation at the industry level, the workers in the factories of the HIP are completely lacking the opportunity to utilize their associational power and voice their demands collectively in an organized and strategic manner. Moreover, the lack of organizational power is also affecting the utilization of workers' structural power by limiting their ability to act together in disrupting the production process for their own ends.

Utilizing National and Sectoral Level Associational Power

Looking from various dimensions, in addition to the weak associated power of the workers in the industrial park, it is also found that the national and sectoral level unions have also a limited associational power. In explaining the conditions of labor unions in Ethiopia, the interviewed expert argued that "the national level unions are losing their stranglehold with the liberalization of the economy. They are getting weaker over time and the representation of workers by the unions is becoming lower compared to the increasing size of the working population" (I10, Personal interview 2018). Drawing on Karl Marx (1974: 91) who stated that the "social power of the workmen" lay in the "force of numbers", Schmalz and Dörre (2017: 4) contended that member numbers are usually referred as a reliable indicator for determining the associational power of the unions. While looking at the national and sectoral level unions in Ethiopia, the number of workers that are unionized under their umbrella remains quite low.[23]

Although one can mention various reasons for the low level of union density in the country, including the lack of awareness among the workers and the limited capacity of the national level trade unions to organize workers, the state and employers' hostility towards unionization remains central (I10, Personal interview 2018). Due to the inadequate number of workers organized under the national and sectoral levels, the unions are lacking the power of numbers and facing limited associational power to represent the interest of the labor. According to the interviewed trade unionists, the national and sectoral trade unions are facing a formidable challenge from the employers and the industrial park administrative body, i.e., the IPDC, in order to organize the workers at the grassroots level (I7 and I8, Personal interview 2018). Virtually, associational power is always a primary target for

[23]See Chapter 4 Section 4.6 of this research for the number of workers unionized under IFTGLWTU and the level of union density at the national level.

power restriction by capital (Monaisa, 2017: 9). However, unless the unions increase their associational power through organizing the workers at the factory level, it is not only minimizing their bargaining power at the national level, but also the representational gap at the plant level further weakens the workers' collective ability to influence decisions that affect their lives.

Apart from their powerlessness to unionize the workforce at the grassroots level, another manifestation for the poor associated power of the national and sectoral level unions is their failure to force the government to set the minimum wage policy for the private sector workers in the country. In principle, the legally binding minimum wage floor for those employed in the private sector would be one way to stop exploitation of workers by employers. However, the CETU and IFTGLWTU's attempts to pressurize the government for the private sector minimum wages are nothing but bureaucratic engagements that are not supported by labor movements at the grassroot level (I7, Personal interview 2018). According to Schmalz et al. (2018: 119–20), effective utilization of associational power depends on the active participation of the members at the shop floor level. Without their active participation, trade unions tend to turn into a bureaucratic organization (ibid.). Even if they have a weak membership density, in order to achieve their goals of minimum wage for the private sector, the national or sectoral level unions need not only a bureaucratic engagement at the top level but also required to mobilize their associational power at the grassroots level.

Aside from the aforementioned restrictions, the associational power of the national and sectoral level unions has been also limited by the lack of sufficient infrastructural resources, both human and financial resources (I7, Personal interview 2018) and lower level of organizational efficiency and ineffective utilization of resources (I8, Personal Interview, 2018). Moreover, it seems that the national level unions are also lacking the organizational flexibility that would enable them to optimize and effectively harness their associational power. Part of organizational flexibility required to strengthen the associational power of the labor unions is changing the staff structure with a new generation of staffs (Schmalz and Dörre, 2017: 5). But apparently, this is not the case both in the CETU and IFTGLWTU. In explaining the lack of organizational flexibility in the management of the labor unions in the country, the interviewed expert argued that:

> "The leaders of the national and sectoral level union are not as such productive and able to move the labor movement forward, but they have made the position their own for more than two decades. When

> they underperform, they need to leave their position and open up the space for new labor leaders" (I10, Personal interview 2018).

This quotation further prompts doubts over the internal democracy of the unions, which remains crucial for trade unions' transformation and renewal at the grassroots level, i.e., HIP.

Overall, the national and sectoral level unions are possessing weak organizational power in terms of member numbers, organizational flexibility, organizational efficiency, and infrastructural resources. This, in turn, is affecting their ability to address the problems the workers are facing at the shop floor level, in this case the HIP.

