

# 1 Philosophy and Policy, then and Now: Unfolding the Rural 2 Tourism Policy Perspectives in Malaysia

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## 7 **Abstract**

8 The paper examines the evolution of political philosophers from the time of Plato (428 BC),  
9 Ibn Khaldun (1406) and Confucius (479 BC) to the current day political philosophers  
10 represented by John Dewey (1952) and Harold Lesswell (1978). The paper further examines  
11 how this departure has diluted philosophy from the policy making process, from what used to  
12 be an integration of philosophy and policy making to separating the philosophical component  
13 from it. This is seen as an issue in modern day policymaking as philosophy is legitimately  
14 concerned with the human affair and serves as guidance to humanity. Taking it into the  
15 Malaysian context, a snapshot of the Malaysian Ecotourism Plan will be used as an example  
16 to further illustrate the absence of philosophy in modern day policy making. This policy is  
17 important, as it serves as the backbone to the overall conservation of rural tourism in  
18 Malaysia.

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20 **Index terms**— philosophy, political philosophy, policy evolution, malaysian ecotourism plan, rural tourism

## 21 **1 Introduction**

22 The question of why people behave justly is quite uncertain. To some extent people behave because they fear  
23 societal punishment, while others are trembling before the notion of divine retribution. Is it possible to seem to  
24 behave justly due to the simple fact that there is good in people? The political system has been a central part  
25 of every nation's journey in development and growth. In further understanding this, the working definition of  
26 the political sciences is the knowledge of and in decision process of the public and civic order (Lass well, 1971).  
27 Much debate has been done in various countries talking about the contradictions in public policy and the policy  
28 process, or it being an oxymoron. For instance, why is sugar subsidised in Malaysia when obesity is on the  
29 rise and is healthy eating is highlighted in the mainstream media? Or a more extreme example, setting out to  
30 assassinate people is generally not permitted, neither is setting out to harm, take them prisoner or destroy their  
31 shelter and vehicles. But these in a civilised war, where only certain types of people get hurt is acceptable (Shue,  
32 2010).

33 Thesesort of questions motivate political scientist to further question the ideological and political persuasion  
34 to understand public problems and to find solutions to them (Birkland, 2005).

35 The political sphere can come in various dimensions. For instance, a school, a university, nation or even  
36 the world, however regardless of the scale, it is crucial to highlight that public policies address issues that are  
37 public and not private (Birkland, 2005). The knowhow of policy and its sciences should dedicate its solution of  
38 societal problems and other human dimensions within the prescribed space and time configurations or context.  
39 This is especially related to those having authority over allocation of valued resources be it wealth, power, skill,  
40 enlightenment, affection or well being (Brewer, 1973). Political science is not a new phenomenon. In fact, political  
41 science has its ancient roots where it has been governing as early as 500bc in the days of Plato in the West and  
42 Confucius in the East. The objective of this paper is to compare examples of classical and modern day distinction  
43 and evolution of political sciences, its importance and application in the modern day dimension and how can this  
44 knowledge be imparted into the context of rural tourism in Malaysia.

45 **2 II.**

46 **3 Evolution of Policies**

47 The policy science focuses on the relevance of knowledge and in decision making ??Lass well, 1971).. The  
48 study of public policy is generally seen as an important component of political science (Birkland, 2005). The  
49 evolution of human nature has been the highlight of political influence. The history of political philosophy  
50 includes many of the greatest most widely works of philosophy (Matravers, 2001). Great classical policy founders  
51 like Plato, IbnKhaldun, and Confucius for instance initiated a point of departure for the evolution of present day  
52 policies.

