

State, Market, and Globalization: Strategic Development of Phitsanulok Province along the Luang Prabang-Indochina-Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC)

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Abstract

This research examines the strategic advancement of Phitsanulok Province within the Luang Prabang-Indochina-Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC), emphasizing the state's changing role in the context of globalization. The study examines the policy frameworks, institutional mechanisms, and socio-political factors that affect the province's capacity to establish itself as a regional hub. The study utilized a qualitative case study approach, gathering data through documentary analysis and conducting in-depth interviews with eight key informants from the provincial government, commerce, and civil society sectors. The researchers developed analytical framework based on the "Market State" theory and globalization, incorporating elements of state power and capitalist transformation.

The findings indicate that Phitsanulok has notable geography, infrastructure, and cultural heritage strengths. However, it encounters structural challenges, including the absence of a designated coordinating agency, inconsistent support from the central government, and limited public awareness regarding LIMEC's strategic role. Fragmentation in policy and institutions hinders regional integration, even with a consensus on developmental objectives. The research highlights the necessity for strategic reforms, such as promoting LIMEC to national policy status, creating a permanent provincial coordination center, and instituting formal PPP mechanisms.

The study's focus on a single case may limit its applicability to broader contexts. It offers important insights for policy-making at the subnational level. Future efforts should enhance inter-agency coordination, foster cross-border collaboration, and promote inclusive stakeholder engagement to guarantee the province's sustainable integration into the regional economic framework.

Keywords: LIMEC, Market state, Economic corridor, Phitsanulok Province Thailand, Greater Mekong subregion

Introduction

In the case of Thailand, its development landscape and sub-regional economic cooperation frameworks emphasize several initiatives, including BIMSTEC (The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation), ACMECS (Ayeyawady - Chao Phraya - Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy), GMS (Greater Mekong Subregion), and IMT-GT (Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle). Economic frameworks that are particularly relevant to the context of Phitsanulok Province and the Lower Northern Region of Thailand are the two frameworks of

the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) and the Ayeyawady- Chao Phraya- Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) (Jansombat, 2020). This work focuses on the frameworks that enable collaboration in constructing the Luang Prabang-Indochina-Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC) (LIMEC, 2024).

The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) project started in 1992. It included six countries around the Mekong Basin: Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, and China (Yunnan Province), benefitting

from substantial support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) (Panihakarn et al., 2018). It seeks to enhance trade, attract industrial investment, support agriculture, create jobs, and uplift living standards in the region. In addition, it aims to improve technological and educational partnerships while promoting the efficient use of natural resources to enhance competitiveness and opportunities in international trade. At various times, the nation-states of the Greater Mekong Subregion have suggested the creation of Economic Corridors, informed by a dialogue amongst GMS leaders and governments, and thus played a participatory role in shaping economic development frameworks, plans, and strategies. The existing primary corridors are the East-West Economic Corridor (EWEC), North-South Economic Corridor (NSEC) and Southern Economic Corridor (SEC), connecting key cities across Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, and China (Niyomsilpa, n.d.).

The Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS), initiated by the Thai government, aims to promote economic development within the ACMECS nations by addressing disparities in economic structures, enhancing capacity, and facilitating knowledge sharing across various sectors

(Pounpunwong, 2018). ACMECS cooperation focuses on facilitating trade and investment, fostering collaboration in agriculture and industry, improving transport linkages, promoting tourism, and advancing human resource development. This collaboration underscores the significance of building networks and improving academic and vocational skills to promote progress within joint sectors (Department of International Cooperation, 2022).

The frameworks (most pronounced ones are GMS and ACMECS) allowed for collaborative dialogues between actors including the Joint Private Sector Committee of the Lower Northern Region 1 (Phitsanulok, Sukhothai, Tak, Uttaradit, and Phetchabun Provinces). The parties involved have forged an arrangement to co-build LIMEC in partnership with Sayaboury, Luang Prabang Provinces in Laos, and Kayin and Mon States in Myanmar. The partnership, launched in 2015, has centered on five sectors trade, investment, tourism, education, health, and logistics. Promoting public-private partnerships, developing LIMEC as a recognized economic entity, forming a secure and facilitated trade group based on mutual investment, and creating a high-quality society in a common legal field.

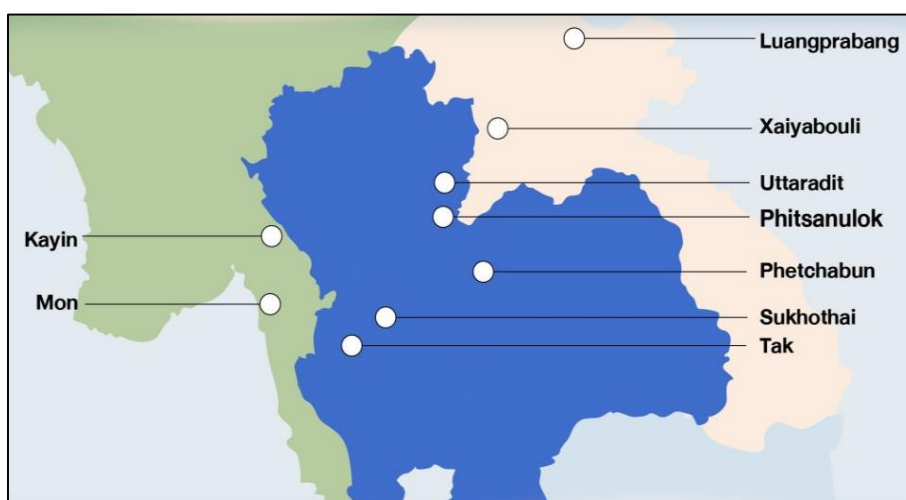


Figure 1 LIMEC province and states
 Source: LIMEC (2024)

In this regard, Phitsanulok Province, situated at an important crossroads in the Lower Northern Region of Thailand, holds great significance. Phitsanulok provincial government The Vision: 20-Year Development Plan: 2020- 2039 Phitsanulok: The

province of Phitsanulok will serve as a stable regional growth center and the crossroads of Indochina, a gateway to prosperity, and a collaborative force for sustainable development This approach is aligned with the mandates of both national and regional plans, which

emphasize the importance of infrastructure development to improve logistics and supply chain capabilities aimed at integration into both domestic and global markets (Collaboration between the Joint Standing Committee on Commerce, Industry and Banking and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation, 2023).

Despite the strategic alignment of policies and plans at the provincial and national levels, the challenges of effectively integrating Phitsanulok into

LIMEC remain. Challenges include a lack of clear and coordinated policy frameworks that join national and local development plans, institutional limitations in cross-border coordination, and gaps in the implementation mechanisms that translate strategic agendas into results. Moreover, the current limitation on the involvement of private sector and civil society stakeholders in LIMEC development removes the potential to contribute to inclusive and dynamic growth in the region.

