

## The Role in Politics of Malaysian of Thai Race

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**Abstract:** The objective of this research are to study: the political role of Malaysian people of Siamese descent, factors affecting the political role of Malaysian people of Siamese descent and the suitable political role model using a form of qualitative research with field research study of relevant documents, observing the social and political activities of Malaysian people of Siamese descent as well as how to interview key informants, local leaders, community leaders, Malaysian citizens, Siamese descent, religious leaders academics in educational institutions analyzing qualitative data derived from data collection with inductive interpretation and logical analysis and use descriptive research results can be summarized as follows: Malaysians of Siamese descent have very little political role. Only being a member of a political party representation of political parties at the community level being a senator to represent Siamese ethnicity and the use of voting rights which is the duty of citizens. Factors affecting the political role of Malaysian people of Siamese descent in 4 areas: politics, namely the political regime rights and freedoms political policies and political parties, economic aspects, including economic status, social aspects including history, education, ethnic groups and culture including religion, traditions and beliefs of Siamese people.

**Key words:** Malaysian political role, Malaysian people of Siamese descent, local leaders, religious leaders, economy, ethnic groups

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### INTRODUCTION

Malaysian people of Siam descent, Siamese people are Southern Thai people who have lived in this area for a long time. After a long time, he became a group of people in the state of Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan in the North of the state. And there are a number of people living in Penang, some of which have been blended with the indigenous people. After losing this part to England this group of Thai people is a group that is still in Malaysia until now. The four Malay States are under British rule. Causing the Siamese people who lived in the state area to be under British rule which later in 1957, Federation of Malaya gained independence these people became the Malaysian people by default. The Siamese descent is a minority of people living in the Northern State of Malaysia, consisting of Perlis, Kedah (Sai Buri), Perak, Kelantan and Terengganu. In all the states of Malaysia Kedah State (Sai Buri) is the state with the highest number of Malaysians of Siamese descent. Which these areas are historically related to Thailand for a long time, especially in the Southern border areas of Thailand. Therefore, the population in the lower Southern part of Thailand and the population in the Malay State in the North has long

interacted both economic history lifestyle tradition and religion Siamese people living in Northern Malaysia Buddhism is different from most people in the country with temples as places of worship and the center of the minds of people in the area. Although, the Siamese people in Malaysia live in many states in the North of Malaysia, either in the State of Sai Buri or Kedah State. Malaysia is a country that has achieved economic development until becoming one of the developing countries that are ready to be developed countries in the near future. Malaysia has become a successful country, like today. One of the important factors is management and management of national differences in the country which consists of Mayans, Chinese people, Indians and other ethnicities effectively and successfully Thai people, this group has a status of Citizens of Malaysia, however are of Thai descent, still maintaining the identity of Thai as well as being strong in terms of language, religion and culture (Kwangwatana, 1974).

From minority problems that occur in Malaysia deeply rooted from the past caused by ethnic differences as a basis which results in the lifestyle society, culture and religion are different as well as when there is an economic disadvantage. Between the Malay people with

the Chinese and the wealthy Indians until the majority of the Malay people were dissatisfied, resulting in the Malaysian government after independence from England in 1957 with the Malay people being the main leaders turned to promote and focus on the importance of Malay people as an urgent consequence is Ethnic minorities. In particular, Chinese and Indians with moderate and poor status are treated equally in equal terms with the Malay people who are large groups. By limiting many rights in politics, economics, society and culture, becoming a disadvantage while providing privileges to Malay people in these areas. Moreover, after the 1969 uprising, the government at that time tried to accelerate the expansion of the interests of the Malay people. In order to improve the lives of Malay people as for the lives of ethnic minorities with moderate and poor status was overlooked. However, in the latter, since, the time of the Prime Minister Mahathir, until now inequality problems among various ethnic minorities alleviate light because the Malaysian government has tried to reduce the gap that is more concrete to minorities until the situation of the relationship between minorities and a large group of people in the same society are not too stressed or pressured (Thong, 2008). The researcher is therefore, interested in studying the political role of the Malaysian people of Siamese descent. There are factors that lead to the creation of political roles. And the creation of a political role model for Malaysian people of Siamese descent which will be beneficial to the formulation of policy on the creation of international cooperation and as a comparison of caring for Thai people of Malaya who are domiciled also in the Southern border area of Thailand.

