

**Deliberative Practices In and Outside  
the Malaysian Parliament**

**Nazli Aziz**

**A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
The University of Auckland, 2013**





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## **Abstract**

This study is structured as a case study analysis that explores the parliament-citizen relationship of the Malaysian Parliament from the eighth to the twelfth parliaments (October 1990 – March 2013). The Malaysian Parliament is used as a case to understand the deliberative practices of a Westminster-style parliament in an illiberal democracy. This study makes a contribution to the literature by filling the apparent gap and contributing to an understanding of the extent to which the Malaysian Parliament incorporate deliberation as a means of involving their citizens in the policy-making process. As such, this study enriches the study of parliamentary democracy in Malaysia and the non-Western world. The primary concern of this study is to examine the deliberative practices of the Malaysian Parliament and how citizens' concerns are mediated through the Members of Parliament (MPs) and the Malaysian parliamentary institution. This study explores the extent to which Malaysian MPs utilise deliberative forums in and outside parliament to engage citizens and respond to their concerns, and how this facilitates political participation and engagement in an illiberal democracy such as Malaysia. To further understand the nature of deliberative practices in Malaysia, this study focuses on the roles that MPs play in the context of the government's pursuit of a poverty eradication agenda and the implementation of a quota system for Bumiputera. The evidence provided by the broader case study of deliberation processes in Malaysia, and the specific case study of poverty eradication and Bumiputera quotas, points to deliberative practices taking place at different sites and in different forms which are often unconventional and unstructured in light of conventional understandings of deliberation in Westminster systems of the liberal democracies. On this basis, this study argues that deliberative practices in Malaysia have been established and progressed through the balancing, adaption and modification of existing cultures, rules, norms and routines of the Westminster model. The deliberative practices in and outside the Malaysian Parliament are not necessarily in line with the idea of deliberative democracy in the liberal Westminster systems.