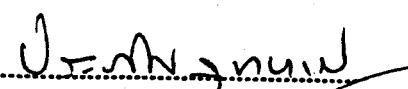
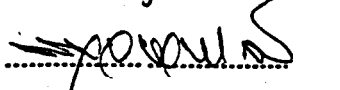


PRAPAT SUTHAWATE : POLITICAL ROLE OF TRAVEL-RELATED BUSINESSMEN AS  
AN INTEREST GROUP. THESIS ADVISOR : ASSO. PROF. WITHAYA SUCHARITHANA-  
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A phenomenon in the past decade has shown that the tourism industry has greatly helped develop the country's economic growth. The Government has therefore promoted and supported the industry seriously, resulting in its rapid expansion. A new interest group of travel-related businessmen has entered the political arena since the Government has stressed cooperation with the private sector to develop the economy and step up investments. An interesting point is how travel-related businessmen will handle their political roles as an interest group, and how much they can do to protect their interests. What political attitudes do the group leaders have ? This is important in deciding the group's behavior in politics.

The research finds out that travel-related businessmen as an interest group play small political roles. The group has not been active under the democratic system as an interest group and in demanding or fighting for its interest. It does not agree with violent actions such as protests or any actions which may affect the state departments or the Government. It prefers peaceful negotiations by explanations and facts presentation as well as suggestions of solutions. The political roles mainly depend on the group's leading people. The research has confirmed the hypothesis that the travel-related businessmen's political roles as an interest group are still low, because the group is not strong enough. The group plays its part from time to time, when there are affecting circumstances. The analysis finds out the reasons why travel-related businessmen have little political roles. These are because of various factors, namely political factors, social factors and political culture, the group's structure and the political attitudes of the group's leaders. These are not providing sufficient encouragement for the tourism interest group to play its political role.

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