#### **Research objectives:**

- To study the political role of Malaysian people of Siamese descent
- To study the factors that led to the creation of the political role of Malaysian people of Siamese descent
- To create a model for creating the political role of Malaysian people of Siamese descent that is appropriate

#### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This research is a qualitative research. Is a study of relevant documents, both as books, articles, research and electronic media is the study of political roles factors affecting the political role of Malaysian people of Siamese descent and create a model for creating the political role of Malaysian people of Siamese descent that is

suitable by using an in-depth interview process and non-participant observation by the main informant local leaders, community leaders, Malaysian citizens of Siamese descent, religious leaders and academics in educational institutions in data analysis, the researcher will collect data obtained from in-depth interviews. And observation without participation by using all the information obtained to verify the accuracy with a triangular examination and the information obtained is complete and can be used to answer the research objectives or not there is credibility and sufficient detail that can be used to explain the various relationships and then read and interpret. In order to create an inductive conclusion.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**The political role of the Malaysian people of Siamese descent:** According to studies, it has been found that the political role of the Malaysian people of Siamese descent is very rare. Has only status as a political party member election rights are the duties of citizens. And the appointment of a senator to represent the Siamese people of Siamese descent in the Malaysian parliament which causes the Siamese to play a less political role in Malaysia because in Malaysia there is racial diversity, divided into 65.7% Malay people, 25.4% Chinese, 7.6% Indians and about 30% of other races. In this race, there are Siamese people included. This can be seen that Siamese people are a minority and there are very few. Thus, resulting in a lack of political bargaining power at present, there are people of Malaysian descent, Siamese, living in the State of Perlis, Kedah State, Perak State, Kelantan State and Terengganu State. About 50,000 people with the political role of Malaysian people, Siamese descent, consist of political party members being a representative of a political party at the community level being a senator and election as follows:

**Membership of political parties:** The political role of the Malaysian people of Siamese descent starting from subscribing to a political party or supporters of their favorite political parties only which Siamese people will be members of political parties which is an independent, unqualified political party. There are no rules. Being a party member does not require rules and regulations. There is no application fee but can be donated according to satisfaction. Therefore, political party members are the characteristics of the participants of the political party as determined by the political party only. And the fact that Siamese are members of political parties in most cases,

there is hope for preferential privileges rather than democratic political participation. Show that being a member of a political party is only a tool of politicians to create a sound base. And being a member of a political party does not have anyone to enforce but it is an application to look for the privilege and convenience of requesting cooperation from the government in some activities within the Siamese community. As well as allowing members of political parties to meet with members of political parties with ethnic differences, especially, the Malay people are considered the owners of the country.

**Representation at the community level:** The form of political administration in the Malaysian community at the district level, there will be a village chief. (Penghulu) is the leader who is a government official in each district (Mukim). The term of office and village level are Kampongs, the smallest provincial administrative unit of Malaysia which comes from appointment in Kedah, Terengganu, Perlis and Kelantan can see that the village headman is quite an important role in the administration the village headman is appointed by the government to act as the village governor. Coordinate with government agencies and welfare such as education, medical treatment and also being the leader of government policy to manage public care Siamese people will allow the village head to take care of themselves in the community. Normally, Malaysia will not allow other nations to hold these political positions but after the year 1976, the Malaysian parliament has passed laws. New local government resulting in the reform of local government in Malaysia resulting in the position of headman from the election of people in the village area but still considered the village headman to be a part of the provincial government show that the headman is a representative of the villagers. At the same time, the state can order the village headman through the village chief and the sheriff. The term of the headman's office is 5 years. For the return that the headman receives from the government is monthly money and special privileges as a state aid such as receiving the right to reduce the rent which the Siamese will give the headman the village headman takes care of himself. What will help each other? The headman is like a representative between the government and the people. Show that the Malaysian government has provided the village headman who is a political leader in the community. And trying to get more people to participate in politics and administration by starting from giving each ethnic a political representative at their own community level.

