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**The Application of Democratic Values for Muslim Minority in the
Kingdom of Thailand¹**

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to highlight the democratic values and their differences from Islamic viewpoints. Secondly, it aims to look into the applications of democratic values for Muslim minority in the Kingdom of Thailand with two different selected cases, the selection of Muslim leadership for provincial and central Islamic Committees according to Islamic Act 1997, and the democratic role of Muslim Political Leadership of Wan Mohammad Nor Matha, a current President of Thai Parliament. The study is a qualitative work using an eclectic approach in selecting data and guiding by Islamic Asalah Solution framework for its analysis. The findings reveal that some of democratic values become democratic principles and some are not, and some of them are compatible with Islamic values and teachings, however some democratic values are confronted with Islamic teaching, such as the majority rule's

¹ This article is a part of my full research entitled "Islam, Democracy, and their Applications in the Kingdom of Thailand" which is on the process of collecting and analyzing of data, and making of concluding analyses.

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conquer doesn't mean the only prime and right judgment for Islam, the loyalty for party system is not the ultimate destination for Islam except the satisfaction of Allah's commands, and election is not the only right means for recruitment of leaders, but there are some superior and worthy apparatus like consultative process of the learned and experienced ones (SHURA) Moreover, one of the most important conflicting value is very clear, that is, Democracy highlights human satisfaction or majority, but Islam prioritizes Allah's satisfaction or Islamic SHARIAH is over the human-made laws. The second finding shows that the applications of democratic values for Muslim minority in Thailand through organization or individuals are adapted in accordance to Islamic Asalah framework where Islamization plays great role in shaping behaviors and application of democratic values. Muslims in Thailand have adjusted their election of Muslim leadership with SHURA, selection, and what is not contradicted to Islamic teaching. For the role of Muslim political leader of Wan Muhammd Noor Matha shows that he has, in some certain extent, satisfied both Muslims and non-Muslims as reflected from public policies proposed and opposed by him. He is well accepted as a key Muslim minority leader and democratic political leader who has fought for both causes of Islamic and democratic principles.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Thailand is historically known as Siam. It is a unitary state, with 76 provinces. Thailand has changed its form of government from absolute Monarchy to democracy since 1932 C.E., so it marked the beginning of constitutional monarchy. Thailand has 20 constitutions due to power struggling. The overall Thai population is approximately 63,299,193 peoples. Muslims are the biggest minority in Thailand. They are mostly populated in the southern bordered-provinces of Thailand, which are Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, Satun, and Songkhla. Though the information from National Statistics Office of Thailand reveals that there are total Muslim populations of 3,639,232 out of 63,299,193 from total Thai populations³, however; a 2023 Pew Research Center survey gave 7%.⁴ Thai Muslims are the largest religious minority in the country.⁵ As of 2024 the number of Muslims has increased to approximately 7.5 million in the Kingdom or about 12% of the total 62.5 million Thai populations.⁶ Thai Muslims have dispersedly lived throughout the country. In fact, throughout Thailand history since Ayuttaya period (1351–1767 C.E.), Muslims are parts and parcels of this country. They played an important role in protecting and building the Thai state as a kingdom and a country. It is undeniable fact that Muslims in the southern area, which are Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat provinces, were included as Thai citizenships after 1909 agreement (Anglo-Siam Agreement 1909 C.E.) between the Britain and the Thai authority (*Siam* was called at that time). Since then, Thai Muslims are under the Thai state system.

After a long period of Thai absolute monarchy, in 1932 a group of military called “Khana Rasadhorn” meaning “people party” took the power by force and made Thailand as a democratic country, though in the beginning it was considered as an authoritarian state where the grassroots’ people had no power and no knowledge of what is meant by democracy. Thus it was considered by some academics as a change of political elites. Nevertheless, most people satisfy this change and democratic initiation of elites since the world milieu is plenty of democratic states-system.

³ National Statistics Office of Thailand, please see in https://www.nso.go.th/nsoweb/nso/statistics_and_indicators?%2Fnsso%2Fstatistics_and_indicators=&page=37. Retrieved 22 August 2024.

⁴ "Most people in the countries surveyed identify as Buddhist or Muslim". Pew Research Center. 6 September 2023. Retrieved 17 September 2023

⁵ Imtiyaz Yusuf, "Muslims as Thailand's Largest Religious Minority". (Routledge Handbook of Islam in Southeast Asia, 2022). pp. 234–249.

