

## **Lao Local Government<sup>1</sup>**

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**ABSTRACT—**: Before the promulgation of the first constitution of the Lao state in 1991 Laos was perceived by a number of Thai scholars as barbaric and lawless. The information about Lao politics during the Cold War was very limited to the outside world. The objective of this article is to reflect on the political system from Lao perspectives by using the analysis of local government in Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR). From 2 December 1975 onwards, historiography and document analysis suggest that Lao local government has been one mechanism in the structure of the state that moves towards socialism. It argues that this local government is controlled under the system of the people's democratic republic with a single party. The People's Revolutionary Party thus dictates the political system of the country in all aspects.

Keywords : government, local government, Laos

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2 The Faculty of Liberal Arts at Ubon Ratchathani University.

## Introduction

On 2 December 1975, the People's Revolutionary Party, known as the Lao Marxist-Leninist Party, established the Lao People's Democratic Republic and its government. This Lao state was established during the Cold War and was therefore a socialist orientated country. The objective of this article is to reflect on the Lao government and political system from the Lao perspective. This article will define the People's Revolutionary Party and the government of Lao PDR as "the Lao state," with the government of people's democratic republic. It means this former colony is successful in revolutionary war, giving its people democracy. However, the process of establishing a socialist regime has not been successful. Laos lacks proletariats in the industrial sector. Therefore, it is stuck in the stage of recovery, to prepare for a socialist revolution. Before the 1991 Constitution which is the first constitution of the Lao state, Laos was perceived by some Thai scholars as barbaric and lawless. The information about the Lao state, especially its local government during the Cold War was very limited to the outside world.

The notion of local government was formulated between the 15th and 17th centuries as the concept of nation-states emerged in Europe as the birthplace of democracy. When central government could not control all the areas thoroughly, decentralisation was necessary so local communities could take care of themselves in some areas. They could be sub-districts, districts, city and villages. This includes tax collection for local development such as public health services, environment and education (Chayyabhud, 2019).

According to Lenin (1977: 41-44), political and government system from the Soviet Union model was interestingly explained. He described problems in establishing the state of proletariats under the leadership of the communist party as follows:

*The proletariat class successfully overthrew the Russian Empire. The steps in establishing a new country attracted the class of*

*proletariats and peasants from the former regimes to cooperate with the communist party. “It was the authority of the working class, the authority that struggles to eradicate the influence of capitalists completely. The proletariat class in the city and industrial zones rose up to join the struggles. The victory was achieved at first and government authority was seized. A significant number of proletariats, peasants and working class were necessary to establish socialism. It is the products of the power of Soviet Union and ours is considered the best.*

Lenin elaborated the roles of the communist party that dictated the proletariat class to establish a new regime by attracting the working class and peasants who were non-members of the party to take part in establishing the country. However, he did not explain the local government. Kaysone Phomvihane talked about the events that followed the establishment of people's democratic republic and the authority of the government. “... in the regime of people's democracy...the defence of the state centralisation and the unity of legislative and executive branches and leading roles were the responsibilities of the communist party or the proletariat party...” (Sisane, December 13, 1997: 2 quoted in Tonlerd, 1998: 116).

Since the end of the Cold War, the Lao PDR has been the last five nation-states under the rule of a party with Marxist-Leninist orientation. However, one cannot understand the local government in Lao PDR because its contemporary local government has the origin in the colonial days.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the first and second generation of revolutionists could be categorised as the royal elites, local government elites and the people's elites. They all had the

3 The root of Lao local government originated in the colonial days. The French colonialists laid the foundation of modern nation state of Laos by establishing its local government, that can be explained in 5 stages. The first one was the traditional government that lasted between 1893 and 1895. The second stage was the administrative district between 1895-1899. The third one is defined as the First French Government between 1899 and 1941. The fourth stage is the Second French Government from 1941 to 1945. The last one was the time under the rule of Japanese Empire in 1956 (Phommachan et al, 2000: 516-521).

experience being under the colonial rule and the royal regime. It must be noted, in the struggle for independence, the people's elites took part in laying the foundation of the local government that looked forward to establishing socialism.

The authors have conducted historical research on Lao local government in 4 steps. As the first step, the documents have been collected and categorised into 3 groups. Firstly, Lao documents such as the standardised Lao history by Phommachan et al (2000) have been collected. Also, the article by Sasane ((December 13, 1997:2 quoted in Tonlerd, 1998: 116) that proposes the ideas of politics and government of Kaysone Phomvihane and Leninism in the government in the Soviet Union (Lenin & Stalin 1977) is examined. Secondly, the research reports by Phoumsavath (2017) Supitcha (2019), Tonlerd (1998), Tonlerd and Masong (2022) and the Completed State Navy Review (1959) that explain the issues of local government are examined. Thirdly, the authors have analysed other documents such as Xinhua Thai newspaper. The second step is the examination and analysis of the documents above. In the third step, the authors have written an analytical draft of this manuscript. In the final step, this manuscript will be presented to the public. It discusses the foundation of Lao local government during the Cold War, the local government of the Lao PDR and draws a conclusion.