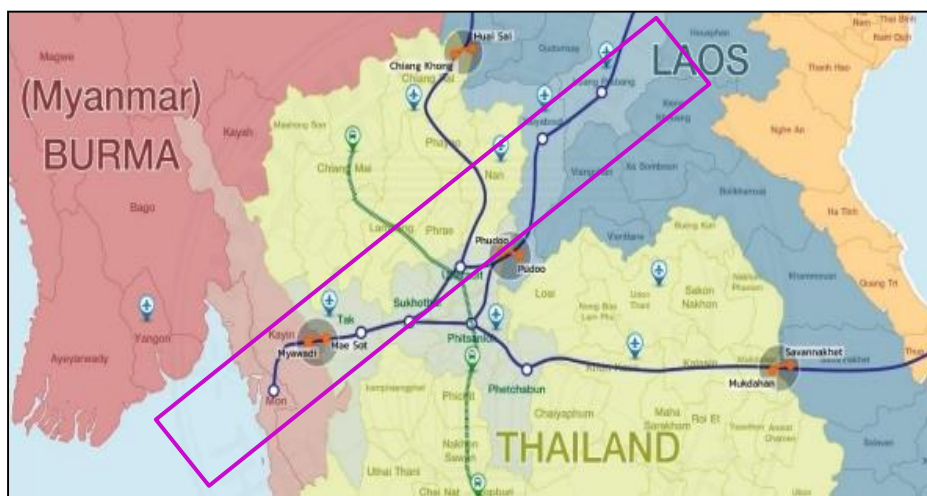


Figure 2 LIMEC map
Source: LIMEC (2024)



Figure 3 Phitsanulok map
Source: Yaemkong (2019)

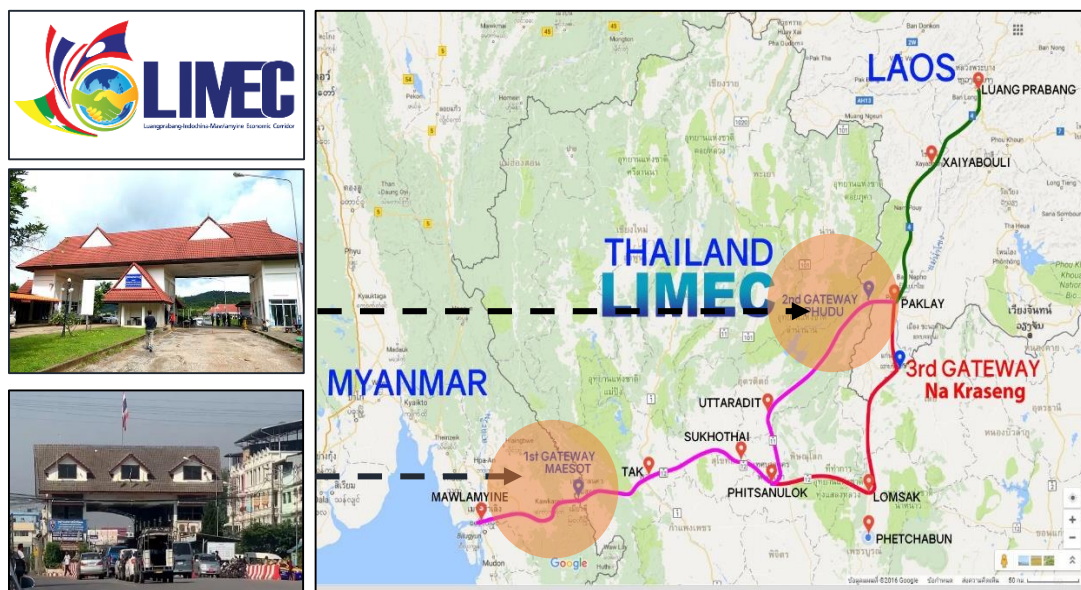


Figure 4 The LIMEC route connects the Mae Sot checkpoint in Tak Province and the Phu Du checkpoint in Uttaradit Province.

Source: LIMEC (2024)

The researchers identify the core problem as the absence of an integrated strategic framework that could enhance Phitsanulok’s capacity to leverage its geographic and policy benefits in the context of LIMEC. Limited empirical research continues assessing the province’s readiness, constraints, and its role in the broader context of area economic interconnectedness.

This research seeks to provide an analytical framework that captures the dynamics of modern state management through an institutional and structural perspective. This study examines the case of Phitsanulok Province, situated at a vital junction of the Lower Mekong River Basin region, to analyze the structural, institutional, and socio-economic factors influencing the capacity for effective integration into the border economic network. This research holds significant theoretical value in enhancing understanding of the state, market, and globalization at the sub-national level, with practical applications in policy-making (Samudavanija, 2001). The proposal outlines a development strategy for institutional mechanisms that consider the variety of stakeholders, the power disparities between the central government and local entities, and the challenges associated with policy integration. This will result in formulating development strategies that are in harmony with global dynamics over

the long term, thereby augmenting Phitsanulok’s potential to emerge as a regional economic center within the LIMEC project sustainably and inclusively.

Research objectives

Main objective

To study the policies, strategies, and development approaches of Phitsanulok Province along the Luang Prabang-Indochina-Mawlamyine Economic Corridor.

Sub-objective

1. The objective is to conduct a thorough analysis of the opportunities and threats present in Phitsanulok Province that may impact the development of the Luang Prabang– Indochina– Mandalay Economic Corridor (LIMEC)
2. The objective is to examine the influence of the current policy framework and institutional structure on the strategic role of Phitsanulok Province in regional integration.
3. The objective is to examine the political, economic, and socio-cultural factors in Phitsanulok Province that either support or obstruct its transition into a hub for the LIMEC cooperation framework.
4. To present strategic guidelines that delineate the role of Phitsanulok Province within LIMEC, ensuring

alignment with an effective and sustainable regional economic framework.

Literature review

This study utilizes the concept of the “Market State” (Strange, 1996) to analyze the policies, strategies, and development pathways of Phitsanulok Province across political, economic, and sociocultural dimensions within the context of the Luang Prabang-Indochina-Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC). The analysis considers both external and internal contexts that influence opportunities and developmental pathways for the province within the corridor. The research examines the function of the state within the context of liberal market systems during the globalization period, highlighting how states adjust to synchronize economic systems with capitalist ideals, consequently evolving into “market states.” (Strange, 1996)

This transformation arises from globalization (Tsunekawa, 2019), where states redirect their attention from nationalistic priorities to economic rationales, prioritizing economic considerations over security, political freedom, or national development. States are progressively establishing connections with other states and multinational corporations as partners in trade. The concept of market state is consistent with theories of state corporatism, which involves the state incorporating different political groups to address conflicts of interest, especially those between labor and capital (Babic, 2019; Nayyar, 2019). Within this framework, the state plays a crucial role in regulating policies and interactions among groups to ensure balance and prevent any party from obtaining an unfair advantage. This process requires managing conflicts that cannot be resolved through negotiation or confrontation and that may potentially escalate into crises. Furthermore, the state frequently operates as a capitalist entity on the global stage, similar to a corporation, working in conjunction with labor and capital to attain economic goals (Strange, 1996).

