

**Independent Study :**

The Role of Local Elites in Provincial Development : A Case Study of Members of Changwat Council of Chiang Mai

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## **ABSTRACT**

The main objective of this independent study is to examine the role of members of Chiang Mai's Changwat Council in capacity of elected local elites with the emphasis on their role in promoting development of the province.

The study's methodology is conducting field research by devising questionnaires for personal interviews. In addition, data are also collected from documentary research of related law and regulations.

The study yields the following findings:

1. definitely, members of Chiang Mai's Changwat Council have role in provincial development. The role starts from providing initiatives to solve the local problems according to the desire of local people. Then, these initiatives would transform to be written projects which are proposed to the meetings of budget committee at Amphoe levels. When approved, these written projects would be proposed to receive scrutiny from Changwat Council before becoming part of Changwat's budget.

2. most members of Chiang Mai's Changwat Council have inadequate bargaining power in dealing with provincial officials owing to the fact that Changwat Council has inadequate budget for city development.

3. most members of Chiang Mai's Changwat Council express the opinion that, in the near future, the positions of Governor and Chairman of Changwat Administrative Organization which are executive positions should come from popular election (86.1 and 77.8% respectively) in order to conform with the principle of "democratically elected authorities."

4. when compare this study with the thesis of Mr. Pairat Soontarevongamol entitled "The role of local elite in politics : A case study of the Provincial Council members in Chiang Mai" and with the thesis of Mr. Somsak Kanacome on "Political role of Provincial Councilors : A case study of Chiang Mai Provincial Councilors 1985-1988" it is found that the factors which are determinants of the role of members of Changwat Council are similar such as lack of budget, lack of authority to decide, lack

of unity including the power structure which vests all power in decision making to provincial officials which leads to the failure in performing the tasks of Changwat Council.