## **2. Foundation of Lao local government during the Cold War**

The communist movements in Laos directly employed the experience from local government in the country from 6 March 1946 to 2 December 1975. That was the foundation of Lao PDR and the colonial legacy of the last phase of the French rule in Indochina from 6 March 1946 to 22 November 1953 in tandem with the time of the Royal Lao Government from 23 November 1953 to 2 December 1975 will be examined. The Lao people organised the governance themselves in the two phases aforementioned. Likewise, the communist movements developed their local governance. The salient details will be discussed as follows.

## 2.1 The last phase of the colonial government: French administration in Laos

The last stage of the French colonial government lasted from 6 March 1946 to 22 November 1953. The French encouraged the Lao elites to take part in the central government as can be seen in Chart 1 and the details of local government in Chart 2.

Chart 1 indicates that on 6 March 1946, the French had to fix their mistakes in Laos in two respects. The French limited the rights of the Lao people to work in the colonies at the level of the city by bringing the Vietnamese to work in Laos instead. The French colonial government in the last phase ran a campaign that encouraged Lao nationalists to take part in modern state building according to the Indochinese Communist Party<sup>4</sup>, *Khwaen Lao* Party, the Pan-Thaiism of Siam<sup>5</sup>. Amnesty had to be granted to

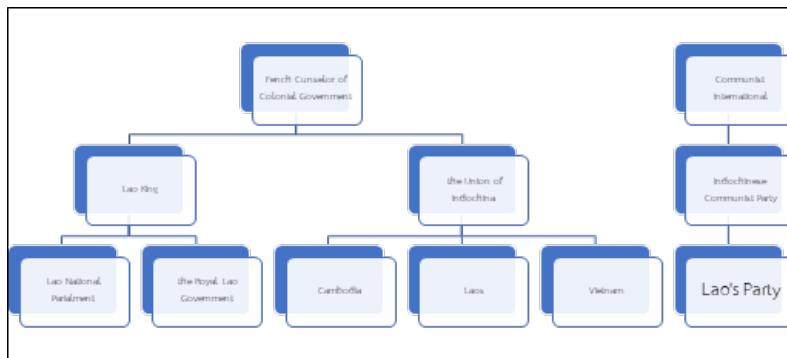
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4 In the 1920s, Comintern sent *Nguyen Ai Quoc* (another Ho Chi Minh's name) to establish people's support and revolutionary movement in Asia. In the late 1920s, Ho Chi Minh was successful in persuading *Khamseang Siwilai* from Sakhon Nakhon and *Khamphong Chamaroek* from Ubon Ratchathani to join the communist movement. Later, they became the key figures in establishing a political party with the Marxist-Leninist ideology. In 1930, Ho Chi Minh took part in forming the Indochinese Communist Party. However, between 1930 and 1945, the Party played a significant role in Lao by focusing on building mass support in Vietnamese working class. In 1934, the Indochinese Communist Party was separated into three big parties such as Worker's Party of Vietnam, Khwaen Lao Party and Kwean Kamphucha Party. During WWII, the Khwaen Lao Party under the leadership of Indochinese Communist Party was successful in producing a leader of the revolutionary movement *Kaysone Phomvihane*.

5 During the second period of French administration between 1941 and 1945 What date? the foundation of local government in Laos was exactly like that which the French colonial administration had formulated as the ethic policy in government in Laos. The highlight was to support nationalism by establishing the youth association. Some worked for the Lao government. Later, they formed the *Pathet Lao* movement or *Naeo Lao Hak Xat* (Paseuth, 2012: 96-97). However, most thinkers argued that the ethic policy was employed by the French to counter pan-Thaiism of the Thai government.

the group of displaced Laos by Prince *Phetsarath Ratanavongsa*<sup>6</sup>. A general election had to be organised with the people's parliament on 11 May 1947. Laos then was part of the Federation of Indochina from 3 March 1949. The colonial government of France granted independence to Laos on 23 November 1953.

**Chart 1: Central government of France in Laos on the third stage that lasted from 6 March 1946 to 22 November 1953**



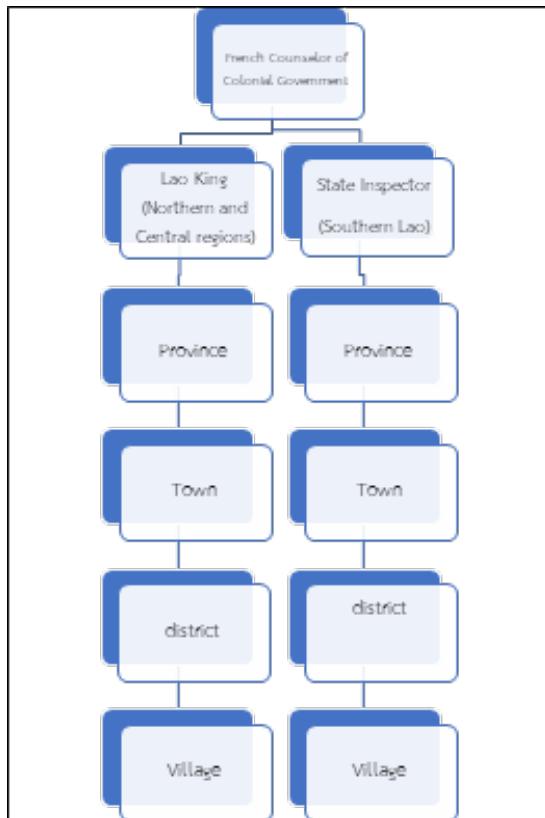
Source: Sutida Tonlerd

Chart 2 shows the local government of France in Laos on the third stage. It is the reflection of the Lao political structure with the overlap of the *Lan Xang* era and the foundation of modern local government. The Governor-General of Laos Paul Doumer separated Laos into two areas. The north comprised six provinces starting from *Khammouane* northwards with *Luang Prabang* as the central government. From the south, the administrative authority starting from *Khammouane* southwards comprised seven prov-

