Ethnic Identification in a Complex Civilization: Who Are the Lue?

MICHAEL MOERMAN
University of California,
Los Angeles

THE initial stimulus for this paper[1] was provided by my inability to give a simple answer to the simple question: "Whom did you study in the field?" The reasons for this inability concern the ways in which ethnologists demarcate ethnic units and account for their survival. These are complex and important issues which require thoughtful and extensive research. It would be false to claim that this short paper raises all of the relevant questions and absurd to claim that it answers them. Nevertheless, I hope that this presentation of data about the Lue[2] will both encourage others to recognize in their own work the need for identifying and delimiting ethnic entities and suggest some questions and field procedures which may help them to do this.

Since comparison is basic to anthropology (Lewis 1956), it is important that our units be comparable (Köbben 1952:132). Yet, it is apparent that the neat ethnic labels which we anthropologists use frequently deceive us. In reading about various areas of the world one frequently encounters ethnic names with unclear referents and groups of people with no constant label. Raoul Naroll, in a recent article (1964), demonstrates that one source of confusion is our lack of agreement about the criteria which define the entities—variously called "tribes," "cultures," "societies," "peoples"—which we describe. Such lack of agreement is obviously a challenge to global comparisons. As this paper will demonstrate, it also has implications for ethnographic fieldwork.

Naroll lists six criteria: trait distributions, territorial contiguity, political organization, language, ecological adjustment, and local community structure—commonly used to demarcate ethnic entities. In addition to Naroll's specific criticisms of them, I would add that these and similar criteria have three main shortcomings as delimiters of "culture-bearing units" (Naroll 1964:283). 1) Since language, culture, political organization, etc., do not correlate completely, the units delimited by one criterion do not coincide with the units delimited by another. 2) If by "culture" we wish to mean "a pattern, a set of plans, a blueprint for living" (Naroll 1964:288), then units delimited by combinations of these criteria, including the combination which Naroll suggests, are only occasionally and accidentally "culture-bearing units." 3) It is often difficult to discern discontinuities of language, culture, polity, society, or economy with sufficient clarity to draw boundaries. It is this which makes me suggest that the delimitation of ethnic entities is especially problematic in all parts of the world which are continuously inhabited but not divided into either sharp ecological zones or strong and durable states. Under such conditions, it becomes quite

difficult to use "objective characteristics [of] language and cultural practice" (Garvin 1958:125) for determining where one entity stops and another, its neighbor, begins. To delimit the entity by its political organization ignores the common phenomenon of "intermediate zones" (Nadel 1947:158) about which one cannot say that there is "war without and law within." Since territoriality is enforced by political acts, its limits are similarly vague. Mere proximity is useful for delimiting some primitive peoples but, "for modern social groups, this may not be essential. Thus the FBI [like the Jews, the Lue, or the Chinese in Thailand] may be a group with sharper boundaries, a harder, more solid social entity than is Davenport County, Iowa" (Campbell 1958:22). Dissimilarities of dialect or of cultural traits, although traditional and sometimes quite useful (Ember 1963:235-6), often fail to demarcate entities among which there is continuous variation of language and culture, a situation which is quite common (Capell 1952:111; Fortes 1945:14; Goody 1962:3; Hogbin & Wedgwood 1953:242; Nadel 1947:4; Read 1954:7). The difficulty of objectively distinguishing between neighboring cultures causes some authors to rely on a limited number of key traits and institutions which seem especially important, whether theoretically (Leach 1954), or because other institutions depend on them (Nadel 1947:9, 10) or because it is by means of these traits that people identify themselves (Nadel 1942:15-17) or are recognized by their neighbors (Fortes 1945:123). In much modern cross-cultural research, the units of comparison are societies rather than cultures (Murdock 1962:113), but the discontinuities of interdependence which are needed in order to delimit societies (Deutsch 1953:21) are certainly no less difficult to discern than political, territorial, cultural, and linguistic discontinuities. We have known for some time that a social entity "that is a whole all by itself" (Redfield 1956:8) is rarely, if ever, found. It might even be possible to array patterns of interdependence among sovereign groups (Swanson 1960:20) along a continuum from the close symbiosis of wards (Nadel 1938:88, 89) and castes, through the dependent incompleteness of peasants (Moerman 1964a:16-17), and the "interpenetrations" (Leach 1960:50) of mainland Southeast Asia to the often unrecognized potential complementarity of groups with similar but non-identical ecologies (Nadel 1947:22, 50). Whatever the general usefulness of such a continuum, the Lue, at least, cannot be viewed in isolation if one is to define their "Lue-ness," identify them as a tribe, and understand how they survive in modern Thailand. For some purposes it is necessary to view every social entity as but part of a larger system which includes its neighbors. I am convinced that in order to delimit the Lue and to account for their survival, one must adopt such a viewpoint. More generally, I would agree with Murphy (1964:848) "that membership in [any group], incorporation within it, is dependent upon a category of the excluded, a sense of otherness . . . which is of importance for the definition of the social unit and for the delineation and maintenance of its boundaries." The Lue cannot be identified —cannot, in a sense, be said to exist—in isolation. In the remainder of this paper, I shall justify this point of view and, by discussing the difficulties of discovering

the properties which distinguish the Lue from their Northern Thai neighbors, suggest some techniques which it implies. These techniques, in turn, help to account for how and why the Lue have retained their ethnic identity in Ban Ping,[3] a village in north Thailand. That account, however, and its extension to other ethnic enclaves, must await a subsequent paper, now in preparation. In both papers, the data are incomplete and the analysis provisional. They should, however, illustrate the kinds of questions which can and must be asked whenever we view social entites under the aspect of their interdependence.

