

Research Article

# The Role of the Vietnam Fatherland Front in Ho Chi Minh City in Building and Promoting Socialist Democracy Through Social Supervision

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## Abstract

This article has approached the problem in a comprehensive, scientific way, combining theoretical basis and vivid practice. In order to clarify the object of research, the author applies the Marxist-Leninist philosophical methodology, the analysis – synthesis method, and the practical survey method to clarify the effectiveness of social supervision activities. The article clearly affirms that social supervision activities are one of the key functions and clearly demonstrates the role of the Vietnam Fatherland Front in Ho Chi Minh City in building a socialist state under the rule of law and promoting democracy. Through participating in supervising areas such as the implementation of social security policies, corruption prevention, administrative reform, environmental protection and the legitimate interests of the people, the Front has contributed to enhancing the responsibility of public authorities, enhancing transparency and strengthening social trust. The author also pointed out the limitations that still exist in social supervision such as uneven supervision capacity among Front levels, some supervision contents are still spreading, not keeping up with the urgent needs and problems of the people, and the response mechanism of the authorities to the supervision proposal is not really effective. On that basis, the article proposes key solutions: improving the political level, social supervision and criticism skills for the Front's cadres; perfecting the coordination mechanism between the Front and the government and relevant agencies in supervision activities; at the same time, strengthen the application of information technology to innovate the content and methods of social supervision.

## Keywords

The Role of the Vietnam Fatherland Front, Ho Chi Minh City, Building and Promoting Democracy, Socialism, Social Supervision

## 1. Ask the Problem

Socialist democracy is the essence of our regime, as well as the goal and driving force of the socialist-oriented renewal and development of the country under the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam. In the political system, the

Vietnam Fatherland Front plays a key role in promoting the people's right to ownership, contributing to building a clean and strong Party and government for the people to serve. One of the important tools to show that role is social supervi-

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Received: 9 June 2025; Accepted: 25 June 2025; Published: 30 July 2025



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sion activities – a mechanism for people to participate in social management in a substantive and effective way, contributing to negative prevention, improving transparency, accountability, and the effectiveness and efficiency of public governance.

President Ho Chi Minh once affirmed: “Democracy is to make the people open their mouths”. This ideology is not only a declaration of the power of the people but also a profound implication of the responsibility of political institutions in facilitating, listening to and absorbing opinions from the masses. In the current context, when the construction of a socialist state under the rule of law is placing higher and higher requirements on publicity and transparency, social supervision activities through the Fatherland Front play an even more key role, especially in large cities such as Ho Chi Minh City – the economic center, culture and politics of the whole country.

Practice shows that over the years, the Vietnam Fatherland Front in Ho Chi Minh City has made many efforts in implementing social supervision in essential fields such as implementing social security policies, administrative reform, environmental protection, corruption prevention, etc waste... However, in addition to the achieved results, social supervision still faces many challenges such as uneven capacity of cadres, inadequate coordination mechanisms, and ineffective responses to supervision recommendations from public authorities. From the theoretical requirements and practical requirements, it is very necessary to deeply study the role of the Vietnam Fatherland Front in Ho Chi Minh City in building and promoting socialist democracy through social supervision, contributing to providing scientific and scientific evidence. practice for perfecting mechanisms and policies and improving the quality of the Front's supervision activities in the new period.

## 2. Theoretical Perspective

### 2.1. Looking Back at Previous Research Works

The Vietnam Fatherland Front plays an important role in monitoring and conducting social criticism to enhance the effectiveness of state governance, ensure transparency, and protect the rights and interests of the people. Bui Thi Thu Nguyet, in her dissertation “*The Monitoring Role of the Vietnam Fatherland Front over the Operations of Commune-Level Authorities in Vietnam Today*” [1], and Dang Thi Ha, in the article “*Existing Shortcomings in the Monitoring Activities of the Vietnam Fatherland Front over the Current Elected Agencies and Solutions for Improvement*,” both emphasize that the Vietnam Fatherland Front performs its monitoring function through “observing, reviewing, evaluating, and making recommendations regarding the activities of state agencies, elected representatives, and public officials in implementing the Party’s guidelines and the State’s policies and laws” [2] (p. 50).

