Examining the Representation of Ethnic Minority Groups and Women in the Malaysian Civil Service

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I. Introduction

One of the key issues in public administration to emerge over the past generations has been the extent to which bureaucracy is representative of society. In a democratically-elected government, representative bureaucracy is an important indicator of the government's commitment to racial and sexual equality. The concept of representative bureaucracy requires that a composition of bureaucracy mirrors all major groups in society (Mosher, 1968; Dresang, 1974; Meier, 1975; Kranz, 1976; Krislov and Rosenbloom, 1981; Kim, 1994; Lim, 2006). The representative character refers not only to the proportion of the population in bureaucracy but also to the level of responsibility and functional distribution of that population. Thus, a bureaucracy that reflects the diversity of the population

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is likely to be more responsive to the needs and aspirations of women and minority groups in society. Substantial empirical research on this argument seems to support this thesis.

Building a representative bureaucracy is desirable because it adds legitimacy to the government. Yet, translating this normative appeal of the concept into specific policies designed to attract and recruit more women and minorities into the civil service is undeniably difficult. The unattractiveness of working in the public service is further exacerbated by the negative rhetoric toward government service. The cumulative impact of the negative aspects of the lives of the public administrators is making government at all levels frustrating and unattractive for many Malaysians. For example, negative public attitudes toward government, unrelenting news media, rigid decision making procedures, politicians and interest groups continuously attack and over-criticize, and unreasonable public expectations drive the talented people away from the civil service. It is in this context that the exclusion of certain groups of people in the civil service makes the bureaucracy less representative. On the other hand, one can argue that no bureaucracy can be perfectly representative and if it were possible, a perfectly representative bureaucracy that includes all segments of people would be undesirable. A true application on the meaning of the concept is to make bureaucracy more or less representative.

This paper begins by outlining the importance of an inclusive civil service within the context of the cultural and ethnic diversity of the population. It then turns to an analysis of the inclusion of women and minorities into the civil service. In the context of Malaysia, two issues stand out: (1) the Malayanization of the bureaucracy, and (2) the role of women and minority groups in the civil service. Are women and minority

groups represented in the civil service proportionate to their numbers in society, at various levels of government, and in the different functional groups? Finally, the options and strategies available to make the Malaysian civil service more representative will be discussed. The authors have used the statistics of racial distribution in the Malaysian civil service that are currently available, but the latest statistics were not available to the public.

A shift from avoidance to acceptance of the reality that bureaucracy would continue to generate power in the policy making process fosters demand for a more representative bureaucracy. Rourke (1978) contends that although a powerful bureaucracy threatens the traditional freedoms of a democratic society, bureaucratic power can be used to protect and extend those freedoms. Donald Kingsley (1944) is generally credited with promoting the subject of representative bureaucracy. The idea of a representative bureaucracy was further highlighted during the Minnowbrook Conference in 1968. In describing the themes of the conferences, Marini (1971) points out that we were reminded of relevance, social problems, personal morality, innovation, clients, the evils of hierarchy and bureaucracy. In other words, bureaucracy has power and thus needs to be included in the scheme of representation and social justice. Representative bureaucracy has now become essential in a democratic political system (Mosher, 1968; Dresang, 1974; Meier, 1975; Kranz, 1976; Krislov and Rosenbloom, 1981; Kim, 1994; Lim, 2006). Riggs (1970) asserts that representation in all forms of government is critical to the stability of that government and he points to the rise of public rebellion in various countries as a consequence of the failure to have an equitable representation in the political dimensions of government and its administration.

The concept of affirmative action in the bureaucracy is essentially an attempt to increase the social composition of the bureaucracy to reflect that of the whole population, especially certain underrepresented groups such as women and African Americans in the US (Kernaghan and Siegel, 1989: Meier, 1975, 1979, 1993). The idea that a diverse workforce is more sensitive to customers' demands is also gaining momentum in the private sector. Kiel (1994) believes that an organization that is reflective of its population will have a better understanding of its clients' needs. Similarly, Dresang (1974) agrees that an organization, which mirrors society, allows itself a greater participation by various groups. Furthermore, a large number of private organizations have considered employment diversity to be a good business strategy (Darling, 1991; Howes, 1993). Both Darling and Howes argue that affirmative action has now become a prerequisite for future success or even survival for any organization.

II. The Legacy of Colonial Administration and the Malayanization Policy

The increasing British hegemony in Southeast Asia created a need for an efficient administration to better coordinate its economic activities. As a result, a distinct Malayan Civil Service (MCS) resembling that of the British Administrative Class and the Indian Civil Service was formed to protect its interests as well as the welfare of its citizens in the area (Ryan, 1965). In addition, subsequent developments in Malaysia further necessitated the formation of a reliable civil service. This was more apparent especially after the 1874 Pangkor Treaty, which was signed between the British and the Sultan of Perak. In this treaty, the States of

Selangor, Perak, Negeri Sembilan, and Pahang agreed to constitute their countries as a Federation to be known as the Protected Malay States, to be administered under the advice of the British Government. The British government, meanwhile, would oversee the administration of these states especially in the collection and control of revenues through its representative to known as the "Resident." All matters relating to Malay religion and custom will be left under the jurisdiction of the rulers of those states. A post of Resident General was established and placed in the federal capital, Kuala Lumpur. The Resident General was responsible for the formulation of policies to be implemented in the newly created Federated Malay States (FMS) (Puthucheary 1978, 4).