6 The 5<sup>th</sup> phase when Imperial Japan ruled over Laos was only a short period of time, that lasted from 9 March to 26 August 1945. However, that contributed to Laos as the Japanese helped ensure that Lao people learned to form their own government. The Army of Imperial Japan supported the replacement of the Lao with the French in administration. That was the foundation of nationalism and the nationalistic movement afterwards, as the King of Laos proclaimed its independence on 8 April 1945 (Phaseuth, 2012: 96-100).

inces. *Don Khong* was the centre of the government. The French abolished the traditional laws and slavery, and began to employ the Christian principles. According to the narratives of the Lao people who lived during the Royal Lao Government regime, they said that their country was divided into two areas, “from *Khammoune* northward, the land belonged to the King, while from *Khammoune* southward, the land belonged to Prince *Boun Oum*; the country was shared by the two governments”.

**Chart 2: Local Lao government of the third stage under the French Regime that lasted from 6 March 1946 to November 1953**



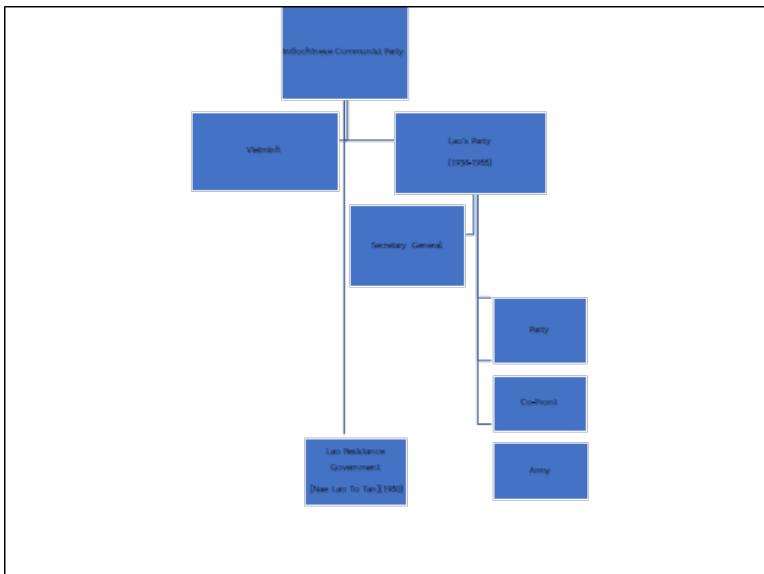
Source: Sutida TONLERD

Chart 3 indicates the Lao system of government after the government of Japan was defeated in World War II. Prince *Phetsarath Ratanavongsa* proclaimed independence and established

the Lao government in *Savannakhet* on 12 October 1946. This government was known as Lao Issara. On 6 March 1946, Ho Chi Minh yielded that France returned to Laos with the exchange of the independence of North Vietnam. In May 1949, Prince *Phetsarath* fled for the Kingdom of Thailand and established a Lao government in exile in Bangkok. The end of the operation was 24 October 1949 as it was the transitional time when the weapons of the Imperial Japan were handed over to the Allies. Viet Minh sent *Kaysone Phomvihane* to take part in the operation of Japanese disarmament. Some weapons were handed over to the movement of *Neo Lao Hak Xat*.

Between 13 and 15 August 1950, the Indochinese communist movement known as Viet Minh established another movement known as *Neo Lao To Tan*, which was illegal. Later, this group was merged into the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, in 1955. The *Neo Lao To Tan* began to strengthen the group that fought for independence by setting up "The discourse of three ethnicities that fought to revive the nation" that covered the ethnic groups of *Lao Loum*, *Lao Theung* and *Lao Soung*. Prince *Souphanouvong* was the leader of the Lao Loum, Sithon Kommadam led Lao Theung and Phaydang Lobliayao led the Lao Soung (Tonlerd & Masong,2022:50-53).

### Chart 3: The Structure of the Indochinese Communist Party, the Government of Lao To Tan and Kwaen Lao Group (Lao's Party)



Source: Sutida Tonlerd

Chart 3 reflects the formulation of administration and government by the group of the Khwaen Lao Party, which was at the stage of building the mass support and network to wage a revolutionary war. After the end of the Cold War, the Lao revolutionists narrated their stories as the young revolutionists. They started with the reasons why they took part in the revolution, the steps to become a professional revolutionist and the fight for independence. This set of evidence reflected the root of a socialist revolution or the formulation of a country with the system of people's democracy in the future. It also helped explain the network power of the Khwaen Lao Party at the local level that was metaphorically compared with the small roots that help support the main one so that the tree grows successfully in the future. On the other hand, some thinkers did not pay attention to the

political roles and movement of the Lao revolutionists but said that this was testimony that the *Khwaen Lao* Party was a puppet of Vietnam (Langer & Zasloff, 1969).