Utilizing Supranational Level Associational Power

As Anner (2011: 176) rightly argued, in countries where domestic power resources are in decline, labor movements tend to apply transnational strategies more often (cited in Birelma, 2017: 13). Accordingly, in spite of their weak domestic associational power to represent the interests of the workers, "the national and sectoral level unions in Ethiopia are forging a strong solidarity with the supranational trade union actors" (I7, Personal interview 2018) which are acting transnationally and supporting wage earners in countries with weak organizational resources. In this regard, the International Trade Unions Confederation (ITUC), to which the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU) affiliated, and IndustryALL Global Union, to which the IFTGLWTU affiliated, are notable transnational players that are engaged in labor activism in Ethiopia.

These transnational trade union actors are showing their allegiance to their respective affiliates in the conferences and campaigns that are being held in the country and calling the government to take measures that would improve the lives of the working people in the textile and apparel sector. In the launching of the minimum wage forum in Addis Ababa, the ITUC has made a plea to the government of Ethiopia to respect the dignity of the working people in the emerging industrial sectors of the country (Birhanu, 2018). In this forum, the ITUC has called the state to ensure minimum living wage and end the exploitation of workers in the industries of the country (ibid.). Making the HIP a notable target, IndustriALL Global Union is also leading the campaign for better wages, workers' rights to organize and collective bargaining in the industrial parks of Ethiopia (Mathews, 2018a and IndustryAll, 2018a). Making her speech in this campaign, IndustriALL director for the textile and garment sector, Christina Hajagos-Clausen, argued that "we support Ethiopian unions on the introduction of minimum wages to set at a level of a living wage.

We demand further that workers be paid what other garment workers earn globally" (IndustryAll, 2018b). Thus, so as to compensate for their weak domestic influence, the local unions are forging a strong network with international trade union actors and tapping the associational power at the supranational level.

Perhaps the engagement of the domestic unions in activities like building global union networks, forging transnational union alliance and organizing joint campaigns could strengthen their associational power and heighten their potential to influence government policies that are affecting the general wellbeing of the laboring class. Moreover, this might help in strengthening the local union's infrastructural resources, particularly their financial resources (I8, Personal interview 2018). However, transnational activism is not a magical solution unless it is supported by the strong local activism of the domestic unions (Seidman, 2008 cited in Birelma, 2017: 14). Indeed, as Anner (2011: 71) argues, without sufficient mobilization of workers on the ground, transnationalism would be unable to articulate sustainable demands of the workers at the grass-root level (cited in Birelma, 2017: 14). Therefore, CETU and IFTGLWTU have to be more engaged in the mobilization and organizing activities of the workers at the shop floor level. It is in this way that they can increase their membership and be able to expand their associational power resources at the national, sectoral, and factory level.

To conclude, the lack of union representation in the factories of the HIP has fundamentally made associational power resources of the workers drop to a minimum. This, in turn, has also reduced the workers' ability to take industrial actions and challenge the employers' power in the factories, thus it minimized their workplace bargaining power. The associated power of national and sectoral level unions also remains weak. However, there is a relatively modest utilization of supranational associational power resources, which needs to be translated into domestic mobilization in order to avoid the representation gap of the workers at the grassroot level.

C. Institutional Power

Institutional power is a secondary source of workers' power that unfolds as a result of negotiation and conflict which are argued out by means of workers' strong structural and associational power resources (Dörre, 2011: 21). "Its particular quality is the fact that institutions fix and to a certain degree legally codify basic social compromises" (ibid.). In this case, institutional power may take the form of labor law, wage setting, and bargaining arrangements, as well as institutionalized forms of social dialogue, but any erosion or

weakening of these institutions may negatively impact on the capacity of unions to represent workers (McGuire, 2013: 33). At the same time, without organizational power and a strong union voice, the existing institutions will also eventually be weakened and the institutional power becomes eroded (ibid.).

Looking from the perspective of a legislative support, having its root in the former socialist regime of the country, Ethiopia has a pro-workers' regulatory regime (I10, Personal interview 2018). The core labor rights including the freedom of association, collective bargaining and the right to strike are considered to be an untouchable privilege of the workers that have a legal standing as well as constitution backing. Apart from the labor law, Article 25 of the Industrial Park Proclamation No. 886/2015 also stipulates workers' collective rights and advocates for a "tripartite modality"—an arrangement by which the MoLSA, Employers of Industrial Park and employees' representatives address labor issues through constructive consultations (Federal NegaritGazeta, 2015: 8211). These and other labor laws the country has internationally signed, therefore, form the basis for the institutional power resources of the workers in the HIP. However, as the laws are far weaker in practices (I10, Personal interview 2018), the employee's leverage in utilizing this form of the workers' institutional power rather remains low. Although the laws are an important institutional resource protecting the interests of the workers, its mere presence does not yield a significant difference in the daily life of the workers in the park. As it could be drawn from Chapter 5, the workers are neither protected nor allowed to make use of the existing provisions in the labor laws.