Sengthavy Sengphachanh, in the dissertation “*The Implementation of Monitoring and Social Criticism by the Lao Front for National Construction in the Current Period*,” highlights that “Monitoring and social criticism activities create conditions for the people to participate in the building and improvement of the state apparatus” [3] (p. 73). Le Thi Thieu Hoa, in her work “*Social Criticism in the Process of Building the Rule-of-Law State in Vietnam*,” also asserts that “Monitoring and social criticism are indispensable tools to ensure transparency, accountability, and the effective governance of the authorities” [4] (p. 98).

Dao Thi Tuyet Thanh, in the study “*The Vietnam Fatherland Front of Phú Thọ Province Participating in the Construction of Local Government Today*,” states that “Monitoring and social criticism possess characteristics of the people, of socialist democracy, of constructiveness, scientificity, and practical depth” [5] (p. 27). Nguyen Thi Xuan Quynh, in her dissertation “*Building the Vietnam Fatherland Front in the Period of Renovation According to Ho Chi Minh Thought*,” affirms: “The Fatherland Front in many localities has strengthened the direction of the People's Inspection Boards in inspecting and monitoring the implementation of policies and laws, thereby contributing to improved governance” [6] (p. 70).

Nguyen Huu Dung and Le Mau Nhiem, in the study “*Promoting the Role of the Vietnam Fatherland Front in Building the Great National Unity Bloc in the New Context*,” emphasize: “Party committees, government authorities, and the Fatherland Front at all levels must regularly engage in dialogue, listen, learn, and absorb the people’s opinions, and resolve their legitimate concerns and difficulties” [7] (p. 362).

Truong Minh Luan, in the dissertation “*The Participation of the Vietnam Fatherland Front in Party Building in the Current Period*,” asserts: “The Vietnam Fatherland Front is an important channel for monitoring, contributing to the building of a government of the people, by the people, and for the people” [8] (p. 121). Nguyen Van Nghia, in the dissertation “*The Role of Social Criticism by the Vietnam Fatherland Front in Nam Định Province Today*,” points out that “The legal regulations, procedures, and processes for monitoring remain unclear” [9] (p. 52), indicating the need to improve the legal framework to enhance the effectiveness of oversight. Nguyen Van Thanh, in his dissertation “*The Vietnam Fatherland Front and the Formulation of Religious Policies in Vietnam Today*,” affirms: “Through monitoring and social criticism, the Vietnam Fatherland Front promptly identifies and proposes revisions to inappropriate policies” [10] (p. 59).

Nguyen Van Pha, in his dissertation “*Improving the Legal Framework Governing the Relationship Between the Central Committee of the Vietnam Fatherland Front and Central State Agencies in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Today*,” also emphasizes: “The Vietnam Fatherland Front carries out monitoring and social criticism to ensure that policies are

promulgated and implemented in alignment with the legitimate aspirations and interests of the people” [11] (p. 112).

Tran Van Son, in his dissertation *“The Role of the Vietnam Fatherland Front in National Assembly Elections Today,”* affirms: “Monitoring and social criticism are activities that strengthen the Party and state apparatus, make it more trustworthy, and enhance the quality of officials, civil servants, and Party members” [12] (p. 12). Nguyen Phuong Thao Ly, in the study *“Innovating the People-to-People Diplomacy of the Vietnam Fatherland Front in the New Context,”* emphasizes that “Monitoring is the act of the Vietnam Fatherland Front observing, reviewing, evaluating, and making recommendations on the activities of state agencies” [13] (p. 14).