Unofficial groups of alliances comprised monks, priests and the Hmong, who were still the new key factor that bound the Lao people under the government of Pathet Lao. The Lao people as the stronghold were described as '*paxaxon bandaphao*' had the sense of belonging with the People's Revolutionary Party and other alliances (*Neo Lao Hak Xat* and *Pathet Lao* Movement) and the Lao People's Army who had been fortified since the time World War II ended. The principles that strengthen the revolutionary movement are socialism, equality and the charisma of the representatives of the three ethnic groups. For example, in 1962 in *Nong Het, Xieng Khouang* which is the base of the Hmong and the birthplace of *Phaydang Lobliayao*, the conference for the unity of the ethnic groups was organised by the *Leo Nao Hak Xat* movement. This activity reflected the mechanism of the local government by the government of Pathet Lao in the area of the Lao-Vietnamese border. As organised by the Hmong, it was the symbol of pluralistic culture in the future (Tonlerd & Masong, 2022:68-69).

## **2.2 Local government in the era of Royal Lao Government from 23 November to 2 December 1975.**

The colonial government supported the Lao colony or *Khwaen Lao* of France for her independence on 23 November 1953, even before France was defeated in *Dien Bien Phu* in May 1954. During the 21 years of Royal Lao Government, the country had to face civil war as part of the Cold War. During this time, two group of Lao elites must be mentioned. The first group is the pro-monarchy elites (the government in Vientiane) and the second group is the pro-communist movement (Pathet Lao). They continuously developed the system of their government since the end of World War II. Between 1964 and 1975, the Royal Lao Government was officially divided into two zones of government. They comprised the government of Vientiane as indicated in Chart 4 and Pathet Lao as indicated in Chart 5. The

elites in the two zones were successful in establishing the sense of belonging with parts of the people in their own zones. Lao people in Vientiane had faith in the monarchy. Meanwhile, those in the area of Pathet Lao were confident with the socialist revolutionary. It could have been said that Lao people in both zones were different and antagonistic to one another with the ways of establishing the nation or the government.

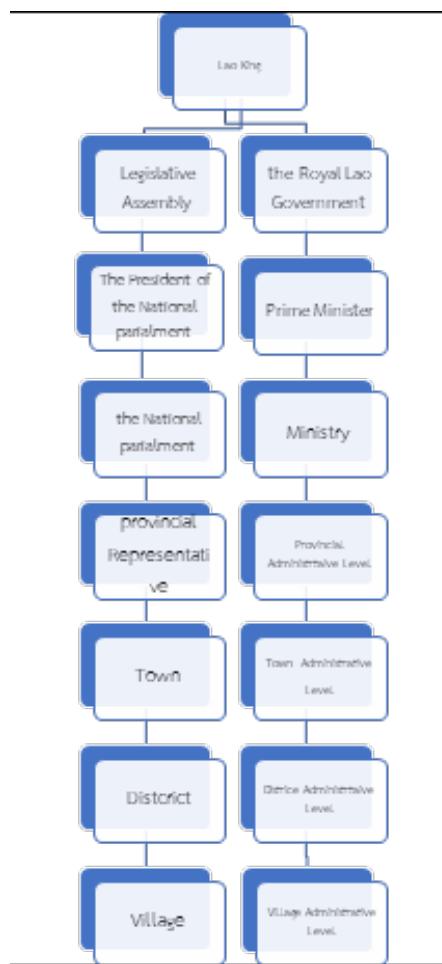
Chart 4 indicates the details of the central and local government of the Royal Lao Government. What is missing in Chart 8 is the counselling team of the United States and her networks as they provided the assistance in establishing the army, the police and the ethnic militants (Conby, 2022).

This scenario reflected that this land-locked country was always the battlefield of the Cold War. However, the Royal Lao Government established the feeling of belongingness with the monarch and the people by supporting the trip of the Lao King, Queen, Crown Prince and royal family. They visited the people and hospitals in the southern cities such as Pak Xan in Bolikhhamxai and Thakhek in Savannakhet. They had dinner and there was the music and a short film that lasted 9.53 minutes. The leaders of the Royal Lao Government, the US Embassy in Vientiane and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) attended this activity. The dinner was finished with the presentation of the Vientiane-Saigon highway construction project. The construction was planned to last 30 years (Skyline Chamnnel,2023).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> It is noted that in the early 1950s, the colonial government of French Indochina suggested that Sisavang Vong visit the people and move the capital city to Vientiane so that a good relationship with Lao people was established. The King would be the spiritual anchor and symbol of the nation. This method was implemented during the reign of King Sisavang Vatthana, the last King of Laos from 1957 to 1975. It was different from the case of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat who re-established the authority of the Thai royal institution which was very successful during the reign of King Rama IX of Rattanakosin Era, with the assistance of the US government.