In addition, the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909 (or Bangkok Treaty of 1909 made between the United Kingdom and the Kingdom of Siam signed in Bangkok) further solidified Britain's control over Malaya. After this treaty, the Siamese government agreed to relinquish the rights it had over the four northern states of the Peninsula, namely Terengganu, Kelantan, Kedah, and Perlis. At about the same time, the ruler of Johor signed an agreement with the British seeking protection from his enemies. As a result, Malaya was divided into three distinct groups: the Straits Settlements of Penang, Malacca, and Singapore, the Federated Malay States of Pahang, Perak, Selangor, and Negeri Sembilan, and the unfederated Malay States (UFMS) of Johor, Kelantan, Terengganu, Perlis, and Kedah. The Straits Settlement and the FMS were under the jurisdiction of a British Governor while the power and influence over the UFMS were exercised through a British advisor in each of those states.

Administrative Structure

The administrative structure of FMS resembled that of a crown colony whereby the British Resident of each state acted as the chief executive. The administration of the states was further divided into several administrative districts. A British District Officer was then responsible as collector of land revenues, Magistrate, and as general administrator with special responsibility for the Malayan population of the states (Gullick, 1981). Meanwhile, a traditional concept of local government was preserved in which a "*Penghulu*" (Village Headman) continued to perform minor administrative and policing jobs. The continuation of the traditional system was essential to reduce resistance from the masses as well as to ensure continued submission of the locals to the British government (Tregonning, 1964).

The top positions in the MCS continued to be occupied by British officials. The Malays, on the other hand, only filled the lower positions and performed mostly minor tasks such as clerical duties and police duties. Yet, these Malayan officials continued to act as the intermediaries between the British administrators and the local masses. The lack of Malayan officials in the top management positions in the MCS was a cause of concern for Malayan political leaders. Hence, in 1910, the Malayan Administrative Service (MAS) was established to ensure the existence of a qualified pool of Malayan officials who could be promoted to MCS (Puthucheary, 1978). However, the rate of promotion among senior Malayan officials in MAS to the MCS was extremely low. This was largely a result of lower qualifications among Malayan administrators. While claiming that these Malayan officials were not prepared to handle responsibilities in managerial positions, the British were reluctant to provide adequate

training to equip these officials for higher positions. Hence, the normal process for MAS officials to be promoted to MCS took a minimum of ten years. As a result, only 31 Malayan officials had successfully gained employment in MCS by 1941 (Puthucheary, 1978).

The invasion of the Japanese army on February 15, 1942, which lasted for almost three years, temporarily halted the colonial administration. There was no significant administrative development during this time. After the war, the British government decided to establish a single administrative unit covering all the states in Malaya with the exception of Singapore (Tregonning, 1964). Thus, the Malayan Union was formed in late 1945. However, the Union came under severe attack from Malayan political leaders who disagreed with a very liberal citizenship requirement for the newly formed British colony. Under intense pressure from Malayan political leaders, the British colonial administration dissolved the Malayan Union and instead formed the Federation of Malaya on February 1, 1948. Under this new federal system, federal government remained the sovereign power, and states and local government were still under the direct authority of British officials (Gullick, 1981).

Post-Colonial Administration (1957-1970)

On August 31, 1957, Malaya officially gained independence from the British government. However, even if Malaya was no longer under direct supervision from the British colonial government, its bureaucracy was still staffed by expatriate officers. Higher civil service remained exclusively in the hands of British officials. As a result, there was a deliberate attempt by the country's leaders to slowly integrate Malaya's community into the civil service. The "Malayanization Scheme" was then established in 1956 to

slowly replace the expatriate officials with the locally recruited native officials and was successfully completed in 1965 (Puthucheary, 1978). The scheme brought significant changes to the demographic characteristic of the civil service. In particular, there was a significant reduction of expatriate officials in MCS, from 67% in July 1957 to only 9.2% in 1962 (Tilman, 1964; Allen, 1968). The following table illustrates the changing trend of higher civil servants after the implementation of the Malayanization Scheme.

<Table 1> Ethnic Representation in the Higher Civil Service (1957 and 1962)

Ethnicity	1957		1962	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Expatriates	1687	61.1	409	14.1
Malayan	390	14.1	850	29.3
Chinese	366	13.2	987	34.0
Indians	191	7.0	462	15.9
Other	127	4.6	194	6.7
Total	2761	100.0	2902	100.0

Source: Tilman (1964: 70).

