

## **REPRESENTATIVE BUREAUCRACY: THE MALAYSIAN PERSPECTIVE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Since being coined by Kingsley in 1944, representative bureaucracy has become a major concern in the study of public administration. The theory of representative bureaucracy developed at a time when there was concern about unelected officials holding important positions in government agencies. This article examines the development and representativeness of the Malaysian civil service. Malay, Chinese and Indian are the three major ethnic groups in the country. In 2010, the country population consists of 55.1% Malays, 24.3% Chinese, 7.4% Indians and 13.2% others. However, the civil service has as high as 76.2% Malay but only 6.0% Chinese and 4.1% Indian representations. Racial preference in recruitment and promotion is said to be the main reason behind the increasingly mono-ethnic of the civil service. Traditionally, males were over-represented in the civil service at all levels. However, the trend has been reversed in recent years due to the continuing preponderance of female graduates and hence applicants for government jobs. Therefore, the concern over the representativeness of the Malaysian bureaucracy is less on gender but more on ethnicity representations. This article argues that increasing the representativeness of the bureaucracy would ensure equitable responsiveness, strengthen capacity and legitimacy of the government in the diverse society.

**KEYWORDS:** Representative Bureaucracy, Civil Service, Public Administration, Diversity, Racial Preference