

Representative Bureaucracy: Some Reflections of the Colonial Civil Service Administration in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Bureaucracy plays a vital role, which is similar to that of the other major stakeholder in the field—politicians, in the policy making process. Therefore, likewise political representatives, bureaucracy should be characterized by the societal make-up in order to ensure democracy in the administration. In this context, the concept of representative bureaucracy has been significantly employed in both developed and developing countries to address the problems of diversity and particularly, guarantee the inclusiveness in the governmental services for a more responsive public administration. This paper examines the representative characteristics of the colonial bureaucracy following the structural and functional adjustments introduced to the early civil service administration of Sri Lanka. In this process, the main focus given towards redefine the concept of representative bureaucracy following the broad interpretations available over the notion of representation and concluded into two interrelated formations as passive and active representative bureaucracy in which bureaucrats share same demographic origins and policy outputs produce benefit for the people. Even though in a colonial context of administration, this study observed some commendable steps taken to ensure the passive-representative features of bureaucracy mainly through the system of recruitments and promotions, local administration and the process of Ceylonization of the Civil Service in Sri Lanka.

KEYWORDS: *civil service, colonial administration, democracy, passive representative-bureaucracy*

Introduction

A democratic government stands for its people's interests while bureaucracy represents government aspirations and preparations to implement policies following the available administrative make-up i.e., a government does articulate and aggregate public interests and distribute resources to the public through the bureaucracy in the sense of representative democracy. Therefore, the relationship between a government and the bureaucracy is closely linked in a context of representative democracy. However, any attempt to make an inclusive partition between governmental or the political functions and bureaucratic or the administrative functions would be impossible due to its overlapping interrelationship in the policy making process. In this sense, not only political authority but bureaucracy as well similarly represents the general public. Nevertheless, bureaucracy does not have direct representation to general public as politicians do—despite this, the bureaucracy undoubtedly plays a significant role in the policy making process in order to accomplish its accountability: broadly the economic development and nation building.

Meaning of Representative Bureaucracy

The term representative bureaucracy is not new; it has evolved through history. For example, Max Weber proposed a typology of representation viz., first, the Appropriated Representation, an ancient form of representation, mostly based on hereditary rights; second, the representation on the basis of socially independent groupings – this would be a socially privileged group asserting the right to bind others; the third and fourth forms are Instructed Representation and Free Representation (Swedberg, 2005: 234). The first three forms of representation are fairly known in early times and the fourth is unique and is emergent in modern times (Ibid: 234).

Broadly, the concept of representative bureaucracy can be interpreted as a bureaucracy consisting of all social, religious and racial groups of the society. The term representative bureaucracy was first coined by Donald J. Kingsley in his book Representative Bureaucracy (1944) and argued for the need for liberalization of social class selection in the bureaucracy in England. He suggested that only representative bureaucracy would respond to changes in political currents whereas a non-representative bureaucracy would sabotage the demand of a party, whose policies may be at odds with the class from which the bureaucracy is drawn.¹ However, according to Kingsley the bureaucracy sometimes stands for the interests of general public and shows their impartiality when the governing elite commit to serve the larger purpose of the state:

“There are obviously points beyond which a man cannot go in carrying out the will of another; and the fact that those limits have seldom been approached in the conduct of the civil service since 1870 bears witness to the unity of the middle class state. The convention of impartiality can be maintained only when the members of the directing grades of the service are thoroughly committed to the larger purposes the state is attempting to serve; when, in other words, their views are identical with those of the dominant class as a whole” (Kingsley, 1944: 278).

He further argued that representative bureaucracy is necessary because there must be some administrators who are sympathetic to the policies of the party in power. In a democracy, he felt that competence itself is not enough and argued that public service must be representative if the state is to liberate rather than to enslave (Kingsley, 1944: 282). Thus, the concept of representative bureaucracy was evolved to argue for a less elite oriented and less class biased bureaucracy.

