CHAPTER2

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

2-1. Literature Review

2-1-1. Nation, Ethnic Group and Nation-State

Max Weber (1968) defines ethnic groups as "those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists" (Max Weber, 1968: 389). They are also collectivities within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their people hood (Schermerhorn, 1970: 12). Smith (1986) identifies an ethnic group as those people who have following characteristics, "a collective name, a common myth of descent, a shared history, a distinctive shared culture, an association with a specific territory of a sense of solidarity" (Smith, 1986:32). In Yinger's view an ethnic group is a segment of a larger society whose members are thought, by themselves or others, to have a common origin and to share important segments of a common culture and who, in addition, participate in shared activities in which the common origin and culture are significant ingredients (Yinger, 1994: 3).

Though the concept of ethnic group and nation are basically the same, "Nation" is officially recognized objective unit. Smith (1991) defines a nation as a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myth, and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members (Smith, 1991: 40). The only difference between Nation and ethnic group is that the concept of Nation is a more fully mobilized or institutionalized ethnic unit.

Meanwhile, Anderson defines Nation as an "imagined community". He explains that the Nation is a group of those people who feel they are in a large community that is tied by common history, culture and common ancestry. It is imagined because even though the members of the nation would never see most of their fellows, they still believe and feel that they live within the same category sharing common territory, language and nationality (Anderson, 1991:6-7).

"Ethnic group" is a word comparable with "Nation" and suggests interrelationship with them. Ethnic group is usually smaller, more clearly based on a common ancestry; and more pervasive in human history (Kellas, 1993:4). In contemporary political usage, the term 'ethnic group' is frequently used to describe a quasi-national kind of 'minority group' within the state, which has somehow not achieved the status of a 'nation' (ibid.). If ethnic group does only exist in a relationship with a state, a strong sense of ethnic identity may assert itself as a response to pressure from the state. Weber (1985) argues that governments have certainly been in a position to influence constructions, assembling information about ethnic groups and sponsoring research which allowed productions of identity to be partly invested in experts and authorities (Weber, 1985:182). Harrell (1995) describes the principle of ethnic classification followed by the Chinese State and recount how state ethnic classification is used to determine the "minzu"[4] categories in China. Each group speaks about themselves in different kind of terms, using different criteria for membership, different signs of identity or separation, different degree of clarity for fuzziness of boundaries, and different possibilities of distinct or overlapping group membership. However, under the state ethnic classification, some sub-ethnic groups, who are closely related historically and linguistically, are classified as one "minzu" group. Cultural difference such as their language, belief, heritage, and ethnic identity are simply ignored under the state classification (Harrell, 1995: 99).

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[4] Official Chinese literature invariably translates "minze" into English as "Nationality". However, it is more proper to classified minzu as a minority of any sort, as opposed to a Han. "Minzu" is a relatively objective criteria since they are, unlike ethnic groups in Western countries, fixed, mutually exclusive categories and can belong to only one minzu (Harrell, 1999:102)

On the other hand, Rajah emphasizes the aspect of ethnic identity on a process of self-identification. Even though state ethnic-classification forms ethnic groups and imposes ethnic identity on them, what distinguishes one ethnic group from another is self-imposed distinctiveness on the basis of "cultural" criteria such as religion, language and nation by their own definition (Rajah, 1993: 244). Barth (1969) shows ethnic identity depends on the nature of interaction between groups; and therefore, ethnic identities are more fluid and changeable. He is concerned mainly with the generation, maintenance and negotiation of ethnic boundaries. The contents of a group may change, and the membership of the group may change through assimilation and such processes, while culture within the boundary of the group tend to remain. From his view, identity of each group depends on the maintenance of its boundaries and even these boundaries can be crossed under certain conditions (Barth, 1969: 10). According to De Vos, members of ethnic groups use any aspect of a subjective, symbolic or emblematic culture, or a perceived separate origin and continuity in order to differentiate themselves from other groups. Ethnic identity is a feeling that is maintained as an essential part of one's self-definition that includes a sense of personal survival through a historical continuity of belonging that extends beyond the self (De Vos, 1995: 24-26). In fact, Turton states that even most successful ethnic group, Sino-Thai insist their "double identity" or mixed identity (Turton, 2000: 4).