CONTINUOUS VARIATION

Difficulties of ethnic labelling are chronic to mainland Southeast Asia and especially severe among the so-called[4] "tribal Thai," of whom the Lue, like the other peoples listed in Box D of Table I, are one. Despite its failure to correspond perfectly with ethno-linguistic groups,[5] the dichotomy between shifting and sedentary cultivators distinguishes the Lue from many of their neighbors, although not from their fellow Thai-speakers of Box D.

TABLE I. THE LUE AND THEIR NEIGHBORS

		LANGUAGE	
		non-Thai	*Thai*
PRE-DOMINANT PATTERN OF RICE FARMING	Shifting	Yao, Miao, Akha Kha, Lamet, Lawa, Chinese [A]	Khaw, Dam, Lai [B]
	Sedentary	Lawa, Chinese, Burman, Annamese [C]	Khaw, Dam, Lai, Lao, Lue, Lem, Yuan, Yong, Yang, Nya, Nung, Shan, Chinese Shan, Khyn, Tho, Phuthai, Siamese [D]

Language, while undoubtedly essential to historical reconstruction (Dyen 1960:73), is presently of limited usefulness for the ethnologist sorting out contemporary Northern Thai peoples, for their dialects seem to present a pattern of almost continuous variation which tribal designations break into arbitrary and misleading units.[6] It appears that genetic divergence, mutual unintelligibility, and named tribal group do not coincide. There is sometimes as much apparent speech divergence between the Lue (or Yuan [Archer 1888:13]) of different districts as between a variety of the Lue dialect and some other, non-Lue, dialect. Ban Ping informants, for example, report that the Khyn of Chiengtung "speak as we do," but claim that the Lue of Chiengkhawng are very difficult to

understand. Khyn as described by Egerod (1959; 1961:49–58) and White Thai as described by Minot (1940) both appear quite similar to the Phong variety of Lue spoken in Ban Ping. While there are undoubtedly real differences among Thai dialects, they do not seem to correspond to the "tribal" groups recognized in the literature or by the northern Thai themselves. At most, slight peculiarities of speech may serve as emblems (Fortes 1945:136; cf. Sapir 1951:16) of a community which has a tribal name, but the same peculiarities may elsewhere be emblematic of a different "tribe" (as with Minot's White Thai) and different peculiarities emblematic of the same "tribe" (as with the Chiengkhawng Lue). The emblematic nature of cultural traits parallels this.

When viewed from Bangkok, differences of dress, dialect, and diet demarcate a Northern Thai culture area which extends from Uttardit (17°35' N × 100°5' E) north and east and west to include North Thailand, North Laos, and much of Yunnan, Szechuan, and Tonkin. Although obscured by contemporary political events, this vague culture area, dominated by the Thai who inhabit its river valleys, is recognized by most knowledgeable Thai and by early foreign observers (Dodd 1923, Presbyterian Board 1884). It includes the Lue, both in their original homeland and in Chiengkham. Within this culture area, however, it is difficult to delimit Thai peoples by means of traits, since these are usually trivial and sometimes undefinable (e.g. Dodd 1923:700). Moreover, unlike the "isoelements" used by Berreman (1960:775–779) in the Himalayan Hills, trait distributions are often discontinuous and out of correspondence with named "tribes." A multi-family longhouse, for example, was used by the Chiengkham Lue until quite recently. It is also used by the Black Thai (Loeb & Broek 1947: 415; Izikowitz 1962:80), by some Lue (Srisiwasdi, n.d., vol. 1, pp. 4, 13; vol. 2, chapter 1), but not by others (Chiang 1950; Wisseman 1943:22 and drawing 6). A courtship platform and associated practices are striking features of Lue life in parts of the Sip Song Panna (Srisiwasdi, n.d., vol. 2, chapter 7) and in Chiengkhawng, but are absent from Chiengkham. The green sarong which sometimes distinguishes the Khyn from their Lue neighbors (Dodd 1923:200) may elsewhere characterize the Lue (Bourne 1888:144). Among the traits which distinguish the Lue in Chiengkham are internal recessed fireplaces which are also built by lowland Karen, threshing techniques shared with the Yuan of Wanglung, a pattern of dibbling which is actually used quite widely (Moerman 1964a:71–72), a jacket of the sort worn by the Lahu in Burma (Innes 1957: fig. 28), and a sarong which, when sold to the Kha (cf. Izikowitz 1951:111), becomes "the traditional . . . skirt of the hill people" (Graham 1924: vol. 1, p. 135 & plate facing 136).

Dialect divisions and trait distributions, the conventional tools of culture area analysis, are of limited usefulness for demarcating and identifying the Lue and other Thai "tribes." Between each village, each district, each valley system and its neighbors there is a pattern of continuous and trivial local diversity within a large area of essential ethnolinguistic homogeneity. Yet the tribal names are used persistently both in the literature and, more importantly, by the Northern