**Being a senator:** In the central government system of the Malaysian government, there are important representatives, including members of the House of Representatives (Ahli Parlimen) and senator which some senators will represent minorities in Malaysia such as traditional indigenous groups (Orang Asli) including Malaysian people of Siamese descent also have representatives elected as senators as Siamese people established the Siam society of Malaysia legally to protect the rights of ethnic groups, including bargaining with a superior group causing the Malaysian government to reserve the right to the Legislative Council for one seat of Siamese people, according to, the population of 60,000 people. The first person to be appointed as Senator is Mr. Charoen Intharachat, Malaysian Siamese citizen of Kedah State. Which has a position as the former head of the Kedah State Customs Office and has a high position at the state level of Kedah and is the former president of the Siam Malaysia Association. Later is Mrs. Chew Chun Eiam, former vice president of the Siam Malaysian Association. Later, is Mr. Boonsom Enang, former director of the Siam Malaysia Association and later Mr. Bunserm Suwanmani sees that the Malaysian government has given importance to all ethnic groups. Especially, the traditional indigenous groups (Orang Asli) including Malaysians of Siamese descent which the Malaysian constitution has reserved the right to the legislative position for the people to come.

**Election:** According to studies, it has been found that the political role of the Siamese people is very little involved in politics. Has only the status of using voting rights as a duty of citizens which now a days Siamese people are more politically active more interested in politics because when the political party that is elected to the government will return benefits in various ways such as budget for community management and waiting for the convenience of Siamese people as well causing Siamese people to become more aware of their political interests and can see that at present, Siamese people are more aware of the election than before. Because the political parties are also rewarding for the Siamese people as well causing Siamese people to become more interested in politics in addition, current communication has made Siamese people more aware of political information. In Malaysia, there is a clear racial segregation. In particular, politics in which each race will choose a political party that is their own race. But Siamese people do not have their own political parties. But will choose a political party that returns benefits for their own group considered to be an incentive for Siamese

people to exercise their voting rights and play a more political role, it can be seen that the Siamese have the greatest political role. Election which is the duty of citizens only.

**Factors affecting the political role of the people of Siamese descent:** Factors that affect the political role of the people of Siamese descent the researcher has divided into 4 areas: political, economic, social and cultural aspects as follows:

#### **Political aspects**

**Democratic governance:** Malaysia, democratic governance even though it is not a complete democratic country but the government adheres to the democratic rules Malaysia's law provides an opportunity for people of all nationalities to have equal political rights. In Malaysia with the dominance of power in the form of a single government, the country has been continuously ruled for a long time and political freedom is often limited. That the government will allow the establishment of various political parties but a small political party is not a party. The government has almost no chance to win elections. This is because the election may not be pure. Which election laws or other rules which allows large parties to win elections continuously. It can be seen from the fact that countries with popular political systems still have the design of the electoral system to facilitate access to the power of each leader. Or political party even if there is an electoral organization as well as checking the election but such organizations are often dominated by the government. Thus, unable to fully perform the work resulting in widespread election fraud in many areas of Malaysia if election fraud occurs, some people will come out against the election. Causing violence, such as in the year 2013, where violent protests occurred (Siriwannabus, 2015) shows that Malaysia ruled democracy even though it is not a complete democratic country but adhering to the democratic rules in addition, the laws of Malaysia allow people of all nationalities to have equal political rights.

**Rights and status:** At present, Malaysian people of Siam descent have a special status that is considered a status that is higher than Chinese and Indian people by the Siamese people with proof of status but there will be no registration of kitchen shows showing Malaysian nationality and use ID cards to show Malaysian citizenship instead. Although, Siamese citizens are legitimate citizens of Malaysia but the rights and status are still not equal to Malaysian people, Malay descent

being a legitimate citizen of Siam has many political rights such as voting rights. Election rights and other political leadership positions except for prime minister positions only because Malaysian law provides this position only for Malaysian Malay descent. With the feeling of Siamese citizenship in Malaysia, all Siamese people have full rights and freedom of Malaysian citizenship. Although, the social environment is in the Malay society but Chava, when expressing his full political rights can participate freely and choose leaders freely.

**State policy:** The state policy towards Siamese people is requesting amendment to specify the name of the Thai ethnic group in the form of request to enter the state university because if there is no clear ethnic group identification will make the descendants of Thai Buddhists deserve the right to continue admission to public institutions and requesting to be a member of the UMNO Party because Malaysia has the UMNO Party which is a party of the Malay people, a political party that monopolizes the administration of the country the members of the UMNO Party will receive benefits and rights. More than any other party which is different in the implementation of policies towards the Siamese minority groups will see that the Malaysian government responds with the establishment of a national group of ethnic Thai Buddhists that are legitimate.