Apart from the existing regulatory frameworks, the workers' institutional power also emerges from the struggles and negotiation process based on the primary power resources in the workplaces (Schmalz et al., 2018: 120). Thus, although not in a strict linearity and permanent reinforcement, structural, associational, and institutional power resources develop in phases and one form is emanating from another (Dörre. 2011: 21). In this regard, as a secondary form of workers' power, institutional power basically requires the availability and the effective utilization of the structural and organizational power resources which lay a ground work for its initiation. Among the types of institutional frameworks which emerge as a result of the contestation at the primary level of workers' power is a collective bargaining agreement. Collective bargaining, among other things, primarily requires the existence of workers' organization (Redae, 2015: 79). However, according to the interviewed expert, due to the hostility of the state and employers, both unionization and collective bargaining are daunting challenges for the workers in the private sectors in

Ethiopia (I10, Personal interview 2018). Particularly, the employers' uneasiness to union formation mainly emanates from the fear that an organized labor will eventually seek to establish collective bargaining with a possible outcome where the amount of profit and managerial power available to the employer becomes more limited (Redae, 2015: 79). CETU (2011: 6) report also discloses that most private employers deny the right of workers to form union and bargain with them. As it was also noted in the preceding sections, in the absence of sufficient structural and associational power, it is hard to reckon that the industrial park workers have *any* opportunity to engage in collective bargaining agreement and make use of the resulting institutional arrangement to ensure their benefits in the employment relations. Thus, as Dörre et al. (2009: 37) rightly argue the primary power resources, particularly the organizational power of workers, must be well developed before the institutionalization of workers' power is conceded by the opposing forces, the employers.

Unlike the employees in the park, (I7, Personal interview 2018), the CETU and IFETLGWU, having the recognition as well as the representation in the tripartite structures at the national level, have a better opportunity to make use of the institutionalized arrangement and influence decisions that affect the lives of the workers. But, parallel to the employees of the HIP, the institutional power appears to be unused power resource at the top levels of trade union structure. To give an example, one of the mechanisms through which the national level trade unions can extend the institutional power to the workers at the grassroots level is through a collective bargaining agreement on the minimum wage. Nevertheless, the top level unions were not able to retain a collective agreement that covers all the workers in the textile and apparel sector (ibid.). Hence, jobseekers are not only left to bargain individually (Redae, 2015: 169) but also exposed to accept abysmal wages. As a matter of fact, there has been an ongoing debate with regard to fixing the minimum wage for the private sector worker (Russel, 2018).[24] Yet, the success in the institutionalized social dialogue depends upon other factors as well. As Myant and Drahokoupil (2017: 6-7) rightly argue, the tripartite structure might provide a base for trade unions' institutional power, but its effectiveness is conditional upon having an ally in the government. In this regard, it remains a big challenge for the national level trade unions to win the consent of the state as it sees lack of minimum wage as its main competitive advantage in the attraction of FDI into the country.

[24]Russel (2018) mentioned that the national level trade unions are holding for a starting minimum wage of $121 for the workers in the private sector.

Besides the weak institutional power in the tripartite structure, I8 (Personal interview 2018) also revealed that Court decisions also contribute to the loss of trade unions' institutional power by penalizing the workers exercising their collective labor rights. According to him, the cases the federation or the confederation has brought before the Court are invariably decided in favour of the employers even though the employers are found to be guilty (ibid.). The interviewee added that this kind of situations are further discouraging workers from joining trade unions in the enterprises where there are already organized trade unions (ibid.).

Finally, the government has also drafted an amendment on the labor proclamation number 377/2003 (I8, Personal interview 2018) with a move which further diminishes the only institutional power resources the workers have at their disposal. However, according to the interviewed government official, the rationale behind the amendment is to make the country's labor laws fit to the demands and changing interests of capital in the era of globalization (I9, Personal Interview 2018). As indicated by Dawit (2017), the newly proposed amendment to the Ethiopian labor law proclamation strikes the labor harder. Dawit also specified that the government has rejected to embrace the national level unions' proposal in relation to the draft amendment leaving the bill only subject to approval by the parliament (ibid.). Admasie (2018b: 433) describes the draft labor bill as "a harsh" and "frontal assault" to the already marginalized labor of the country.[25] In explaining its prospective impact, one of the interviewed unionists also argued that "the reform will degrade the workers into the state of slavery" (I7, Personal interview 2018). Overall, from the power resource perspective, while this kind of amendments gives greater leverage for the employers, it worsens the already fragile institutional as well as structural power of the workers.

