

ASPA 2014 Founders' Fellows

Subject Matter Essay

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Title: Enhancing Representation: Hispanic Minorities in 21st Century Public Service Delivery

Executive Summary:

American regulatory and service agencies serve the vast array of demographic groups, cultures, and backgrounds. Within our representative democracy, we have historically struggled at upholding the “representative” nature of our structure as a governing body and as service providers. As we move forward in the 21st Century, public administration should actively enhance the bureaucratic representation of Hispanic minorities in the U.S. service delivery.

Body of Essay:

“If men were angels, no government would be necessary.” – James Madison

When James Madison wrote Federalist Paper 51 in 1788 (1999: 290), he was referencing a principal of classical political thought—questioning the goodness of man. Classical political theorist before him, such as Aristotle, Plato, and St. Thomas Aquinas, debated the goodness of man while laying the foundation for American revolutionary thinkers. The constitutional framers questioned the nature of man in conjunction with the structure of government.

In a representative democracy, government is composed of representatives of the people (Liphart, 1999: 1)—or as President Lincoln noted in his Gettysburg address a government of, by, and for the people. Within this system of representative democracy we find that throughout history we have struggled at upholding the “representative” nature of our structure as a nation. With the foundations of representativeness comes the incorporation of the necessities of the various groups in the diverse populations. Representatives should act with enough authority to exercise initiative in the face of changing circumstances and constantly strive to better acclimate themselves to the evolving

body of the United States citizens. The public interest should be represented in every respect by the elected officials and public administrators who have been charged with upholding and representing their citizens.

Stemming from the larger umbrella of representative democracy is the notion of representative bureaucracy, which was articulated by Donald Kingsley in 1944. “The theory of representative bureaucracy proposes that a demographically diverse public sector workforce will lead to policy outcomes that reflect the interests of all groups represented, including historically disadvantaged communities” (Bradbury and Kellough, 2007). Later, Paul Van Riper extended Kingsley’s theory of representative bureaucracy by adding the concepts of “ethos and attitudes” as needed elements for true representativeness. Van Riper explains, “A representative bureaucracy is one in which there is a minimal distinction between the bureaucrats as a group and their administrative behavior and practices on the one hand, and the community or society memberships and its administrative behaviors, practices, and expectations of government on the other.”

This new addition by Van Riper shifted the focus from “that which bureaucracy does” to “that which bureaucracy is” (Hindera, 1993: 417). Frederick C. Mosher took this further in his *Democracy and the Public Service*, by developing a criteria for what he called “active” and “passive” representations. Mosher explains that “passive (or sociological) representativeness concerns the source of origin of individuals and the degree to which, collectively, they mirror the society.” Wherein active (or responsible) representativeness is when “an individual is expected to press for the interests, and desires of those whom he is to represent, whether they be the whole people or some segment” (Mosher, 1982: 18).

The principle of representative bureaucracy holds that the social makeup of public administrative agencies is relevant to their performance and legitimacy among members of the public. The power that administrative organizations possess can be focused more characteristically

in terms of public interest if the administrators and bureaucrats are representative of the citizens at large, so these populations can be represented in policy formulation and implementation.

In *Representative Bureaucracy* Samuel Krislov explored the issues of merit systems, personnel selection, and social equity. Krislov asked directly “How could any bureaucracy have legitimacy and public credibility if it failed to represent all sectors of its society?” Public administration can and should be neutral, but cannot be neutral all those who work for an agency are Caucasian men. The 1978 act “directed agencies to take steps to eliminate the under representation of women and people of color in all federal occupations and at all grade levels,” helping to solidify the 14th Amendment.

The U.S. Census Bureau defines Hispanic or Latino as "those who classify themselves in one of the specific Hispanic or Latino categories listed on the Census 2000 or ACS questionnaire - "Mexican," "Puerto Rican", or "Cuban," as well as those who indicate that they are "other Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino." The total population of Hispanic and Latino Americans comprised 46.9 million or 15.4% of the national total in 2008, with the following racial distribution:

Race in the United States		
Total:	304,059,724	
Not Hispanic or Latino (84.6%):	257,116,111	100.00%
White alone	199,491,458	77.59%
Black or African American alone	37,171,750	14.46%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	2,328,982	0.91%
Asian alone	13,237,698	5.15%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	434,561	0.17%
Two or more races	4,451,662	1.73%
Hispanic or Latino (15.4%):	46,943,613	100.00%
White alone	43,147,784	91.91%
Black or African American alone	1,887,084	4.02%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	754,452	1.61%
Asian alone	311,366	0.66%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	127,560	0.27%
Two or more races	715,367	1.52%
Source: US Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program		
Population Estimates Program at " http://www.census.gov/popest/estimates.php "		

Over 15% of the United States population self-identify as of Hispanic or Latino decent, and this number is rapidly growing. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Hispanic population is expected to double in size by the year 2050. Given the significant population statistics, public administrators should be considered both the passive and active bureaucratic representativeness of the growing U.S. Hispanic population. As Bradbury and Kellough (2007) explain, “the theory holds that ‘passive representation, or the extent to which a bureaucracy employs people of diverse demographic backgrounds, will lead to active representation, or the pursuit of policies reflecting the interests and desires of those people.’” Krislov expounds that “as a major vehicle of social change, the occupation of its positions by minority-group members [in administrative organizations] has been significant in policy outcomes and in the subtle transactions that cumulatively constitute policy.” The idea of representative bureaucracy was initially developed to secure a less elitist civil service. Our nation now sees race, sex, and ethnic origin as becoming more relevant to the case of representative bureaucracy. These other issues of equal representation are of significant interest to public administrative organizations today.

The concept of new public management wants the government to be more responsive. This is decided by votes, or more precisely the majority of votes. The thought is if we only rely on elections to hold government reliable there are a number of inefficiencies. If we make the government look and act more like the public, then government will be more responsive. There should be an exact mirror of the population expressed through the government which is representative bureaucracy.

In examining *Representative Bureaucracy: In the EEOC Offices*, Hinderer (1993) found that a statistically significant relationship between group proportion and charge level. Hinderer noted that this findings “represents evidence in support of the prescription hypothesis--i.e., that passive representation of a particular group of bureaucrats determines the resources allocated to a particular group of citizens” (1993: 426). The parameter estimates of Hinderer’s study focused on ethnicity overall.

James Madison said “all authority in the federal republic of the United States will be dependent on the society, the society itself will be broken into many parts, interests and classes of citizens.” It is not likely that Madison realized the extent to which these words would mean in this day and time. The government desires to be representative of its citizenry within the facets of its governmental bureaucracies, but the reality of this is that we as a nation have yet to realize that ideal representation of our citizenry. In the last fifty years great strides have been made to accomplish this goal of representation, but we as a nation still have further progress to make if we are to move forward in the constitutional direction that was intended. As we progress in the 21st Century, public administration will continue to incorporate active and passive bureaucratic representation within the Hispanic minority of the United States.

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