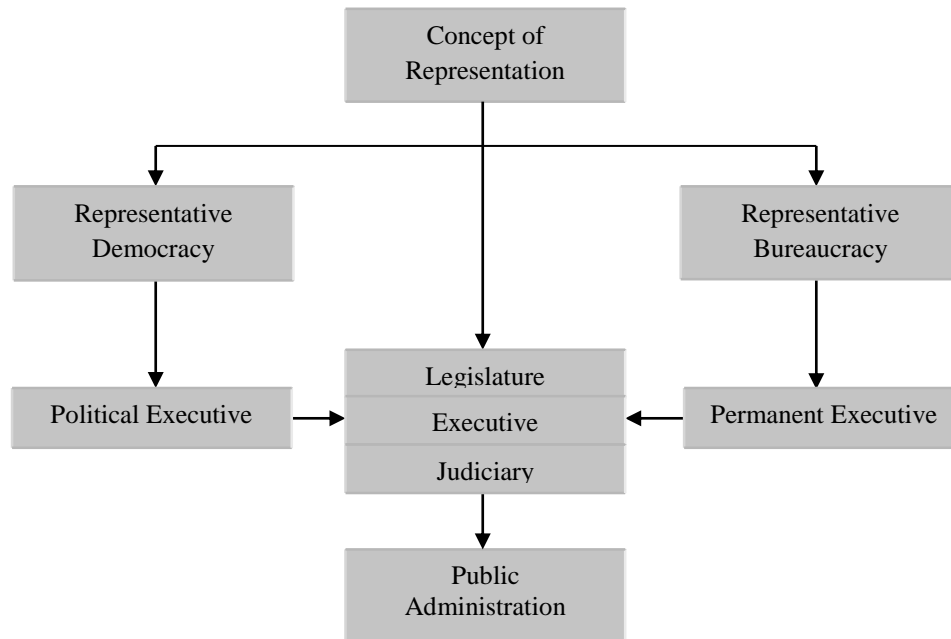
There are three main forms of representative bureaucracy—representation by personnel, by administrative organization and through citizen participation (Krislov and Rosenbloom, 1981: 22). First form is employed to represent social composition, mainly physical (race and sex) and socio-cultural (ethnicity, religion, language, gender etc.) differences of the society. The Second deals with representing various social interests through organizational structures such as departments, agencies and missions: for instance, the special attention given to minorities, women and children in a country. Third, representation of community interests by citizen participation is also a method of the idea of representative bureaucracy. There are three major forms of citizen participation: as an advisory group for certain policy proposal, as a governing group in a specific policy area and as a neighborhood government in which citizens have direct responsibilities (Ibid: 22-6).

Redefining the Concept

The concept of representative bureaucracy has become a highly conversational term as scholars provide definitions from various points of view as illustrated earlier in this section. However, the most important step at this juncture is not generalizing all these interpretations but examining their theoretical and practical applicability in order to arrive at a more plausible definition.

¹<http://www.scribd.com/doc/219782127/Public-Administration-Unit-18-Representative-Bureaucracy>

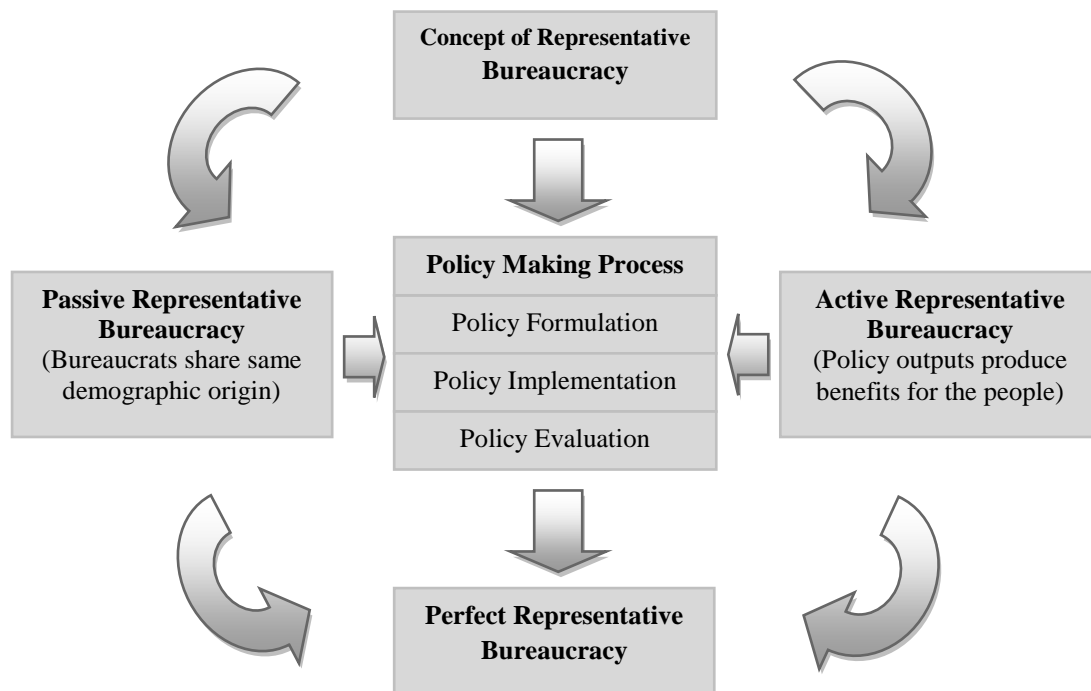
Figure 1 – Progress of the Concept of Representation



Source: Compiled by author with reference to Negro, F.A. and Negro, L.G. (1989). *Modern Public Administration*. 7th ed. New York: Harper and Collins. P. 11.

As shown in figure 2.2 the concepts of representative democracy and representative bureaucracy simultaneously depend on the term of representation. Obviously, representative democracy provides means to select mainly political executive or the head of the government following the basic principles of democracy. In this sense the figure shows that at the same time the concept of representative bureaucracy could be applied to appoint the permanent executive or the bureaucracy. Consequently, public administration emerges with all the three branches of government: executive, legislature and judiciary and their interrelationship (Negro and Negro, 1989: 11).