Thai themselves in order to label their own groups and those about them. It appears, although it cannot yet be proved,[7] that tribal divisions were essentially political in origin. The Lue are the Northern Thai whose capital was Chiengrung, the Khyn the Northern Thai of Chiengtung, the Phuthai the Northern Thai of Myang Thaeng (Dienbienphu), the Yuan the Northern Thai of Lanna-tai, the Lao the Northern Thai of Lanchang. Propinquity to a strong and durable capital may have resulted in the focusing and coalescing of minor differences of speech and custom to make them the emblems of a "tribe." Where the states were weak, as in Tonkin, distinctions of language and tribe are especially unclear (e.g., Seidenfaden 1958:75). At the edges of even the more powerful states, one "tribe" may merge into another (e.g., Archer 1892:342). Thai tribal labels seem to record not language and culture, but historical states which no longer exist. These states were probably never sufficiently durable or powerful, nor were watersheds so mutually isolated (Berreman 1960:779), as to produce the centripetal interactions that make for objectively distinctive cultures (Berreman 1960:788; Campbell 1958:22; Deutsch 1953:70). Nevertheless, if I am correct to consider them the originating core of Thai tribal names, these petty states are more important to ethnic identification than were their Himalayan equivalents (Berreman 1960: note 4), for they provided the nuclei of ethnic entities whose members took certain traits as "badges" (Goodenough 1963:81) with which to identify their group and themselves. Traits of culture, like peculiarities of speech, are signs of ethnic identification. Like many signs, they do not have the same meaning everywhere. To the Thai of Lampang or Chiengmai, the signs which mean Lue in Chiengkham are aberrancies or, at most, merely regional peculiarities. In Chiengkham they are contrastively Lue in opposition to the emblems, or lack of them, of neighboring entities. However trivial and arbitrary, these traits nonetheless enable the Chiengkham Lue and their neighbors to prove that the Lue are a distinct people "the members of which claim unity on the grounds of their conception of a specific common culture" (Nadel 1942:17).

I criticized the criteria reviewed and suggested by Naroll because the units they delimit are non-coincident, ambiguous by reason of lack of clear discontinuity, and irrelevant to "social and cultural patterns as they exist in the minds of culture bearers" (Naroll 1964:288). Since each criterion delimits a somewhat different ethnic unit, an entity delimited by self-identification and label cannot coincide with them all. Nevertheless, I cannot agree with Naroll's view (1964: 307, 309) that a native name is merely one more criterion to add to the six with which he began.

It is widely recognized that the labels by which people identify themselves and are identified by others are important and convenient signs of ethnic membership (Evans-Pritchard 1945:5; Comments of Berndt, Bessac, Jaspan, von Mehring).[8] Moreover, in situations of ethnolinguistic mosaics (Nadel 1942:14–17), interpenetration, or continuous variation, it must be emphasized that self-identification and ethnic labels are frequently the least ambiguous, and sometimes the only ways of determining where one entity ends and another be-

gins (cf. Pool 1963). When "objective ethnical characteristics" fail to define or demarcate entities we may still, as Garvin (1958:125) suggested, make use of "attitudes of identification and classification." Among the Northern Thai, as among the Nuba, it is not misleading to say that:

> We shall meet with groups which, though they are close neighbours and possess an almost identical language and culture, do not regard themselves as one tribe . . . ; and we shall also meet with tribes which claim this unity regardless of internal cultural differentiation. . . . Cultural and linguistic uniformity, then, does not imply, and cultural and linguistic diversity—at least within certain limits—not preclude, the recognition of tribal unity. It is, in fact, easy to see that culture and language cannot provide infallible criteria of tribal identity: for culture and language admit of degrees and shades of uniformity or diversity; while the tribal concept tends toward a sharper crystallization—one either is, or is not, a member of the tribe" (Nadel 1947:13).

In addition to their lack of ambiguity, ethnic identifications and the names which label them recognize and coincide with such "blueprints for living" as are recognized by the folk who follow those blueprints. I assume that when a set of people gives another set the same name as it gives itself, it perceives that other set to be like itself; when a set is given some other name, it has been perceived as significantly different. It therefore becomes the ethnographer's task to discover, in each instance, which features are locally significant for purposes of assigning ethnic labels. The ethnographer of a set of people, X, must discover the features of set Y which make the members of X say that the members of Y are also, or are not, "X's, like us." He must not assume that any single "objective" difference or similarity—of language, polity, phenotype, or religion—is significant to all groups, and in the same ways, and to the same degrees. Nor may he assume that ethnic labels take account of total "blueprints for living" which are totally mutually exclusive. Indeed, cross-cultural universals and the similarities which are usually found among neighboring peoples make it quite unlikely that such total blueprints exist.

It seems reasonable to suppose that the existence of an ethnic name usually indicates that a culture-bearing unit exists in its own eyes and in those of its neighbors. The criteria suggested by Naroll, on the other hand, are either presumed causes or common consequences of the existence of a culture-bearing unit. Mutual intelligibility, for example, can be a clue to the common history or a concomitant of the easy communication which frequently accompanies a shared culture. It is for such fortuitous reasons that a cultunit "generally resembles fairly closely at least *some* operating social unit within the society wherever these units have sharp boundaries" (Naroll 1964:289). Since mutual intelligibility and contact communities are common causes and frequent consequences of ethnic unity, they probably are more often diagnostic of ethnicity than religion or log-racing (Naroll 1964:288) are. But their relationship to "social and cultural patterns as they exist in the minds of culture bearers" is solely diagnostic. For this reason, only approximates (Bessac, *Comments:*293) and has no inherent relation (Dole, *Comments:*294) to cultural unity. Naroll's cultunit proposes to locate ethnic units by looking for those things which sometimes accompany them. It is this which makes his invocation of "Goodenough's rule"