**Political parties:** Malaysian of Siamese descent do not have their own political parties. Which is different from the main ethnic groups namely Malay, Chinese and Indian people which have their own political parties to act as their voice for their ethnic groups. Although, Siamese people do not have their own political parties, Siamese people have the right to become members of the UMNO party, a Malay Party and a government party. It can be seen that the Siamese people in the state of Kedah will give the popularity of the UMNO party that has been in power for a long time. Because Kedah is the sound base of the UMNO Party but in the Kelantan Pass (PartiIslamSe-Malaysia-PAS) can still maintain the sound base and receive a landslide vote every time there is an election. Show that each ethnic group needs a political party to take care of their interests and identity. And at the same time, political parties have proposed policies that respond to specific ethnic groups in order to be a base for election. Therefore, political parties which are political institutions, act as representatives of ethnic groups.

In terms of economy, most Siamese people have been in the area, since, their ancestors and have a subsistence economy with rice farming. Making rubber plantations,

fruit orchards, growing vegetables and tobacco farming and a number of Siamese people still favor their own independent occupations hire as an employee in a company, shop or retail. Including government service (Somong, 2003) show that the economy is an important factor affecting the political role of Malaysia. If people have good economic status the Siamese people will come to play a political role but some Siamese people are not interested in politics at all. Because of having to work for a living, therefore, there is no time to be interested in politics but Siamese people who have good economic status will be interested in politics and have more political role. Because those people perceive that politics is facilitating and rewarding various benefits for the group.

**Social aspects:** Factors that lead to the creation of the political role of Malaysian people in the area of education and ethnic integration as follows:

In education, Siamese people have education both inside and outside the state education system. Education is an important factor that affects the political role. Siamese people who have access to political roles are mostly educated people. If a general villager is more interested in the stomach, Siamese people will send their children to both government schools and private schools. But if any family has a good status, they will send their children to study in the capital city of Malaysia or the capital of the state in which they live. Therefore, seeing that the financial position is an indicator of education as well which most Siamese people have good educational opportunities because the Malaysian government has opened educational opportunities for all ethnic groups as well as extinguishing Malay people because the state considers all ethnic groups to be entitled to the rights and freedoms as required by law, like the Malay people show that the Malaysian government provides educational opportunities for all ethnic groups in accessing education at all levels. Which shows that education is an important factor that affects the political role of Malay people of Siamese descent if Siamese people are educated, they will play more political roles. As can be seen from the permission to open Thai language schools that are available in every state.

Ethnic grouping, since, the struggle for political rights of ethnic minorities in Malaysia the Malaysian government responded by establishing an ethnic group to allow the Siamese people to live in Malaysia legally. Therefore, formed the Siam Malaysia Association such as the Siamese Malaysian Association (Persatuan

Masyarakat Siam Malaysia), the Siam Kedah Association (Persatuan Masyarakat Siam Kedah) and the Siam Rath of Kelantan Association (Persatuan Masyarakat Siam Kelantan), the Buddhism and Thai Education Center, etc., go to play a role in politics to protect the rights and interests of ethnic groups. Siamese people have their own associations to voice their communities. The establishment of this association is beneficial to the Malaysian community of Siamese descent in order to have bargaining power with the government. From the ethnic grouping of Malaysian people, Siamese descent as mentioned above shows that ethnic grouping is an important factor affecting the political role of Malaysian people of Siamese descent. Due to the integration of ethnic groups to protect the rights and interests of their own ethnic groups and to fight the political rights of minorities.

**Culture:** Factors that lead to the creation of the political role of the Malaysian people, namely, religion, tradition and culture as follows:

The religion of Siamese people in Malaysia is mostly respected by Buddhists from the first period and inherited to the present. Moreover, Buddhism is a bond of Siamese people. And the temple is also a center of mind and center for grouping because every community of Siamese people will have a temple as a center for joint activities whether it is a forum for organizing meetings to inform information or brainstorm ideas is the area for organizing various activities for children and youth in Thai language schools as well as being the area to meet and talk with Malaysian people of Siamese descent important religious activities like the Siamese people will be like the religious activities of Thailand, such as Buddhist Lent Day, Asarnha Bucha Day, Makha Bucha Day, Visakha Bucha, Kathin Ceremony and Meditation. To create love and unity among the group is the bond of Siamese people together and is a succession of Buddhism along with the principles of Buddhism as a principle in life and the Malaysian government has allowed the Siamese people to conduct Buddhist activities freely.