However, the Malayanization Scheme was implemented without regard to the ethnic background of the civil servants. Thus, there was a clear inequality among ethnic groups in the higher civil service. For example, the Malayans continued to dominate the administrative and semi-professional services largely due to their lack of professional and technical qualifications. On the other hand, the colonial educational policy that allowed English education for the non-Malayans enabled them to dominate professional and technical services such as the judicial and legal services,

medical as well as public work services. Malay administrators tended to concentrate on the administrative services while minority administrators were overly represented in the professional services.

The ethnic separation based upon function in the higher civil service continued to proliferate among the new recruits. The English-educated Chinese and Indians benefited most in terms of employment opportunities. In her thesis, Diana Ooi (1966) succinctly describes the advantage of an English education in that there were three main avenues of employment open to the English educated—government, private commercial and own employment. The field was limited in government service to the general clerical service, by far the largest unit, junior technical jobs to run the public utilities, teaching, and medicine (Ooi, 1966).

In 1973, the Malaysian government implemented an affirmative action program, setting a quota of 55% of university places for Malay and the remaining 45% for Chinese and Indian students. The university quota system created considerable unhappiness among the Chinese and Indians (Puthucheary, 1978). The Malayans, despite the quota system that gave them special privileges in employment in the public service were unable to qualify for posts in the professional and technical services. The following table illustrates the concentration of new government recruits in the civil service. The data indicate that Malayans were mostly employed in the middle and lower echelons of the civil service while there were more non-Malays in the managerial and professional level.

<Table 2> Ethnic Compositions of New Recruits into the Federal Civil Service, 1969-1972

Grade	Malays		Non-Malays		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Managerial and Professional	1228	41.7	1718	58.3	2946	100
Executive	1602	62.2	973	37.8	2575	100
Technical and Clerical	18048	87.0	2697	13.0	20745	100
Total	20878	79.5	5388	20.5	26266	100

Source: Figures extracted from Prime Minister's speech in Parliament, 25 April 1973.

The predominance of Malayans in the civil service was of great concern to non-Malayan political leaders. These leaders accused the government of purposely excluding the non-Malayans in government jobs. One accusation was that even if the number of non-Malayans far exceeded that of the Malayans in the higher civil service, their number in the overall federal and state public services remained significantly lower than the Malayans (Goh, 1968). As a result, there was tension between Malayan and non-Malayan political leaders, and this conflict was often cited as one of the major causes of the 1969 race riots in Kuala Lumpur. On the other hand, Malaysian political leaders claimed that the deliberate attempt to give special preferences to Malaysians in government positions was to ensure adequate Malaysian representation especially in the professional and technical services. The colonial administration, which concentrated on providing general education for the Malaysians, had indeed deprived them of their opportunities to fill managerial positions in the civil service. Consequently, the quota system under the New Economic Policy (NEP)

was introduced as a short-term measure to achieve proportionate representation in the government sector.[1] More detailed information on the quota system will be given in the following sections.

The New Economic Policy (1970–1990)

The racial animosity and ethnic tensions that reached their peak in the 1969 racial riots prompted the government to remedy the racial inequalities. As a result, the New Economic Policy (NEP; *Dasar Ekonomi Baru* in Malay) was launched in 1970, which specifically aimed to eliminate the identification of race with economic function as well as to eradicate poverty among all races (Ariffin, 1992). Government would aggressively intervene to ensure that over a twenty-year period the Bumiputra[2] (or Bumiputera) share of the country's economy would expand from 2 percent in 1970 to "30 percent" in 1990. Government would also provide more

[1] In addition, the Malaysian leaders also claim that Malaysians had also felt alienated by the lack of opportunities for Malaysians to gain employment in the private sector, which was dominated exclusively by the non-Malaysians.

[2] *Bumiputra* is a Malaysian term to describe the Malay race and other indigenous peoples of Southeast Asia. This term comes from the Sanskrit word *bhumiputra*, which can be translated literally as son of the land (the soil). In the 1970s, the Malaysian government implemented policies to favor and generate opportunities, and to defuse inter-ethnic tensions following the extended violence against Chinese Malaysians in the 13 May Incident in 1969. Preferential policies include quotas for the following: admission to government educational institutions, qualification for public scholarships, positions in government, and ownership of businesses. Such related policies were established in the New Economic Policy (NEP) period and many policies focused on trying to achieve a Bumiputra share of corporate equity, comprising at least 30% of the total. Definitions of Bumiputra in public use vary among different institutions, organizations, and government departments and agencies.

employment opportunities for Malaysians especially in managerial and professional positions. Preferential treatment would be given to Bumiputra for entrance into the university system. Mandarin and Tamil-medium schooling were maintained and given sufficient funding.

