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THITIMA TAGOPORN: THE IMPACT OF THE GOLF BUSINESS ON A RURAL COMMUNITY IN CHA-AM DISTRICT PHETCHABURI PROVINCE. THESIS ADVISOR: SOLOT SIRISAI, M.A., RUENGDET PANKHUENKHAT, Ph.D., 166 p. ISBN 974-663-744-4

This study focused on the changes and impacts on economics, social structures, culture and natural resources due to the expansion of golf course businesses in the community of Cha-Am District, Phetchaburi Province using the quality research method.

Results of the study revealed that expansion in the golf business has both advantages and disadvantages for the studied provincial community as follows

1) The advantages are that it created new occupations and higher incomes for the up country people but only on a small scale, namely for those people who are employed at the golf course, the land brokers and sellers of lands to the developers.

2) The disadvantages have to do with the ways thinking is changing, so people have more expenses and this causes them to have more debt. It was found that the internal relationship among villagers in the community is declining and that the relationship of the family is getting weaker this having a bad affect on the resources in the community. Especially the affect on the water resource in the community will be detrimental causing a shortage of water for agriculture because each golf course must reserve a large quantity of water for their projects. It was found that some of these businesses have even started to steal water from the natural source. The affect on the forest resource is indirect because after the villagers have sold their lands to the capitalist businesses, they need new land to live on. So, they inevitably invade the forest area.

These findings suggest the need for the Thai government to help the golf businesses and the community work together to form a better plan for land use in this area.