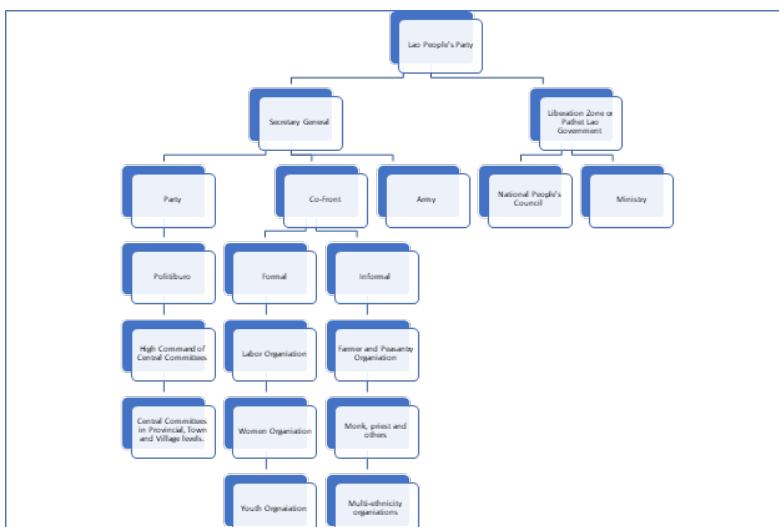
**Chart 4: The Lao central and local government: The Royal Lao Government that lasted from 1953 to November 1975**



Source: Sutida Tonlerd

Chart 5 explains the structure of the Lao People's Party before the establishment of Lao People's Democratic Republic from 1964 to 2 December 1975. What is missing is the counsellors from Vietnam and other socialist nation-states such as the Soviet Union; the People's Republic of China and the German Democratic Republic. These counsellors assisted the Lao People's Party in every mission, similar to the ways in which the US and her allies helped the Royal Lao Government. From the point of view of the Lao revolutionists, this was the fight for independence which was led by professional socialists. Moreover, Chart 5 shows that the Lao People's Party planned for the establishment of a state space for the lives of Lao people after the revolutionary war was over (Phommachan et al., 2000: 913-918).

**Chart 5: Structure of the Lao People's Party before the establishment of Lao People's Democratic Republic between 1964 and 2 December 1975**



Source: Sutida Tonlerd

### **3. Local Government under the regime of the Lao People's Democratic Republic**

It is noted that foreigner who stayed in Laos for some time, all had direct experience that would be remembered for the rest of their lives. They felt as if they fell “in a vacuum, were suspicious, and worried as they were spied by the Lao government and its network.” They often asked why a country which is one in the group of the poorest (Xinhua Thai, March 26, 2022) could cause them trouble? We could analyse this direct experience which is “the power of the local Lao government”. This local government in the era of Lao People’s Democratic Republic could be categorised as the Cold War and post-Cold War ones.

#### **3.1 Lao local government during the Cold War**

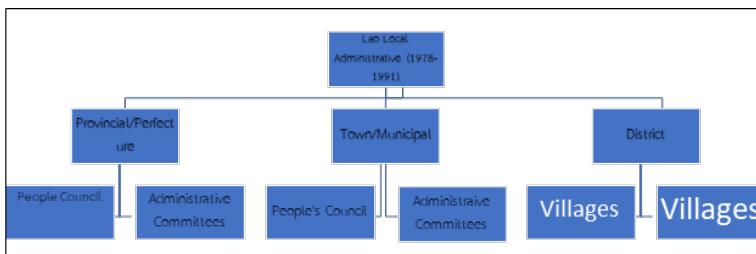
Lao local government during the Cold War took place from 2 December 1975 to 1991. This can be called the era of Lao People’s Democratic Republic, after the ratification of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation with Vietnam. Tonlerd (1998: 117-118) stated that “the administrative authority of the Lao people’s Democratic Republic is separated into three branches; the legislative (National Assembly), executive (Council of Ministers, and judicial (Supreme People’s Court). On the issue of local government, it is linked with the executive branch.” The Lao state has the slogan of nation building and tying the people together so that they are obedient and loyal to the state. It says “The Party dictates, the State protects, and the People are the masters”. This slogan can be employed to decode the network of Marxism-Leninism in Lao territory. According to the Governor of Huaphanh Xayavong (February 2-4, 1998: Interview quoted in Tonlerd 1998: 118), the slogan can be explained as follows;

*The phrase ‘The Party dictates’ means the Party controls the direction of policy by attaching to the demand and benefits of the majority of people.*

*The phrase ‘The State protects’ means the State is the practitioner of the direction so that it materialises as demanded for the benefits of the people. The phrase ‘the People are the masters’ means the people are the most important bases for society, economy and politics. This is the key itself whether the implementation of the development by the State will be possible or not.*

The point of view of Xayavong (February 2-4, 1998: Interview quoted in Tonlerd, 1998: 118) can be employed for analysis of the crucial role of the slogan. The first component of “the Party dictates” means the People’s Revolutionary Party directs the policy of the country from its base which is “a centrally planned democracy.” The second component “the State protects” means the government of Lao People’s Democratic Republic run the administration of the country and implement the policy of the Party. The third component “the People are the masters” means they are the “organisational coalitions”. They promote the policy of the Lao government to the people. The very objective of the policy focuses upon the benefit of the people. The organisational coalitions are directly and indirectly set up by the party so they are the middleman that bind the people with the Lao government. Its strong root resulted from the regional and local government as the Lao state revealed in its motion on local government in 1978 (Phoumsavath, 2017: 50).