How the states interact with ethnic groups, is also the one of great factors to magnify sense of ethnic consciousness today. "State" is an objective concept which one can see on a map. It can be defined by territorial boundaries and by representing a particular "national" community. Those are generally products of historical and political (often a military or colonial) processes, made and broken and remade as group and/or individual leaders vie for control over territory (Eller, 1999:16-21). State is a sovereign centralized political entity with a government empowered over a territory to make laws, collect taxes, and maintain an army (ibid.). Rajah (1993) quotes Brown's (1989) typology of the state's response to ethnic group. States normally follow one of three policies to unify society; plural, clientele or corporate. Plural societies try to produce the mono-ethnic state. Client societies promote the

politics of comparative ethnicity, in which interethnic rivalry is pursued through the activities of entrepreneur, patrons and brokers (Brown: 1989: 52). Ethnic groups are sometime concerned as interest groups who are articulated particular interests when states deal with ethnic groups. Usually, when there is a need to subordinate political and populist participation to an overall effective economic strategy, state follow corporative policies. In the same way, ethnic identity is able to continue and even more emphasize in most interactions with other ethnic groups (Golomb, 1978).

Relations between nation and state can be distilled into two major categories; states that are coterminous with nations, and states that are not (Eller, 1991: 19). The coterminous state and nation is the well-known "Nation-State" which is the prime model and aspiration of Western nations. According to Eller, the process of creating a Nation State entails convincing its population of the states' right to a monopoly on the use of force within a specific territory in an attempt to unite the people. In many cases, those who have already ruled the states forged the states' population into a nation through intensified institutionalization, language standardization, acculturation, and sometime military conscription. Even truly homogenous nation-states such as Japan, Iceland, and Norway, where 90 percent of the population consists of a single ethnic group, come under doubt as indigenous populations are considered and immigration and internationalization take effect, and therefore, all other states would be multinational states by definition (ibid.).

Worsley (1984) suggests that there are three main ways for states to deal with ethnic groups to achieve to become nation-state. States take a process of being hegemonic, uniform or pluralistic according to how the states distribute political power through the populations. The hegemonic states recognize only one identity as legitimate. The identity of dominant ethnic group becomes National identity and the culture of the dominant group becomes the National culture. States of uniformity demand the renunciation of old, indigenous, distinctive or local cultures while trying to instill a new synthesis based on physical type, language, or culture. A pluralist state recognizes the legitimacy of other cultures. Ethnic groups feel that their cultural continuance, personal security, economic prosperity and political participation is

possible. Milton (1994) states that when cultural differences within states become potential for conflict, states may try to de-pluralize their society, usually through assimilationist policies, so that it becomes increasingly homogenous. Some states may try to maintain existing patterns of pluralism by official recognizing a situation as a legitimate and continuing reality, and some may try to reduce the political voice of minority groups' solidarity, while accepting social pluralism as a continuing reality (Milton, 1994: 41). Correspondingly, ethnic groups in states try to attempt assimilation into the larger economic, political and social milieus, argue the validity of their own culture and ethnic pride (Graham, 1979), or develop adaptive strategies in the society they live in (Rajah, 1993: 245)