53 **4 a) Plato**

54 Plato was born in 428 B.C. in Athens to an upper-class family. His father was a descendent of Codrus (the last  
55 king of Athens) and mother Perictione of Solon who is an Athenian lawgiver. Plato has shaped the fundamental  
56 social and political by rejecting cynical interpretations of leadership as merely an exercise of power inflicted  
57 by self-interest elites (Williamson, 2008). This is coined by two major events. Plato was believed to have written  
58 the west's first legal theory. He is also responsible to write the west's first systematic philosophies of ethics and  
59 policies (Heinze, 2007). The Republic, is the first book by Plato to explicitly highlight about the fundamental  
60 idea of societal, or political justice, deriving from an analogous concept of individual justice (Plato, 360 B.C.).  
61 The Republic also mentioned that there were two major events that took place during the time the book was  
62 written. Firstly, the assumption of power by two groups namely the Four Hundred and the Thirty. After the  
63 Peloponnesian War, Athens was turned into an oligopolised nation, controlled by the wealthy. He was critical  
64 about the fact that the government at that point was very instable and oppressive, and was actively trying to  
65 restore democracy (Plato, 360 B.C.). Nonetheless, Plato cares not just about justice per se, but rather who  
66 and how Athens is controlled (Heinze, 2007). The second major event happened when his mentor, Socrates  
67 stood before a jury as he was charged for not recognising the gods of the state, of inventing new deities and  
68 for corrupting the youth of Athens. However, during that time amnesty was brought upon political offenders.  
69 Nonetheless, Socrates was found guilty of other charges but managed to escape a narrow death sentence (Plato,  
70 360 B.C.) b) Plato's political view as a philosopher Plato expresses his philosophy through dialogues (Osborne,  
71 2006). Plato's work has given practitioners the fundamental concepts of freedom, democracy, rules, positivism,  
72 individualism, community, morals, politics and government (Heinze, 2007). His work is divided into three parts  
73 which means ethics, epistemology and metaphysics (ontology) and was heavily influenced by other philosophers  
74 including Heraclitus, Parmenides and Socrates. The Theory of Forms, the foundation of Plato's work ??Robjant,  
75 2012, Silverman, 2012) indicates that all things share a common feature in the universe. Therefore, although a  
76 ball regardless if it is a basketball or a circle drawn on a blackboard is round, it shares a common feature in the  
77 universe, i.e. a Form. This task of metaphysics is to pass beyond the experience in which the world exists, but  
78 also to further understand it (Robjant, 2012).

79 He believes that the virtue of happiness requires knowledge, that is the knowledge of good and evil (Silverman,  
80 2012). He quotes from the Republic that "Until philosophers rule as kings or those who are now called kings and  
81 leading men genuinely and adequately philosophise, that is, until political power and philosophy entirely coincide,  
82 while the many natures who at present pursue either one exclusively are forcibly prevented from doing so, cities  
83 will have no rest from It was also mentioned that the proposed political analogy adopted was the idea of morality  
84 constructed within a community ??Plato, 1993). Therefore the philosophy to Plato was reviewed as a dialect in  
85 which represents the art of contentious reasoning in order to ever last the validation of true options (Bocancea,  
86 2009). Policies and law in his era did not emerge explicitly from changing issues of social and cultural life, nor  
87 did it come from the great deeds and inspiring events from predecessors. Instead, they are simply fabricated  
88 in terms of well-established principles and procedures by the artisan (Steinberger, 1989). His method does not  
89 always lead to the truth, but is seen as a substitute to truth. Philosophy was therefore used to govern and make  
90 politics (and or policies) (Bocancea, 2009).

91 **5 c) IbnKhaldun**

92 IbnKhaldun (1332-1406), born in Tunis of Spanish-Arabic descendent and settled in Egypt in 1382 received  
93 education from reputed scholars (Chapra, 2008). He was born to a family that held high rankings in the civil  
94 services that had connections to the Spanish culture. His family was also connected to the Hafid dynasty and  
95 considered themselves part of a foreign elite. (Bocancea, 2009). The era of the Black Death (1340's) claimed the  
96 lives of his family including friends, teachers and members of his society (Chapra, 2008). Ibn Khaldun has been  
97 acclaimed as one of the greatest of its kind, created in any time or place where is seen as a system of Muslim  
98 jurisprudence and adaptation to Greek philosophy (White, 1959).

99 **6 d) IbnKhaldun's political views as a philosopher**

100 In his work, he postulates the notion of "everything is a function of man and a human social organisation" This  
101 notion of anthropocentrism (White, 1959) was a barrier especially in instilling social responsibility amongst the  
102 political elite. He was seen as one of the greatest figures of the fourteenth century where he was known as a

103 tremendously able politician and rhetoric and jurisprudence (Burns, 2006). He talks about the dynamic theory  
104 of development where it talks that a development or decline of an economy or society does not depend on a  
105 singular factor, but rather an interaction of moral, social, economic, political and historical factors over a period  
106 of time (Chapra, 2008) or generational time (Inayatullah, 1998).