In the process of building and promoting socialist democracy, particularly through the mechanism of social oversight, numerous theoretical and practical works have contributed to clarifying the nature, role, and operational methods of democracy. Works such as *“Direct Democracy: The International IDEA Handbook”* by Virginia Beramandi, Andrew Elis & colleagues [14]; *“Democracy and its Critics”* by Dalh Robert Alan; *“Speech at the Ceremony Celebrating 30 Years of Renovation”* included in *“Reference Materials for the Study and Summary of 30 Years of Renovation”* by various authors [15]; the PhD dissertation in Philosophy *“The Issue of Building the Regime of People’s Democracy in Laos Today”* by Khăm Phon Bun Na Di [16]; and *“Democracy”* by Georges Mavrotas [17] all approach democracy from multiple perspectives: from theory to practice, from institutional models to operation within specific contexts.

A common point across these works is the emphasis that the essence of democracy is that power belongs to the people, and it can only be truly realized through their proactive and active participation in social processes. Democracy, accordingly, is not only a political-institutional form but also a dynamic process that requires integration with the cultural, social, and economic conditions specific to each country. Within this framework, the role of political-social organizations—typically the “Vietnam Fatherland Front in Ho Chi Minh City” - becomes especially important in promoting democracy through social oversight activities.

Notably, the work *“Direct Democracy: The International IDEA Handbook”* translated by Dao Tri Uc and Vu Cong Giao provides a comprehensive and systematic overview of direct democracy mechanisms such as referendums, citizen initiatives, agenda initiatives, and recall procedures - mechanisms that are being widely applied around the world. The book views democracy as both a system of organizing power and a process of political operation, clearly demonstrating the need to build democratic institutions closely linked to mechanisms of control and oversight from the people—an issue of particular significance in the current context of Vietnam.

Thus, although there have been numerous studies on the role of the Vietnam Fatherland Front in building and promoting socialist democracy through social monitoring, there has

yet to be a comprehensive and thorough study that evaluates both theory and practice while analyzing the factors affecting the Front’s operations. This is a critical issue that needs further research in order to enhance the effectiveness of the Vietnam Fatherland Front’s activities in the new context, thereby contributing to the successful implementation of the Party’s guidelines on promoting democracy through social monitoring in Ho Chi Minh City.

Regarding the research approach, previous studies have employed a variety of perspectives—from the sciences of Party building and state governance to the social sciences. Many have combined quantitative and qualitative methods, but they have not delved deeply into the practical operation of the Vietnam Fatherland Front at the grassroots level. Therefore, this study will approach the issue from the perspectives of Party-building science, philosophy, and social sciences, and will apply methods such as practical generalization, as well as quantitative and qualitative analysis, to provide a more comprehensive and objective picture.

As such, this overview aims not only to identify research gaps that require further clarification but also to build upon the achievements and lessons of previous studies, avoiding redundancy with content already explored.

## 2.2. Research Methods

To clarify the research subject, the study employs the following research methods:

- 1) *The philosophical method of Marxism–Leninism*, focusing on the fundamental principles of dialectical materialism and historical materialism. This method provides a solid theoretical foundation, enabling the scientific analysis and resolution of research problems. It also elucidates the laws of motion and development of the research subject within the specific context of Ho Chi Minh City, while applying theory to practice to formulate scientifically grounded arguments and conclusions.
- 2) *Analytical–synthetic method*: This involves collecting and analyzing theoretical documents, policy papers, Party and State resolutions, and reports from the Vietnam Fatherland Front related to the research topic.
- 3) *Empirical survey method*: Field investigations and surveys are conducted to examine the actual activities of the Vietnam Fatherland Front in Ho Chi Minh City, aiming to assess the effectiveness of its role in promoting socialist democracy.
- 4) *Other scientific methods*: In addition to the primary data collection methods, the research also applies several basic scientific approaches, including analysis and synthesis, deduction and induction, abstraction and generalization, the logical–historical method, and the historical–comparative method.