2-1-2. Nation-State Building in Thailand

Nation building in Thailand has been executed by the ruling authorities. It started in the late nineteenth century, when Western countries invaded Southeast Asia and ruled over Thailand's neighboring countries in succession. At the end of the nineteenth century, King Chulalongkorn started to administer his territory according to the western concept of Nation-State in order to avoid being colonized by the British and keeping a relation of equal terms with Western countries. The king and the Siamese elite began to draw boundaries between Siam and the colonial domains on which it borders in order to determine who belonged within the realm of the Thai Kingdom (Keyes, 1995:144). Winichakul (1994) terms the fixed boundaries of Siam as "geo-body" of Siam. The king incorporated the autonomous tributary territories in each region into the one in Siam. The local rulers were gradually replaced by central officers to centralize power. Though there were various ethnic groups, including hill dwellers, in each tributary territory, ethnic difference was not seen as threatening during this time. According to Keyes as well as many other scholars, the diversity of cultures represented by both migrants and indigenous peoples had not posed problems for the rulers of the pre modern Siamese empire as long as they faithfully performed their duties to monarchy (Keyes, 1998:6). Ethnic diversity and heterogeneous society in Thailand only became to an issue after the absolute monarchy system ended in 1932.

Since the end of Siam's absolute monarchy, the Thai government has sought to define "Thai Nation" or to create "National identity" because neither all nor even a majority of the people living within the Thai boundaries shared a sense of belonging. "Speaking central Thai, loyalty to the King and being Buddhist" became the fundamental pillar, of being Thai[5]". In other words, the Thai policies since the late 1930s have sought to favor ethic Thais and have excluded or subordinated other ethnic groups (Reynolds, 1991). The state fused its political power with bureaucratic power and used that power to make a distinction from the bourgeoisie. The first targeted ethnic group of "demobilization" and "depoliticization" was the ethnic Chinese since some of them had been significantly threaten creating Thai Nation. In order to prevent the political invention of ethnic Chinese, they were denied access to political affairs as well as National resources if they remained as ethnic Chinese. If they wanted to thoroughly enjoy using the citizenship in the Thai Nation, they had to replace their ethnic identity with National identity. Full acceptance of Thai ethnicity is required for assimilation into Thai society.

Thus, the state has attempted to impose a dominant national ideology. Reynold argues that what Thai Nationals believe about Thai identity and what they feel in their hearts-of-hearts, such as their foods, language, kinfolk, religion, king, monarchy, and so on, have been planted by state promotion to cultivate a sense of belonging (Reynold, 1991: 30). Official promotion of National identity has been exercised especially through control over the institution of a statewide system of mass education.

2-1-3. National Education in Thailand

The formal education system first started within palaces for young princes and nobles, which represented a major move toward systematic schooling. The first public school for commoners was established in 1884. In the reign of king Rama VI, a new educational system was formulated following the new "education plan", in

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[5] Keyes (1998:8) terms what the Thai people share as a national heritage, such as common language, a common religion, and a relationship to the Bangkok monarchy, as "Thai-ness".

1913, and a law on compulsory primary education was issued in 1921 requiring every child receive free primary education from 7 until the age of 14. In 1932, compulsory education was extended from five to six years. Education system was divided into two general and vocational and length of compulsory education was reduced to four years in 1936. During the post-war period, the government became much more concerned with the development of education as a part of national reconstruction and modernization.

It is concerned that the primary objective of the national education system has been (and continues to be) to prepare children throughout the country to enter into a "Thai" national world, a world structured with reference to modern Thailand. Mulder (1997) examines a curriculum of social studies and describes how and what contemporary Thai school children are taught about wider society. He assumes that the state uses public education as a way of imagining people to rationalize their behavior and to perceive events in society. The knowledge of "Thailand" or "being Thai" is transmitted in school, and school texts are a very important part of the culture of the Nation-state, reflective of the "dominant mentality", at least as seen and interpreted by a government and bureaucracy (Mulder, 1997: 26). Vaddhanaphuti (1991) insists that the National education system demonstrates the state's dominant power relation. Teachers represent the authority of the Nation in Thai schools. Textbooks serve as the primary medium for the communication of knowledge in rural schools in Thailand. When people use standard Thai there is often an implicit acceptance of the authority of the Thai State (Keyes, 1991: 112). The Thai school plays a role as an institution that hammers the power relationship and authority of the Nation into the mind of people who are going to become "Thai-National". Vaddhanaphuti also mentions that National education has contributed to estrange local communities from their tradition. The way of living among local communities has been greatly affected by the Thai capitalist economy, local authorities have been replaced by the state administrative system, and the National education system has changed the structure of local communities which had still followed traditional ways. State promotion of National identity has made other cultures "fold" become "sub-cultures" and sometime die out completely. Bauer (1990) shows one example of