Evaluation of the NEP after 1990 indicated positive progress, though not substantive, in the Malaysian community. A large urban middle class has been created and Malaysian equity in the economy has increased to 20 percent, somewhat less than the original target of 30 percent. Malaysians are widely represented in managerial positions whether in public or private sectors. Malaysian leaders opine that without government-directed social engineering programs they would not have been able to break the inherently unjust division of labor from the colonial legacy that victimized them individually and collectively (Esman, 1974, 1994). Meanwhile, non-Malaysians complained of discrimination in higher education and in government employment. Non-Malaysians feared that preferential treatment given to Bumiputra would be a permanent feature and thus deprive them of fair competition in government as well as in the private sector. By emphasizing that social equity is a necessary ingredient for a stable and harmonious society, they continue to press the government to respect their legitimate rights as citizens. Officially the term of the NEP ended in 1990, but it can be said that much of it remained in effect through other governmental policies.

III. The Concept of Malayan Special Rights

The Special Rights of Malayans is essential in discussing the theory of representative bureaucracy. The Bumiputras, a group comprised of the

Malayans and other indigenous groups feel that they should have a dominant place in the government and the public service. As a result, the concept of Malayan Special Rights was manifested and guaranteed under Article 153 of the Federal Constitution which stipulates that the King is responsible for safeguarding the special positions of the Bumiputras and shall reserve for the Bumiputras a reasonable proportion of the positions in the public service, educational institutions, scholarships, and business permits or licenses (Rahim, 1988, 13).[3] To this effect, the quota system was implemented in the selection of civil servants in the Judicial and Legal Service, the External Affairs Service, and the Customs Service (Means, 1972).

The concept of Malayan Special Rights originated with the British rule in the Malayan states in 1874. The philosophy behind this concept was that even though Malayans were subjected to British colonialism, they were still the rightful owners of the country. As such, the British felt that the positions of the Malayans should be protected and maintained through a special status. The large-scale migration of Chinese and Indian laborers into the country further alienated the Malayans from the main economic activities. Thus, in order to maintain a colonial rule that would be seen as in the interests of the indigenous Malayans, the concept of "protection" was introduced by the British (Lim 1985).

In Malaysia, ethnic representation in the civil service has been a major political issue since the colonial time. The colonial government actively

[3] The special position of the Malays has been provided in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia, in particular, Article 153. However, the constitution does not use the term "Bumiputra."

recruited British officers to fill the higher positions in the Malaysian civil service while leaving the subordinate posts to the local citizens. Meanwhile, the English-educated Chinese and Indian immigrants also benefited from this arrangement because an English education paved the way for employment in government as well as private enterprises (Ooi, 1966). The local community, namely the Malayans, was not in a position to work in the upper echelon of the civil service because they were mainly educated in the Malayan schools. The British continued to dominate the upper level of the civil service until the late 1950s when the new government implemented the "Malayanization Scheme" aimed at replacing the expatriate officers with local officers. This scheme ensured a greater number of Malayan officers in the senior bureaucracy.

Meanwhile, the communist insurgency during the 1950s forced the government to differentiate between the Chinese whose loyalty was to Malaysia and those whose loyalty was in doubt. As a result of this, in 1952 General Sir Gerald Templer, the British High Commissioner at the time, introduced a quota system in the recruitment of non-Malayans into the senior bureaucracy. This move was justified based on the fact that "……The special position of the Malays should be retained in the Civil Service and improved in the whole economic field. To this end certain safeguards are necessary. This is at once evident from the fact that in the First Division of the other branches of the public service, excluding Police, which other branches have long been open to Asians of all races, there are today 235 non-Malay Asians as compared with only 91 Malays" (Legislative Council of the Federation of Malay, 1952). General Sir Gerald Templer proposed that, as one of the safeguards, the number of non-Malay Federal citizens who are admitted into the Malayan Civil Service shall be

limited to one for every four Malays admitted into that service in the future (Legislative Council of the Federation of Malay, 1952).

After Malaysia celebrated its independence in 1957, the economically underprivileged Malayan community dominated the political landscape. As a result, the Constitution was set up in such a way that it gave preferential treatment to the Malayan community. For example, Article 153 of the Federal Constitution gives the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong* (the King) the authority, on the advice of the cabinet, to reserve for the Malayans, "such proportion of positions in the public service as he may deem reasonable" (Sheridan and Groves, 1967, 184). Consequently, the quota system for the Malayans in the higher civil service remains in effect. Notwithstanding, Article 136 of the Constitution further stipulates that all officers in the public service must be treated impartially and discrimination on the basis of race is forbidden. The quota or preferential system guaranteed the dominance of the Malayan officers at the higher level of the civil service especially in the Judiciary, External Affairs, and Customs. At the same time, no quotas were in place for the professional and technical services. Table 3 illustrates the new trend in the composition of the federal higher civil service in 1970 and 1980.