### 2.3. Research Questions and Research Hypotheses

#### 1) Research Questions

How is the role of the Vietnam Fatherland Front of Ho Chi Minh City manifested in building and promoting socialist democracy through current social oversight activities? What factors are hindering the effectiveness of social oversight in the context of rapid urbanization and profound social transformation? What solutions are needed to enhance the effectiveness of the Vietnam Fatherland Front’s role in building and promoting socialist democracy through social oversight?

#### 2) Research Hypotheses

The social oversight activities of the Vietnam Fatherland Front of Ho Chi Minh City play a positive role in promoting socialist democracy, but still face many limitations due to insufficient staff capacity, ineffective coordination mechanisms, and the lack of appropriate institutions. Enhancing the quality of personnel, improving coordination mechanisms, and applying technology will contribute to strengthening the supervisory role of the Fatherland Front, thereby fostering substantive and sustainable democracy.

### 2.4. Operationalization of Concepts

According to the article “The Role of the Vietnam Fatherland Front of Ho Chi Minh City in Building and Promoting Socialist Democracy through Participation in Party and State Building,” the author specifies the following core concepts: (1) Vietnam Fatherland Front; (2) Building and promoting democracy; (3) Socialism; (4) Social oversight; and (5) The role of the Vietnam Fatherland Front of Ho Chi Minh City in building and promoting socialist democracy through social oversight.

The Vietnam Fatherland Front is the political foundation of the people’s government; it represents and protects the lawful and legitimate rights and interests of the people; unites and mobilizes the strength of the entire nation; promotes democracy and strengthens social consensus; engages

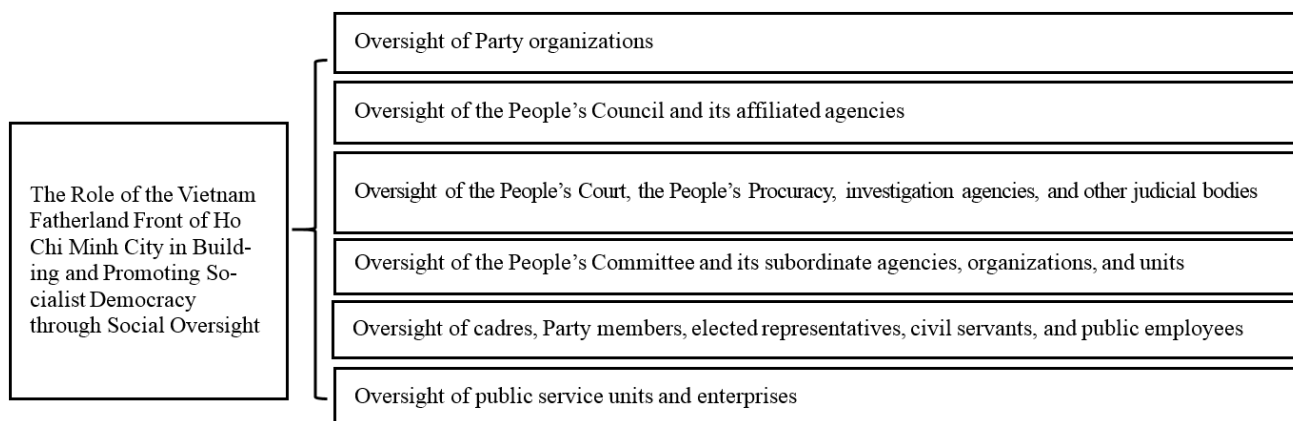
in oversight and social criticism; participates in building the Party and State, and conducts people-to-people diplomacy, contributing to national construction and defense [18].

Building and promoting democracy is the process of establishing and operating mechanisms, institutions, and policies to ensure that power belongs to the people. This is reflected in citizens’ participation in political and social life, their voices being heard, their ability to offer criticism, and their capacity to oversee power. Promoting democracy not only involves expanding participation rights but also ensuring the effectiveness of that participation, through institutional channels such as elections, social criticism, social oversight, policy dialogue, and contributions to Party and government building.