cultural eradication as the result of state promotion of National education where Thai language is used as the sole medium of instruction. He compares literacy among Mon in Thailand and Mon in Burma in order to examine the validity of the myth 'Mon is a dying language'. He found that Mon in Burma have retained Mon literacy relatively higher than in Thailand, where only the sixty-plus age group retains a high degree of literacy in Mon (Bauer, 1990: 31). This finding shows how compulsory education in Thailand had impacted Mon literacy. In Thailand, the cut-off point that divided those who are literate in Mon from those who are not is located in the age group which were born in the 1920s, coinciding with the introduction of compulsory primary school education in Thailand (ibid., 35). He considers the future of Mon literacy in Thailand depended on whether ethnic identity can transcend the decline in language use (ibid., 37).

As Keyes (1998) argues, not only teaching Thai language, but teaching Thai, Thai history also has a great impact on penetrating National identity. The official national historical narrative, which emphasizes the difference between Thai and Chinese, was composed by the very productive and influential Luang Wichit Watthakan and made the basis of Thai history as taught in schools. Creating a new past was to link the dynastic era to the post-1932 nation-state, where there was great diversity in terms of language, religion, culture and ethnicity (Barma. 1993:4).

Bechetedt (1991) considers the impact of school activities on children. Children throughout Thailand are first exposed to a national Thai culture through school activities such as songs with nationalist themes, participation in ceremonies celebrating national heroes as well as honoring the present king and queen, and explanation of such national symbols as the flag, the national colors, and pictures of the king and other members of the royal family. By doing so, the high degree of redundancy of themes ensures that the base idea of being a Thai citizen and a subject of the Thai king will be deeply rooted in most children by the time they finish the forth grade (Keyes. 1991: 115-6).

2-1-4. Thailand and Ethnic Groups

Skinner's[6] work explains the reason of why a great degree of assimilation has occurred among Chinese communities in Thailand. Primarily, government policy made it necessary for ethnic Chinese or descendants of Chinese immigrants to identify themselves clearly as Chinese or Thai (Skinner, 1957: 128). There was no middle ground in the matter of identification, no Sino-Thai culture with distinct values or outward signs. They had to decide which ethnic group they would be. Though they could identify with either Chinese or Thai, if they identified themselves as Chinese, they would be denied access to National affairs. Economically, it was significant for them to take on "Thai-ness" since it depended on the ability to speak Thai and to adopt Thai cultural milieu if they could success in Thailand or not (Coughlin, 1960). Skinner insists that intermarriage between Chinese and Thai played an important role in the process of assimilation (Skinner, 1957:128). Many single ethnic Chinese immigrants married Thai women. Marriage with Thai women was the rule for Chinese immigrants when occupation and financial status permitted. According to Skinner's account, the third generation descendants of Chinese immigrants were ethnically Thai in culture. The Thai population was continually being increased by the incorporation of Chinese "blood", and the ethnic characteristics of the Thai population of the main immigrant areas was becoming more and more Chinese in physical appearance (ibid. 134). In addition, it was not so difficult for ethnic Chinese culturally to assimilate into Thai society because Thailand itself has been a recipient of external influences from Chinese civilizations[7]. There were no barriers to complete assimilation for offspring of Chinese immigrants. The children of China-born fathers and Thai mothers more frequently considered themselves Chinese, but the children of Chinese-Thai fathers usually considered themselves Thai. Many Chinese cope with Thai culture, have Thai names. Their speech and behavior are identical with that of the Thais (Amyot, 1972: 84).

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[6] His work has been regarded as very significant to provide an assimilation theory to explain ethnic relation under the Nation-State.

[7] Rajah (1993:247) quotes Benda's comments in his article.