<Table 3> Ethnic Composition of the Federal Higher Civil Service (Division I Posts)

Ethnic Group	1970	1980
Malayans	1,863 (39.3%)	9,176 (51.29%)
Chinese	1,636 (34.5%)	5,919 (33.08%)
Indians	961 (20.3%)	2,478 (13.85%)
Others	284 (5.9%)	318 (1.78%)
Total	4,744 (100%)	17,891 (100%)

Source: Government of Malaysia (1970, 1980).

However, despite the quota system, the Malayan community was underrepresented in the higher civil service. The gap was more apparent especially in the professional and technical services. Because of their educational background, Malayan officers tended to concentrate on the administrative and semi-professional services as shown in Table 4.

<Table 4> Ethnic Composition of Selected Services in the Federal Higher Civil Service, 1968 (percent)

Ethnic Group	MCS[4]	Public Works	Medical	Education
Malayans	86.7%	16.4%	10.1%	32.2%
Chinese	6.4%	63.8%	40.7%	40.3%
Indians	6.4%	18.7%	44.6%	24.0%
Others	0.5%	1.1%	4.6%	3.5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Esman (1974: 76-77).

The predominance of Malayans in the higher civil service has become a source of heated political debates among Malayan and non-Malayan political leaders and has been officially highlighted as one of the major causes of the 1969 racial riots in Kuala Lumpur. Yet, the proponents of the quota system argue that the quota is necessary to fix the short-term problem of achieving adequate Malayan representation in the higher civil service, particularly in the science and technical fields. Secondly, the main reason for implementing the quota system is the legacy of the colonial

[4] A Malayan Civil Service (MCS) was created by the British Colonial government to protect British interests as well as the British subjects in Malaya. It was similar to the British Administrative Class.

administration, which was keen on providing only general education for Malayans so that they continued to fill positions in administrative and semi-professional jobs such as Customs, Postal, and Immigration Departments. Table 5 compares the educational level of Malayan officers and the non-Malayan officers in the higher civil service in 1971.

<Table 5> Educational Levels of the Higher Civil Service by Ethnic Origin, 1971 (percent)

Highest Educational Attainment	Malayans	Non-Malayans
Masters and Doctoral	63.7%	92.8%
Bachelor	13.2%	4.8%
Diploma/Certificate/Secondary School Level	23.1%	2.4%
Total	100%	100%

Source: Malaysian Home and Foreign Service (1971).

According to a report of the Centre for Public Policy Studies (2005) based in Kuala Lumpur, the Malaysian civil service has become increasingly non-representative especially since the start of the NEP. In other words, the NEP made a substantial impact on the representation of Malayans in the Malaysian civil service. The outcome is that today the Malaysian civil service is predominantly Malayan. Table 6 shows the latest figures for the civil service released by the government (Oriental Daily News, 2005; Centre for Public Policy Studies, 2006). According to Table 6, Malayans are now over-represented in the Malaysian civil service and other ethnic groups, including non-Malayan Bumiputras, are under-represented. As of 2005, Malayans account for 77.03 percent of the entire civilian civil service. The percentage of Malayans increases with level: it is 75.77 percent for the Support Group, 81.65 percent for the Management and

Professional Group, and 83.95 percent for the Top Management Group. Thus, it is fair to say that the NEP has made a substantial impact in the composition of the Malaysian civil service over the years.

<Table 6> Ethnic Composition of the Malaysian Civil Service, 2005

Ethnic Group	Top Management Group		Management and Professional Group		Support Group		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Malay	1,370	83.95	155,871	81.65	535,495	75.77	692,736	77.03
Chinese	151	9.25	17,896	9.37	66,248	9.37	84,295	9.37
Indian	83	5.08	9,777	5.12	36,194	5.12	46,054	5.12
Other Bumi-putra	23	1.41	6,156	3.22	63,649	9.01	69,828	7.77
Others	5	0.31	1,203	0.63	5,129	0.73	6,337	0.70
Total	1,632	100	190,903	100	706,715	100	899,250	100

Note: the data does not include the police and armed forces.

Source: Oriental Daily News (2005) and Centre for Public Policy Studies (2006).

IV. Female Representation in Government

Colonization as well as the socio-cultural milieu that permeates traditional society reinforces the stereotype that women's role is limited to taking care of the domestic sphere (Ahmad, 1999; Ariffin, 1992; Yousof and Siegel, 1994.). As a result, the issue of female representation in the civil service only gained momentum after the establishment of the New Economic Policy in 1970 when government introduced various educational reforms aimed at increasing the entry of women into schools and universities. Since then, a large number of women have entered the job market. For example, statistics reveal that the percentage of women in the

government service's workforce increased steadily from 13.7% in 1957 to 27.0% in 1980 and to 30.6% in 1987 (Ariffin, 1992). Even though women are making substantial inroads into government service, their presence is limited to the lower echelon in the civil service. Consequently, the issue has drawn much debate especially from various female politicians and non-governmental organizations, which argue that since women now comprise half of the population[5], their presence in positions of power and authority such as in the higher civil service is essential to insure that interests of women are taken care of. The argument clearly bodes well for the proponents of representative bureaucracy who claim that a bureaucracy is only legitimate if its composition reflects the population it serves.