Socialism is a progressive socio-economic formation in which the working people hold state power, the principal means of production are under public ownership, and economic development is associated with progress and social justice. It is built for the people, by the people, and in service of the people. From a political–social perspective, socialism emphasizes comprehensive democracy, rule-of-law governance, and the substantive and broad participation of the people in all areas of social life.

Social oversight is the process of observing, monitoring, evaluating, and independently and objectively reflecting on the activities of Party and government agencies, organizations, and individuals involved in implementing policies and laws. It is an important democratic tool to detect violations, promote transparency, enhance accountability, and protect the people’s right to mastery. Social oversight is carried out by the Vietnam Fatherland Front and its member organizations and has legal foundations in the Constitution and the Law on the Vietnam Fatherland Front.

Based on these concepts, the author formulates the central concept: “*The role of the Vietnam Fatherland Front of Ho Chi Minh City in building and promoting socialist democracy through social oversight*”. This concept has been operationalized in the following [Figure 1](#).



**Figure 1.** The Role of the Vietnam Fatherland Front of Ho Chi Minh City in Building and Promoting Socialist Democracy through Social Oversight.

### 3. Research Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. Research Results

The role of the Vietnam Fatherland Front Committee of Ho Chi Minh City in building and promoting socialist democracy in Ho Chi Minh City through supervision activities. This activity is organized and implemented by the Vietnam Fatherland Front Committee according to the principles of ensuring the promotion of democracy, the participation of the people and members of the Vietnam Fatherland Front Committee of Ho Chi Minh City; originating from the demands and aspirations of the people; conducted openly, transparently, without overlap; and not obstructing the activities of the supervised agencies, organizations, or individuals. It contributes to effectively implementing the resolutions of the Party Committees at all levels, the People's Councils at all levels, and the decisions of the People's Committees at all levels.

Since 2014, the Standing Committee of the Vietnam Fatherland Front Committee of Ho Chi Minh City has led coordination with the Front's member organizations and some relevant ministries and sectors to build and sign cooperation programs on supervision and coordination regulations. Specifically, the signing of the cooperation program for implementing the City's sustainable poverty reduction program with the Social Policy Bank in 2023, along with organizing a review conference on the implementation of Directive No. 13-CT/TU on enhancing the role of the Vietnam Fatherland Front in supervising Party organizations, Party members, and authorities at all levels. Especially, many inter-sectoral supervision delegations have been organized with participation from representatives of member organizations, agencies, and ministries such as the People's Procuracy, the People's Court, the Department of Health, the Department of Justice, the Department of Education and Training, and many member organizations of the Vietnam Fatherland Front. The su-

per vision work has become more substantive and effective recently. The Vietnam Fatherland Front Committee of Ho Chi Minh City has focused on planning and organizing thematic supervision of the implementation of policies and laws, thereby monitoring, examining, detecting, and recommending many issues to the supervised agencies and organizations, playing an important role in building the Party and the State.

During the 2014–2020 period, Ho Chi Minh City recorded many significant achievements in economic, political, and socio-cultural fields. The city's economy grew at an average annual rate of approximately 8.2%, contributing over 20% to the national GDP. Reforms such as the Enterprise Law (2014) and the Investment Law (2014) created favorable conditions for attracting more than 70 billion USD in FDI, promoting strong development of enterprises, especially in technology and service sectors. Politically, Ho Chi Minh City improved through the implementation of the 2013 Constitution and the National Assembly Election Law, with voter turnout consistently above 99%. In socio-cultural aspects, the city reduced poverty rate from 9.88% (2014) to under 1% in 2020, along with vigorous development of education, healthcare, and protection of the rights of women and children.