Figure 2 –Defining the Concept of Representative Bureaucracy



Source: Compiled by author with reference to Meier, K.J. (1993). Latinos and Representative bureaucracy: Testing the Thomson and Henderson Hypothesis, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* P. 393.

Meanwhile the concept of representative bureaucracy has been defined from various perspectives as above interpretations given by scholars. However, initially these interpretations can be summarized into a single sentence that representative bureaucracy emerges when bureaucracy represents demographic origins such as ethnicity, sex, education, religion etc., by similar proportions to the society. Despite this general idea which emphasizes the inclusiveness of physical characteristics of population into bureaucracy as shown in Figure 2.3, Kenneth J. Meier has contributed to develop *active* and *passive* aspects of representative bureaucracy. The passive representative bureaucracy is primarily a mirror image of demographic origins to the bureaucracy; i.e., it is a nominal representation in which bureaucracy merely reflects diversity of the society. In contrast, according to Meier the active representative bureaucracy is the most advanced form of representative bureaucracy in which passive representation produces policy outputs with compulsory benefits for the society (Meier, 1993: 393). Therefore, it is evident that the passive and active representations interconnect with the policy making process where policy formulation, implementation and evaluation discharge policy outcomes which eventually benefit the society with a perfect representative bureaucracy.

Representative Bureaucracy in Practice

The idea of Representative Bureaucracy was relatively simple when it came to be known in the 1960s in the United States, although a short while later it claimed a rapid growth over the

past half a Century. In every organization individuals who make decisions exercise discretion because organization rules cannot cover every contingency and because organizational socialization is rarely total (Meier, Wrinkle & Polinard, 1999: 1026). If individuals are assumed to be utility maximizers, then individual bureaucrats with discretion are likely to use that discretion to make decisions that reflect their own values; one source of these values is the socialization process, and one of the most enduring relationships is the impact of race and ethnicity on values (Meier, Wrinkle & Polinard, 1999: 1026). Thus, representative bureaucracy suggests that if a bureaucracy is broadly representative of the public it serves, then it is more likely to make decisions that benefit the public (Thielemann & Stewart, 1996:169). The initial work examining a variety of value sources has been replaced by work focusing on values related to race. Not all policy decisions are likely candidates for influence by a representative bureaucracy. Hence, Bureaucrats must have discretion over decisions that are directly linked to race or ethnicity which indicates that representation is also enhanced by political support and that, in some cases, a critical mass is necessary (Ibid: 169). This idea has been mainly applied to the American and European Civil Service Administrations, but it is hardly found in the South Asian context. This study mainly focuses on evaluating the Sri Lankan perspective on representative bureaucracy.

Based on historical evidence it is clear that Sri Lanka had been practicing a feudal type of bureaucracy until it fell into the hands of the Western Imperialism. From the beginning of the 16th Century to the mid-20th Century, the Country was ruled by the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English. However, some considerable administrative changes which influenced the structure of the present civil service practices took place in the British Colonial period.

First constitutional reform to Ceylon, the Colebrook proposal of 1833 established the Ceylon Civil Service introducing a stalwartly centralized system of bureaucracy. Constitutional reforms of 1912, 1920 and 1924 added considerable changes to the Civil Service. The Donoughmore reforms of 1931 contributed to major civil service reforms expanding and demarcating bureaucratic functions following universal suffrage. Later in 1947, the Soulbury reforms were introduced, but it did not aim to reform the colonial structure or ideology of the Civil Service. The concept of representative bureaucracy however, cannot be applied originally into a colonial system of bureaucracy. As explained in the conceptual analysis, active and passive aspects of the concept of representative bureaucracy have become inevitably interrelated i.e., though the active representation could exist itself, the passive representation is compulsorily a function of the active representation of a bureaucracy. Despite the conceptual emphasis of the thought of representative bureaucracy, this study identified certain significant representative characteristics in the colonial bureaucracy of the Island as follows:

The Chief-Headman System

Evidences of a certain system of representative bureaucracy can be seen from the very beginning of the development of bureaucracy in the Colonial Ceylon. The Colonial Government identified the importance of a system of administration with native chiefs and headmen, especially for the local-level administration. As a result, the local elite again became a part of the administrative machinery as it was in the Portuguese and Dutch eras (Collins, 1966: 450). In this sense, the local chiefs, officially known as the Chief Headmen, were designated in various titles in different parts of the Country:

Table 1 – Chief Headmen in the Different Regions

Region	Chief Headmen
South West (Low-Country)	Mudaliyar
Central Kandyan Provinces	Ratemahatmaya
North	Maniagar
Mannar (North-West)	District Adigar
Batticaloa (East-West)	Vanniyar