⁶ "Muslim in Thailand". Royal Thai Embassy, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. 22 May 2024. Retrieved 22 May 2024.

From centralization of power of the king in absolute monarchy to separations of power in democratic regime, Thailand has adopted its political system as parliamentary system, where democratic values, principles and apparatuses initiated democratic practices, like setting the rule of law, admitting to form political parties, interest groups, providing regular election, peoples' political participation in all sorts political activities, etc. Since 1932 C.E. Thailand has as many as 20 constitutions, with different governments from both the military powers and civil governments. The Thai governments have always claimed their democratic regimes, though some are clearly considered as undemocratic, especially when the military made coup d'état and formed the authoritarian governments, these count more than a dozen times, (exactly 13 times). These show that the interrupted periods of undemocratic by using forces rather than peaceful means to change the government by election. However, democratic regimes always prevail due to the fact that the Thai majority favors them and the democratic regimes are encouraged in world politics, and the most important concern is the allocation of social values and resources in a democratic country must be shared by people through people participation. Thus, peoples' political participation in all processes of state activities is the basic requirement for all Thai citizens, including Muslim minority in this country.

Statement of Problem

There are plenty of rationalities why this research is needed to be studied; among them are the following reasons.

1. It is undeniable fact that the governments of various modern nation-states are practicing or applying the predominant ideal of Democratic values and principles. Various secular values are promoted such as the separation between religions and state, human being has freedom to think, design his own law and environment to suit his satisfaction and desire without religious compulsion, and live the way he likes to. This kind of humanism is prime desire in secular ideas. In order to satisfy these humanistic desires, there are various democratic ideas, values, and principle to promote this end. Among these various values are the rule of law by some social contract initiated by people, peoples' right and equality in various areas, people representation facilitated by political parties and election process, people political participation in all level of politics. Thus a democratic state system like Thailand has to make all these values in the practical life of al Thai peoples including Muslims.

2. It is not just a duty of state but also the Thai people to adapt themselves to meet various requirements for a modern state system which consists of four important characteristics, these are people sovereignty, population, government, and national boundary. In all these characteristics, Thai citizens have their shares of their dignity in accordance with the constructed national identity and cultures, these will include their local natures, races, and beliefs. The Thai national identity and culture will pass through the interaction and intermingling of the Thai nation-building. In short, Thai peoples of various races, ethnics, and religions are parts of each other in the Thai democratic system.
3. In Thailand Buddhists are the majority, whereby Muslims are just a minority group. As far as democratic polity is concerned, this country has shown the ability to integrate Thai people into a single Thai nationality, as well as to show how plural society in Thailand has flourished. In order to live with a majority Thai Buddhists, Muslims have to compromise with the majority but not to sacrifice their faith and identity.
4. The Thai-state democratic apparatuses provide wider opportunity for Muslims to participate in politics, to gain some share of social values.
5. Thai Muslim minority is the major or the biggest minority in Thai society, where Muslims play some important roles in Thai politics.
6. As Muslims, they have to retain their faith and practice of Islamic principles. Thus, they have to participate in all of the state apparatuses for their survival as Muslims in the same time as Thai citizens. In order to achieve all these minority Muslims have been playing their key roles in various parts of Thai politics especially the Muslim elites who always have been given their better privileges, positions and power in the representative democracy through either election or selection in a conventional political parties. Being a representative or being a religious leaders or group of elites whose positions, power, and trust, can be sources of advantages and decision-making process of public policies. In addition, the Thai constitution has supported Muslim minority to have their own religious laws concerning Islamic family and inheritance. More importantly, Muslims in Thailand have been provided a law called “Islamic Act Concerning Administration of Islamic Organization 1997” or Islamic Law for managing Muslim affairs heading by Shiekhul Islam of Thailand. This law has simultaneously been imposed for Thai Muslim minority with all other Thai laws.

7. However, it is important to look into some similarities and differences between democratic values and Islamic values which are both concerned and affected Muslims. How these values are applied by Muslims without making them in difficult situation or awkward manner is the purpose of this study.