### **Chart 5: The structure of local Lao government from 2 December 1975 to 1991**



Source: Mone Phouunsavath.(2017). The Reform of Local Administration in Lao PDR by Law on Local Administration 2015. P.50. A Thesis for Master's of Law. Thammasat University, Thailand. Retrieved on April 17,2023, from [http://ethesisarchive.library.tu.ac.th/thesis/2017/TU \\_2017\\_5701090028\\_9098\\_9347.pdf](http://ethesisarchive.library.tu.ac.th/thesis/2017/TU _2017_5701090028_9098_9347.pdf)

The Lao lawyer Phouunsavath (2017: 41-42) did not explain the local government of Laos during the Cold War that lasted from 2 December 1975 to 1991, but he focuses on the post-Cold War one under the amended 1991 Constitution from 2003 to 2015.

### **3.2. Lao local government after the Cold War**

After the Cold War, the Lao state was open to investment in three aspects: economy, tourism and culture. In terms of politics, it is still secretive although the Cold War is over. Security problems included the movement led by General Vang Pao, Lao To Tan and other resistant militants along the border with Thailand and China. The local government thus were the fundamental fortress that helped defend the country and look after the security problems for the Lao state. From 1991 to 2023, the Lao state fixed and developed at least three bodies of the law on local government. They are the 1991, 2003 and 2015 amendments.

#### **3.2.1. Post Cold War local government of Lao PDR: Stage 1**

The first stage of local government of the Lao PDR after the Cold War was between 1991 and 2003. Tonlerd (1998: 117-118) explained the government authority of Lao PDR on the matter of local government that it is linked with the executive body as follows;

*The administrative authority of Lao people's Democratic Republic is separated into three branches; the legislative (National Assembly), executive (Council of Ministers, and judicial (Supreme People's Court). In 1991, the Council of Ministers was renamed into the government cabinet. It is the central government that extended its authority to*

*the regional and local section. The regional section includes the provinces, district, sub-district known as Taseng and village. The local government is in the form of prefecture. If it is a big city, it is called “kampheng nakhone.”*

Chart 7 is about the structure of the administration of the Lao state from 1991 to 2003. It reflects the hierarchy of local government, which is the province, district and village. Phounsavath (2017: 51) analysed the 1991 Constitution by cutting the level of sub-district known as *Taseng* off (International Labor Organization, 1996-2014)

Boulaphanh, Khwatota, Luangkaew & Wantha (2022: 259) discussed the mechanism of local government and made a very interesting conclusion as follows;

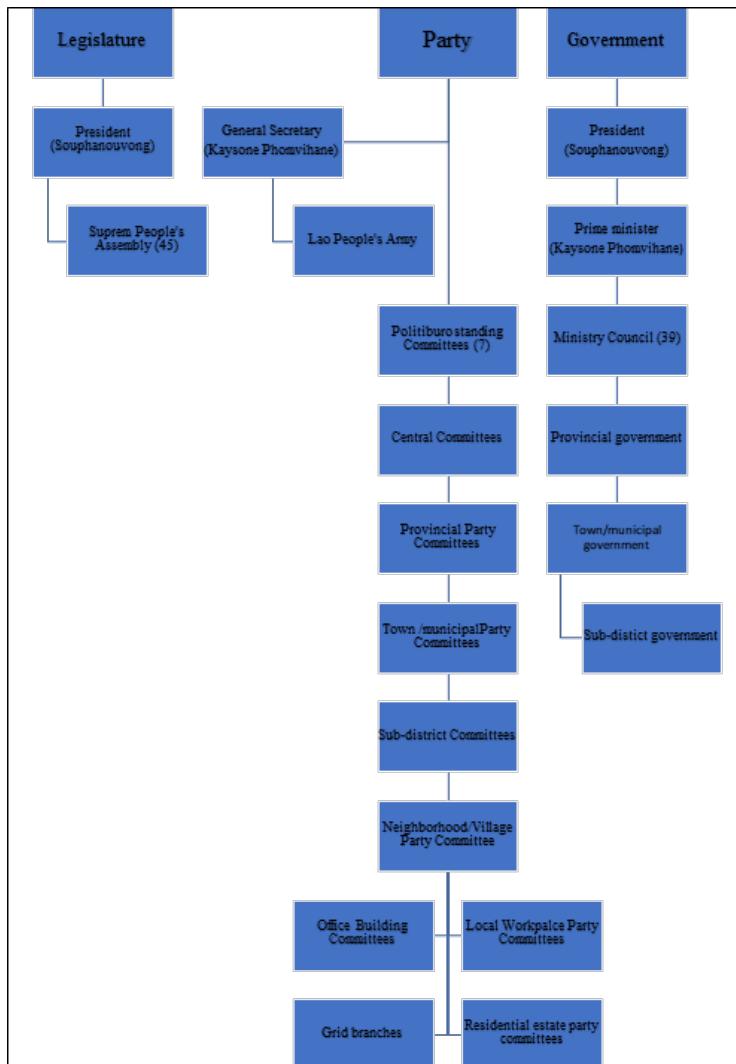
*In each level of the hierarchy, there are the administrative commission, people's councils and the people's organisation led by the People's Revolutionary Party. The formats of the administration are collaborative. However, there is no concrete law. In the procedures of administrative organisation at the provincial level, there could be a type of government that is decentralised to the local government. The people's council in the province will be their representative to wield their power and rights. The authority of the government at the provincial level has two different roles. Firstly, the authority at the provincial level is the responsible representative of the government according to the law. Secondly, the authority at the provincial level set up the practices according to the resolution and the province is responsible to the people's council at the provincial level.*

Boulaphanh, Khwatota, Luangkaew & Wantha (2022: 259) explained the formulation of the local government as follows;

The government is not the party that directly set up

organisations at the level of local government. However, it is the Prime Minister who approved the election results of the administrative presidents at the provincial and municipal level. The people's council at the provincial level approved the project and the appointment of the head of each department in the province and prefecture according to the administrative standard set up by the central government.

