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**UNDERSTANDING NGOS AND THEIR ROLES IN
DEVELOPMENT: AN ANALYSIS OF ROLE
AND STATUS OF DEVELOPMENT
NGOS IN BANGKOK**

By

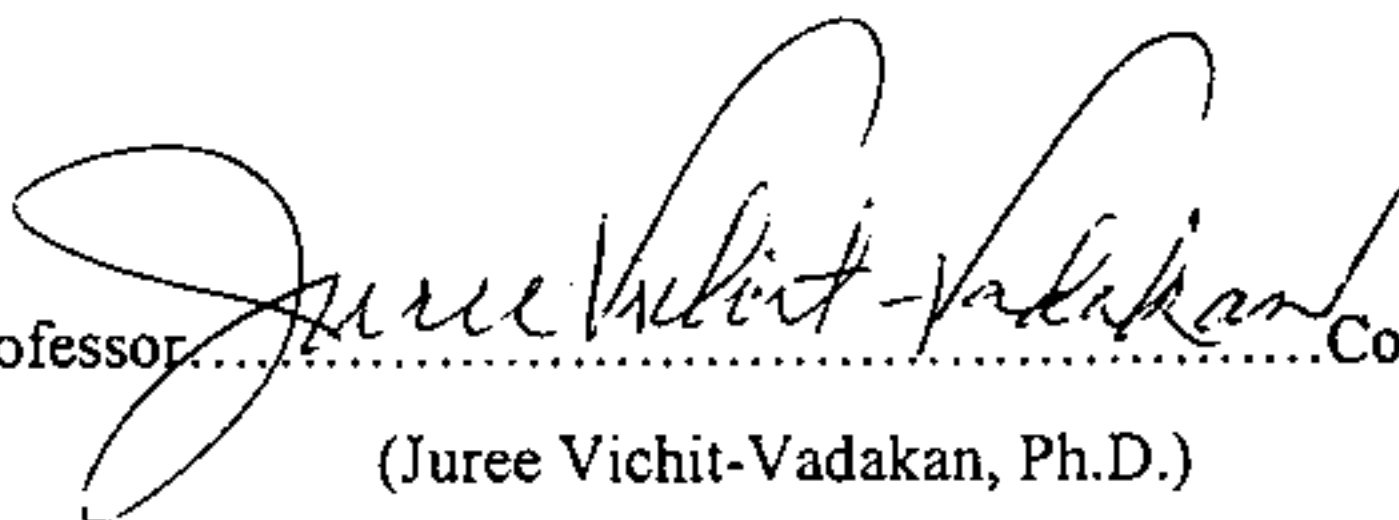
Arpapat-Mungthanya

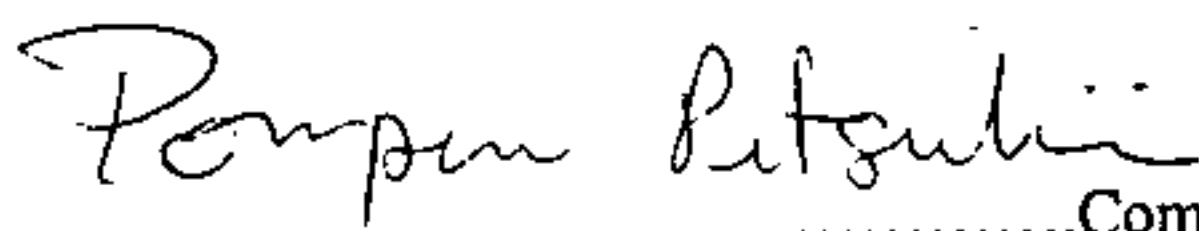
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School of Public Administration**

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ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation : Understanding NGOs and Their Roles in
Development: An Analysis of Role and Status of
Development NGOs in Bangkok

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The main objective of this research is to explore research development NGO's role and status. It opens a window of understanding on different roles of development NGOs as well as their positions in society. It explores "inside views" from the NGOs themselves as well as "outside views" related to their role and status. Moreover, the research presents interesting information related to development NGOs underlying values, worldviews and ideologies and the key elements in the environment that affect them. The study also looks into means in which NGOs are seeking to adjust themselves in the rapid changing world.

The main research methodology is qualitative research method supported by quantitative research methodology. Both inside-out and outside-in approaches are used to learn about role and status of development NGOs as well as their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Findings from three case studies have reflected the uniqueness of development NGOs. Each organization has different approached to pursue their developmental roles and has sought divers strategies to deals with threats and changes facing them. Development NGOs played all 6 types of roles namely advocacy, watch dog, social assistance, partnership building, introducing and enhancing alternative development theories and catalyst for change role. However the emphasis of each type of role is different depending on organizational objectives, approach, funding and emerging

problems. Development NGOs perform many roles simultaneously by increasing and reducing certain roles due to incremental learning and changes in the external environment. Factor influencing roles are for example, trends in society, influence of donors, experience and leaders' visions.

The synthesis and analysis of role and status has reflected certain patterns, similarities as well as differences of these organizations such as the definition of role and status, nature and characteristics, governance system, factors affecting role change and reaction to challenges and change. It also sheds light on common problems that many development NGOs face in terms of management system, human resource development, networking and funding. The survey has reveal information on attitudes and expectations from other sectors which are valuable data for future adjustment of role and status.

From the analysis of values, norms and ideology of development NGOs, it is revealed that they fit several features of the Interactional Role Theory. Development NGOs has diversified approach to development which can be categorized into 3 main groups: 1) taking advantages and being innovative from in the mainstream trend, 2) challenging mainstream trends and seeking structural reforms and 3) focusing only on target issues/groups. Role of development NGOs emerged because of many factors namely 1) **public failure** where development NGOs fill in the gap of the state's work, 2) **work sorting** where it is a workplace for people with certain values and commitment, 3) contract failure since it serve as an ideological asylum for Thai society, 4) **equality and justice failure** where NGO workers are moved by social injustice and inequality, 5) **analytical failure and passiveness of citizens** where the organizations stimulate people to participate in the development process and counter the state-centrality paradigm, 6) **status inequality** where the sector aim to intervene unequal status between the state and the people in shaping development trends.

A survey of 400 stakeholders revealed that the top three expected role of development NGOs are social assistant role, watchdog role and advocacy role. Also, NGOs are accepted as reliable development agents that serve public interests.

Propositions for the future of development NGOs are based on various lessons learnt from the research. Also, recommendation for future research is to conduct a study of development NGOs in other provinces.

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