(Naroll 1964:306, 289) both surprising and instructive. In asserting that "what we do as ethnographers is, and must be kept, independent of what we do as comparative ethnologists," Goodenough (1956:37) does not mean that the right hand must never know what the left does. Rather, he insists that "When we move from one level to the other we must shift our conceptual frameworks in accordance with systematic transformation procedures." By means of reasoning from the "cultural principles governing the object of residential choice" (1956:35 f.), and not from the products of those choices as entered in a typological grid irrelevant to the choosers (Conklin 1964:28) the Trukese are shown to be matrilocal and the Lakalai to have "nodal kindreds" (Goodenough 1962) for purposes of comparative ethnology. If we are to profit from "Goodenough's rule," we should reason from the cultural principles governing the assignment of ethnic labels. To use language, polity, or intermarriage as invariant criteria for delimiting ethnic units is to assume that these criteria are ubiquitous, isomorphic, and therefore equivalent, in the "social and cultural patterns as they exist in the minds of [all] culture bearers" (Naroll 1964:288). The assumption is clearly unwarranted. This does not mean, of course, that identification expressed through labels is the only way in which to delimit ethnic entities. The criteria suggested by Naroll seem quite useful for dividing the world's population into sets equivalent in terms of those criteria. Chapple's suggestion (*Comments:* 294), although perhaps difficult to operationalize, would permit us to deal with units equivalent in terms of interaction. Deutsch's ideas (1953) might someday permit us to delimit cultures defined as communications networks. The statistical techniques suggested by Mukherjee (*Comments:*301) may permit us to score the objective similarities and differences among sets of people. We have yet to explore seriously the indices of "entitativity" suggested by Campbell (1958). Each of these criteria may be more convenient for global sampling than the one I suggest.[9] But none of them helps me to discover who the Lue are; none "tends toward a sharper crystallization" in situations of continuous variation; none relates as directly to "social and cultural patterns as they exist in the minds of culture bearers"; and none are as easy to discover as is ethnic identification expressed by the existence of an ethnic label used by means of describable procedures for applying that label and its contrast labels. Moreover, I do not think that any of them are as suggestive of further research.[10]

Before indicating the directions that such research might take, I can, at this point, attempt a preliminary answer to the question of, "Whom did you study in the field?" I studied a community of people who call themselves and their language "Lue." Their neighbors also call them "Lue," but I do not know in what ways and to what extent their language and behavior are similar to those of "Lue" communities elsewhere.[11] The community exhibits certain peculiarities of speech and of custom which makes public its notion of Lue, but these distinguish them from others far less clearly and significantly than does the identity and the label of "Lue." We must therefore consider how these peculiarities relate to identification and how the label relates to other labels.

ETHNO-ETHNOLOGY

Someone is a Lue by virtue of believing and calling himself Lue and of act-ing in ways that validate his Lueness. Although identification expressed by a label is an essential criterion of ethnic entities, it does make for "a number of inconveniences" (Naroll 1964:288). Since I believe the criterion to be essen-tial, I would argue, with Berndt (*Comments:292*), that the inconveniences are worth surmounting. I would also argue that they suggest some interesting lines of research. Despite my enthusiasm over these possibilities, it would be unwise to ignore the fundamental criticism hinted at by Fuchs, Jaspen, Mukherjee, and Watson in their comments on Naroll's article. It may be that the world is so put together that cultures and culture-bearing units are not well demarcated, mutually exclusive, and, thereby, comparable. It is certainly the case that the world, at least that part of it inhabited by the Northern Thai, is so put together that the following inconvenient facts of ethnic identification must be taken ac-count of.

1. Ethnicity is impermanent in that individuals, communities and areas change their identification. If the origins of Thai tribes are political, one would expect these changes to be fairly common (Nadel 1942:19–22; Schapera 1955:5). Since the changes occur within the single pattern of lowland Northern Thai culture and society, they are more difficult to trace than are transforma-tions by hill peoples into valley peoples (Cole 1945:149; Eggan 1941). In addi-tion, whatever its oscillations elsewhere (Leach 1954, cf. Slamet-Velsink 1961:217), within Thailand itself all such change is toward the language, cul-ture, and identification of the politically dominant people which, for the last 50 to 100 years, has been the Siamese (Archer 1888:13; Kingshill 1960:218–220; Moerman 1964b:43–47). The Lue have not been exempt from this transition. Thai scholars (Damrong 1918/19:2; Kraisri Nimmanhaeminda, personal com-munication) believe that many Yuan in the region of Chiengmai, especially those of the Pasang district of Lamphun, are descended from Lue war captives. When Ban Ping traders went to Pasang about 50 years ago, the people there told them, "You speak as our grandparents did." Now, aside from one old priest proud of his Lue heritage, the people of Pasang consider themselves Yuan and are undistinguishable from them. They find the Lue dialect amusing and while some of them admit to being Yong, none are aware that the designation comes from Chiengtung (Presbyterian Board 1884:537) and the Sip Song Panna.

Since Leach's influential study of the *Political Systems of Highland Burma* (1954), there can be no question that shifts in ethnic identification are impor-tant subjects for research. In order to understand the creation, viability, and dis-appearance of interacting ethnic entities we must discover, and not merely as-sume, the institutions (e.g., political, religious, ethical, aesthetic) which are nu-clei for ethnic identification. We may then ask how much change in the nuclear institution can occur before ethnic identification disappears and whether some institutions permit more resilience in this respect than others. Insofar as ethnic identification is conscious or its emblems intelligible, we can explore the prin-

ciples which underlie how persons go about choosing, and influencing others to choose, an ethnic identity. We can also investigate decisions which have the consequence, although not necessarily the motive, of altering one's ethnic identity. In Southeast Asia, for example, there are some communities—of "tribal" Thai, Karen, Lawa, Palaung, or T'in—whose ecological situation appears to permit choice among such major bases and symbols of ethnicity as religion and type of farming, as well as among such emblems as dialect, diet, and dress. At the very least, knowing that Lue elsewhere in Thailand have altered their ethnic identity will make it necessary for me to try to explain why the villagers of Ban Ping have not altered theirs.