The Framework of the Study

This study has chosen Abdul Hamid AbuSulayman's classification of the three different responses of Muslim Ummah to the challenges of modern world as the framework for the analysis of this study.⁷ These three responses or solutions are: firstly, the Imitative Foreign Solution which relies on cultural experiences of the West; secondly, the Imitative Historical Solution which seeks to apply the Islamic historical experiences; and thirdly, the *Islamic Asalah Solution* which mainly applies the relevant solutions derived from authentic Islamic sources. These three classified categories have their respective features and characteristics, however, my focus in this research is to merely state the *Islamic Asalah Solution* because it directly relevant to Muslims 'circumstances in the Kingdom of Thailand, although for Muslims, Islam constitutes a part of both the imitative historical solution and a contemporary *Islamic Asalah solution*. Thus this framework of research analysis is a content-analysis by focusing the characteristics of *Islamic Asalah Solution*. A summary of characteristics of *Islamic Asalah Solution* can be mentioned as follow:

1. The solution is derived from Islamic beliefs, values, and inclinations as they reflect on the Ummah's contemporary circumstances and its standing issues. It means to understand what those circumstances require as regards time and place in relation to Islam's heritage and experience in its earliest age on the one hand, and in terms of the significance of quantitative and qualitative change in human life on the other.⁸
2. The articulation of the Ummah's needs, and as an answer based on values, concepts, and objectives of Islam to the challenges confronting it.
3. A comprehensiveness of the solution, it means to understand the theories and applications of the early period of Islam with all their dimensions of time and place. It also means to understand the objectives and higher purposes of Islam and the proper relationship between them.

⁷ Abdul Hamid A. Abu Sulayman, *Crisis in the Muslim mind.*(translated by Yusuf Talal Delorenzo) (Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1993), p. 7-18.

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 18.

4. It is an academic and intellectual approach based on knowledge of the laws of nature and experience. It includes these two factors in order to have an effective role in the leadership and reform of human civilization. These two factors are the impetus of a positive religious outlook and preeminence in effective thought.

5. The sound methodology where religious and secular elements come together as it is meant from the above.

6. The Ummah's intellectuals, writers and concerned social and political leaders should play a dominant role in clarifying the picture, making the Ummah aware of the problem, and planning seeds of reform so that these may grow and bear fruit.

0. RESEARCH METHODS

The research is a purely qualitative one using eclectic methods in collecting the data. It relies on documentary availability from both elementary documents such as interviews and so on, while the secondary sources are sorted from books, articles, newspapers, research reports, theses, dissertations, and international conference documents. This research has designed its analysis from "*Islamic Asalah Solution*" proposed by Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman who holds that the rightly response for Muslims to western ideas and westernization should be screened through Islamization, and the *Islamic Asalah Solution* is the best solution since its covering authentic sources of Islamic values and principles at the same time adapting what suits the modern values and development criteria for Muslims in Thailand.

In order to make the reliability and validity of the data analysis and findings, the research uses triangulation of data sources- collections where documents play a major role followed by interviews and observational notes. In summary, this research is subjective in nature, the interpretation is therefore relies on the shoulder of researcher: however, a rigorous criterion is adapted from Islamic Asalah Solution of Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman one of the pioneers of Islamization project in the Muslim world.

0. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The results of the study will be described and discussed according to respective objectives. The first objective is to highlight the democratic values and their differences from Islamic viewpoints.

The findings revealed that there are various differences from Islamic viewpoints in terms of their objective meanings and applications of democratic values. The following value is emphasized for the objective of democracy; to make a human law geared by human desires and majority proportion of peoples' will, to live a good life, to have a good welfare, to make people free, to make people equal, to

make people a self-autonomy or free from domination, and to make people participants through various official and unofficial participations and representations. All these values are reflected in democratic system. Democracy in itself is a major democratic value. It is meant as a political system where the power to make a decision-making is shared by peoples as pointed out by Abraham Lincoln that democracy is “the rule of the people by the people and for the people.” In other words, peoples are always in political society, and they are always the authoritative actors for power struggle in order to allocate social values of both concrete and abstract manners. This is because democracy is considered by many as a people’s politics.⁹ Democracy is also referred as a way of life by using rational empiricism, attributing mutual respects, having tolerance and compromise until it becomes the consent of each other, and always obeying the rule of law.¹⁰ However, various failures and inefficiencies of democracy provides for disbelief in democracy too.

To make a human law geared by human desires and majority proportion of peoples’ will.