Data on women in the civil service, especially during the pre-independence period, is lacking, but scattered evidence indicates the contribution of women as low-level manual workers as far back as 1921. These women were mainly Chinese and Indian immigrants. The increase of formal education among Malayan women in the 1940s saw a small number of them venturing into government jobs as teachers, nurses, and clerical staff. However, it was only after independence that the number of women in government service grew considerably (Ariffin, 1992). Compared with men, female employees had to go through several obstacles before achieving equal status with men. For instance, it was only in 1964 that women were admitted into the Malaysian Civil Service, now known as the Administrative and Diplomatic Service. Five years later, female employees

[5] According to the 2000 Census, there are 11.42 million women in Malaysia out of total population of 23.27 million. Further, there are 3.24 million women who are employed in various sectors throughout the country (Department of Statistics, 2000).

began to enjoy equal pay with their male counterparts and by 1971 they were accorded permanent employment status regardless of their marital status.

The provisions that enable women to become permanent civil service employees certainly help them increase their share in the public service workforce. While the proportion of male officers is declining, female officers continue to show their presence in the government. For example, women only made up of 13.7% in 1957 but rose to 27% in 1980 and 30.6% in 1987. On the contrary, men's proportion continued to spiral downward from 86.3% in 1957, to 73% in 1980 and 69.4% in 1987. Table 7 depicts the composition of civil service based on gender.

<Table 7> Staff in the Government Sector by Gender (percent)

Gender	1957	1967	1980	1987
Men	86.3%	79.0%	73.0%	69.4%
Women	13.7%	21.0%	27.0%	30.6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Ariffin (1992: 17).

Although the number of women in the civil service continues to grow, the increase is notable in only a few sectors such as education and health services. In addition, the rapid increase of women in the government tends to be predominantly concentrated on the lower echelon of the civil service. Women's entrance into key positions of power and authority, especially in Division A group, continues to be notably lacking. Specifically, women are concentrated in the National Archives, Education Service, Department of Inland Revenue, and Medical and Health Services. Table 8 illustrates the distribution of women in various groups in the government.

<Table 8> The distribution of Women in the Civil Service According to Divisional Group

Divisional Group	1968	1987	Growth Rate
Division A	244 (1.1%)	19,032 (8.9%)	22.9%
Division B	748 (3.2%)	15,066 (7.0%)	15.8%
Division C	15,804 (68.5%)	104,153 (48.5)	9.9%
Division D	6,268 (27.2%)	76,563 (35.6%)	13.2%
Total	23,064 (100%)	214,814 (100%)	

Source: Government of Malaysia (1988).

The New Economic Policy (NEP) that was established in 1970 further enhanced the educational opportunities for Malayan women. This opportunity subsequently paved the way for their participation in both the public and private sectors. As a result, Malayan female representation in the higher civil service has also risen significantly from the previous time. Table 9 shows the number of women in the higher civil service in 1980 as compared with 1971. Although their presence is significantly higher, it still pales in comparison with the number of male officers at that level. What is worse, female officers are still considered a "rare species" in the Administrative and Diplomatic Service.

<Table 9> Composition of Women in the MCS, 1971 and 1980

Year	Number of Women in the MCS (Malays, Chinese, Indians, and others)	Total Number of MCS Officers	Percent
1971	16	782	2.05
1980	150	1507	9.95

Source: Malaysian Home and Foreign Service (1971, 1980).

Note: 1971 and 1980 figures were based on the Federal Staff list of 1971 and 1980.

In terms of ethnicity, in 1971, there was only one non-Malayan woman in the MCS. However, their number rose to 45 in 1980. This phenomenon is not unusual because non-Malayan women who are English-educated tend to secure their positions in professional and technical fields such as medicine and public works just like the non-Malayan public officers. Table 10 below illustrates the difference between the numbers of Malayan female officers in various services compared to non-Malayan female officers. The fact that non-Malayan officers had the highest representation in the medical service and public works was due to various opportunities provided to them to pursue courses in medicine, engineering, and other professional fields that require an English education.

<Table 10> Ethnic Compositions of Women in Selected Services in the Higher Civil Service, 1971 and 1980

	1971			1980		
Ethnicity	MCS	Public Works	Medicine	MCS	Public Works	Medicine
Malays	15	0	1	105	47	71
Chinese	1	24	59	30	53	227
Indians and Others	0	0	86	15	0	214
Total	16	24	146	150	100	512

Source: Malaysian Home and Foreign Service (1971, 1980).

Note: 1971 and 1980 figures were based on the Federal Staff list of 1971 and 1980.