2. Various non-members may use ethnic terms differently. Burmese, Chinese, Siamese, and Northern Thai do not use the same labels. Moreover, translation of these labels is not always a matter of merely finding a convenient gloss, for not everyone recognizes the same categories. The Chinese *Pai-i*, for example, includes some, but not all, of China's Thai people. The term *Yang* is used by the Siamese for the Karen, by the Eastern Lao for the Lue (Archer 1892:346), and by the Lue of Ban Ping for non-Buddhist Thai in China. The term *Yuan* is used by the Lue, the Shan (Archer 1892:346), and the Lao (Mouhot 1864 II:129) for the Thai of Lannathai, who call themselves "people of the *myang*" (*khon myang*). The Siamese call the Yuan *Lao* and reserve the term *Yuan* for the Annamese.

Identical usage of labels for non-members may sometimes, itself, signal unity among those who do the labelling (Goody 1962:4). Different usage indicates that not all neighboring peoples recognize the same features as distinctive for ethnic classification. This observation raises such interesting questions as: To what extent may the criteria claimed by members differ from the diagnostics by which outsiders recognize them?[12] How much change in defining criteria can occur before a people cease to exist in its own eyes or those of others? These questions imply that all peoples have a folk nomenclature of ethnic labels, that such nomenclatures are systems,[13] and that individuals assign labels in response to cues which they have been taught are criterial. I suggest that ethnographers examine such folk nomenclatures, compare their structure with institutional structure (e.g.: state relations, lineage organization), and inquire into the criteria of category membership used by a people and its neighbors (cf. Vreeland 1958:86–87). I make the suggestion not merely because ethnic labels provide yet another delimitable domain which we can presume to be structured for purposes of ethnocognitive analysis. Rather, unless we who speak about groups, tribes, peoples, and cultures know how we and our informants go about labelling ethnic entities, we literally do not know what we are talking about.

3. Members may not always use the same term for themselves. Unless this variation is random, however, the inconvenience it causes is surmountable and may be instructive. So, for example, one reason for believing that Thai tribal names are political in origin is that the names of states and of ethnic entities exhibit parallel variation. Northern Thai chronicles and oral histories are difficult

to follow because all supra-village units, of whatever size, strength, or level of sociopolitical integration are given the same term: *myang*, a term also used for the capitals of such units (Archer 1888:10; Leach 1954:122,f.; McFarland 1944:567; Sasorith 1959:29).[14] Whereas a Westerner might speak of sub-infeudation from the kingdom of Thailand to the principality of Nan to the petty princedom of the Sip Song Panna to the district of Phong, the Northern Thai use the word *myang* for each unit and its capital and the word *caw* for each ruler. As Archer observed some time ago (1892:346), Northern Thai "call themselves Thai of a particular district, e.g., 'Thai La' or 'Thai Bun.'" If one points to a member of Ban Ping and asks him, "What kind of Thai are you?", any of the answers marked with an asterisk in Table II are possible. The units named in levels of contrast A, C, D and E can all be termed *myang*. The answer given will reflect the level of contrast the speaker thinks appropriate. Some of the confusion of Northern Thai ethnic terms may result from distinguishing a group from another which includes it (e.g., the Yong [Vrooman 1872]) and from failure to realize that the same term is sometimes used at different levels of contrast (e.g. Phuthai).

TABLE II. PARTIAL TAXONOMY OF ETHNIC TERMS IN BAN PING

A	Chinese	Thai					Hill
B	Northern*						Central
C	North Country (in origin)*						
D	Yang	Shan	Lue*			Yuan	Lao
E			Phong*		La		
F			Thu-mawk	Ping*	Ch. Ban		

In form, Table II is a taxonomy (Frake 1962:80). From Naroll's article, in which it is called "nesting," and from other sources (Berreman 1963:295–299; Goody 1962:5) it is apparent that such formal taxonomies are widespread and, conceivably, universal. It may be that peoples who, unlike the Thai, are organized into segmentary lineages are conscious of them (Fortes 1945:21, 36). The form of Table II suggests, as a political technique, that one way to quickly unite ethnic entities is through antagonism between another unit which includes them at a higher taxonomic level and a unit at a higher level which does not. So, for example, Batak and Minankabau can be united as Sumatrans against the Javanese; all Indonesians can unite against foreign imperialism. Regardless of the plausibility of their political implications, folk taxonomies of ethnic terms should certainly be investigated in the hope that the structure of names for so-

cial entities may correspond to, or at least provide an accessible means for inves-
tigating, the structure of relatedness among the entities themselves.