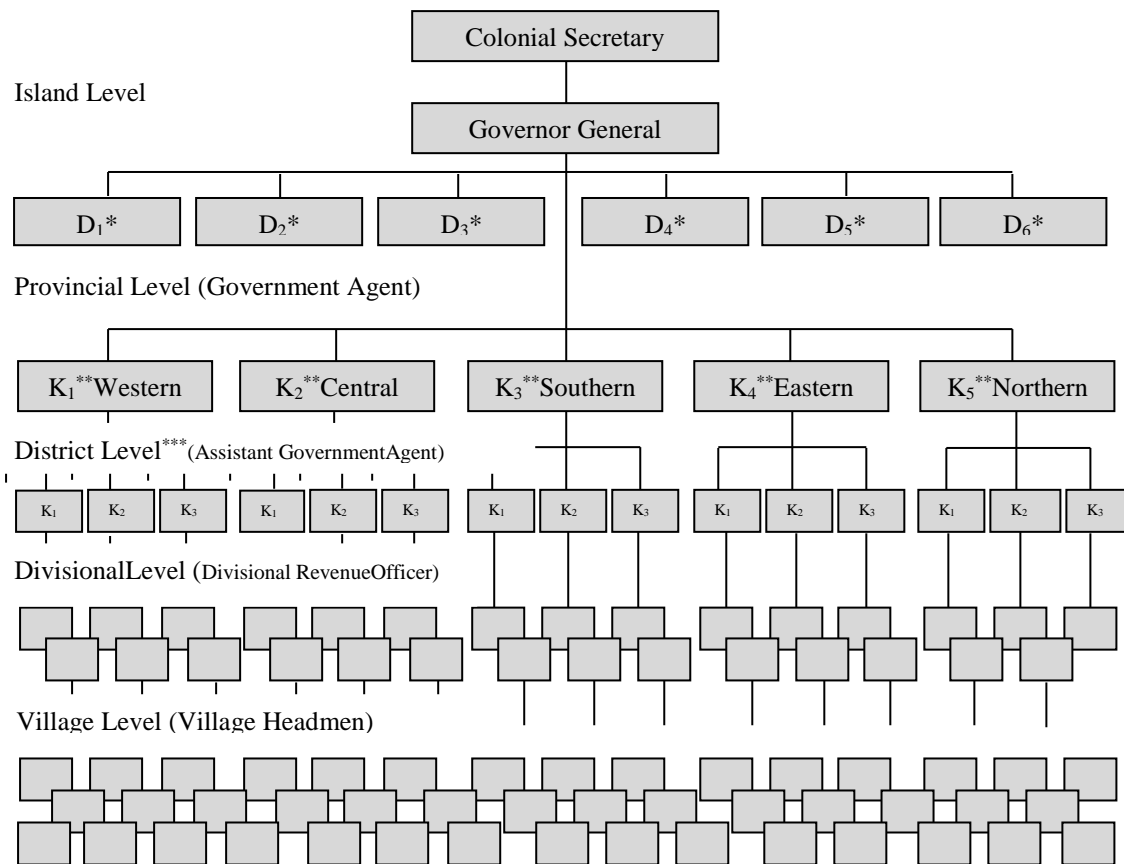
Source: Collins, C. (1966). Ceylon: The Imperial Heritage, in: Ralph Braibanti (ed.) *Bureaucratic Systems Emergent from the British Imperial Tradition*. Durham: Duke University Press. p. 450

As shown in Table 1, the Chief Headmen, however, were officers-in-charge of the divisions and worked under Collector or the Divisional Revenue Officer. Meanwhile, the intermediate and village headmen took over their tasks under the Chief Headmen. Therefore, it is evident that the importance of local-level representation had been considerably taken into account in the colonial administration. Moreover, according to Collins, the system was familiar to the people because of the native bureaucracy and they involved with it very much as it was in the past (Ibid: 450). Although the colonial regime did not intend to objectively address the public interests, they somehow answered the grass-root public demands sensibly through a system of representative bureaucracy because of their colonial interests.

Passive-Representative Bureaucracy

Some reflections of the idea of representative bureaucracy can be seen in the Colebrook and Cameroon reforms in 1833. The reform was the most initial and significant step in terms of history of the constitutional and bureaucratic development of Ceylon. The main objective of the visit of the Commission was to investigate the conditions of finance and administration including judiciary, and make recommendations for satisfactory adjustments (Ibid: 451). In this process, one of the most significant recommendation was a unified and uniform, centrally administrated government. As a result, the Island was divided into five provinces, and the chain of command was centralized in the provincial administration.

Figure 3 – Decentralized Administration in Ceylon



* Departments of (D₁) Survey (D₂) Police (D₃) Irrigation (D₄) Local Government (D₅) Health and (D₆) Education
 ** Kachcheriya System, headed by five Government Agents, conducted the colonial administration in the provincial level
 *** District Kachcheries were chaired by the Assistant Government Agents under the supervision of the Government Agents

Source: Data extracted from Nadarajah, S (1996). Evolution of Administrative Reforms, in: Somasundram, M. (ed.) *The Third Wave: Governance and Public Administration in Sri Lanka*. Delhi: Konark Publishers. pp 241-2.