**Chart 7: The structure of administration of the Lao state from 1991 to 2003; modified from “The Economist: Anatomy of Dragon China Communist Party and Government Structure 2021.”**



Source: The Economist: Anatomy of Dragon China communist party and government structure 2021. In Bruce Dickson.(2021). "The Party and the People: The Chinese Politics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century." Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Retrieved on January7,2023, from <https://www.economist.com/specialreport/2021/06/23/the-cpush-to-revamp-the-chinese-communist-party-for-the-next-100-years>

The root of local government in the Lao PDR was adapted according to the structure of the area as indicated in the Leninist fundamental principles in order to establish socialism in each area. For example, *Nong Het, Xieng Khouang* Province, is the area of the Hmong. When there are conflicts among themselves, the members of District Commission who were Hmong would be the arbitrators. When tourists, or non-residents went to the community, everyone would be informed of their arrival and objectives of their visit.

After the Cold War, in the late 1990s, the Lao government had the policy of urban development which took place in the expanding city centre. The residents of Nong Het felt uncomfortable. They were not feeling at home even though they were home. Cows were walking around. As a result, they complained to the city governor of Nong Het and he negotiated with the owner of the cows. He was the relative of Phaydang Lobliayao. The result of the negotiation as issued by the committee of the governor, the relative of Phaydang Lobliayao had to relocate his cows out of town. The Lao government allowed the owner of the cows to choose the location himself and also granted him the land rights (Yongly Lobreeyao, April 5, 2019: pers,comm.)

### **3.2.2. Post Cold War local government of Lao PDR: Stage 2**

In 2003, the Lao government promulgated the first law on local administration. Article 5 stated the organisation of local administration is established according to the principle of centralisation of democracy. At the village level, it is under the authority of the district. The district is under the authority of the province.

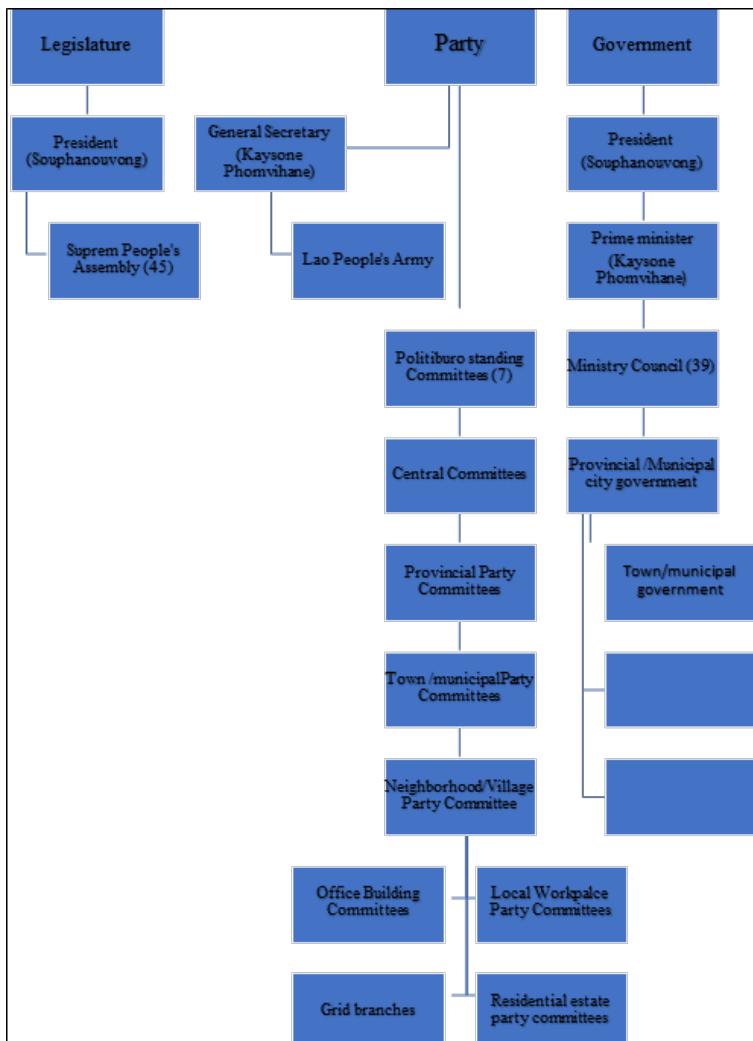
The province and the capital city are under the authority of the government (Phoumsavath 2017: 51). In the meantime, to bring about the unity among the ASEAN members under the principles of the civil-society, culture and economy, the Kingdom of Thailand spent 16 years to produce a book on local Lao government (Mejan, 2013) after Lao PDR became a member of ASEAN in 1997.