At a basic level being Thai is very simple. It appears any person could become Thai if they speak Thai, adhere to Buddhism and are loyal to the Thai monarchy, no matter what different background, culture and language they have. In this sense, it was easy for Chinese born in, or with many years of residence in Thailand, to become a Thai.

However, not a few researchers argue that assimilation policies has achieved in creation of only one ethnic group and has eliminated distinctive identities and ways of life, especially from hill tribe peoples (Keyes: 1987, Cooper: 1979, and Walker: 1979). McCaskill describes conflict between ethnic identity and National identity among indigenous people and argues that cultural difference becomes serious conflict in the context of assimilation. According to him, tribe people have gradually become aware of their negative image of themselves that the majority group held about them. Further interaction among different ethnic groups affect self-identification, and as a result, "they may begin to devalue their tribal identity, and take on the inferior identity attributed to them by the larger society, resulting in feelings of low self-esteem and identity confusion" (McCaskill, 1997: 55). Furthermore, the Thai state is far less willing to encourage and accept cultural diversity in terms of language, ideology and religions (Wijeyewardene, 1990: 3) but fosters the culture of ethnic groups to draw foreign interest. Encouraging activities of ethnic groups such as selling tribal handicrafts or performing songs and dance for tourist turn to be a commercial purpose (McCaskill, 1997: 49). All hill tribes in Thailand are still considered "aliens" and illegal settlers in Thailand (Keyes, 1979:17). They are rejected to participate Thai politics and excluded from the Thai political system in a large context.

2-1-5. KMT Yunnanese in Northern Thailand

F.W. Mote (1967) was the first researcher who entered and conducted the study of KMT Yunnanese Chinese during the 1960s. He was asked by the Thai government Department of Public Welfare to collect information about the KMT Yunnanese Chinese for the purpose of making ethnic identification. In 1966, Mote carried out anthropological survey in two KMT Yunnanese villages. His publication was valuable information to know about KMT Yunnanese during 1960s in northern

Thailand. He describes their society as "not secret, protection rackets, extortion or other such practices"(Mote, 1967: 500). He mentioned nothing about the authority of Nationalist Armies over the two villages, or might have overlooked the element of KMT forces in the villages[8]. When he carried out his research, there was already a Thai language lesson given to the young villagers by the Border Patrol Policemen. Although only little villagers paid attention to Thai education, Mote gave his comment that Thai language teachers were no doubt making an impact on the minds of the children. He also predicted that the Thai education would inevitably grow in importance as the community becomes more adjusted to its new life in Thailand (Mote, 1967: 500-502)

Hanks (1987) have done ethnic survey in the area of north of the Mae Kok River to the west of the main Chiang Rai-Mae Sai road. He observed how KMT Yunnanese in rural villages were making their lives in Thailand. Former KMT soldiers were retired and with many of whom have married to tribal women. They raised pigs for sale in the Thai markets of the lowlands (Hanks, 1983:137). He assumed that KMT Yunnanese could be a valuable group of people in introducing various improvements among the hill tribes' communities, particularly with respect to agricultural technology and commerce skill.

Estrada's account (1988) is mainly concern the Thai government policy towards KMT Yunnanese. His publication describes the role and privileges of KMT Yunnanese in northern Thai region. It also helps to understand why the KMT Yunnanese have been associated with drug trafficking. He explained the KMT Yunnanese were given the right to irradiate opium and collect taxes among the areas they controlled. It was easy for the KMT armies to control tax on their territory. Eventually, the KMT armies expanded this taxation on opium and involved themselves much into the opium trade (Estrada, 1988: 4-5).

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[8] Chang (1999) explains the KMT Yunnanese would have simply denied the links with Taiwan or the KMT forces during the 1960s in order to avoid being perceived as illegal immigrants.

Chang (1999) has recently done her excellent research on KMT villages in northern Thailand. Her work contributed to the limited body of the information about the KMT Yunnanese. She visited more than 20 KMT villages in Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai during 1994 to 1996 and revealed that leader of Third and Fifth KMT armies (General Li and General Duan) had significant role in the process of resettlement of KMT Yunnanese in northern Thailand. She also founded that there was a great degree of economical, political and social integration, especially among the young KMT Yunnanese.