As shown in Figure 3, the highly centralized system of administration had confined the expressed objectives of a system of representative bureaucracy. However, the establishment of a legislative assembly at the very beginning with a provision of minimum representation was a significant step towards a system of constitutional government. Although in the climax of centralized administration, the Colebrook and Cameroon proposals made a significant contribution to the idea of representative bureaucracy: Colebrook suggested the idea of Village Councils which was applied to take over the responsibilities of local governments, and proposed to open the public service to Ceylonese more rapidly and extensively than it was the case then (Collins, 1966: 452). Although these suggestions were a highly positive sign for a system of representative bureaucracy, at that time they were not attractive to the colonial powers. Hence, it took some time for the implementation process to take effect. Meanwhile, some other recommendations, such as the abolition of *Rajakariya* system and establishment of educational facilities, enabled people to qualify for higher appointment which indirectly contributed to develop the boundaries of the idea of representative bureaucracy. However, the main features introduced by Colebrook-Cameroon reforms in terms of provincial administration lasted for a long period.

In 1948 some disturbances emerged owing to the introduction of financial innovations including taxes on various essential items (Ibid: 457). Nevertheless, the structural and behavioral patterns of the Colonial administration were not challenged by radical means, instead people became familiar with administrative procedures and practices. In this context, Charles Collins expressed his views in the relationship between local and provincial level administration:

“...the relation between the government agent and the headmen and villagers were happy; provincial officers generally identified themselves with the interests of their people and were able to represent and press their views when matters arose affecting those interests...” (Ibid: 457)

Moreover, the role of Government Agent in the peripheral *Kachcheriya* system did not always depend on the Central Government. Particularly, due to some transportation and communication difficulties, the local government agents could not consult the Central Government even in an emergency. Therefore, they made their own decisions which produced confident and successful administrators, and on the other hand, the decisions were usually in favor of the people. For example, P.A Duke who served for forty-five years in the Civil Service as the Government Agent of the Northern Province was appreciated as follows when his death was announced:

“...he was in every sense a Rajah in Jaffna, and the people invariably treated him as such. They knew they were safe in his hands and they liked him, but his disciplinarian habits astounded them, and we doubt if there is or has ever been a government agent so thoroughly feared...” (Ibid: 458)

In this sense, people always felt that Agent Duke acted in order to accomplish not just interests of the Colonial Government, but on behalf of the will of the people. Another example was H R Freeman, the government agent of the North-Central Province, who always stood for the people despite the decisions of the Central Government; particularly, on the issue of Chena cultivation the Colonial Government aimed to discourage the farmers, but Freeman decided in favor of the people, ignoring the Government decision (Collins. 1966: 459).

In this context, some Government Agents successfully gained not only the admiration but affection of the people. Although they had not similar characteristics in terms of ethnicity, religion or language to perform the idea of representative bureaucracy in its original sense, they actively represented aspirations of the people as true statesmen in the office. Therefore, the concept of representative bureaucracy had significantly been performed as a system of colonial passive-representative bureaucracy. Despite the representation not being quantitative enough, they made decisions and implemented policies in favor of the people in the Colonial Administration.

Development of the Local Government

Colonialism made a number of significant changes in the socio-economic and cultural life of Ceylon. Widespread educational and career opportunities together with other modifications of the life style brought forward a new middle class which comprised of professionals and the landed-elite. However, neither the Colonial Government nor its administrative arrangements were challenged by these bourgeoisies. Instead, they demanded for a reasonable share in the government and administration. Meanwhile, the Colonial Government introduced a series of ordinances to establish local government institutions which aimed to ameliorate

representation in the subordinate levels of administration. As a result, the competition grew among the local elite to enter the administrative positions of the local administration, which later became a significant phenomenon in terms of representative bureaucracy.

Table 2 – Origin of the Local Government in Ceylon

Year	Institution/Ordinance	Task and Representation
1856	Irrigation Ordinance	Control cultivation and use of water (Government Agent, Official Chairman and Special Officer)
1865	Municipal Councils	For larger towns
1871	Village Committee System 1. Village Task Force 2. Village Tribunal	Landowners
1876	Local Boards of Health and Improvements	Three elected and three nominated members (Government Agent or Assistant Government Agent as the Chairman)
1892/1889	Sanitary Boards	For larger villages and bazaars (Government Agent or Assistant Government Agent as the Chairman)

Source: Data extracted from Collins, C. (1966). Ceylon: The Imperial Heritage, in: Ralph Braibanti (ed.) *Bureaucratic Systems Emergent from the British Imperial Tradition*. Durham: Duke University Press. pp. 444-84.

As shown in Table 2, many steps had been taken to strengthen the local government. In 1856, the Irrigation Ordinance was passed which was designed to control cultivation and use of water; however, the prime objective of the Ordinance was to develop a system of local self-government – particularly, the *Gamsabha* system which had been left to a natural death after 1818 (Collins, 1966: 460). Furthermore, the Municipal Council system (in 1865), the Village Committee system (in 1870) and the Sanitary Board system (in 1892) were some of the significant contributions introduced to the development of local government system (Ibid: 460).