The advancement of women in Malaysia is often dependent upon their access to decision makers in politics and government (Yousof and Siegel,

1994). Historically, female employees had to face several obstacles before being accepted into the civil service. The equal pay as well as the permanent employment status had been in place only fourteen years since the country gained its independence. Despite their slow progress, women's participation in government services has steadily increased from 27 percent in 1980 to 33.6 percent in 1991 (Mansor and Rosnah, 1993). Several factors are important in this regard, the most significant being the increased opportunities to be educated in institutions of higher learning. In addition, the expansion of government services in such areas as education, health, and welfare helped fuel the demand for female civil servants. However, the largest concentration of women in the public workforce tends to be in the lower echelon posts such as clerks, stenographers, and manual workers. In 1984, only 244 women or 1.1 percent were in professional and managerial positions. The number rose to 19,032 (8.9%) in 1987 and 25,050 (10.5%) in 1991. Table 11 shows the distribution of women in the different divisions in government.

<Table 11> Distribution of Women in the Government Services

Group Division	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
Group A	244	19032	19962	21367	22965	25050
Group B	748	15066	15475	16551	17805	23461
Group C	15804	104153	105551	109366	113686	11596
Group D	6268	76563	7097	76766	75329	74708
Total	23064	214814	218084	223050	229785	238415

Source: Government of Malaysia (1992).

In addition to lack of women in managerial positions, women also tend to be concentrated in traditional jobs such as in health, medical, and education services. They still align themselves with gender stereotypical roles such as providers of care and child rearing. There are also a lot more female nurses than doctors or hospital administrators. The under representation of women in the management and professional division is clearly a cause of concern for many female leaders. The gap between men and women's representation widens as they move to higher divisions. In 1999, women made up of almost 50 percent of the total registered voters (Ahmad, 1999). Yet, their presence at the decision-making level either in government or politics is not very encouraging compared to their overall population. For example, there are only three female cabinet ministers in the government today, an increase of one since 1990. In the federal, state, and local government, female employees constitute a higher percentage in the support groups rather than in top management positions (See Table 12).

<Table 12> Women in Malaysian Public Service, 1999

Title of Post (Top Four Levels)	Women in top decision-making level in the Federal Civil Service		Women in top decision-making level in the State Civil Service		Women in top decision-making level in the Local Government	
	Number	Percent of women appointed to that level	Number	Percent of women appointed to that level	Number	Percent of women appointed to that level
Chief Secretary to the Government	0	0	0	0	0	0
Superscale Levels (A, B, and C)	21	10.9	0	0	0	0
Professional and Management	30,965	50.0	517	15.6	135	22.7

Source: Ahmad (1999).

In spite of the significant progress in government employment compared with thirty years ago, gender equality remains an important issue in the context of ensuring an equitable representation of women, especially in the top management positions in government services. The lack of women in the higher echelon of bureaucracy is clearly an issue that needs to be addressed quickly by the government. In addition, the ever-increasing role of women in all sectors in Malaysia makes it even necessary to have more women in the decision-making levels in politics as well as in government services. Women are under-represented in the higher civil service. Specifically, Malayan women continue to be under-represented in the professional and technical services. The increase of educated women in the labor market, and the fact that the female population comprises half of the country's population, makes it necessary to have more women in the higher civil service. Moreover, more family-friendly policies need to be introduced in the Malaysian civil service in order reduce family-related burdens for women in Malaysia.

As of late, attempts have been made by the government through various measures such as constitutional change, executive orders, as well as the establishment of the Ministry of Women and Family Development to correct the imbalance of women in government, politics, and private sector. It seems that women have steadily increased their participation in Group A posts, particularly in key positions of power and authority. Yet, the issue that continues to be debated is whether the presence of women and minorities in the higher civil service yields benefits to their groups, such that the policy decisions they make promote the interests and demands of women and minority groups.

V. Policy Implications and Conclusions

The analysis suggests that government agencies need to create a culture that values diversity and encourages substantive policy decisions that promote the interests and wishes of historically disadvantaged groups. The first step is to build a diversity awareness program. The program will focus on administrators to make sure that they have an increased sensitivity to the multicultural differences that exist among the co-workers and the customers. The second step is to set up a training program for managers to teach diversity skills. The training modules should be geared toward recognizing the value of diversity in different teams and demonstrating how diverse teams are more creative and productive than homogenous teams. The third step is to form diversity resource groups that allow employees with a similar background such as people with disabilities, parents, women, and minorities to come together to support one another. The fourth step involves emphasizing a merit-based performance system. An effective and efficient public service consisting of those who are well-qualified is needed for meeting citizens' expectations and national competitiveness in an increasing global and borderless international environment. In addition, a fuller merit system with less gender and ethnic preference is necessary to attract talent and motivate staff to improve their performance. More importantly, government agencies should create a culture of inclusion so that the high achievers and the best talent seeking careers in the civil service will be encouraged to apply for employment in government.