Miliband (1983) emphasizes the connection between the state and the ruling class in capitalist societies, asserting that the class that owns and controls the means of production utilizes the state as an instrument to sustain its dominance, relying on economic power as the basis of authority. He argues that

the pluralist concept of equality between capital and labor is impractical, as large enterprises possess considerable leverage in influencing the state to fulfill their goals. Poulantzas (1969) contends that the state’s primary function is to maintain social cohesion, thereby enabling effective capital accumulation. He emphasizes structural factors over individual agency in determining roles within capitalist society. Poulantzas (1969) posits that the direct participation of capitalist class members in governance structures is subordinate to the tangible relationship of mutual interests between the capitalist class and the state.

From the author’s perspective, regardless of whether the state serves as a mechanism for capitalists, as Miliband (1983) suggests, or functions as an entity that harmonizes interests, as Poulantzas (1969) argues, its primary role is to uphold its authority and interests. Integrating these perspectives with market-state theory demonstrates that the state’s role undergoes evolution within a capitalist-driven globalization context. The state operates similarly to a corporate entity, overseeing international economic matters while balancing domestic stakeholders’ interests. This transformation highlights the notion the dynamic state, adjusting its role as an economic operator and interest mediator. Martinussen (1997) examines the changing role of the state in the economy, indicating that states are progressively taking on the responsibilities of direct producers and suppliers of goods and services. Polanyi (2001) contends that the state’s economic interventions decrease in free-market systems due to challenges to state authority from merchants and capitalists. Strange’s perspectives resonate with Polanyi’s, highlighting the diminishing influence of state authority over economic and social matters, with a shift towards non-state entities like multinational corporations and business organizations (Gereffi, 2019). Strange (1996) posits that contemporary states have significantly ceded authority over economic stability, with non-state actors playing a growing role in influencing state policies and directing economic activities.

This study integrates the concepts of market dynamics and globalization to analyze state collaboration in developing the Luang Prabang-Indochina-Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC), which encompasses Phitsanulok Province. The objective is to examine the policies, strategies, and

development pathways of Phitsanulok through the lenses of political, economic, and sociocultural dimensions within LIMEC. The study seeks to thoroughly understand the external and internal contexts that shape the province's opportunities and development paths within the corridor based on global economic trends and reflect the state's changing role as an economic operator and mediator of interests. This research highlights how market dynamics and globalization reshape the interactions among states, markets, and society.

This research explores the literature and related studies regarding the state's role in economic development and policy formulation. It argues that a thorough understanding of the context and processes involved in economic policy can offer valuable insights into the collaborative efforts associated with the Luang Prabang- Indochina- Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC). This corridor is central to this study, and the examination of pertinent works will guide the discussion of the findings of this research. The objective is to emphasize the state's involvement in facilitating and shaping policy frameworks that promote economic development in border areas and international economic corridors at regional and subregional levels. Furthermore, the literature review offers insight into states' interconnectedness and regional and subregional cooperation mechanisms in fostering strategic economic development.

1. **Economic Opportunities Through State- Led Policy:** The study by Fuggate (2019) on developing tourism linkages along the Luang Prabang- Indochina- Mawlamyine Corridor highlights the significant role of the state in economic development and policy formulation within the tourism sector. The findings underscore the potential of this corridor to improve economic and social opportunities in the associated regions. The study highlights three essential components of development: infrastructure development, tourism logistics management, and economic benefits.
2. **Economic Development and Local Impact:** Conversely, Tangsupvattana and Wongsatjachock (2022) examine the effects of state-led development on border regions in their analysis of the Nan- Luang Prabang route. The unintended consequences of state-driven infrastructure projects are emphasized, particularly regarding their impacts on local communities in Nan, Thailand, and Luang

Prabang, Laos, about the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) expansion.- 3. **Sustainable Development Strategies:** Kongsanoh (2024) examines the interplay between state mechanisms and the advancement of the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) in his analysis of sustainable development strategies. He highlights the importance of coordination between national and local-level mechanisms. Similarly, Chitraphan (2020) expands upon this topic by examining the East-West Economic Corridor (EWEC), emphasizing the significance of regional and international stakeholders in economic development. The infrastructure of the EWEC, especially Route 9, holds considerable importance for Thailand's transportation, logistics, and investment sectors; however, it necessitates bilateral and multilateral collaboration to address current challenges.

Policy Implementation and Regional Integration: Research conducted by Narong et al. (2022) Please provide a more detailed analysis of the state's role in economic policy within border areas, emphasizing that effectively crafted state policies in economic corridors promote national and regional economic growth. These works highlight the necessity for local and regional strategic planning to maximize economic corridor development's advantages. Furthermore, within the wider international framework, the Routledge Handbook of International Political Economy (IPE) emphasizes the geopolitical importance of the state's involvement in economic development. Bello (2009) emphasizes the importance of geopolitical factors in economic policymaking, while Wade (2018) analyzes the impact of international capitalism on developing nations. Wade highlights that in the 1980s, global economic liberalization redefined the state's role, facilitating rapid economic growth in certain East Asian regions and transforming them into developed economies. Hayashi (2010) critiques the developmental state model in her article, *The Developmental State in the Era of Globalization: Beyond the Northeast Asian Model of Political Economy*. She outlines two primary critiques of the developmental state: 1) Neoliberal critiques contend that the model's industrial policies harm developing countries. Additionally, historical critiques recognize previous achievements while arguing that the developmental state is no longer

feasible in today's globalized environment (Li et al., 2019).

The summary and implications for LIMEC development indicate that the literature reviewed presents diverse viewpoints regarding the state's role in economic development and policy formulation. This research synthesizes these insights to examine the role of public policies in promoting the political, economic, and sociocultural development of Phitsanulok Province within the LIMEC framework. This analysis explores local and regional strategies to evaluate the effects of LIMEC development on economic, political, and cultural aspects. This research aims to assess the state's role in adapting to the demands of globalization and regional integration, focusing on developing economic corridors to promote both national and regional growth while tackling the challenges and opportunities arising from changing geopolitical and economic dynamics.

Research methodology

The research explored the strategic role of Phitsanulok Province in the structure of the Luang Prabang- Indochina-Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC) by applying a qualitative case study methodology. Thus, the case study design was conducive to the research, as it allowed a comprehensive analysis of context-dependent mechanisms by looking at interactions between provincial development strategies, institutional capacities, and cross-border regional cooperation. The case study method allowed triangulation of multiple data sources and stakeholder perspectives, making the interpretation richer and more trustworthy (Baskarada, 2014).

Data collection

The researchers collected secondary data through documentary research, drawing from key official planning documents, including: The 20-Year Phitsanulok Provincial Development Plan (2020-2039), The Lower Northern Region 1 Development Plan, and The Luang Prabang-Indochina-Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC) Framework. Policy papers and reports pertinent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce, along with strategic publications from the Phitsanulok Chamber of Commerce and the Provincial Administrative Organization. The study also involved a review of

academic literature, including books, journal articles, and peer-reviewed research at both national and international levels, to establish a solid conceptual foundation.