In this context, it can be argued that the development of local self-government institutions contributed to the growth of representative bureaucracy. Although it was not purely a system of representative bureaucracy in the contemporary meaning, it considerably broadened the bottom self-delegation of the local government. In addition, instead of being a mere extension to the bureaucracy, it was an elected body which prepared for a broad public participation in the Local Administration of Colonial Sri Lanka.

System of Recruitment and Promotion

The method of recruitment and promotions in the Ceylon Civil Service depended on a formal system of evaluation of educational and professional qualifications. The importance of education and integrity was considered as an avenue to improve the personality and character of the Civil Servants, and an approach to earn respect and trust of the indigenous people. In this regard, up to 1854 the recruitment system was on the basis of the Heilebury Entrance Examination; however, in 1856 the system of open-competitive examination was introduced to the recruitment process, and after 1870 a scheme was initiated to hold examinations simultaneously in Colombo and London (Warnapala, 1995: 50). Meanwhile, the local candidates who were not recruited by examination but appointed on the basis of the

nomination by the Governor were required to sit for a non-competitive examination (Ibid: 50).

Table 3 – The Compulsory and Optional Subjects of the Examinations

Non-Competitive Examination	Open-Competitive Examination
Compulsory Subjects	
1. English Composition	1. Exercise designed to test hand-writing and Orthography
2. Accounts and Book-Keeping	2. Arithmetic including vulgar and decimal fractions
3. Euclid Books I-IV and Algebra	3. Latin and one of the following languages: Greek, French, Italian or German
4. Geography	4. English Composition including précis writing
Optional Subjects	
1. Languages: Greek, Latin, French, German, Sanskrit	1. Pure and Mixed Mathematics
2. Modern History: British Colonies and Dependencies including India	2. Ancient or Modern History and Geography
3. Elements of Constitutional and International Law	3. Elements of Constitutional and International Law
4. Elements of Political Economy	4. Political Economy
5. Civil Engineering and Surveying	5. Geology
	6. Civil Engineering and Surveying

Source: Data extracted from Warnapala, W.A.W. (1995). *Civil Service Administration in Ceylon: A Study in Bureaucratic Adaptation*. Colombo: University of Sri Jayawardenepura. pp. 49-51.

However, both open and non-competitive examinations were aimed at selecting the most successful candidates for the Civil Service. As shown in Table 3, the compulsory and optional subjects of both examinations stressed the importance of a wide-range of knowledge a civil servant needed to carry out the functions of his office. Although it was prominently mentioned from the very beginning of the Civil Service, the requirements of indigenous languages had not been included in the above formula. Since 1822 proficiency of the indigenous languages became a necessary condition for promotions of the Civil Service (Warnapala, 1995: 41). Moreover, if a Class III Civil Servant successfully satisfied the requirement of language proficiency, he was to be promoted to the Class II within a period of two years instead of three, and to the Class I in six years instead of seven (Mills, 1933: 58). However, ignoring practical difficulties of learning languages, in 1822 it was decided not to promote any Civil Servant without knowledge in Sinhalese or Tamil (Ibid: 42).

In this context, the Civil Servants became not only professional experts but close observers of the indigenous life-style. As a result, some significant discoveries about customs, history, archeology, languages and literature of the Island were carried out by the Civil Servants.² Therefore, it is evident that the Colonial Civil Servants were highly responsive to the socio-cultural life of the Country. As a result, they became outstandingly sensible in public interests with the system operating as a passive-representative bureaucracy in which, as explained earlier in this section, most of the decisions were taken in favor of the people.

²John D'Oyly, George Turnour, William Tolfrey, R.C Childers, T.W Rhys Davids etc, were experts in the local languages and Buddhist Literature while Joseph Joinville, Edgar Layard, W.E Wait, J. Emerson Tennen, H.C.P Bell, Leonard Woolf etc, carried out some significant studies in the history and the tradition of ancient Ceylon (Collins, 1966: 445-6).

Ceylonization of the Civil Service

The Constitutions of 1912, 1920 and 1924 were proclaimed with some significant structural and functional developments. Particularly, the growth of the membership of Legislative Councils and increasing the number of non-Officials over the Official appointees were among the main structural adjustments. More importantly, a limited-vote system was introduced with the reforms of 1912 which is considered as an important footstep in growth of the concept of representation of Ceylon. Although it was small in number at four out of 21 appointments of the Legislative Council, as shown in Table 4, the representation had increased gradually in the successive reforms of 1920 and 1924 as 11 out of 37 members and 23 out of 49 respectively.