This value is very clearly expressed in the principle of “the rule of law” which derived from human needs and satisfaction as explained by John Lock, Thomas Hobbes, and Jean Jacque Rousseau in terms of “social contract’ as a result of the general wills of people. This human law may come from either the direct consent of people or indirect one from people representatives. Thus, the rule of law is a man-made law for human desires.¹¹

An Islamic viewpoint on the rule of law is very sacred and strict to its applications. This is to ensure the security of the collective lives. Islam has imposed its own law called *Islamic Shariah* which covers nearly all aspects of Muslim life. However, one may not have seen a perfect *Islamic Shariah* in the shape of constitution except to see what have been said and laid down in the Quran and Hadith, especially in the Muslim minority country.

To live a good life

As democrats, they believe that there must be a political community where people are controlled by laws. These laws will always promote good life and ensure their security of life, right, and freedom. The laws will guard against

⁹ Goh Keat Peng, *A People’s Politics*. (Petaling Jaya: Strategic Information and Research Development Centre, 2013)

¹⁰ Somboon Suksamran, *Ideologies, Cultures, and Representation in Democracy*. (Bangkok: King Prachadhipok Institution, 2013)pp.47-67., see also in Nipon Sohngeng, *From Theory to Practice of Democracy: The problem of Political Participation in Malaysia*. Proceedings in International Conference, Ramkhamhaeng University. 29 August 2017, pp. 53-67.

¹¹ Nattaphong Boonlue and Nipon Sohngeng, *Democratic Theories: Viewpoints of the Classic, the Contemporary, and the Future*. (Bangkok: Kitpaisarn Karnpim, 2023) pp.157-187.

injustices and intrusion of other' rights. Thus the laws become the social and political control for everyone in a state.

In Islam, we aim to get not only good life in this world but also in the hereafter. That is why the basic belief for Muslims will include the faith in the day of judgments or the hereafter. This belief encompasses Muslim lives to take care themselves and to be accountable to all his deeds.

To have a good welfare

A political entity has the duty provide good and services in terms of public policies in order to uplift the people's quality of life. In other words, a state authority has to deliver not only necessary welfare for people but also whatever and whenever the peoples have requested for.

In Islam, each and every one is accountable for his own duty, the governmental organizations have their duty to fulfill the best services they have for the peoples. The leaders and officers who are in charge have to look after the welfare of people. The prophet Muhammad (SAW) once said that "A leader of a group is the servant of that group."

To make people free

This democratic value is meant that all people in democratic society have their free wills to do whatsoever not contradicted to the social contracts or the laws of peoples. Freedom is, thus; the thrust of democratic society.

In Islam the law of Allah is the highest, Muslims has his free choice in the condition that he bears the results of his choice. The Islamic law has imposed the framework for Muslim behaviors and choice like human laws which control their freedom depending to how they design their laws.

To make people equal

This equality is meant the equality before laws. Each and every ones has his equal political right to vote his/her choice from the principle of one-man one-vote. Electoral procedure and system is produced to facilitated public policies through the election of peoples' representatives.

In Islam is in the view that all humans are equal. There is discrimination based on sex, race, origin, religion and son on. As Quran says, "O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul" Quran (4:1)

The prophet Muhammad (SAW) had said that "No Arab has any superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab. Nor does a white man have any superiority over a black man, or a black man any

superiority over a white man. You are all the children of Admam, and Adam was created from clay.” All men in Islam are equal, however; Islam goes further to say that there are some inequalities because of knowledge, faiths, and skills that one may earn himself. Islam has managed all these in equalities by providing institutional mechanism such as “Baitulmal” collecting from zakat system. This institutional mechanism is apparent in the both Islamic and western sources of governmental organizations.

To make people a self-autonomy or free from domination

In democracy, each citizen has his self-autonomy for his own decision, judgment, and choice. Peoples have been free from any control and domination except that it is imposed by laws.

In Islam, every Muslim is independent and self-autonomy since each one has to bear what he has done and no one can bear burdens of others. There is no compulsion in Islam. Thus Muslims have their own choices and they are responsible to what they do and behave. The Quran has warned Muslims for their actions because everything is countable in this world and the hereafter.