The progress towards making bureaucracy in Malaysia more representative is heading in a good direction. On May 16, 2008 the pay structure for civil servants was revised and the new pay system offers an

attractive package for those who want to work in the civil service. As a result, the number of Chinese and Indian candidates who applied to work in the public sector has increased significantly. In addition, the government has also allocated one percent of the total workforce in the government for disadvantaged groups. This policy is aimed at encouraging more disadvantaged people to apply to work in the civil service. In the conclusion, it is noted that more strategies and policy actions need to be taken to ensure that the notion of representative bureaucracy requires more than just passive representation but also active representation as well.

The *Bangsa* Malaysia (a united Malaysian nation) policy was introduced by Mahathir Mohamad, then Prime Minister of Malaysia, to create an inclusive national identity for all inhabitants of Malaysia, thus abandoning the National Culture Policy that asserted a Malay ethnic national identity. Mahathir Mohamad's core idea was to have a united Malaysia which is ethnically integrated, harmonious, and tolerant. Then, the present Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak declared a rebranded version of *Bangsa* Malaysia under the slogan of One Malaysia (1Malaysia; *Satu* Malaysia in Malay), calling for the cabinet, government agencies, and civil servants to more strongly emphasize ethnic harmony, national unity, and efficient governance. In fact, there are many political slogans in Malaysia. Political rhetoric is useful for politics and administration, but there is no assurance that such rhetoric will produce expected outcomes. Therefore, more feasible inclusive policies must be implemented in the field in order to make a representative bureaucracy in Malaysia.

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국문초록

말레이시아 공무원제도에서의 종족그룹과 여성의 대표성에 대한 연구

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정부의 균형있는 고용정책과 관련하여 말레이시아 정부의 정책을 회고해보면, 정부가 직장에서 그냥 단순히 젠더와 다양한 종족의 통합을 제안하는 것에 안주하지 않고, 공무원제에서 여성과 종족별 대표성을 증가하기 위한 보다 적극적인 단계로 점진적 변화를 도모하고 있음을 알 수 있다. 그러나 관료제 구성이 인구구성을 반영하는 대표관료제를 확립하는 문제는 여전히 어려운 과제로 남아 있다. 혹자는 완전히 대표적인 관료를 구축하는데 실패한 이유 중의 하나는 정치지도자들이 그러한 노력을 하는데 적절한 지원을 하지 못한 것이라고 비판하고 있다. 말레이시아 차원에서 보면, 공무원제도 속에서의 종족별 구성과 여성 수를 전체 인구 속의 해당 인구비로 따져보면 그 비율이 서로 부합하지 않음을 알 수 있다. 아울러, 모집과 경력개발 기회가 불공평하게 작동하고 있다는 인식과 낮은 보수 수준은 소수민족과 여성의 관료제 지원을 위축시키고 있다. 그리고 중요한 이슈는 말레이시아 공직 내에서 소수민족과 여성에 대한 임용기회가 불공평하게 작용하는지의 여부이다. 이러한 관점에서 이 글은 관료적 대표성이 말레이시아 정부의 정통성과, 구조적, 정치적, 경제적 특성을 증진시키는데 중요한 수단이라는 점을 논의하고 있다. 이를 위해 말레이시아의 역사적 맥락에서 대표관료제 연구문헌부터

고찰하고자 한다. 결론에서 단순히 인구 구성비를 반영하는 수동적인 대표만이 아니라, 보다 적극적인 대표성을 감안한 대표관료제를 완비하기 위한 보다 나은 전략과 정책이 필요하다.

주제어: 대표관료제, 여성, 소수민족그룹, 부미푸트라, 말레이시아

Abstract

Examining the Representation of Ethnic Minority Groups and Women in the Malaysian Civil Service

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A retrospective view of the government's policies with respect to equal employment opportunity shows a gradual transition from merely suggesting that government will integrate people from different gender and ethnicity into the workplace to taking proactive steps to increase the representation of women and minority groups in the civil service. However, ensuring a bureaucracy that mirrors the population it serves remains a daunting task. Some people have attributed at least some of the blame for the failure to achieve a fully representative civil service to inadequate support for such efforts by political leaders. Yet, in the context of Malaysia, it is the localization policy that is worthy of consideration that shows disproportionate numbers of women and minorities in the civil service as opposed to their number in the population. In addition, the perceived unequal chances in recruitment and career advancement as well as the low pay discourage the minorities and women's application into the

bureaucracy. The important issue raised is whether there exists a case of unequal opportunities against women and minority groups in the civil service in Malaysia. Building upon this foundation, the paper argues that even if bureaucratic representativeness is an important tool for increasing government legitimacy, the structural, political and economic features of Malaysia have a bearing on the gender and minority representativeness of the civil service at the national and sub-national levels. The dearth of representative bureaucracy literature is then discussed within the historical context of Malaysia. In the conclusion, it is noted that more strategies and policy action need to be taken to ensure representative bureaucracy, which requires more than just passive representation; active representation is essential.

Key Words: representative bureaucracy, women, ethnic minority groups, Bumiputra, Malaysia

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