Table 4 – Representation of the Legislative Councils

Reform	Council	Type	Appointment
1912	21	Officials (11)	-
		non-Officials (10)	by nomination (06)
			by limited-vote (04)
1920	37	Officials (14)	-
		non-Officials (23)	by nomination (07)
			by electoral-vote (11)
by ethnic-vote (05)			
1924	49	Officials (12)	-
		non-Officials (37)	by nomination (03)
			by ethno-electoral base (11)
by electorate (23)			

Source: Data extracted from Fernando, L. (1974). *National Movement, Constitutional Development and Origin of the Leftist Movement*. Nugegoda: Deepani Publishers.

Meanwhile the absorption of the Ceylonese into the Civil Service remained small up to 1920; however, the proportion was much higher in the technical departments. Therefore, in 1919 a committee was appointed to initiate 'Ceylonization' which recommended that one-third of the Ceylon Civil Service should be Ceylonese (Collins, 1966: 466). In this context, under a colonial government, for the first time in the Ceylon Civil Service history, some significant steps had been taken to implement the idea of representative bureaucracy. However, Table 5 illustrates that while the British Civil Servants were the majority up to 1919, by 1920 to 1937 and hereinafter the Ceylonese became the majority of the Ceylon Civil Service.

Table 5 – Ethnic Composition of the Ceylon Civil Service: 1798 - 1937

Period	number of appointments made				percentage British
	British	Ceylonese	Indian	Total	
Before 1801	21	-	-	21	100.0
1801-1824	77	2	-	79	97.5
1825-1844	55	1	-	56	98.2
1845-1864	67	15	-	82	81.7
1865-1884	79	5	-	84	94.0
1885-1919	123	43	5	171	71.9
1920-1937	41	59	-	100	41.0
Totals	463	125	5	593	78.1

Source: Collins, C. (1966). Ceylon: The Imperial Heritage, in: Ralph Braibanti (ed.) *Bureaucratic Systems Emergent from the British Imperial Tradition*. Durham: Duke University Press. p. 467.

Although the distribution of appointment of the Ceylon Civil Service among major ethnic communities was a considerable fact in terms of representative bureaucracy, the proportion was highly unequal in relation to the ethnic composition of the Country. According to S.J Tambiah, in the early years most of the Ceylonese Officers were Burgers or Tamils and only a small number of Sinhalese were employed in the Service (Tambiah, 1955: 133). However, as a result of increasing social mobilization of the Sinhalese, particularly with the spread of educational opportunities in 1930s, a large number of Sinhalese began to enter the Civil Service and they became the majority of the service by 1946 as shown in Table 6.

Table 6 – Ethnic Representation in the Higher Administrative Services

Year	Sinhalese	Tamils	Burgers
Before 1870	07	02	11
1870	05	n/a	05
1907	04	02	06
1925	17	08	14
1946	69	31	16

Source: Tambiah, S.J. (1955). Ethnic Representation in Ceylon higher Administrative Service: 1870-1946, *University of Ceylon Review*, 8 (3). p. 115.

Moreover, regarding the ethnic proportion of the population, in comparison to the Sinhalese representation in the Higher Administrative Services, Tamils and Burgers accounted for a higher representation which was not equivalent to their ethnic proportion. For example, in 1946 the ethnic make-up comprised Sinhalese 69.41, Sri Lankan Tamils 11.02, Indian Tamils 11.73, Moors 5.61, Burgers 0.63 and Malays 0.34 percent of the total population.³ However, Burgers were privileged to have an excessive representation with 13.5 percent in comparison to their ethnic proportion while Tamils also enjoyed similar status with 26.7 percent. Meanwhile, Sinhalese remained at 59.4 percent, a lower number compared with their ethnic proportion. Unfortunately, Muslims, being an inherited ethnic community in the country, had been completely alienated from the higher administrative service.

Therefore, though the early Civil Service set-up held largely passive-representative characteristics, after 1940 it showed an increasing tendency of active-representative bureaucracy. However, as explained above, conceptually the Civil Service was far away from

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Sri_Lanka

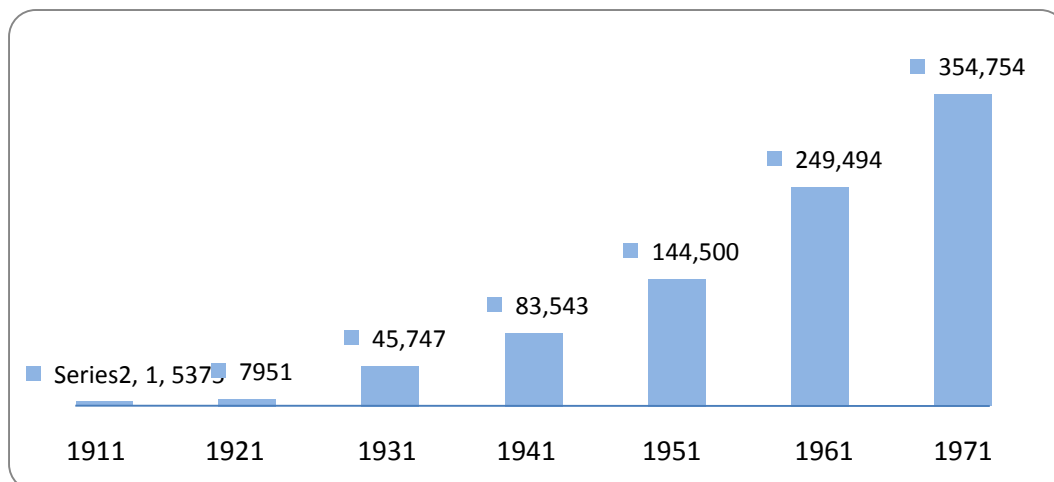
the ideals of representative bureaucracy owing to its unequal distribution of positions among the major ethnic groups in comparison to their share in the ethnic composition of the Country.

