

The objectives of this thesis are to study the formation and development of local political groups at the Tambon Municipality level in Chiang Mai now, groups' internal structure and the political activities of these groups.

In the research, some information was collected through in-depth interviews of 33 individuals including representatives of two local political groups, of the bureaucracy and of the people and some information was collected through the study of government documents and other related materials.

Findings show that:

1. Both local political groups are based on leader-follower relationships following a patron-clients structure.

2. The groups are loosely structured, having informal organizations. Maintenance of the group is achieved by giving status to members in the form of positions which are distributed after elections to members who invest the most of themselves.

3. The political activities of the groups concentrate on elections and administering the local council.

4. In order to succeed in some of their activities, group leaders must have patron-clients relationships with the national politics via the members of parliament and political parties in their area.

In general, the formation of political groups take place based on personal relationships and members united in order to win the local election for their own personal gain. Maintenance of unity after election depends on distribution of the benefits of gaining office to the satisfaction of group members. Even though the groups have personal relationships with members of the national political party, they are not interested in developing into national political parties or even part of nation political parties.