D. Societal Power

Societal power is the other secondary source of workers' power. According to Xu and Schmalz (2007: 1037), it is the space of action resulting from the sustainable collaboration of an organized labor with other social groups and organizations. This form of workers' power comes from two sources: coalitional power and discursive power. While the

[25] Among other things, the new amendment proposes a doubling of the period of probation, reduction of annual leave days, and less mandatory compensation for workplace accidents. Even worse, it proscribes immediate dismissal for workers who are absent for a single day without medical certification, or who either report late for work for only two days in a month or five days per six-month period (Endeshaw, 2017 cited in Admasie, 2018b: 433).

coalitional power emerges from the formation of networks with other social actors and the mobilization of those networks to participate in workers' actions, discursive power stems from the ability of an organized labor to intervene successfully in areas of public sphere and get people's recognition that workers' demands are justified (ibid.: 1018).

Although societal power can be used to redress the lack of other power resources in the worker's struggle against unjust labor practices in the industrial park, there has been no indication in the use of this power resource as well. First and foremost, the absence of this power resource in the industrial park has a lot to do with the lack of a meaningful organized labor movement that sparks the involvement of other social movements in the labor causes. The empirical findings show that the problems of the workers are not yet well publicized through an organized labor movement within the industrial park. Along with the weak societal power of the workers, the national trade unions' utilization of this power resource to address the labor conditions in the park is not considerable either. As it is mentioned above, this power resource requires unions' ability to form a coalition with other social movements in the society. In reinforcing the importance of coalition power, Clawson (2003: 14) argues that "if a new upsurge is to come in the labor movement, it will require labor and other societal movements to connect to each other and to take up each other's cause in ways that transform the movements that exist". As a matter of fact, starting from 2015, Ethiopia has been going through a massive social movement that has recently brought a large-scale economic and political change in the country. In a situation where the state is highly hostile towards labor unions, the circumstances would have been a good opportunity for the unions to reinvigorate themselves and to make advances on the issues that are central to the worker's current situation in the industrial park. But, let alone to make use of this opportunity to forge an alliance with other social groups and assert the problems of the laboring class, one of the interviewed unionists has mentioned the ongoing political instability in the country as the major impediment in their effort of mobilizing the workers at the grassroots level (I7, Personal interview 2018). Apparently, this response from the trade unionist clearly vindicates the non-existence of an effort from the side of the national labor unions to build an alliance with other social movement groups within the society and ignite the laboring class interest through the coalition power.

Apart from the absence of a partnership with other social movements within the society, there are also no civil society organizations in the country that are assertive of the protection of labor rights and lobby for better wages and working conditions of the labor force in the industrial park (I7 and I8, Personal interview 2018). According to I8 (Personal

interview 2009), the role of civil society actors in the country has been largely weakened after the government has enacted the Charities and Civil Society Proclamation No. 621/2009. This proclamation is mainly designed by the state to draw repressive measures against the civil society actors involving human right advocacy activities in the country. Perhaps, the limited space of action for the NGOs working on labor activism (I10, Personal interview 2018) and the lack of alliance with the other social movements in the society has severely limited the unions' potential to exploit the external power resources outside the workplace.

The utilization of societal power is also constrained by the weak engagement of the labor unions in the public debates. With regard to the unions' presence in the media and boosting workers' agenda in the public discourse, one of the interviewed trade unionist argued that "the media is accessible if and only if we (trade unions) come up with the money, which is currently unavailable" (I7 Personal interview 2018). This interviewee from the IFETLGWU added that "it is not only the failure of the unions, but the media also lacks the initiative to expose the problems of the labor". Despite there exists a monthly newspaper, "Voice of the Labor", being published by the CETU (I8, Personal interview 2018), its poor accessibility to the general public is also limiting the visibility of the union's activities to the general public. The same interviewee noted that the newspaper is accessible only to those workers that are members of the basic trade unions which are part of one of the trade union federations forming the CETU (ibid.). Overall, whether it is the lack of real commitment from the side of the mass media to cover the labor issues or the failure of unions to leverage the media power, the low level of the unions' media presence has reduced the possibility of exploiting media power in exposing the labor conditions in the HIP. Moreover, this is also limiting the agenda setting capability of the unions in the society.