“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity, It will have [the consequence of] what [good] it has gained, and it will bear [the consequence of] what [evil]it has earned” Quran (2:286)

To make people participants through various official and unofficial participations and representations

There are various mechanisms or tools to encourage people to participate in politics in both official and unofficial manners. Democratic rule will always provide election system, political party system, interest groups for peoples to participate in politics.

The Islamic values have emphasized that the most important item for Muslims is to believe in God (Allah), his messengers, his holy books, his angels, and the hereafter. All these basic principles compose a Muslim to become the obedient to Allah’s will and hence to act according to Allah’s will. It is important to note the most referred words of the holy Quran in managing the affairs of Muslims as Allah says:

“And whoever do not judge by what Allah has revealed- then it is those who are the disbeliever” Quran (5:44)

“And whoever do not judge by what Allah has revealed- then it is those who are the wrongdoer” Quran (5:45)

“And whoever do not judge by what Allah has revealed- then it is those who are the defiantly disobedient” Quran (5:47)

These words have laid down a very basic principle for Muslims to believe and behave accordingly. Thus, it is a duty of Muslims to adjust themselves and to comply with Quranic injunctions or God’s orders. Muslims in Thailand have also the same duty to carry out these orders. However Islamic teachings have always the solutions for any difficulty by not fixing an exact form of political system and a form of government, for example, monarchy, representative democracy, consultative democracy, presidential government, parliamentary government. As long as it is able to carry out Allah’s commands and it does not make Muslims disbelieved in Allah, any form of political systems and governments are welcomed according to Islam.

However, the democratic values as above-mentioned are not really compatible to Islam, though some values are compatible and suit Muslims’ demands. There are some major arguments where Muslim and Non- Muslim scholars are alike to debate on that is Islam compatible to democracy. The responses are multifarious perspectives. As Zohair Husain has highlighted these Muslim responses to modern ideologies (liberal democracy is one of them) into four groups as follow:¹² the first group is called Fundamentalists who responds that democracy is incompatible to Islam, and some of historians like Elie Kedouri even claimed that democracy is alien to the mind-set of Islam.¹³ The second group replies it as partially compatible to Islam, this group is called Traditionalist. The third one is Muslim Modernists who hold that democracy can be reconciled and adaptable to Islam. And the last group called Muslims Pragmatists who are sympathetic to western thoughts and not knowledgeable with Islamic concepts.

The applications of democratic values by Muslims are adopted and changed according to the circumstances and political contexts of the Thai state. It may be stated that the *Islamic Asalah Solution* has guided the decisions taken by Muslims, especially the Islamic values such as Halal, Haram, Sunnah, and so forth.

The second objective is to look into the applications of democratic values for Muslim minority in the Kingdom of Thailand with two different selected cases, the selection of Muslim leadership for provincial and central Islamic Committees according to the Islamic Act Concerning Administration of Islamic Organization 1997, and the democratic role of Muslim Political Leadership of Wan Mohammad Noor Matha, a current President of Thai Parliament.

¹² Zohair Husain. *Global Islamic Politics*. (London:Pearson Education,1997) pp.152-160.

¹³ Cited in L. Anderson. Arab Democracy: Dismal Prospects. *World Policy Journal* 18 (Fall,2001): 53-60.

The selection of Muslim leadership for provincial and central Islamic Committees according to Islamic Act 1997

It is revealed in the first case where an Islamic organization especially the highest hierarchy of Muslim community in Thailand is Sheikhu Islam or “Chularajamontri”, the Central Islamic Committee of Thailand, The Provincial Islamic Committee¹⁴, and the Islamic Committee of Mosques in Thailand have to be implemented according to “Islamic Act 1997.” It is important to note that there various article of this law which impose that the selection of committees in all the above levels have to pass through election process. However, it is fortunate that those Muslims who formulated this law have a very insight of Islam by letting a *Shura* as another choice for the selection. Because in Islam, Shura is a serious and effective participation in making decisions in all matters of personal and public life.¹⁵ Therefore, Fathi Osman refers that *Shura* is the way of life of Muslims.¹⁶ The *Shura* as a process helps Muslims a lot for solving any problems. It is an Islamic solutions and decisions made by the learned and experienced ones to select Muslim leadership for various levels of Islamic organizations. It can be said that *Shura* has its place in Thai Muslim society when it comes to some religious problems and screening issues by Islamic organizations. Thus, Muslims have wider choices to vote or to consult the learned and experienced in the framework of Islamic Act 1997.