The researchers obtained primary data through detailed, semi-structured interviews conducted during field data collection. The research obtained approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee of Pibulsongkram Rajabhat University (Approval No. : PSRU- EC 2024/ 031). The researchers employed a purposive sampling strategy to ensure that interviewees held decision-making roles relevant to LIMEC and provincial planning. Eight key informants were selected based on their institutional authority and active involvement in strategic regional planning or interprovincial coordination. The items listed below were included: 1) The Governor of Phitsanulok Province, 2) The Deputy Governor of Phitsanulok Province, 3) The Provincial Agricultural Officer, 4) The Provincial Commerce Officer, 5) The Officer of Provincial Culture, 6) The Director of the Phitsanulok Provincial Tourism and Sports Office 7) The President of the Phitsanulok Provincial Administrative Organization and 8) The President of the Phitsanulok Chamber of Commerce.

The researchers established the selection criteria based on the interviewees' positional relevance and domain-specific responsibilities. "Relevance" was defined by formal authority, active involvement in LIMEC planning activities, and a significant influence on policy implementation. This ensured that the data precisely reflected both the strategic goals and the operational challenges in provincial development and regional integration.

Research instruments

The main tool was an interview form designed for in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Furthermore, secondary sources were employed, encompassing the 20-Year Phitsanulok Provincial Development Plan, LIMEC framework, Lower Northern Region 1 Development Plan, as well as pertinent governmental and private sector documents, in addition to published books, literature, research reports, and peer-reviewed articles. (Pounpunwong, 2018)

Data analysis

The study applied thematic content analysis to code and interpret the data systematically. The process involved the following steps: Transcription of recorded interviews verbatim; 1) Open coding to identify recurring keywords, ideas, and statements related to political, economic, and cultural drivers 2) Axial coding to link these categories with strategic themes such as institutional readiness, cross-border cooperation, and policy gaps 3) Thematic mapping to construct interrelations between structural factors and strategic pathways for LIMEC integration. The research utilized methodological triangulation, to ensure methodological rigor cross-validating interview data with official documents and academic literature. Analytical memos and reflective notes were maintained throughout the analysis to document evolving interpretations and to ensure transparency in theme development (Nowell et al., 2017). The findings were presented through descriptive and interpretive narration, highlighting key institutional perspectives and strategic challenges identified by informants.

Findings

1. Factors influencing the development of the LIMEC economic corridor project in Phitsanulok Province, including both opportunities and challenges

The analysis of documentary data and interviews revealed that Phitsanulok Province possesses significant opportunities and potential for integration into the LIMEC economic corridor. Nonetheless, the author outlines several obstacles and limitations, as detailed below.

The prospects and possibilities of Phitsanulok Province

Geopolitical Considerations: Phitsanulok Province is located in a strategically significant area, acting as a hub for key terrestrial and aerial transportation routes. The region is linked to neighboring countries via essential routes, including Highway No. 12 and the Phudu Border Checkpoint in Uttaradit Province, enhancing its function as a pivotal transportation hub within the Mekong River Basin area.

“Phitsanulok Province is strategically positioned for logistics, facilitating connections with Laos,

Myanmar, and the Central Economic Zone in a timely manner” (The Phitsanulok Provincial Commerce, Interview, 2024).

Economic Considerations: Phitsanulok Province is a significant center for agricultural production and has the potential for expansion into international markets, provided that the management system and infrastructure are enhanced to facilitate this growth.

“Our agricultural offerings include durians, mangoes, and processed foods; however, we currently face challenges with an efficient logistics system necessary for comprehensive commercial export”. (The Phitsanulok Provincial Agriculture, interview, 2024).

Furthermore, it possesses the capacity to evolve into a center for meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) as well as a smart city, which will significantly contribute to economic growth in the future.

“With appropriate policy support, this province is poised to emerge as a central hub for investors in the northern region”. (The President of the Phitsanulok Chamber of Commerce., interview, 2024)

Social and Cultural Considerations: The province holds substantial historical and cultural tourism potential, particularly through its connection to world heritage sites such as Wat Phra Si Rattana Mahathat and Sukhothai Historical Park, which can be seamlessly integrated into a travel itinerary that include destinations like Luang Prabang.

“Connecting the route with Luang Prabang would establish a unique Golden Route of cultural importance within ASEAN”. (The Phitsanulok Provincial Commerce, interview, 2024).

Challenges and constraints to the advancement of LIMEC

Absence of a primary accountable agency:

“Currently, there is a lack of a primary host effectively managing LIMEC, resulting in numerous operations being hindered, particularly regarding coordination and budget allocation”. (The Deputy Governor of Phitsanulok Province, interview, 2024)

The role of the government remains ambiguous:

“Historically, the private sector has played a pivotal role in dialogues with neighboring countries.” (The Phitsanulok Provincial Commerce, interview, 2024).

The government has primarily listened and participated in meetings, yet it has not taken the initiative to lead negotiations or planning efforts.

Ambiguity in Status and Policy: LIMEC remains a concept at the provincial group level and has yet to receive endorsement at the national strategic level, rendering it inadequate to garner support from the central government (The Deputy Governor of Phitsanulok Province, interview, 2024).

The operations exhibit a lack of continuity:

“Previously, we needed to consolidate the projects associated with LIMEC alongside other initiatives to secure funding.”

It was not feasible to present it as an independent project, which poses a considerable constraint for ongoing operations. (Deputy Governor of Phitsanulok Province, interview, 2024)

Summary: The study results indicate that Phitsanulok Province possesses significant potential across multiple dimensions, positioning it to become a stable and sustainable hub within the LIMEC economic corridor. This is particularly evident in its advantageous geopolitical location, a robust agricultural production base, and strategic smart city development initiatives, alongside a rich cultural landscape that can foster engaging cross-border tourism routes. Nonetheless, considerable challenges persist within the institutional framework and policies that have yet to facilitate comprehensive integration, including the absence of a primary host agency, the ambiguous responsibilities of the government, and the current status of the LIMEC project, which has not yet received official recognition at the national level, continue to present considerable challenges. Consequently, implementing LIMEC necessitates coordinated collaboration among government entities, the private sector, and civil society. The government must assume a pivotal role in establishing strategies, developing coordination mechanisms, and advocating for the integration of LIMEC into the national development plan. Furthermore, collaboration with the academic sector to develop data, analyze feasibility, and assess impacts will be essential in strengthening the credibility and sustainability of this project over the long term.