Table II is, unfortunately, a taxonomy in form only. It is merely hypotheti-
cal because it was produced by casual observations and retrospective analysis
instead of by real "critical experiments" (Conklin 1962:130) for determining
native criteria of categorization. Nevertheless, Table II suggests directions for
future research. In North Thailand and elsewhere it would be valuable, and not
too difficult, to discover minimal contrasts by presenting informants with ethno-
graphic photographs or items of material culture for them to identify. One
should also record and analyze the things informants talk about and ask each
other when they try to categorize persons. It would be wrong to assume that the
same kinds of criteria (e.g., those we can photograph) are distinctive for all
peoples, among all segregates, or between all taxonomic levels. For the Lue, I
would guess that the practice of Buddhism is a major distinctive criterion at
level A, eating glutinous rice a distinctive criterion at level B, and form of tatoo-
ing distinctive at level D. Although distinctive criteria may vary from level to
level and certainly vary from culture to culture (so as to include even the log-
racing of the Timbira [Naroll 1964:288]), one may hypothesize transcultural
universals in addition to labelled self-identification, systematic nomenclatures,
ethno-taxonomies, and distinctive features. It is intriguing to speculate that reg-
ularities exist in attitudes and behavior toward members of classes on various
taxonomic levels. Perhaps the highest level of every taxonomy contains a class of
"others" who are not quite human.[15] Perhaps the lowest level of every taxonomy
contains a "self" class about whose members it is interesting to gossip (Gluck-
man 1963:311, 313–314).

In order to identify and account for the survival of ethnic entities, I would
suggest that we discover the criteria used for ethnic labelling at different taxo-
nomic levels, compare the criteria used by entities that interact, determine
whether such criteria are consciously manipulated, and analyze the mechanisms
which maintain and inculcate the practice of the criteria through which members
identify themselves or are recognized by others.

NOTES

[1] An earlier version of this paper, called "Class and Culture in Northern Thailand,"
was read at the 1962 annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association. For
their helpful comments on it, I wish to thank Gordon Gibson, F. K. Lehman, Li Fang-Kuei,
George P. Murdock, and Roger D. Peranio. I am especially indebted to Harvey Sacks
of U.C.L.A. James Hamilton kindly provided information about Wanglung and permitted
me to visit the Karen there.

[2] The Lue, also spelled Lu and Lü, are the Thai people of the Sip Song Panna (100°–
101°30′ E × 21°30′–22°30′ N) in Yunnan. Chiengrung (Kenghung), their former capital,
is the Chinese Ch'eli-fu. Estimates of Lue population vary between 400,000 and 72,000
(LeBar, *et al.*, 1964:207). The number of Lue in Thailand has been estimated, probably
too generously, at 50,000 (Sharp *et al.*, 1956:547).

[3] Ban Ping is in the Chiengkham district of Chiengrai province. Between August 1959
and April 1961 my wife and I lived there for fourteen months. The remaining months
were spent in surveying Lue and other Northern Thai peoples in Chiengrai, Chiengmai,

Lamphun, and Maehongsorn provinces. I am pleased to be able to thank the Foreign Area Training Fellowship Program of the Ford Foundation for its generous support of this research.

[4] I say *so-called* because the epithet "tribal" implies a degree of internal homogeneity and objective discreteness (Steward 1955:44,f.) which these peoples do not possess. Moreover, it is conventional as well as useful both theoretically (Lehman 1963) and practically to reserve "tribe" for peoples with little supra-village political organization, no participation in an organized great religion, and only superficial involvement in a cash economy (Leach 1960). These negative characteristics, based upon a system of agriculture (Lehman 1963:22) associated with hill habitation are found among the Thai only quite rarely. In the context of Southeast Asian civilization, "tribe" is therefore best reserved for those neighbors of the Lue entered in Boxes A & B of Table I.

[5] The appearance of some "tribes" in more than one box indicates that, as Leach (1960:50,f.) and his critics (Dyen 1960) agree, cultural, linguistic, and ecological categories do not always correspond.

[6] Although I am not a linguist, it is perhaps worth recording that my own observations, both in speaking and in listening to native speakers, indicate that Lue, Lao, Yuan, and Yong are all mutually intelligible. Chiengkham Lue informants report that their speech was easily understood in the Burmese and Chinese Shan States during World War II. Although speakers of a Northern dialect often seem to understand speakers of another Northern dialect more easily than they can understand Siamese (Central Thai), the genetic significance of this relative intelligibility is difficult to evaluate since Northern speakers react to and discuss dialects solely in terms of lexicon. The comparative unintelligibility of Siamese results from its Cambodian and Sanskrit borrowings rather than from differences of tonal structure which might be of greater genetic significance. Diffeernces of tone among the Northern dialects are ignored or "automatically" compensated for by native listeners.

[7] LeBar (personal communication, March, 1963), after a thorough survey of the literature, confirms that, "in the Tai case at least, [political units] may turn out to be the main factor in terminological differentiation. Other things, e.g., dress differences, etc., may be just symptomatic of this basic historical factor." LeBar also suggests "using the concept of 'breeding population' as an additional way of making sense of these various named groups."

Elsewhere in the world, clear tribal self-identification may also correlate with supra-local political organization. In classifying North American tribes, Murdock (1953a:vii) was able "to adopt as a norm the nationally self-conscious tribes of regions with some measure of political development . . . [but in] regions with less extensive political development" he had to resort to "arbitrarily uniting a number of triblets or local groups." Nadel's study of the Nuba Hills (1947) suggests a similar correlation in that groups which have names for themselves often have relatively powerful chiefs or rainmakers (e.g., Tulushi, Koalib, Nyime, Dilling), while those without group consciousness (e.g., Moro, Korongo, Mesakim) rarely do.

[8] In order to conserve space, references to published comments on *On Ethnic Unit Classifications* by Raoul Naroll are cited as *Comments* and omitted from the bibliography. They may all be found in Current Anthropology 5:291–306.