The Donoughmore System

The Donoughmore Constitution was brought into operation in 1931 with the recommendation made by the Donoughmore Commission, chaired by the Earl of Donoughmore, appointed in 1928 in order to grant a more responsible system of government. Consequently, this system introduced many remarkable politico-administrative features, including universal suffrage, the state council, the executive committee system and more importantly the supervision and control of administration. Therefore, it is needless to say that the Donoughmore system was indeed a turning point of the constitutional history of Sri Lanka. It converted the traditional capital-economy into a welfare-oriented state. The system introduced a single-chamber legislature: the state council of sixty-one in which fifty members were elected for territorial constituencies by universal franchise and eight were nominated by the Governor.

The Donoughmore system brought representation for the State Council up to fifty, while in the Board of Ministers, the three Officers-of-State and the Heads of the seven Executive Committees consumed executive powers under many reserved-powers of the Governor. However, in terms of administrative reforms, the Donoughmore system introduced some significant structural and functional adjustments to the public service which can be summed up into three main themes: the extension of the Civil Service, the growth of the technical departments and the expansion of the local authorities. Particularly, among these changes the Civil Service had been subjected to a dramatic growth in number of personals with initiation of the reforms, as shown in Figure 3.3, which, in turn, was highly influential in increasing the levels of representation of the bureaucracy.

Figure 4 – Growth of the Civil Service



Source: Data extracted from Collins, C. (1966). *Ceylon: The Imperial Heritage*, in: Ralph Braibanti (ed.) *Bureaucratic Systems Emergent from the British Imperial Tradition*. Durham: Duke University Press and Warnapala, W.A.W. (1995). *Civil Service Administration in Ceylon: A Study in Bureaucratic Adaptation*. Colombo: University of Sri Jayawardenepura.

The growth of cardership of the Ceylon Civil Service brought in some dramatic effects in the ethnic composition of the service. Particularly, the competitiveness between the Sinhalese

and Tamils for the civil and administrative positions came into an end as the representation of Sinhalese majority grew over Tamils in the Public Services. In fact this was a result of the introduction of the universal franchise which inevitably increased the representation and responsiveness of politics as well as administration. Consequently, Tamils began to complain against the majority Sinhalese over the perceived discrimination they experienced regarding the appointments in the Civil and Administrative Services.⁴

The rationale of grievances of the Tamils has been clearly mentioned in the Soulbury Commission Report (SCR) in 1947. The Commission has categorically pointed out that the complaints of Tamils were baseless in light of the number of posts held by them in proportion to their population in the community; moreover, the Tamils have achieved themselves a much larger share due to their higher standard of literacy and education which this community has so long enjoyed through its energy and efficiency (SCR, 1947: 49). The Commission further added that the Burgers enjoyed more important positions than the Sinhalese and Tamils. In this sense, the minorities particularly Tamils and Burgers have categorically held a disproportionate representation in the bureaucracy which was dissimilar to their share in the ethnic composition of the Island. It is evident that the effect of universal franchise has largely contributed to reshape the existing degree of the representation of bureaucracy. Although Tamils and Burgers still held a disproportionately higher representation in the Civil Service in comparison to their share in the ethnic map of the country, the statistics show that it was gradually decreasing.

Conclusion

The concept of representative bureaucracy is defined as a result of the passive and active representation in which the demographic composition is employed in favor of the policy making process. Although the idea of representative bureaucracy becomes controversial, not unlike many other theories of Social Sciences, it has been successfully employed in the world's most competitive administrative systems. In a colonial context, representative characteristics are hard to recognize in the administration owing to the overwhelming socio-economic interests of colonial powers. However, when the notion of representative bureaucracy applies to the Colonial Civil Service Administration in Sri Lanka, the early Civil Service practices from 1833 to 1931 show passive-representative characteristics owing to its professional background, structural formation and highly skilled-practices. As a result, the decision making process went out in parallel to professional standards or following the Civil Service ideals. However, introduction of the Donoughmore reforms brought active-representative characteristics into the bureaucracy; particularly as a result of universal franchise and the growth of the Civil Service positions. Consequently, though the colonial bureaucracy did not focus on conceptually, it has demonstrated some remarkable features of the concept of representative bureaucracy.

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⁴Soulbury Commission Report, 1947: p. 48.

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