2. The role of policies and the framework of relevant agencies in promoting or hindering the integration of Phitsanulok Province at the regional level

This study examines the influence of policies and units at both national and provincial levels on the integration of Phitsanulok Province within the Luang Prabang-Indochina-Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC) framework. This analysis draws upon policy documents and comprehensive interviews with policymakers and government officials in Phitsanulok Province. The presentation encompasses the following topics:

The coherence between national and provincial policies:

The analysis of the Phitsanulok 20-Year Development Plan (2020-2039) and the Lower Northern Region Group Strategy 1 reveals a concerted effort to establish Phitsanulok Province as a logistics hub and a regional economic link. This initiative is in alignment with national policies outlined in the 20-Year National Strategy, which focuses on enhancing competitive capabilities and the fifth milestone of the 13th National Economic and Social Development Plan. Nonetheless, this alignment is still confined to rhetorical policy rather than practical integration. A number of provincial-level policies continue to be devoid of direct backing from central agencies, especially regarding budgetary allocations and institutional frameworks. For instance, national agencies have not yet acknowledged LIMEC's status to the same degree as GMS or BIMSTEC, leading to a lack of adequate legal and administrative resources. (The Deputy Governor of Phitsanulok Province, interview, 2024)

The complexities of institutional mechanisms in integration:

Provincial informants indicated that government agencies engaged in promoting development in the area function in a disjointed manner, lacking cohesive integration. One interviewee from the provincial policy department remarked,

“Despite the existence of a provincial strategic plan, government agencies continue to operate independently”. (The Deputy Governor of Phitsanulok Province, interview, 2024)

The department's strategy is not in accordance with the provincial plan. An illustrative example of policy inconsistency is the request for support regarding infrastructure projects that connect the province with adjacent countries. The interviewee indicated that the province had intended to develop road infrastructure to connect with Luang Prabang; however, this initiative was not incorporated into the ministry's special area development budget, resulting in the project's suspension midway (The President of the Phitsanulok Provincial Administrative Organization, interview, 2024). Additionally, constraints within the bureaucratic framework are linked to the centralized power system. Provincial agencies are unable to establish strategic directions or effectively manage budgets adaptively. A representative from a local agency remarked,

"All plans formulated by the province are subject to approval from the central authority". (The President of the Phitsanulok Provincial Administrative Organization, interview, 2024).

If it is not part of the ministry's master plan, no budget will be allocated.

Challenges and constraints in developing a new mechanism:

Despite the initiatives to organize provincial group meetings, develop cooperation plans among border provinces, and form provincial group committees, LIMEC has yet to establish itself as a sustainable institutional development mechanism. A representative from the Chamber of Commerce remarked,

"The private sector is fully prepared to advance; however, there is a lack of substantial engagement from the central agencies, which frequently compels us to depend on the private sector as the foundation". (The President of the Provincial Chamber of Commerce, Interview, 2024)

Another instance is the initiative to create a special economic zone along the LIMEC corridor, which currently does not have a dedicated central agency addressing it with the necessary seriousness. The interviewee noted that despite multiple proposals and organized discussion forums by the private sector,

"We organized forums with the Lao Chamber of Commerce, but no government agencies at the ministry level participated, which undermined the legitimacy of

cross-border operations". (The President of the Provincial Chamber of Commerce, Interview, 2024)

Furthermore, the framework for international coordination at the provincial level remains ambiguous. In other words, collaboration with Luang Prabang and Sayaboury provinces in Laos and the Karen and Mon states in Myanmar currently lacks an agency with direct authority to oversee these relationships at the provincial level. This absence results in delays in negotiations and the execution of cooperative projects. (Phitsanulok Provincial Commerce, Interview, 2024).

In summary, although the policies and development plans at the provincial level of Phitsanulok demonstrate an intention to integrate with LIMEC, the structural and procedural limitations of the relevant agencies remain significant obstacles. National policies are not fully supportive, while provincial and local agencies lack the authority to formulate strategies and manage effectively. Therefore, regional spatial integration still requires a more systematic push from national policies than it currently has.

3. The political, economic, and socio-cultural factors in Phitsanulok Province that either facilitate or obstruct the transition to becoming the LIMEC center

According to the study's findings, Phitsanulok Province possesses several structural elements that might help the province grow into a hub for the Luang Prabang- Indochina- Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC). However, restrictions and challenges need require better structures, rules, and collaboration from many sectors. The following is a full breakdown of the political, economic, and sociocultural elements examined:

Political dynamics:

Ongoing policies and public administration. Phitsanulok Province has established a comprehensive long-term development plan that aligns with national strategic initiatives and regional policies, including the 20-Year Provincial Development Plan (2020–2039), which aspires to position the province as a "logistics and trade hub in the region." This highlights the province's capabilities in strategic planning to enhance its involvement in international cooperation frameworks such as LIMEC (Phitsanulok Provincial Office, 2023).

An interview with the Deputy Governor of Phitsanulok Province revealed that local government management currently faces challenges in achieving continuity and sustaining long-term policy stability.

“Despite the existence of a long-term development plan, the inauguration of a new governor frequently leads to the prioritization of new initiatives, resulting in the postponement or delay of certain projects associated with LIMEC. This situation presents a challenge to sustained progress.” (The Deputy Governor of Phitsanulok Province, interview, 2024).

Furthermore, the collaboration framework between provincial and national agencies exhibits certain limitations, particularly regarding budget allocation and coordination with foreign affairs entities or sub-regional cooperation organizations like ACMECS or GMS. These aspects are essential for Phitsanulok Province to position itself effectively as the center of LIMEC. (The President of the Provincial Chamber of Commerce, Interview, 2024)



Figure 5. The member of parliament from Sukhothai Province, representing the Pheu Thai party, is focused on developing the Lower Northern Region 1 Provinces into a Trade Economic Corridor (LIMEC). Agenda for the 16th meeting of the 26th house of representatives, 1st Year, 2nd regular session, Thursday, February 8, 2024

Source: Kochanun (2024)



Figure 6. The provinces of the Lower Northern Region 1, in collaboration with the Office of Commerce, organized an international conference (Grand Meeting) focused on the Luangprabang - Indochina - Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC)

Source: LIMEC (2024)

Economic capital and the role of the private sector:

Phitsanulok Province is a pivotal economic hub for the lower northern region, showcasing significant potential in trade, transportation, agriculture, and services, which are essential for fostering cross-border economic development. In recent years, the private sector in the province, especially the Chamber of Commerce and local business groups, has assumed a pivotal role in advocating for various initiatives and projects under LIMEC, including the advancement of logistics routes, border trade, and infrastructure investment. The provincial chamber of commerce has recognized the potential of LIMEC from the outset.

“We have engaged in multiple discussions with our partners in Laos and Myanmar; however, the challenge remains that government policies have not yet provided the necessary concrete responses, particularly in terms of budget allocation and the collaborative development of cross-border infrastructure.” (The President of the Provincial Chamber of Commerce, Interview, 2024)

The private sector remains vigilant and prepared to facilitate investment; however, it encounters challenges, including constrained provincial budgets, insufficient central policy incentives, and the lack of a cohesive trade and industry strategy that aligns with the development of LIMEC.

Community and Heritage:

Local advocacy and cultural resources Phitsanulok Province boasts a rich cultural heritage, encompassing art, history, and religion, exemplified by Wat Phra Si Rattana Mahathat and the nearby historical sites of Sukhothai and Si Satchanalai (Phitsanulok Provincial Cultural Office, 2024). This allows the province to establish cultural tourism routes that can be directly associated with Luang Prabang Province in Laos. Our cultural assets are both profound and diverse. Integrating with the LIMEC route can greatly enhance tourism, particularly regarding the cultural and shared heritage of the region. (The Director of the Phitsanulok Provincial Tourism and Sports Office, interview, 2024) The local population’s awareness of the LIMEC project continues to be limited. Only local leaders and

provincial officials possess comprehensive information and understanding.