From 2020 to 2024, Ho Chi Minh City continued its strong development with digital transformation policies and the development of a smart city, aiming to increase the rate of digital enterprises to 60% by 2024. The city continued to attract FDI, reaching nearly 3.5 billion USD in 2023. Resolution 18-NQ/TW on political reform was strongly implemented, with an increasing rate of citizen participation in supervision and social feedback. In socio-cultural terms, Ho Chi Minh City achieved the target of reducing the poor household rate below 1%, while promoting support programs for women, children, and vulnerable groups, contributing to fair and sustainable development.

**Table 1.** Building and Promoting Socialist Democracy through Social Supervision According to Officials, Civil Servants, Public Employees, and Citizens.

Building and Promoting Socialist Democracy through Social Supervision	Officials, civil servants, public employees, and the people					
	Officials, civil servants, public employees, and the people		Citizens		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Supervision of Party Organizations	373	66,1	451	69,7	824	68,0
Supervision of the People's Council and its affiliated agencies	376	66,7	435	67,2	811	67,0
Supervision of the People's Court, the People's Procuracy, investigative agencies, and prosecutorial agencies	328	58,2	368	56,9	696	57,5

Building and Promoting Socialist Democracy through Social Supervision	Officials, civil servants, public employees, and the people					
	Officials, civil servants, public employees, and the people		Citizens		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Supervision of the People's Committee and its subordinate agencies, organizations, and units	393	69,7	477	73,7	870	71,8
Supervision of officials, Party members, elected representatives, civil servants, and public employees	381	67,6	527	81,5	908	75,0
Supervision of public service units and enterprises	272	48,2	340	52,6	612	50,5
Total	564	100,0	647	100,0	1211	100,0

(Source: Survey conducted as part of this thesis)

Currently, the social supervision activities carried out by the Vietnam Fatherland Front of Ho Chi Minh City have been increasingly recognized and positively evaluated by various social strata. According to survey results, at indicator number 4 / Supervision of the People’s Committee and affiliated agencies, organizations, and units, up to 71.8% of respondents highly appreciate the role of the Fatherland Front, including 69.7% of officials, public servants, and employees, and 73.7% of the general public, reflecting the growing trust and social expectation towards this institution in ensuring transparency and accountability of authorities at all levels.

The supervision activities of the Fatherland Front are consistently implemented according to President Ho Chi Minh’s democratic principle: “People know, people do, people check, people supervise, people benefit,” clearly expressing the spirit of putting people at the center, democracy as the foundation, and the effectiveness of serving the people as the political-legal benchmark in the operation of the political system. In practice, the Fatherland Front of the City not only promotes its role in representing and protecting the lawful and legitimate rights and interests of the people but also promptly detects and proposes handling violations and shortcomings of public agencies and officials. It also participates in contributing to the amendment and supplementation of policies and laws, clarifying inadequacies and “bottlenecks” in policy implementation at the grassroots level. The supervision activities of the Fatherland Front also contribute to identifying and spreading good models and exemplary advances, creating positive ripple effects in political and social life, thereby promoting the process of building a socialist rule-of-law state “by the people, of the people, for the people.”

However, alongside the achieved results, social supervision activities by the Vietnam Fatherland Front of Ho Chi Minh City still face certain limitations. First, the supervision capacity of the Front’s cadre team at some grassroots levels remains inconsistent, unable to keep up with the require-

ments of innovation in content and supervision methods amidst rapid urbanization, high public knowledge levels, and increasing demands for transparency and accountability. Second, some coordination mechanisms between the Fatherland Front and authorities as well as political-social organizations in carrying out supervision are still lacking binding force, resulting in low effectiveness of post-supervision recommendations, slow and insufficient feedback reception from competent agencies, and lack of compulsory sanctions. Third, the application level of technology in social supervision has not matched the conditions of a special urban center like Ho Chi Minh City, where digital transformation is an inevitable trend in public administration and modern democratic practice.

