

## **The Privatization of Ownership in the Sphere of Khap Lam Melodies**

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**Abstract:** This paper aims to discuss the -privatization of the ownership of Khap Lam folklore music, which the Lao people living in Thailand and Lao PDR have owned jointly. Looking at their brief history, the Lao have lived in the fateful trajectory of “the -closest but the farthest neighbors.” Since French colonization was launched in the Southeast Asian mainland and demanded the Siam and the Lao to demarcate the international border, the Lao—who have inhabited in the Khorat plateau and the current country of Lao PDR—have been separated into two different nation-states. The Lao in northeastern Thailand includes approximately one of third of the national population, while the Lao in Lao PDR, with a population of approximately 6 million, have gone through several wars and civil conflicts over many centuries, including the revolution for independence in 1975. Furthermore, the former has deployed capitalist economic policies as opposed to the latter which was administered by a diplomatically socialistic government during the Cold War. Although the Lao people share common customs, food and language, these political differences have given rise to some controversial issue related to the privatization of ownership in the process of making folklore music as a “commodity.” Conventionally, folklore music has been also orally passed from master to pupil, and also informational knowledge has been inscribed into the body. When the embodied knowledge was remade into commodities such CDs or VCDs, the perception of private ownership of the music emerged— through the process of copyright law in both countries. Therefore, this paper attempts to clarify what consequences international legal standardization has brought to folklore musicians in the intercultural relations among the Lao people in Thailand and the Lao PDR with regard to Lam melodies.