“The general public remains unaware of LIMEC and the province’s potential involvement.” Numerous individuals perceive it merely as a standard roadway, rather than recognizing it as a component of a broader regional economic strategy. (The Phitsanulok Provincial Commerce Office, interview, 2024)

This matter highlights the deficiencies in policy communication and public engagement, which are essential in the shift towards sustainable regional centrality.

The political, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of Phitsanulok province distinctly illustrate its potential to evolve into a LIMEC hub, especially given its preparedness in strategic planning, the robustness of the private sector, and its cultural assets. Nonetheless, obstacles persist regarding the variability of government policies, the absence of institutional support systems, and the inadequate public engagement. Consequently, should policy coherence be achieved between national and local levels, and if diverse sectors are authentically assigned roles, Phitsanulok province will successfully and sustainably transition into an economic center within the LIMEC framework (Faculty of Logistics and Digital Supply Chain, Naresuan University, 2024).

4. Proposal for strategic guidelines to delineate the role of Phitsanulok Province within LIMEC, aimed at fostering an efficient and sustainable regional economic framework

Through comprehensive interviews with key informants from provincial, local, and private sector agencies in Phitsanulok Province, significant strategic proposals emerged to delineate the role of Phitsanulok Province in the effective and sustainable integration into the LIMEC economic corridor as follows:

Enhancing the position of LIMEC to serve as a national policy cooperation framework:

An interviewee from the provincial administration stated,

“While the concept of LIMEC holds promise, its practical implementation hinges on its integration into the national strategy or regional government policies; otherwise, the province will struggle to operate

effectively.” (The Deputy Governor of Phitsanulok Province, interview, 2024)

Consequently, the initial strategic approach involves recommending to the government, particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce, the elevation of LIMEC to a defined policy status. This would establish a framework for connecting provincial and sub-regional development plans (The Phitsanulok Provincial Statistics Committee, 2023).

Putting in place a provincial-level integrated management mechanism:

A source from the provincial planning department recommended establishing a permanent working group or a special coordination center to lead LIMEC efforts. This body should include representatives from all sectors, including agencies from neighboring provinces, to ensure continuity and achieve tangible results. (The Phitsanulok Provincial Commerce, Interview, 2024). In addition to regularly monitoring operations and progress, this strategy will assist in mitigating the issue of policy discontinuity during management changes.

Encouraging structured public-private partnerships (PPP):

The President of the Phitsanulok Chamber of Commerce stated,

“The private sector is prepared to invest in logistics and cross-border services; however, we require clear guidance from the government regarding their support in legal and infrastructure issues”. (The President of the Provincial Chamber of Commerce, Interview, 2024)

Consequently, a significant strategy is to establish a public-private policy forum, like the “LIMEC-PPP Roundtable,” to facilitate collaboration between the private sector and the government in co-designing and implementing policies, as well as to draw investments in transportation, cross-border trade, and logistics centers.

Investment in infrastructure to enhance sub-regional connectivity:

The Phitsanulok Provincial Commerce Office has indicated that “the essential infrastructures include main roads, airports, and logistics centers, which will be pivotal in transforming the province’s role into a sub-regional economic hub” (The Provincial Commerce

Office, interview, 2024). This strategic approach should include the enhancement of Highway No. 12, establishing rail connections, and modernizing Phitsanulok Airport to support international cargo and passenger traffic.

Creating cultural identity to support the role of Soft Power:

The Provincial Cultural Office proposed,

“We should utilize Phitsanulok’s cultural strengths to establish a tourism route in partnership with Luang Prabang and Mawlamyine, which will act as both a revenue source and a significant tool for Soft Power.” (The Provincial Cultural Office, Interview, 2024)

This strategy could enhance the creative economy and promote regional acceptance by facilitating collaborative cultural and artistic exchange initiatives.

Based on the study’s results, the author has summarized the findings in a table format, emphasizing the stakeholders and their respective roles in the development associated with LIMEC, as outlined below.

Discussion

The research study titled “State, Market, and Globalization: Strategic Development of Phitsanulok Province along the Luang Prabang- Indochina-Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC)” presents a structured analysis of the findings, categorizing the discussion points into four key areas. These areas illustrate the relationship between empirical data gathered from documents and interviews and the Market State and Globalization theoretical framework. This encompasses a direct connection between the interviewees’ responses and the theoretical interpretation as outlined below:

The opportunities and constraints of Phitsanulok Province in establishing itself as the hub of LIMEC.

Phitsanulok Province possesses significant potential for development as a hub of the LIMEC economic corridor, particularly in geopolitics, economy, and culture. This is consistent with Strange (1996) state-market framework, which highlights that in the context of globalization (Gereffi, 2019), the state not only

regulates the economy but also functions as an “economic operator” and “facilitator” in connecting

markets, society, and private capital. A representative from the provincial commerce office remarked,

Table 1: An overview of the policy suggestions made in light of the research findings

Policy recommendation	Appropriate organizations	Roles and responsibilities of the agency
1. Advocate for integrating LIMEC within the national strategic plan and the ACMECS master plan.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ministry of Foreign Affairs <input type="checkbox"/> Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC)	Facilitate national policy acknowledgment for LIMEC via Cabinet mechanisms and collaboration within GMS/ACMECS frameworks.
2. Establish the “LIMEC Coordination Center of Phitsanulok” under the supervision of the provincial governor.	<input type="checkbox"/> Phitsanulok Province <input type="checkbox"/> Lower Northern Region Provincial Cluster	Collect local data, facilitate collaboration among provincial and cross-border agencies, and recommend spatial strategies.
3. Establish quarterly discussions between the public and private sectors to align cross-border investment strategies.	<input type="checkbox"/> Phitsanulok Chamber of Commerce <input type="checkbox"/> Provincial Office of Commercial Affairs	Facilitate collaborative investment initiatives (e.g., cross-border logistics hubs) and cultivate investor relationships.
4. Enhance the progress of Highway No.12, the western railway, and expand Phitsanulok airport for cargo operations.	<input type="checkbox"/> Department of Highways <input type="checkbox"/> Airports of Thailand <input type="checkbox"/> Railway of Thailand	Obtain dedicated funding from the central government or international development sources to enhance infrastructure initiatives.
5. Design a “Two Nations Cultural Tour” connecting Luang Prabang, Phitsanulok, and Mawlamyine.	<input type="checkbox"/> Provincial Tourism and Sports Office <input type="checkbox"/> Local Administrative Organizations	Organize cultural exchanges, regional tourism forums, and joint exhibitions with neighboring countries
6. Execute public communication initiatives through local media, community radio, and village forums.	<input type="checkbox"/> Provincial Public Relations Office <input type="checkbox"/> Provincial Community Development Office	Distribute information regarding LIMEC-related knowledge and responsibilities via village channels and local government platforms.

“Phitsanulok Province is strategically positioned in logistics, linking with Laos, Myanmar, and the central economic zone of the country”. (The Phitsanulok Provincial Commerce, interview, 2024).

