

## ABSTRACT

### Agents of Transformation: the Impact of Non-Governmental Development Organisations within the Contemporary Development Praxis

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This thesis aims to assess the transformational potential of the NGDO sector. It utilises the world-systems theoretical framework, a model that applies a structural, globalist analysis to the study of international relations. The Non-Governmental Development Organisation (NGDO) sector, understood as an institutional innovation of contemporary anti-systemic movements, projects a transformational vision of development praxis, and by extension the world system. This thesis seeks to assess the potential of the NGDO sector for realising that vision.

The context for the study is established by structurally locating the NGDO sector within the development praxis of the international industry. This is done by identifying the anti-systemic role of the New Social Movements (NSM), who not only rebel against the dominant, exploitative paradigm but, in their most radical manifestations, also seek to completely redefine social relations and in so-doing restructure the world-system itself. These NSMs have emerged out of a *conjunctural crisis*. The structural role of the NGDO sector is characterised by this tension between the struggle to resist processes of incorporation, and the determination to forward its own transformational agenda. The thesis analyses the contribution of the Caribbean NGDO movement and, more specifically, the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action towards assessing the sector's potential for the realisation of its transformational objectives.

The Addo model, developed to assess the transformational potential of the New International Economic Order (NIEO), informs the concluding analysis. This framework aims to identify the relationship between the NIEO's *valid* and *arrested* "politics of transition", that is, the extent to which those processes that can forward the NIEO's transformational objective outweigh those that undermine it. Based on this analysis, the thesis concludes that the strength of the

movement (its most *valid* current) lies in the sector-wide solidarity it has fostered. However, the NGDO sector is characterised by financial dependence and organisational weakness.

The thesis confirms the existence of transformational potential within the NGDO sector and concludes that while the process may be gradual, the objective is an achievable one, for the pursuit of which, the movement must assume ultimate responsibility.

**Keywords:** Amanda Muriel Laurence; non-governmental development organisation; global development praxis; world-systems; transformation; Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action.