The democratic role of Muslim Political Leadership of Wan Mohammad Noor Matha, a current President of Thai Parliament.

There are various Muslim political leaders, who play great role in Thai politics in Thailand from the past until the present. However this study will focus only the role of Muslim Political Leadership of Wan Mohammad Noor Matha, a current President of Thai Parliament or the National Assembly.¹⁷ He is selected in this study because he holds a major and key position in Thai politics. Moreover he is a frequently elected as a member of the house representatives more than 10 times. He used to be deputy Minister and Minister of various ministries such as a Deputy Minister of Interior, Minister of Transport(1995, 2001), Minister of Interior(2002), Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives(2004), Speaker of the House of Representative(1996), and Deputy

¹⁴ The number of provincial Islamic committees are totally 816 persons who come from 40 different provincial Islamic Offices throughout the country (This number is not yet deducted from some resignation). See the details in Chanond Dalai, *The Role of the Central Islamic Council of Thailand and the Influence on the Political Policy Formulation of Political Parties*. (Ph.D. s’ Dissertation, Ramkhamhaeng University, 2023), pp.79-80.

¹⁵ Fathi Osman, *Islam in a Modern State: Democracy and the Concept of Shura*. Occasional Paper Series (Washington: Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, History and International Affairs, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, 2001)

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ “Bibliography of the President of National Assembly and the Speaker of the House of Representatives” see the details in web.parliament.go.th

Minister(2004)¹⁸ Moreover, he has formed a political party named Prachachat Party and become the first party leader. This party won 9 seats in the last general election 2023 and become a part of a current Thai coalition government.

He becomes one of the champions who fight for Muslims causes both in the local and national levels of Thai politics. During his role in power of various ministries he pushed various laws to be enacted. One of the most important law for Muslims is “The Islamic Act Concerning Administration of Islamic Organization 1997.” This law is a result of his political group called “Wahdah”¹⁹ led by Den To’mina and surely Wan Mohammad Noor was one of the key-played roles who formulated and passed this law until its enactment in 1997.

Under a Muslim political leadership of Wan Mohammad Noor Matha, he has the role in public policies. He has tried to make public policy in accord with the democratic values as he believes that democratic mechanism can solve various problems especially when they reflect in public policies and there can be no harm to Muslim peoples. Thus, his political career as a member of representative has provided his democratic roles in Thai society. He has tried his best in his ability and roles to uplift the local people in particular and the Thai peoples in general. He even pushed his will to regulate and form Islamic Bank in Thailand during the time of Thairakthai government. His political leadership among the Muslims and Thai Buddhists are well received in Thailand, this is due to his strict adherence to Islamic principles, being highly trusted by contemporary political leaders, and receiving continuous supports from general peoples in local and national levels.²⁰

In addition, it can be discussed further that political party system may allow Muslim minority to establish their own political party. It was apparent that a group of Muslims have established a political group like “Wadah” or a political party like “Prachachat Party or Ummah Party in 2017” are the opened opportunity provided by democratic values. On the one hand, Islam does not teach to stick to the party alone or give a submissive loyalty to the party’s consensus, but Islamic principles teach us to stick to the right and wrong according to Islamic injunctions, and to what is permissible or impermissible in Islam. To reflect this in detail one may have a look into the stance of Wan

¹⁸ “Bibliography of the President of National Assembly and the Speaker of the House of Representatives” see the details in web.parliament.go.th, see the details also in Thuan Iskandar Dato’ Mulia, “The role of political Leader of Wan Muhammad Noor Matha in Thai Politics.” (Ph.D. s’ Dissertation) Bangkok, Ramkhamhaeng university, 2024) p.92-249

¹⁹ Most members are local and national Muslims in the four southern-border provinces of Thailand, led by a member of parliament of that time, Mr. Den To’mina

²⁰ Thuan Iskandar Dato’ Mulia, “The role of political Leader of Wan Muhammad Noor Matha in Thai Politics.” (Ph.D. s’ Dissertation) Bangkok, Ramkhamhaeng University, 2024. abstract.

Muhammad Noor Matha on the issue of the law of equal marriage for LGBTQ. It is clear that he rejected this law and he became the minority against the majority's advocacy. This is how Islamic Asalah Solution worked in the case of Muslim political leadership.