Illustrates the establishment of regional cooperation spaces akin to Fuggate (2019) analysis, indicating that the development of tourism routes among Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand can function as a mechanism for state-led economic advancement, provided that the state prioritizes policies and infrastructure effectively (Babic, 2019) Nonetheless,

institutional limitations continue to pose a considerable challenge, especially the absence of a primary host to advance the LIMEC effectively. Moreover, Polanyi (2001) highlighted the insights, noting that in a free market system, the influence of market mechanisms and substantial capital often diminishes the state’s role, leading to a loss of its authority in shaping developmental trajectories (Nayyar, 2019) . A representative from the Provincial Agricultural Office noted,

“Currently, the logistics system is not conducive to exporting agricultural products to foreign markets” (The Phitsanulok Provincial Agriculture, interview, 2024).

Emphasizing the infrastructure challenges that continue to receive insufficient backing from the central government. This aligns with Chitraphan’s (2020) findings on the Development of Trade and Production along the East-West Economic Corridor, which highlighted that while large projects garner attention, the absence of coordinated plans across all levels can result in operational bottlenecks.

This issue is important for political science studies as it broadens the analysis of the state’s role from the national to the local level. The concept of a “cooperative state” is introduced, necessitating new institutional mechanisms to efficiently coordinate government, capital, and society in the framework of regional economies and globalization (Bello, 2009). LIMEC has distinctly demonstrated this concept.

Policies and institutional mechanisms for regional integration.

While Phitsanulok’s 20-Year Provincial Development Plan aligns with the national strategy, it remains deficient in “concrete support from national agencies in terms of budget and driving structure” (The Deputy Governor of Phitsanulok Province, interview, 2024). This illustrates the disparity between discursive policies and practical implementations, akin to the analysis conducted by Tangsupvattana and Wongsatjachock (2022). The development of infrastructure in border regions, lacking a comprehensive understanding of the local context, may result in adverse effects rather than fostering integration. The internal mechanisms within the province function in a disjointed manner.

“Multiple agencies persist in operating based on their individual missions, failing to align with the provincial strategic plan”. (The Deputy Governor of Phitsanulok Province, interview, 2024).

This aligns with Poulantzas’ (1969) concept that, although the state is responsible for maintaining equilibrium to support capital accumulation, structural constraints inherent in a centralized bureaucratic system hinder its effectiveness at the local level.

Furthermore, Kongsanoh (2024) and Chitraphan (2020) emphasize the significance of vertical coordination mechanisms between the central government and local governments in economic corridor projects like EEC and EWEC, which encountered comparable early-stage challenges due to the absence of permanent coordination mechanisms until receiving approval from the central government. Nonetheless, the discourse surrounding this matter indicates that provincial government agencies face challenges in effectively establishing international cooperation, exemplified by their lack of direct authority to engage with Luang Prabang in Laos and Mon State in Myanmar (The Phitsanulok Provincial Commerce Office, interview, 2024). This situation illustrates the evolution of the state’s role from a controlling supervisor to a connector or supporter in the context of globalization; however, it is deficient in the necessary tools and structures for effective implementation.

This issue is notably significant in political science as it highlights the complexities within the functions of modern states. In the context of globalization (Gereffi, 2020) argues that states have evolved beyond the role of mere controllers; they are increasingly expected to act as coordinators, managers, or mediators among diverse interest groups, both domestically and transnationally particularly in regions with distinct geopolitical significance (Wade, 2018).

The interplay of politics, economy, and socio-culture is a factor in the transition to the LIMEC center.

Despite a long-term strategic plan, political factors in Phitsanulok Province continue to encounter challenges, including the impact of changes in the governor on administrative direction, resulting in the stalling of specific projects. (The Deputy Governor of Phitsanulok Province, interview, 2024).

This illustrates the inconsistency of policies, as Miliband (1983) noted that the state’s role frequently hinges on the ruling class’s power dynamics that control state mechanisms for their economic advantage. The private sector economy, especially the Phitsanulok Chamber of Commerce, has undeniably assumed a prominent position.

“We have engaged in multiple negotiations with the Chamber of Commerce of Laos and the Mon State;

however, there has been no involvement from central government agencies.” (The President of the Provincial Chamber of Commerce, Interview, 2024)

The evidence indicates that the state has not yet established a robust Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mechanism comparable to the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC). Kongsanoh (2024) examines that the state’s success fundamentally relies on the collaboration among the central government, local authorities, and the private sector. Regarding culture and public perception, despite the area’s rich cultural heritage, many individuals remain unaware of the LIMEC project, perceiving it solely as a roadway rather than a comprehensive regional economic strategy. The Provincial Commerce Office highlights the constraints in policy communication that could influence long-term public acceptance (Hayashi, 2010). To position Phitsanulok Province as the center of LIMEC, policymakers must advocate for the LIMEC project to be formally recognized as a national policy priority. This is particularly important in developing the National Economic and Social Development Plan and Thailand’s regional strategy, ensuring effective alignment with international cooperation frameworks such as ACMECS and BIMSTEC (Fuggate, 2019). Creating a permanent provincial coordination center is essential for data collection, project management, and collaboration with central agencies. This necessitates collaboration across all sectors, encompassing government, the private sector, academia, and civil society. Furthermore, the establishment of a PPP mechanism that facilitates private sector investment in a structured manner under clear regulations and guidelines, such as the creation of a “LIMEC-PPP Roundtable” to foster negotiation opportunities between the government and business entities (Martinussen, 1997; Strange, 1996), is consistent with Hayashi (2010) framework, which asserts that the post-developmental state must adopt strategies that extend beyond industrial intervention similar to the original East Asian model. It is essential for a state to effectively coordinate a significant number of stakeholders, both at the domestic and international levels, as exemplified by the LIMEC case that necessitates cross-border cooperation mechanisms.

Overview The evolution of Phitsanulok Province into the hub of LIMEC transcends mere infrastructure development or regional economic strategies; it signifies

a transformation in the power dynamics of the Thai state within the framework of globalization. The Market State concept emphasizes the state’s need to adapt its role in response to the complexities of capital groups, trade, and international relations, with LIMEC serving as a notable example of this dynamic.

Strategic proposal: The evolving function of the state as an interest coordinator and advocate for cross-border collaboration

Advancing LIMEC to National Policy Recognition: The Mechanism of State- Market Interaction and the Formulation of International Strategy

The initial significant proposal is to advocate for the LIMEC to gain recognition at the federal government policy level, including the National Economic and Social Development Plan and regional cooperation strategies such as ACMECS or BIMSTEC. This illustrates Strange (1996) idea that, in the context of globalization, states must “transform their roles” from economic controllers to “strategic managers” tasked with connecting international capital and fostering multilateral cooperation. The absence of a policy status hinders LIMEC’s ability to efficiently allocate resources, including budgetary, legal, and operational support, from the national to the local level. This is consistent with the proposal by Narong et al. (2022), which indicates that the success of border economic development projects relies on formulating clear state policies that incorporate regional joint objectives.