**Beliefs and traditions:** In terms of beliefs and traditions, Siamese people will have beliefs, traditions and rituals, mostly like the Thai people in the South. Siamese people will organize activities, according to, the festival which is considered to be a combination of unity among the community in each event, there will be a Thai dress-up game. Have entertainment activities from dancing and showing various activities of youth in the community

which will be attended by both Thai, Chinese and Indian people from various states all over Malaysia, therefore, Siamese people in Malaysia still have a way to adapt to maintain cultures such as traditional customs, traditions and culture every year. But chose to organize large-scale events at the state level for funding such as Songkran and Loi Krathong in Kedah, Perlis and Kelantan which create ethnic participation as well. While organizing events on a similar date, the Siamese people who work or live in the area far away from the community have the opportunity to attend. Sanit (2016) based on factors religion traditions and beliefs that Siamese people adhere to are all respects. Shows that culture, religion, beliefs and traditions are a very important factor affecting the political role of Siamese people in Malaysia. Because religious activities are the starting point for the Siamese people to join groups in various activities with a temple as a center for joint activities.

**The political role model of Malaysian people of Siamese descent:** Malaysia is a multicultural country. With ethnic diversity the government, therefore, has to create a model by creating a Malaysian ideology. Coordination of economic benefits and political power allocation including managing the relationship between government and ethnic groups by participating in activities and budget support for ethnic groups is political aspects of Malaysia, democratic governance. Even though it is not a complete democratic country but adhering to the democratic rules which the law of Malaysia also allows people of all nationalities to have equal political rights such as the establishment of political parties membership of political parties community representation election with the same rights as Malaysians who are Malay nationals because the Siamese people are also in the landscape group except for the Prime Minister's position which is not possible because the Malaysian law gives only Malay rights it can be seen that the Siamese want a political party to act to protect the interests and specific status of their group. At the same time, the political party presented a policy that responded to Siamese people only to be the base of votes in the next election.

The economy of Siamese people is mostly people who have been in the area, since, their ancestors. And have a subsistence economy with farming making rubber plantations, planting fruit trees, growing vegetables and tobacco farming and a number of Siamese people still prefer their own freelance careers. Hire as an employee in a company, shop or retail. Including government service especially farming in the state of Kedah which has now

become an important industrial area of Malaysia. If the Siamese economy is growing, it will affect the economic status of Siamese people. Ekhang also made Siamese people send their children to study to be educated. This will lead to further political roles.

The Siamese society has been under the rule of Malaysia for a long time, since, its predecessor. But the realization of the Thai people of the land is still strong and this group of Siamese people have a similar history of settlement or history. Therefore, making these people together (Thipsirimit, 2007), brothers and sisters have contact and doing activities together will see that Siamese people will have good educational opportunities because the Malaysian government has opened educational opportunities for all ethnic groups as well as extinguishing Malay people because the state considers all ethnic groups to be entitled to the rights and freedoms as required by law, like the Malay people. In addition, the Malaysian government has set up a group of ethnic groups in order to legally live in Siam. Therefore, formed the Siam Malaysia Association such as the Siam Malaysia people association to protect the rights and interests of ethnic groups Siamese people have their own associations to represent the community of Siamese ethnic groups themselves.

The culture of Siamese people is a minority with a long history which has been established in Malaysia's multicultural society. Which Malay has a culture of Malay and Islamic culture is the main culture for a long time but Siamese people still maintain their way of life conservation of all Thai culture and having a peaceful life modest that he is a minority in Malaysia. Shows that in culture which consists of religion and beliefs, traditions which are important factors that make Siamese people gather to merge the benefits of political and other roles.

Can conclude that the pattern of creating political roles of Malaysian people of Siamese descent by creating a sense of being Siamese through learning the history of the Siamese ethnic people themselves creating unity and the creation of Siamese ethnic identity to occur under the diversity of ethnic groups in Malaysia by combining the social groups of Siamese for the religious activities, traditions and culture that are still strong and contribute most and lead to social integration economy and politics by being a representative of the Siamese people in the Malaysian political system to create bargaining power and to fight and protect the rights and interests of Siamese ethnic groups according to the legitimate citizenship of Malaysia as the following Fig. 1.