[9] If the size of a society depends upon its internal organization, it is unrealistic to expect that the same property (e.g., marital ties, common language, a secret society, loyalty to a chief, veneration of a common god) will delimit every society. The institutions which mark the borders of societies at one level of organization may be nonexistent at lower levels and unimportant at higher ones. If, for example, one adopts Service's (1962) evolutionary scheme, then sodalities "clearly demarcate the borders of a tribe" (Sahlins 1961:343, note 3) while other institutions demarcate the borders of bands and still others of chiefdoms. An acceptable scheme for relating the scale of societies to their internal organization would permit us to modify and thereby act upon Murdock's suggestion (1953b:477) that we stratify our sample of world societies.

[10] My approach parallels Bessac's (*Comments*: 293) and, I have discovered belatedly, was anticipated and given elegant application in Colson's study of The Makah Indians (1953 : 61, 87).

[11] I was therefore perhaps wrong to furnish data on the Lue for LeBar, *et al.* 1964 and for Nag 1962, in which latter typographical error disguises them as "Luo."

[12] M. G. Smith (1964 : 180–182) presents an interesting analysis of the motives and consequences of the divergent criteria of "Moslem" held by the Hausa and the Fulani.

[13] Every ethnic label is part of a terminological system even if only because by calling itself something a people indicates that there is some other people which it is not.

[14] The Tallensi *tɛn,* "which has a wide width of reference varying with the situation," (Fortes 1945 : 164) indicates that this difficulty is peculiar neither to states nor to the Thai.

[15] Some Ban Ping villagers responded to a photograph of a hill tribe unknown to them with the question, "What kind of creature |*meng,* a term usually used for insects| is that?" At least one informant referred to a known hill tribe as "*meng* Khamu."

REFERENCES CITED

ARCHER, W. J.
    1888 Report by Mr. W. J. Archer of a journey in the Vice-Consular District of Chiengma, Siam. London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
    1892 Report of a journey in the Me-Kong Valley by Mr. W. J. Archer, First Asst. in H. M. Consular Service in Siam. [Great Britain] Parliamentary Papers 79 : 337–363.
BERREMAN, G. D.
    1960 Cultural variability and drift in the Himalayan hills. American Anthropologist 62 : 774–794.
    1963 Hindus of the Himalayas. Berkeley & Los Angeles, University of California Press.
BOURNE, F. S. A.
    1888 Report of a journey in South-Western China. |Great Britain] Parliamentary Accounts and Papers 98 : 121.
CAMPBELL, D. T.
    1958 Common fate, similarity, and other indices of the status of aggregates of persons as social entities. Behavioral Science 3 : 14–25.
CAPELL, A.
    1952 The Wailbri through their own eyes. Oceania 23 :110–132.
CHIANG YIANG-LIANG
    1950 Pai-yi ti sheng-hou wen-hua [The life and culture of the Pai-yi tribesmen]. Shanghai, Chunghua Book Co. (HRAF typescript translation.)
COLE, F. C.
    1945 The peoples of Malaysia, New York, Van Nostrand.
COLSON, ELIZABETH
    1953 The Makah Indians. Manchester, University of Manchester Press.
CONKLIN, H. C.
    1962 Lexicographical treatment of folk taxonomies. Problems in Lexicography, ed. F. W. Householder and S. Saporta, Bloomington. (Supplement to International Journal of American Linguistics, vol. 28, no. 2, part 4.)
    1964 Ethnogenealogical method. Explorations in Cultural Anthropology, ed. Ward H. Goodenough, New York, McGraw-Hill.
DAMRONG, R.
    1918/19 Introduction to Phongsawadan Myang Chiengrung [Chronicle of Chiengrung]. Prachum Phongsawadan [Collected Chronicles], No. 3. Bangkok. (In Thai.)
DEUTCH, K.
    1953 Nationalism and social communication. New York, Wiley.

DODD, W. C.
    1923   The Thai race: elder brother of the Chinese. Cedar Rapids, Torch Press.
DYEN, I.
    1960   Comment on The Frontiers of 'Burma' by Edmund Leach. Comparative Studies
           in Society and History 3 : 69–73.
EGEROD, S.
    1959   Essentials of Khün phonology and script. Acta Orientalia 24: 123–146.
    1961   Studies in Thai dialectology. Acta Orientalia 26: 43–91.
EGGAN, F.
    1941   Some aspects of culture change in the Northern Philippines. American Anthro-
           pologist 43 : 11–18.
EMBER, M.
    1963   The relationship between economic and political development in non-industrial-
           ized societies. Ethnology 2 : 228–248.
EVANS-PRITCHARD, E. E.
    1945   The Nuer. London, Oxford University Press.
FORTES, M.
    1945   The dynamics of clanship among the Tallensi. London, Oxford University Press
           for the International African Institute.
FRAKE, C. O.
    1962   The ethnographic study of cognitive systems. Anthropology and Human Be-
           havior, ed. T. Gladwin and W. C. Sturtevant, Washington,
GARVIN, P. L.
    1958   Comment on The concept of ethnic groups as related to whole societies by
           Herbert H. Vreeland. Report of the Ninth Annual Round Table Meeting on
           Linguistics and Language Studies [Georgetown University], ed. W. Austin.
           Washington.
GLUCKMAN, M.
    1963   Essays in honor of Melville J. Herskovits: Gossip and scandal. Current Anthro-
           pology 4 : 307–316.
GOODENOUGH, W. H.
    1956   Residence rules. Southwestern Journal of Anthropology 12 :22–37.
    1962   Kindred and hamlet in Lakalai, New Britain. Ethnology 1: 5–12.
    1963   Cooperation in change: an anthropological approach to community develop-
           ment, New York, Russell Sage Foundation.
GOODY, J.
    1962   Death, property, and the ancestors. Stanford, Stanford University Press.
GRAHAM, W. A.
    1924   Siam. London, de la More Press.
HOGBIN, H. I. and WEDGWOOD, C. H.
    1953   Local groupings in Melanesia. Oceania 23 : 241–276; 24 : 58–76.
INNES, R. A.
    1957   Costumes of Upper Burma and the Shan States in the collections of the
           Bankfield Museum, Halifax Museums.
IZIKOWITZ, K. G.
    1951   Lamet: Hill peasants in French Indochina. Göteberg.
    1962   Notes about the Tai. Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, No.
           34. Stockholm.
KINGSHILL, K.
    1960   Ku Daeng: A village study in Northern Thailand. Bangkok, Prince Royal's
           College.
KÖBBEN, A. J.
    1952   New ways of presenting an old idea: the statistical method in social anthro-
           pology. Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 82: 129–146.