Besides, the ability of the unions to intervene in areas of public sphere is further weakened by the lack of political parties that represent the voice of the labor force in the country. Currently, "there are no political parties having a lineage to the labor nor does the CETU have an affiliation to any of the political parties in the country" (I8, Personal interview 2018). But, I8 underscored that "in recent times, questions are being circulated in the meetings of the confederation demanding the formation of the labor political party that represents the working class people in the country". The question apparently has got a strong support from the members of the council of CETU (ibid.). From the power resource perspective, it is above all workers' parties—associational power—that represent the interests of wage earners (Schmalz and Dörre, 2017: 3). According to them, apart from

strengthening the associational power, the presence of workers' parties has also a connection with societal power (ibid.). Basically, the availability of an alliance with a political party enables the circulation of labor demands—discursive power—at the policy level. However, its absence has faded not only the discursive power of the unions but also the associational power of the unions that enables them to impose the demands of the labor on the broader policymaking process.

Lastly, the union's discursive power is also limited by the identification of the trade unions with the socialist past of the country, which came to an end in 1991. By attaching the national level trade unions with the socialist past, the interviewed government official from the MoLSA argued that "the leaders of the CETU and the IFTGLWTU are all the remittances of the socialist DERG regime whose ideology is detrimental for the industrial growth of the country. They were neither educated nor updated themselves to the demands of globalization" (I9, Personal interview). This kind of allegation is followed by tight control over the activities of the CETU, which is the only umbrella organization of the whole trade union in the country (ITUC, 2011 a). Apart from that, the politicization of labor unionization and the enduring hangover of the DERG regime have made industry workers scared to form trade unions across the country (I10, Personal interview 2018).

In conclusion, the only positive about the utilization of the discursive power resource comes through the supranational coalition power the unions are forging with international trade unions. Otherwise, similar to most of the power resources that are discussed in this chapter, both the coalition power and discursive power of the workers and trade unions remain at the bottom low. This, in turn, is providing a limitless space for the capital to exploit the workers in the industrial park without any significant challenge from the employees and labor unions at the upper levels of the trade union structure.

7. Discussion of the Results

7.1. State and the Capital–Labor Relation

In reality, labor does not develop its power in isolation from other powerful wielders of power, namely, the state and capital (Schmalz, Ludwig, and Webster 2018: 124). Among them, the role of the state remains a determining factor for the workers and unions to exercise their power in ways that enable them to gain benefits in the industrial relation. Basically, the states play a central part in constructing and managing the political and legal structures within which capital accumulation and the social reproduction of class relation occur (Selwyn, 2017:106). According to Selwyn, these structures often constrain the workers' ability to organize themselves and engage in collective action. He further notes that "the states engage in building institutions designed to structure the behaviour of the workforce, simultaneously reproduce state power and guarantee the process of capital accumulation" (ibid.).

In accordance with the argument of Benjamin Selwyn, in countries like Ethiopia, where the government has emphasized on the essential role of an activist state in the process of industrialization and applies a large-scale command over the economy (Arkebe, 2015: 75), the development of workers' power depends overwhelmingly on the states' capacity and its propensity to discipline the laboring class. Putting the HIP in perspective, the state institutions, such as the MoLSA (the body established to manage the capital-labor relation) and the IPDC (industrial park administrative body under the Investment Commission) are playing a crucial role in providing a stable environment for capital accumulation by applying a downward pressure against the actual implementation of the constitutionally given collective rights of the labor. For instance, according to the interviewed trade unionists, these state institutions are at the forefront of prohibiting the national labor unions from organizing the workers in the industrial park (I7 and I8, Personal interview 2018). Thus, as establishments are hampering the actual implementation of the labor laws, government agencies are not only playing an instrumental role in the oppression and exploitation of the labor force but they are also dodging the rise of the workforce against the exploitative labor practices and preventing them from forming class-based alliances in the industrial park.[26]Apart from employing those institutions to create a favorable milieu for the capitalist's interest and eroding the labor's collective action, the government is also

[26]According to Ali (2011: 49–50), the role of the state in the restriction of class-based coalition and resistance is very common within the state-sponsored export processing zones around the world. Fundamentally, the state plays a crucial role in the obstruction of the unionization of the workers in the zones in order to halt their potential resistance.

utilizing the security apparatus in the industrial park (I5, Personal interview 2018) so as to govern the labor through the fear of state coercion.

The other indicator of the critical role of the state in the management of the labor relation in the industrial park is its blatant interference in the activities of the national-level labor unions (ITUC, 2011b). The government is tightly monitoring every activity of the trade unions (Freedom House, 2018 and Admasie, 2018a: 174–75) thereby eroding the autonomy of trade unions to mobilize and organize workers at the grassroots level and withering away their militancy in the labor movement. According to the study by Melakou (2013: 154 cited in Admasie, 2018a: 174–75), the length of the state intervention in Ethiopia reaches to the level of leading the CETU from behind through an informal "party proletariat committee" organized to control the labor movements in the country.