It can be considered also that the application of democratic values of Muslim minority in Thailand can come through the role of Islamic organizations and individuals especially the Muslim political leaders since there are official apparatuses to deal with Muslims' problems (Ummah's problems). From the Islamic organizations role, Chularatchamontri Office, Central Islamic Committee Office, Provincial Islamic Committee Office, and mosques, have their authority to implement what are the needs and services requested by Muslims. The implementation of Islamic Act 1997 have been in practice in order to settle Muslims problems and needs, and the roles played rely much on the hand of political leadership with the combination of religious learned men. Therefore the roles and duties of Islamic organizations play great part in solving problems confronted Thai Muslims, for example Islamophobia is one of the problems faced by Thai Muslims, the Islamic organizations can also settle this problem as Naris Amincen has pointed out that one of the roles of Muslim leaders or officers in the Islamic organization is to ensure that people of other religions understand Islam and accept the concept of tolerance and plurality in democratic system.²¹

From the above-mentioned researcher's findings, it can be pointed out that Islamic Asalah Solution works well for Muslims in applying of democratic values and practices to the problems of minority Muslims in Thailand. The two cases have represented the individual and organizational roles in solving Muslims problems reflecting some major characteristics of Islamic Asalah Solution. In other words, the Islamic Asalah Solution is one of the tools used in Islamization project whose objective are to protect Islamic values and practices at the same time to advance for the development of Muslims in modern state system, where foreign and western ideas and practices may jeopardize Muslims' faith. However, one should keep in mind that Islam does not prevent western and modern developments but it promotes sustainable developments by inculcating Islamic Ethics in the means and ends of all processes of development.

0. CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION

In summary, the study of "The Application of Democratic Values for Muslim Minority in the Kingdom of Thailand" is aimed to highlight the democratic

²¹ Naris Amincen, *Roles of Islamic Organization per the Royal Act Concerning the Administration of Islamic Organizations (1997) in Response to Islamophobia Circumstance*. (Ph.D. 's Dissertation) Bangkok, Ramkhamhaeng University, 2023, pp.190-203.

values and their differences from Islamic viewpoints. Secondly, it aims to look into the applications of democratic values for Muslim minority in the Kingdom of Thailand with two different selected cases, the selection of Muslim leadership for provincial and central Islamic Committees according to Islamic Act 1997, and the democratic role of Muslim Political Leadership of Wan Mohammad Nor Matha, a current President of Thai Parliament. The study is a qualitative work using an eclectic approach in selecting data and guiding by *Islamic Asalah Solution* framework for its analysis. The findings reveal that some of democratic values become democratic principles and some are not, and some of them are compatible with Islamic values and teachings, however some democratic values are confronted with Islamic teaching, such as the majority rule's conquer doesn't mean the only prime and right judgment for Islam, the loyalty for party system is not the ultimate destination for Islam except the satisfaction of Allah's commands, and election is not the only right means for recruitment of leaders, but there are some superior and worthy apparatus like consultative process of the learned and experienced ones (*Shura*) Moreover, one of the most important conflicting value is very clear, that is, Democracy highlights human satisfaction or majority, but Islam prioritizes Allah's satisfaction or *Islamic Shariah* is over the human-made laws. The second finding shows that the applications of democratic values for Muslim minority in Thailand through organization or individuals are adapted in accordance to *Islamic Asalah Solution* framework where Islamization plays great role in shaping behaviors and application of democratic values. Muslims in Thailand have adjusted their election of Muslim leadership with *Shura*, selection, and what is not contradicted to Islamic teaching. For the role of Muslim political leader of Wan Muhammd Noor Matha shows that he has, in some certain extent, satisfied both Muslims and non-Muslims as reflected from public policies proposed and opposed by him. He is well accepted as a key Muslim minority leader and democratic political leader who has fought for both causes of Islamic and democratic principles.

The suggestions from this research is that there are very few Muslim political leaders, like Wan Muhammad Noor Matha, who can play the role of Islamization of various aspects in Thai society. The other leaders like religious leaders have very limited impact to modern society and public policies. As long as they are not members of parliament, they can do lesser role in Thai politics. Thus, there should be pushing and grooming the new and qualified generation of political leaders, who are well-versed of both Islamic knowledge and western skills in Thai politics.

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