

**A primer in public policy analysis: Techniques and methods. By Garoot S. Eissa and Abdul Raufu Ambali. Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press, 2012, pp. 187. ISBN: 978-967-418-244-1.**

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Public policy analysis is the examining of different government agendas that directly affect a specific community. The kinds of topics examined can vary from the impact of infrastructure on a city to smoking laws. The idea behind public policy analysis is to provide the government with facts and statistics about the extent to which such initiatives are working. Although various approaches to policy analysis exist, three general approaches can be distinguished: the analycentric, the policy process, and the meta-policy approach. Policy analysis is methodologically diverse using both qualitative and quantitative methods, including case studies, survey research, statistical analysis, and model building, among others. One common methodology is to define the problem and evaluation criteria; identify all alternatives, evaluate them; and recommend the best policy agenda. Many models exist to analyse the creation and application of public policy. Analysts use these models to identify important aspects of policy, as well as explain and predict policy and its consequences. Among the most widely used models are: institutional, the process, and the rational model.

*A Primer in Public Policy Analysis: Techniques and Methods* is a commendable effort by two specialists in the field of public policy analysis to provide a succinct and concise introductory text for undergraduate students at the advanced level. The text has been written with the main objective of presenting a field of knowledge that is considered by many as difficult and requiring much preparation in economics and quantitative methods. The authors have written a text in a manner that is both simple and accessible for the benefit of student learning. The text discusses the central issues and core concepts in policy analysis, in simple terms and reviews the basic techniques employed to guide analysis. One additional advantage of the book under review is the use of local examples and cases, in addition to the authors' own experiences which should serve to ease students' comprehension. It has to be noted that Western books in this field, particularly American ones, tend to address American readers

and use American examples throughout. The appearance of a primer on the subject that uses local examples and based on the experiences of the two authors is timely and topical.

The eight chapters of the book cover the different facets of the field of public policy analysis. The first chapter defines, rationalises and explains public policy as well as the practice of public policy analysis. The second chapter discusses pertinent and relevant issues considered as useful background to policy analysis such as the policy making process and the place of policy analysis in it; policy analysis as welfare economics; policy analysis as rational choice; and policy analysis in political decision making. Chapter three is the first and primary chapter pertaining to the process of analysis. It deals with problem analysis, which includes problem identification, problem definition, problem structuring and problem modelling. The fourth chapter attempts to explain the techniques and methods of forecasting, classified under quantitative or qualitative techniques. In Chapter five, the authors analyse alternatives and policy recommendations using political, economic, technical, administrative and social feasibilities. One merit of this chapter is that it includes suggestions pertaining to Islamization of public policy and proposes that the approach of public policy as a policy field can be developed to devise principles for Islamization. The focus of chapter six is on the study of methods of evaluation of policy impacts with an eye to disclosing the real impact of policy which is the climax of policy analysis. Chapters seven and eight represent applications of the core ideas and concepts presented in the earlier chapters of the book with particular focus on Malaysia, and are largely based on the authors' experiences and research.

The book serves the purpose for the subject-matter as well as the aims of teaching, i.e., it is written with an eye on the aims and objectives of teaching. It is well written and presents the subject-matter in a simple, lucid and clear form. The book contains tables, charts and diagrams where necessary. It provides a substance of each chapter at the end. Such a provision helps students to grasp the subject-matter properly.

On the down side, the book has no index. There is no excuse for this omission. Another omission of the book is that it does not include questions at the end of each chapter that may be used by students for revising the subject-matter covered.