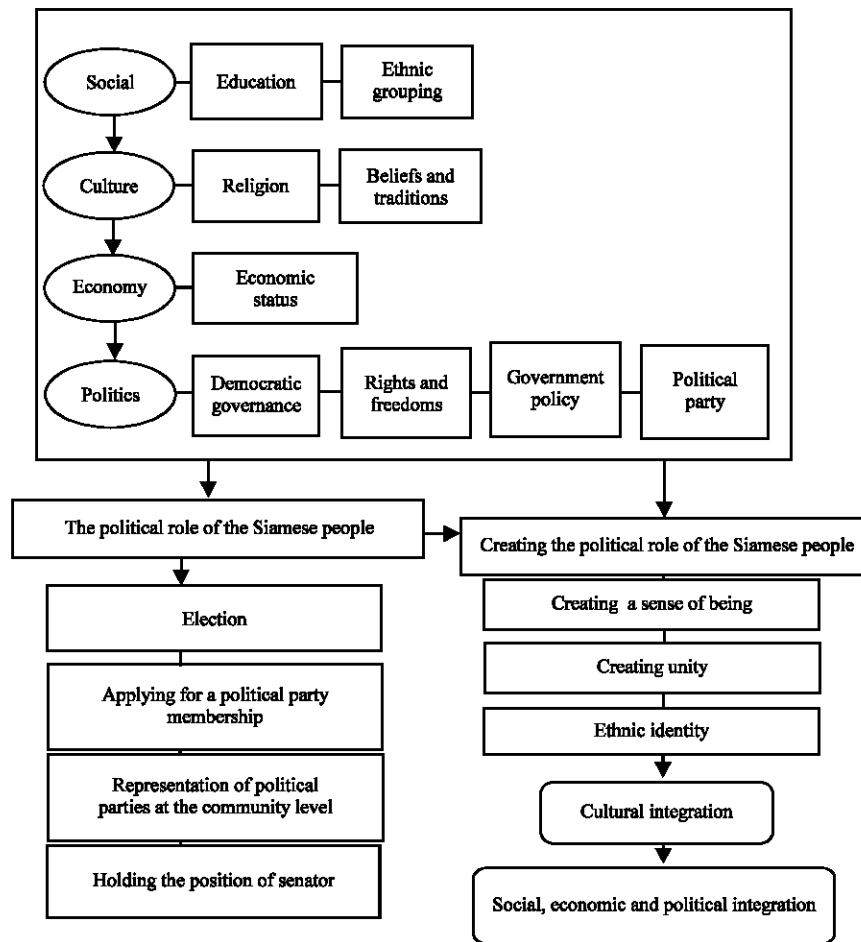


Fig. 1: Model for creating political roles of Malaysian people of Siamese descent

## CONCLUSION

The political role model of Malaysian people of Siamese descent by creating a sense of being Siamese through learning the history of the Siamese ethnic people themselves creating unity and the creation of Siamese ethnic identity to occur under the diversity of ethnic groups in Malaysia by combining the social groups of Siamese for the religious activities, traditions and culture that are still strong and contribute most and lead to social integration economy and politics by being a representative of the Siamese people in the Malaysian political system to create bargaining power and to fight and protect the rights and interests of Siamese ethnic groups, according to, the legitimate citizenship of Malaysia.

## SUGGESTION

**Recommendations for the use of research results:** Malaysia is a country with ethnic diversity. Should

therefore, aim to encourage ethnic minorities to play a political role by forming a political group the small group of people make Thai people have a political role. There is very little, only social groups that are set up to carry out political and social activities in parallel. Is a new political style creating a mainstay in the area establishment of interest groups creating a democratic political culture to be a strong citizen politics by strengthening the knowledge and awareness of democratic people in a participatory manner, creating a public space for the people to be strengthened together.

From the results of the research, it is found that, although, the Malaysian law permits Siamese people to establish political parties but at present, Siamese people do not have their own political parties. Therefore, it is appropriate for the Siamese to establish their own political parties in order to have bargaining power and strengthen the Siamese ethnicity.

From the research results, it is found that in the event of violence whether protesting the government or claims of various ethnic groups can be seen that no

Siamese people joined the political movement of all forms, whether it was a violent movement or not. Made the Siamese love peace and did not support violence maybe because the Malaysian government has never had a policy that forces Siamese people at all.

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