2-2. Conceptual Framework

In general, when the state more enforces an integration policy in order to achieve formulating "nation-state", smaller groups in its territory usually come increasingly under the political and economic spheres of the dominant group, which becomes a nation. Smaller groups are termed certain name by the state classification and their cultures are regarded as somewhat inferior than the dominant culture. This fixed concept, compelled by the state, deprive self-respect from people in small groups and even make them feel negative of being "ethnic group". By removing different cultures and identities from the state, the nation-state tries to make all people merge into the national group.

The Thai state has been taking a process of being a state of uniformity by instilling a sense of belonging to the "imagined community" through the state promotions of development projects, classification and controlling over the media and educational institutions. Having people to speak the same language, the national identity is possibly implanted into people in a state, particularly through the Thai schools or national education, and eventually people in the state are supposed to become share the same feeling of belonging.
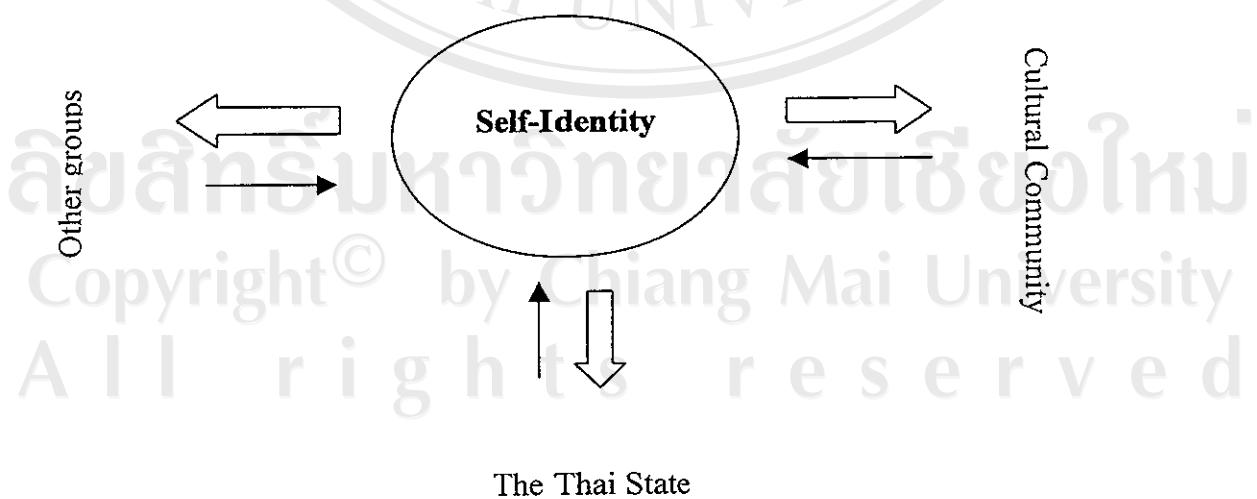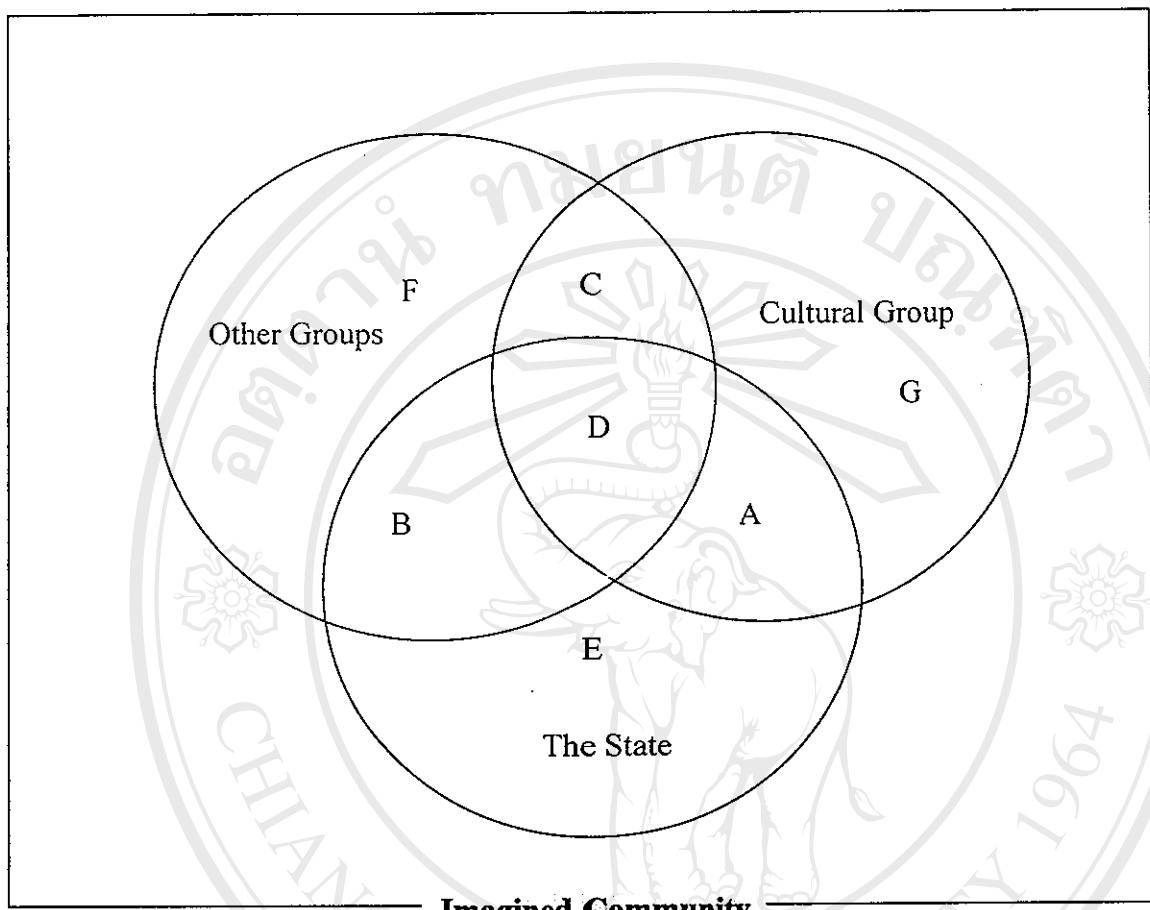
However, when the more state tries to impose the National ideology on the ethnic groups, the more they foster their cultural identity on the basis of "cultural" criteria such as religion, language and nation by their definition. In order not to be absorbed into the Thai system through the Thai school, ethnic groups organize their

own school based on their cultural values. By paralleling and confronting the ethnic education with the national education, ethnic groups attempt to remain as ethnic groups and further distinguish themselves from National group.

This challenge happens because ethnic identity is not always "in-born" but an essential part of one's self-definition, which is increased by the interaction with the state and other groups as well as interaction with people in their own community. These three criteria to construct ethnic identity are also the main factors to formulate imagined community. "Cultural group", "the state", and "the other groups" have shared places (A, B, and C) in between where people can cross the borders. For example, "cultural group" are able to step in to the boundaries A and C but unable to step into E or F because those spaces do not have boundaries with G, which can be the Ethnic identity and can not be touched by people outside of the group.

Even though they belong to the same group, self-understanding might differ from each other depend on where they are situated. People in a cultural group who are in A, C, G have different self-identification; group A might feel more close to the Nation than cultural community, group C might have shared identify with "the other groups" and G group might only have ethnic identity. Therefore, what people in the cultural group share each other is a condition that they are all access to the G boundaries and what people in an imagined community actually share each other is nothing but the fact that they are all people who live in an imagined community within a certain territory (D).

Conceptual Framework:

Imagined Community

The Thai State