LEACH, E. R.
    1954   The political systems of Highland Burma, London, London School of Economics.
    1960   The frontiers of 'Burma.' Comparative Studies in Society and History 3 : 49–68.
LeBar, F. M., HICKEY, G. C., and MUSGRAVE, J. K.
    1964   Ethnic groups of mainland Southeast Asia. New Haven, H.R.A.F. Press.
LEHMAN, F. K.
    1963   The structure of Chin society. University of Illinois Studies in Anthropology, No. 3. Urbana.
LOEB, E. J. M. and BROEK, J. O. M.
    1947   Social organization and the longhouse in Southeast Asia. American Anthropologist 49 : 414–425.
MINOT, G.
    1940   Dictionnaire Tay Blanc Français avec transcription latine. Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient 40 : 1–237.
MOERMAN, M.
    1964a Farming in Ban Phaed: Yale University Ph.D. dissertation. University Microfilms, Ann Arbor.
    1964b Western culture and the Thai way of life. Asia 1 : 31–50.
MOUHOT, H.
    1864   Travels in the central parts of Indo-China (Siam), Cambodia, and Laos. Two vols. London, John Murray.
MURDOCK, G. P.
    1953a Ethnographic bibliography of North America. New Haven, H.R.A.F. Press.
    1953b The processing of anthropological materials. Anthropology Today, ed. A. L. Kroeber. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
    1962   Ethnographic atlas. Ethnology 1 : 113–134.
MURPHY, R. F.
    1964   Social change and acculturation. Transactions of the New York Academy of the Sciences, Series 2, Vol. 26, No. 7 : 845–854.
NADEL, S. F.
    1938   Social symbiosis and tribal organization. Man 38 : 85–90.
    1942   A black byzantium. London, Oxford University Press for the International African Institute.
    1947   The Nuba. London, Oxford University Press for the International African Institute.
NAG, M.
    1962   Factors affecting human fertility in nonindustrial societies: a cross-cultural study. Yale University Publications in Anthropology, No. 66. New Haven.
NAROLL, R.
    1964   On ethnic unit classification. Current Anthropology 5 : 283–291, 306–312.
POOL, I.
    1963   When is a Maori a 'Maori'? Journal of the Polynesian Society 72 : 206–210.
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATIONS
    1884   Siam and Laos as seen by our American missionaries. Philadelphia.
READ, K. E.
    1954   Cultures of the Central Highlands, New Guinea. Southwestern Journal of Anthropology 10 : 1–43.
REDFIELD, R.
    1956   Peasant society and culture. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
SAHLINS, M. D.
    1961   The segmentary lineage: an organization of predatory expansion. American Anthropologist 63 : 322–345.
SAPIR, EDWARD
    1951   The nature of language. Selected writings of Edward Sapir, ed. David G Mandelbaum. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press.

SASORITH, K. D.
   1959 Historical aspects of Laos. Kingdom of Laos, ed. R. de Berval, pp. 24–31.
        Saigon.
SCHAPERA, I.
   1955 A handbook of Tswana law and custom. London, Oxford University Press for
        the International African Institute.
SEIDENFADEN, E.
   1958 The Thai peoples. Bangkok, The Siam Society.
SERVICE, E. R.
   1962 Primitive social organization. New York,
SHARP, L., MOORE, F. J., and VELLA, W. F., EDS.
   1956 Handbook on Thailand. Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, HRAF
        Subcontractor's Monograph. New Haven.
SLAMET-VELSINK, I. E.
   1961 Comment on anthropological studies of complex societies by S. N. Eisenst dt.
        Current Anthropology 2 : 216–218.
SMITH, M. G.
   1964 Historical and cultural conditions of political corruption among the Hausa.
        Comparative Studies in Society and History 6 : 164–194.
SRISIWASDI, B.
   n.d. Thai sibsongpanna [The Thai of the Sip Song Panna.] Ly khon thai nai prathet
        cin [The Lue : A Thai People in China.] Two vols. Bangkok. (In Thai.)
STEWARD, J. S.
   1955 Theory of culture change. Urbana, University of Illinois Press.
SWANSON, G. E.
   1960 The birth of the gods. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press.
VREELAND, H. H.
   1958 The concept of ethnic groups as related to whole societies. Report on the
        Ninth Annual Round Table Meeting on Linguistics and Language Studies
        [Georgetown University], ed. W. Austin, Washington.
VROOMAN
   1872 Narrative of a journey made with Mr. McGilvery. Siam and Laos as seen
        by our American missionaries, ed. Presbyterian Board of Publications. Phila-
        delphia.
WISSEMAN, H. v.
   1943 Süd-Yunnan als Teilraum Südostasiens. Schriften zur Geopolitik, No. 22.
        Heidelburg.