The weakening of the labor power can also be attributed to the favor the state has granted to the interest of the capital. Regarding this, the interviewed expert contended that "at the moment, there is a clear favouritism to the employer's interest at the expense of labor rights and interests as the state prioritizes the attraction of investment to the country" (I10, Personal interview 2018). One of the manifestations for this can be the currently ongoinglabor law amendment whereby the government is proposing, among many others, the possible termination of a work contract by the employers, unilaterally, without any prior warning (Dawit, 2017). According to the interviewed government official from MoLSA, the labor law amendment is important to this country in order to match the demands of the globally mobile capital (I9Personal interview 2018). Hence, as the state is focusing on the attraction of investment, it has been closing the door for an employment relation which compromises the interest of the labor. This is, therefore, adversely affecting the growth of labor power in the emerging industrial parks, in this case the HIP, and, in return, paving the way for the strengthening of the employers' power. In his honest assessment of the government's stance with regard to the state and the capital–labor relation, I9 noted that:

> "We can only discuss the issue of industrial relation if and only if we can be able to build an industrialized country. In its absence, we cannot talk about industrial relations. Thus, with the intent of enhancing the growth of the industrial sector, we (the MoLSA) give priority to the interests of the investors […] At this point in time, we do not want to scare the investors from coming into our country by focusing on labor rights and their interests" (I9, Personal interview 2018).

Overall, although the state does not have anti-labor laws, the actual implementation of the laws remains limited with the extensive involvement of the state in the management of class relations. Through its institutional mechanisms, the state is limiting the development of workers' and trade unions' power and making the labor subservient to the interest of employers in the HIP. In another word, the state is exacerbating the shift in the balance of power further towards the employers in the park and reproducing an authoritarian industrial relation system.

7.2. Organizing the Unorganized: A Stalled Labor Movement?

Most of the discussions in this research addressed the formidable external challenges the workers and trade unions are facing in their attempt to defend the employees' interests in HIP. Specifically, the state and employers' anti-union stances are well uttered in the analysis. However, the problems are not only external, but a substantial share can also be attributed to the internal weaknesses within the trade unions. Most importantly, the failure of the national and sectoral level trade unions to organize the unorganized workers in the park has also contributed to the present woes in the workers' struggle against the unjust labor practices in the industrial park.

Trade unions carry a dual character as "institutions" and as a "movement" (Atzeni, 2014: 142). Contending this, Clawson (2003:14) argues that these days, unions are more of bureaucratic organizations, with elected leaders, paid staff, buildings, and property, and money at the bank, but labormust be a movement as well. Apparently, looking at the performance of the national and sectoral level trade unions in Ethiopia, they are a reflection of the former than the latter. The assertion of the interviewed unionists regarding the mechanism they are employing to organize the workers at the shop floor level in HIP can explain this very well. Rather than making a large-scale campaign, they have been largely dependent on the good will of the employers and the state agencies in their effort to organize workers, which is literally unlikely at the moment. Whenever they have been denied, they are not able to override employers and state resistance in their effort of reaching out to the workers at the grassroots level. Thus, the unions are virtually lacking the militancy in their campaigns of organizing the workers in the industrial park.

According to I8 (Personal interview 2018), the unions are planning to unionize workers of the HIP outside of their workplace, during their day offs, as they were not able to unionize them through the consent of the employers, which he called "formal ways". The same

interviewee also asserted that "although it is time taking and difficult method to address the larger section of the workforce in the park, informal ways are the only viable option the unions are left with as organizing the workers has become more difficult from time to time". However, although the informal way is under consideration, the plan is yet to be materialized and put into practice (I7, Personal interview 2018).

As it can be understood from the interviews made with the CETU and IFTGLWTU trade unionists, their effort to organize the workers was very direct and over-reliant on the best will of the employers. This approach is, therefore, making it easy for the state and employers to neutralize the effort of the unions to organize the unorganized workforce in the industrial park. Conversely, it is an active and strategically sophisticated effort of organizing the unorganized which can result in the quantitative gains in union membership (Milkman and Voss, 2004: 4), upon which the positive class compromise is generally hinged. Thus, in order to be considered as a labor movement, the national and sectoral level labor unions have to present themselves as a major social force in the society and engage substantially in their primary function of developing and mobilizing workers' solidarity that eventually strengthens, among other things, the associational power of the working class.

Overall, the failure of the unions to organize the workers in the industrial park is, therefore, not only because of the state and employers' participation in the suppression of workers' rights. Rather, it is also down to the top-level labor unions' impotence in carrying out the primary responsibilities of organizing the workers at the grassroots level. Their direct presence at the workplaces and the ability to initiate struggles from the bottom is quite limited or almost dormant. This is generally related to the practical limitation of the unions to go beyond their bureaucratic existence and presenting themselves as a movement in the society.