From the above situation, it can be affirmed that the Vietnam Fatherland Front of Ho Chi Minh City has gradually affirmed its core position and role in the political system with the function of social supervision. However, to fully promote this role, breakthrough solutions are needed to improve the quality of human resources, complete coordination institutions, increase digital technology application, and establish quantitative evaluation mechanisms for supervision and feedback effectiveness. These are prerequisites for building a truly substantial and sustainable socialist democracy suitable for the context of modernization and deep international integration today.

### 3.2. Discussion of Issues Raised

First, the supervision work of the Vietnam Fatherland Front of Ho Chi Minh City currently faces difficulties in enhancing the supervision capacity of cadres at some grassroots levels. The cadre team is inconsistent in capacity and unable to keep pace with innovations in supervision work under rapid urbanization, high public knowledge, and growing demands for transparency. To overcome this, it is necessary to strengthen training and improve professional qualifications

for supervisory cadres, while applying new supervision methods to meet the increasing demands of supervision in a modern society.

Second, supervision work also encounters challenges in coordination mechanisms among organizations, agencies, and political-social organizations. Although coordination programs exist, these mechanisms lack binding force and their implementation effectiveness remains limited. The reception and feedback process after supervision is slow and lacks sanction mechanisms, reducing supervision effectiveness and affecting transparency and accountability of state agencies.

Third, a major issue is the limited and insufficient application of technology in supervision work relative to the development requirements of Ho Chi Minh City, which is focusing on digital transformation and becoming a smart city. The lack of technology application in supervision reduces effectiveness and limits information access and community participation in supervision. It is necessary to apply information technology in data collection and analysis for supervision to enhance efficiency and transparency.

Fourth, the social supervision work lacks a clear quantitative evaluation mechanism to measure the effectiveness of supervision activities. To improve effectiveness, a system of clear and specific criteria must be established to assess the success of supervision programs, enabling improvements and adjustments to supervision methods suitable to reality and the City's development needs.

Fifth, although supervision has achieved certain results, the integration between social supervision and political-legal factors is not yet really effective. A more comprehensive supervision mechanism is needed, combining supervision by the Vietnam Fatherland Front, political-social organizations, and public participation to ensure that policies and decisions by state agencies are effectively and reasonably implemented. This will help strengthen transparency and protect the lawful rights of the people.

## 4. Conclusion

The social supervision activities of the Vietnam Fatherland Front of Ho Chi Minh City have shown an important role in promoting socialist democracy, thereby making certain progress in protecting the lawful rights of the people and ensuring transparency and accountability of authorities at all levels. However, as hypothesized, this supervision work still has significant limitations, mainly due to inconsistent capacity of supervisory cadres that have not kept pace with the rapid development of the City, and less effective coordination mechanisms among agencies and political-social organizations.

In practice, to make social supervision truly effective and contribute to promoting a substantive and sustainable socialist democracy, urgent solutions must be implemented. First, improving the quality of the supervisory cadre team, especially at grassroots levels, is an urgent requirement. Supervi-

sory cadres need specialized training in supervision skills, management, and the ability to apply technology in their work. Second, coordination mechanisms between the Vietnam Fatherland Front and government agencies, political-social organizations need to be perfected and clarified with stricter legal bindings to ensure the effectiveness of the reception and implementation of supervision recommendations. Third, the application of information technology in supervision work not only helps increase supervision effectiveness but also creates a transparent, easily accessible, and interactive information system, thereby enhancing efficiency and social consensus.

Only by thoroughly addressing these issues can the Vietnam Fatherland Front of Ho Chi Minh City fully promote its role in social supervision, thereby advancing a more substantive and sustainable socialist democracy. Improving supervision quality and building suitable institutions will play a crucial role in constructing a strong government that meets the expectations and aspirations of the people, laying the foundation for the City's comprehensive and sustainable development in the future.

## Abbreviations

USD	United States Dollar
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
NQ	Resolution
TW	Central Committee
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment

## Author Contributions

Dinh Van Chi is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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