Establishing integration mechanisms at the provincial level: The role of the state as a coordinator of diverse stakeholder interests

The proposal to establish a permanent “LIMEC Coordination Center” at the provincial level signifies the evolution of the state from a centralized bureaucratic entity to a market-oriented state that functions as a “manager of interest networks” (Strange, 1996; Poulantzas, 1969). Within the framework of LIMEC, establishing a permanent center comprising representatives from government, the private sector, academia, and civil society will effectively address the challenge of policy discontinuity, a significant concern. Miliband (1983) noted that the state frequently mirrors the interests of influential groups, which shift in

response to political mechanisms, resulting in a lack of long-term policy stability.

The implementation of a well-defined PPP mechanism: Establishing collaborations between the government and private sector in the post-developmental state period

The “LIMEC- PPP Roundtable” proposal represents an institutional design to facilitate the state’s transition to a joint venture role. This aligns with Martinussen’s (1997) assertion that the modern state cannot function independently and must engage in a partnership structure with capital (Li et al., 2019). The Phitsanulok Chamber of Commerce has expressed its readiness to invest in the logistics system, contingent upon the government’s clarification of laws and infrastructure (The President of the Provincial Chamber of Commerce, Interview, 2024). The analysis by Kongsanoh (2024) indicates that the state has not yet fully fulfilled its role as a facilitator in the case of the EEC. The success of the special economic zone depends significantly on the close cooperation of all sectors, particularly local capital groups.

The application of cultural soft power to strengthen regional significance

The proposal to establish a collaborative cultural tourism route connecting Phitsanulok, Luang Prabang, and Mawlamyine illustrates the strategic application of cultural assets to enhance regional acceptance and identity. According to Fugate (2019), LIMEC possesses the potential to evolve into a multicultural economic and tourism route, necessitating state policies focused on infrastructure investment, tourism management, and the systematic creation of economic value. Success can be achieved when the state is able to exercise soft power not as a “controller,” but as a “coordinator” among diverse cultures, forms of capital, and individuals. This is consistent with Hayashi (2010) critique that the conventional developmental state is unable to adequately address the complexities of globalization (Tsunekawa, 2019)

In summary, the strategic proposal of Phitsanulok Province to enhance its role within the LIMEC framework clearly illustrates the evolving function of the state in the context of globalization, transitioning from a directive and controlling entity to a strategic manager, a coordinator of interest networks, and a developer of flexible and participatory institutional

mechanisms. Pursuing sustainable development within the LIMEC framework necessitates enhancing national policies, creating transparent public-private mechanisms, and authentic coordination of interests among diverse sectors. This is consistent with the perspectives of Strange (1996), Poulantzas (1969), Miliband (1983), and Martinussen (1997), which suggest that in the context of globalization, the state must “change its role” not to withdraw but to “adapt” in order to thrive in an environment dominated by capital, technology, and international collaboration.

Conclusion

The study entitled “State, Market, and Globalization: Strategic Development of Phitsanulok Province along the Luang Prabang-Indochina-Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC)” This study focuses on examining the feasibility of policies and development mechanisms that Phitsanulok Province can adopt to establish itself as a regional economic corridor hub. It will consider political, economic, and socio-cultural factors within the framework of the “Market State” concept and the influences of globalization. The research has effectively addressed the research questions by delivering findings that align with the field context and current political science theories. The study results demonstrate that Phitsanulok Province possesses potential across multiple dimensions, including its geopolitical location, agricultural and service-oriented economic structure, and cultural heritage, which can be leveraged as Soft Power to strengthen cross-border cooperation with Luang Prabang Province, Mon State, and Kayin State. Nevertheless, the province continues encountering considerable challenges, notably lacking national policy recognition for LIMEC. The absence of a primary host agency with the capacity to unify projects, coupled with the inconsistency of provincial policies influenced by shifts in leadership, is a significant issue.

The study’s theoretical implications highlight the evolution of the state’s role within the framework of globalization. As Strange (1996), noted that contemporary state cannot independently manage the economy. Instead, it must evolve into a strategic manager, facilitating the coordination of interests and fostering collaboration with private capital and civil society. The analysis conducted at the local level

reinforces the concepts put forth by Miliband (1983) and Poulantzas (1969), indicating that the state serves as a domain where capital groups and political power engage in competition and coordination of interests. This is particularly evident at the provincial level, where the private sector is increasingly assuming increasingly assumes a proactive role in shaping international strategies.

Regarding academic significance, this research significantly contributes to the advancement of knowledge within the field of political science, specifically focusing on sub-national state analysis, which incorporates market state concepts alongside the context of cross-border economic cooperation. The proposal outlines specific and actionable policy directions, including the elevation of elevating LIMEC to national policy status, establishing permanent provincial coordination centers, and the creation of PPP mechanisms to attract private sector investment. These are structured as mechanisms designed to open participation from all sectors.

To conclude, this research highlights the strategic potential of Phitsanulok Province within the framework of LIMEC and illustrates the evolving role of the Thai state in the context of globalization. Restructuring power, management approaches, and new mechanisms for coordinating interests are essential for a sustainable and effective response to capital, technology, and cross-border cooperation dynamics.

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Recommendations

Recommendations and approaches for national and provincial agencies

The findings underscore the challenges faced by Phitsanulok Province in advancing the LIMEC project independently, particularly due to the lack of a designated host agency, insufficient backing from the central government, and inconsistencies in policy implementation. The findings indicate that:

□ The government should advocate for recognizing LIMEC as a national policy by integrating it into the National Economic and Social Development Plan and ensuring alignment with regional strategies such as ACMECS and BIMSTEC to facilitate a systematic allocation of budgets and resources.

□ Phitsanulok Province should establish a permanent LIMEC coordination center with a flexible framework that encourages participation from government agencies, the private sector, academia, and civil society representatives to ensure the continuous execution of policy and administration.

Recommendations for economic strategies and the partnership between the public and private sectors

The private sector, particularly the Phitsanulok Chamber of Commerce, is keen to invest in logistics and border trade; however, it continues to encounter insufficient support from the government. The research suggests the establishing a collaborative platform for public policy negotiations that includes both the state and the private sector, such as the “LIMEC– PPP Roundtable”. This would allow the private sector to participate in policy development and make formal investments within a clearly defined legal framework. This mechanism should operate formally, providing flexibility and enabling local capital groups to engage in policy discussions, thereby reducing the gap between the public and private sectors.

Recommendations for meeting the requirements of diverse stakeholders

Field data indicated that diverse stakeholder groups emphasize and gain advantages from distinct elements. The government emphasizes meticulous planning, the private sector seeks rapid investments, while the community finds it challenging to understand

the project's specifics. The research demonstrates the importance of consistently establishing area-based consultation forums that engage the government, private sector, and community stakeholders. This strategy seeks to address conflicting interests and develop policies based on the genuine agreement of all stakeholders. Promote the establishment of frameworks that solicit contributions from public sector representatives, such as farmer networks, local entrepreneurs, and community leaders, to influence the future direction of LIMEC development.

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