7.3. Grassroots Labor Movement: Workers' Agency and Class Consciousness

The discussion of "power" in the PRA essentially focuses on "power to", that is, the ability of agents to bring about significant effects, to advance their own interests and/or to affect the interests of others (Lévesque and Murray 2010: 335). In doing so, the approach captures the capacity of one actor to persuade another to change their position and to engage in acts of cooperation (McGuire, 2013: 28). Looking from this perspective, the workers' ability to influence the decision of the employers or the state in the HIP is quite limited.

At the factory level, it is the existence of labor's active workplace resistance that can influence the employers' decision and enable them to attain their interest in the employment relation. Primarily, the capacity of the employees to engage in the industrial actions has been largely constrained by the low level of structural as well as associational power the workers possess in the employment relation. Moreover, the workers' ability to step up and lead the factory-based resistance has been also inhibited by the lack of awareness and limited class consciousness, which remains the key to spark collective labor resistance in the industrial park. While discussing the issue of workers' awareness and class consciousness, it is important to realize that for most of the workers, the occupation in the factories is their first wage job. As a result of this, the workers in the industries of the park lack the valuable exposure to the capitalist relations of production that might enable them to develop their class consciousness. In addition to this, what has been hindering the grassroots level labor resistance is that most of the workers in the industries are uninformed about their basic rights (I10, Personal interview 2018).

An integral part of this problem, but not the analytical focus of this research, is the issue of gender. As it is common to the textile and apparel sector, female workers constitute the majority of the workforce in HIP. Their dominant presence means the issues of workers' ability to influence decisions at the workplace has a certain connection to gender-related particularities. Regarding this, one of the interviewed workers asserted that "most women in the factories are from the countryside with limited educational background and they were too much submissive and remain silent whatsoever" (I4, Personal interview 2018). In accordance to this, the interviewed expert has also affirmed that "the textile and apparel sector is mainly occupied by female workers, who are lacking the necessary awareness and interest to unionize" (I10, Personal interview 2018). Therefore, the limited ability of the employees to offer factory-based resistance is also connected to the low level of political activism of women workers which constitute the majority of the workforce in the industrial park.[27]

Generally, in the situation where the structural power is weak, the workers' ability to influence decisions lies in their collective power, thus, in their associational power. This, in turn, is determined by the level of awareness and willingness of the workers to act together in a way that affects the interest of the other parties, especially the employers. To pursue their causes, the employees need to be able to forge a strong solidarity among themselves.

[27]Ali (2011: 50) states that the employers prefer women workers on the grounds that females are less capable of creating troubles to production the working environment.

However, labor in HIP has a low level of class consciousness and remains highly disorganized. In the end, this is not only facilitating the oppression and exploitation of the labor force but also limiting the possibility of sparking class-based resistances rooted in the workplaces.

To conclude, as the constraints to initiate grassroots struggle are very deep, external support and resources, capacity training and awareness education programs particularly remain critical to any prospect of the labor movement in the industrial park. For that end, the national and sectoral level unions, as well as civil society actors, are required to step up and play the role of educating the newly emerging working class population. It is under this circumstance that the workers can be able to collectivize their interests and develop the "capacity to'" influence decisions of the employers in the factories of the industrial park.

Conclusion

The above research set out to attain two-fold purposes. One, examine the prevailing working conditions and respect labor rights in HIP. Two, explore the manner in which workers respond to grievances in their workplaces. The research made clear that the working conditions in the industrial park were generally of poor quality. The finding presented different features that characterize the poor quality of the working conditions of the employees in the park. Among these were: abysmal pay levels that do not match the human dignity of the laborers, poorly drafted employment contracts, unfair working-time arrangement and overtime payments that violates the international and local standards, poor health condition of the employees manifested by the fainting of the workers, unfair treatment of the workers, and arbitrary dismissals without due procedures. Apart from the poor quality of working conditions, the respect for the collective labor rights of the workers in the industrial park is also negligible. Although workers have the legal rights to form their own associations, the industrial park remains a union-free zone as the attempt of the national level unions to organize them has been declined by the employers and the state agencies. As a result, the employment relations in the industrial park were unilaterally managed by the employers with no collective bargaining agreements in place that set the rules governing the working conditions in the factories. Besides, industrial strike actions were also inconsequential due to the structural limitation the workers have been facing in the employment relations within the park. Basically, due to the lack of workers' collective organizations at the factory level, the workers' industrial actions were limited to immaterial demands that have no real effect in the disruption of production processes, bringing a tangible change in the pay levels and working conditions of the employees in the park.