The Lao (Lao Government, March, 2014) state defined local government "ສື່ ການປົກຄອງຫ້ອງຖ່ານ ສາທາລະນະລັດ ປະຊາທິປະໄຕ ປະຊາຊົນລາວ ໄດ້ແປງການ ບົກຄອງຫ້ອງຖ່ານອອກເປັນ 3 ຂັນ ຄື: ຂັນແຂວງ, ຂັນເມືອງ ແລະ ຂັນບ້ານ. ແຕລະຂັ້ນປະກອບນີ້: ແຂວງ ແລະ ນະຄອນ; ເມືອງ ແລະ ແທດສະບານ; ບ້ານ..."<sup>8</sup>

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8 “Fourth, local government: The Lao People’s Democratic Republic separated the local government into three levels: the province, the district, and the village. Each level has the province and prefecture, district and municipality, and village.”

**Chart 8: The structure of administration of the Lao state from 2003 to 2015; modified from “The Economist: Anatomy of Dragon China Communist Party and Government Structure 2021.”**

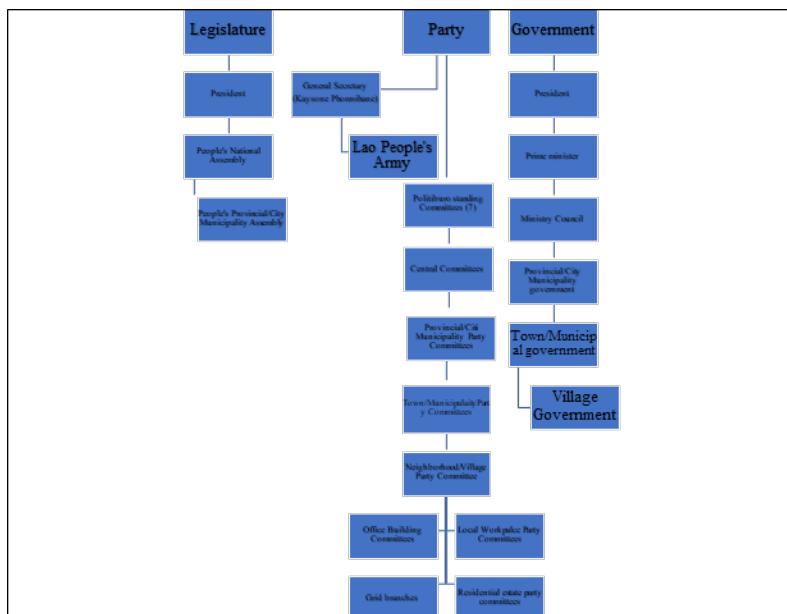


Source: The Economist: Anatomy of Dragon China communist party and government structure 2021. In Bruce Dickson.(2021). “The Party and the People: The Chinese Politics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.” Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Retrieved on January7,2023, from <https://www.economist.com/specialreport/2021/06/23/the-push-to-revamp-the-chinese-communist-party-for-the-next-100-years>

### 3.2.3. Post Cold War local government of Lao PDR: Stage 3

The stage 3 of the local government of the Lao PDR that began from 2015 could be defined as the era of the reformation

**Chart 9: The structure of administration of the Lao state from 2015 to 2023; modified from “The Economist: Anatomy of Dragon China Communist Party and Government Structure 2021.”**



Source: The Economist: Anatomy of Dragon Chinese communist party and government structure 2021. In Bruce Dickson. (2021). "The Party and the People: The Chinese Politics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century." Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Retrieved on January7,2023, from <https://www.economist.com/specialreport/2021/06/23/the-cpush-to-revamp-the-chinese-communist-party-for-the-next-100-years>

The local government of the Lao PDR needs further research in the future, as this topic of politics and government is not allowed by the Lao government. Nowadays, the Lao state has founded the Faculty of Political Science at the higher education level. This is a phenomenon which will bring about changes in introducing new topics of government in the areas of Lao Studies.

#### **4. Conclusion**

As mentioned above, the Lao local government is the reflection of nation building on the pathway of socialism. It is a country that lacks labors, industrial sector and technical knowledge to build the socialist country. The first and second generation of Lao leaders had direct experience of living under the colonial regime and the Royal Lao Government. The root of learning a new way of government helped the first and second Lao leaders to try implementing the administration of local government in the release zone from 1964 to 1975. However, the roles of Lao government on local government during WWI is still confidential as it reflected the Cold War problems and anti-globalisation perspectives of the Lao leader. The security of the state must be in must be defended in tandem with the legitimacy of their group, not the utmost benefit of the country as it is indicated "The Party dictates, the State protects, and the People are the masters". The local Lao government can be described as the state that allows certain amount of authority to the local government so that they can handle certain kinds of resources themselves. However, a number of areas such as national culture, education, peace and order are the responsibilities of the Lao state. This article notes that the local Lao government is a reflection of traditional politics and

government in Southeast Asia especially “the system of governing a town” in each province. The governor or village headman has the absolute rights for the area management himself, but the capital punishment needs to be passed over the central government for the judgement.

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