The study has also found out that the grievance mechanism was virtually absent in the industrial park. Apparently, the workers are lacking the structure to voice their complaints in the prevailing employment relations within the park. Due to this, the employees were mostly obliged to deal with their employers on an individual basis, which subsequently leaving them with a little or no responses to their demands and interests. Although the level of workers' grievance has been growing, there has been no genuine labor movement within the industrial park that attempts to reverse the existing poor remuneration and working conditions. Perhaps the weakness in the labor struggle for better working condition and improved wage levels in the industrial park has been perpetuated by the absence or weak

availability and utilization of the workers' power resources at various levels of labor union structures.

The workers at the plant level have very limited structural power at their disposal. The combined effect of the lack of sufficient job in the economy and large-scale labor unemployment has been playing an important role in the weakening of this primary source of workers' power. The availability of a large amount of reserve labor army and low skill levels required to replace the workers in the textile and apparel industries also gives greater leverage to the employers while leaving the employees with a greater sense of job insecurity. The limitation in the marketplace power is also being reflected in the weak workplace bargaining power of the workers in the industrial park. Even though the workers are practicing some of their workplace power including sabotages, work stoppage, and strikes, they were neither organized nor strategic and virtually incapable of disrupting the production process. Fundamentally, the fragile marketplace bargaining power of the workers disciplines the labor at the workplaces. The weakness in the primary sources of workers' power can be seen much on the workers' associational power. Practically, power is relational. In the class struggle, labor needs to have a strong solidarity to reverse or challenge the unjust labor practices and ensure its benefits are being considered in the employment relation. As the workers are apparently lacking the associational power, the possibility to exert any influence against the prevailing exploitation of labor in the industrial park remains quite minimal. The lack of organizational power at the plant level has also its own impact on the ability of workers to exercise workplace bargaining power in the industrial park. As the workers do not have union representations in the park, the national and sectoral level unions are theoretically supposed to organize them and mobilize the struggle for better remuneration and working conditions. But unions are weak in leading the labor movements and are passive in their attempt to organize the unorganized workforce at the grassroots level. Besides, the limitation in the primary sources of workers' power has tarnished the utilization of the secondary sources of workers' power at the factory level. As the workers are lacking their own association, their ability to lead an industrial protest and consequently forming a coalition with other social movements in the society remains limited. Although the top level labor unions have this advantage, their capacity to draw on coalition building and discursive power also remain weak. The weakness in the workers' societal power is further exacerbated by the lack of civil society actors that are engaged in activities related to the advocacy of labor rights in the country. Moreover, although the labor laws are in place to leverage institutional power, the weakness in its enforcement

equally made the availability of this form of workers' secondary power resource to drop to the minimum. With the lack of any collective bargaining agreements within the industrial park or at the sectoral level, the employees of the park have been subjected to unfair practices and poverty wages. Overall, the combined effect of government policies that fosters capitalist social relation of production and facilitating an unbalanced power relations between capital and labor, the hostility of employers towards a unionized labor, the impotence of top-level unions in mobilizing and leading labor movements, and the under-developed class consciousness of the labor at the grassroots level has opened up the space for the unfair treatment of the workforce in the industrial park. These factors also left the labor with limited possibilities to challenge the prevailing labor practices in the park.

Finally, some conclusions can be drawn regarding the usefulness of the PRA for purposes of labor studies. The approach proved to be important in locating potential sources of workers' power. As a theoretical model of this study, it also helped to identify the power resources which are being used and not used in the labor struggle within the industrial park. Moreover, it also detected the foundations of problems for the effective utilization of workers' and trade unions' power resources. However, the lack of enough analytical support within this approach to see the role of the state and capital power in influencing the usage of those workers' power resources makes the model short of being a complete theory. As Reuben-Shemia (2017: 47) described it, power designates not a thing, but a relation between two or more agents. Thus, as the labor struggle is conditioned on the relational power between the labor on one side and capital on the other, the examination of workers' power needs to take into account the power of the capital in determining the actual utilization of the workers' and trade unions' power. Besides, the role of the state as an agent of fostering capitalist social relation of production in the developing countries also needs to be given due attention.

In conclusion, this research can lay groundwork for future researches on labor studies in Ethiopia. As the study only focused on the case of the HIP, many aspects, however, are worthy of more attention in future researches. Fundamentally, researches focusing on the labor movements and capital–labor relation at the national level would help us to get the bigger picture of the prevailing class struggle in the country. Moreover, this would enable us to understand the relative strength of labor in influencing the social relation of production in the country.

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