107 Amongst his work, he mixes philosophy, sociology, ethical and economic considerations that are influenced  
108 by physical, nonphysical, social and economic environments. The Muqaddimah, the first of his seven books  
109 highlighted the importance of social organisation of production in order for an adequate livelihood (Boulakia,  
110 1971). In this book, he particularly tried to analyse the closeness in interrelated roles of evils [...] nor, I think,  
111 will the human race" Republic, 473 d-e (Plato 1997, 1100) taken from (Bocancea, 2009). moral, psychological,  
112 political, economical, social, demographic and historical factors over three generations, or 120 years (Chapra,  
113 2000). He talks about the theory of distribution, the theory of cycles and how his theories forces the government  
114 to spend more and to levy more taxes bringing about production cycle (Boulakia, 1971).

115 IbnKhaldun's critique of philosophy and theology was to distinguish his new science from the aspect of  
116 political philosophy and dialectical theology. His analysis, was not static but more dynamic and multidisciplinary  
117 (Chapra, 2000). He states that these attempts would not show how people should be governed nor take the path  
118 indicating that the Islamic system is correct, but rather undertake a scientific examination of the different types  
119 of government that have existed and their relation to human nature (Burns, 2006).

## 120 **7 e) Confucianism**

121 Confucius (551-479 BC) coined the ideology of Confucianism around 2500 years ago. Confucianism has its  
122 influence on political, social and cultural ideologies (Fengyan, 2004, Hang, 2011) with a moral and spiritual  
123 base. The Han dynasty 202 BC to 220 AD abandoned Taoism and adopted Confucianism as an official ideology  
124 (Hang, 2011). This ideology preaches the notion that harmony and cooperation were preferred over disagreement  
125 and competition, and it is believed to be once coexisting with Buddhism and Christianity (Fukuyama, 1995).  
126 This form of thinking has been a farreaching influence and dominating on traditional Chinese culture for years  
127 (Fengyan, 2004) f) The Confucius' political views as a philosopher

128 The general principle for good governance would include strive for peace, ideally unified and peaceful. The  
129 doctrine includes the notion of one ruler obtaining dominance over the whole world without fighting to gain  
130 territory (Bell, 2006). The notion of 'peace' is not synonym with the absence of violence, but it refers to the  
131 united world that is governed by benevolence (Bell, 2006, Lam, 2003).

132 Scholars have questioned this claim of Confucianism's ideology of democracy being contradicting (Hu, 1997,  
133 Tan, 2003). For instances scholars postulates that Confucianism as the ideological underpinning of 'oriental  
134 despotism', hence dismissing it as anti-democratic (Hu, 1997) and inherently collectivistic, patriarchal and  
135 authoritarian (Tan, 2003) but on the other hand also claims that Confucianism is full of humanism and was far  
136 from being undemocratic (Hu, 1997). This is due to the fact that Western and Eastern ideologies on democracy  
137 are poorly defined and hence would result in a debate of this doctrine (Hu, 1997, Tan, 2003). Tan (2003)  
138 postulates that one of the main reasons is that the Western ideologies do not understand the basic philosophies  
139 and religious assumptions underlying a particular civilisation. g) Modern Day Philosophers and their political  
140 views John Dewey John Dewey was considered one of the most significant and influential philosophers in the  
141 American history and is well known for his interpretation of pragmatism (Cutchin, 2008, Fott, 1991, Glassman  
142 and Kang, 2010, Dalton, 1997). He dwells into the metaphysics of his philosophy in particular concerning the  
143 areas of nature and continuity, contingency and change, situated sociality and transactions (Cutchin, 2008). He  
144 authored 3 major books including School and Society (1956), How we think (1997) and Democracy and Education  
145 (1997) (Fallace, 2012).

146 His philosophy of pragmatism, where was regarded as a distinctive American philosophy, interpreted as an  
147 intelligence in action, not isolated and self-reflective, where it involves intelligent criticism and discrimination of  
148 values (Boisvert, 1985). It was known as a philosophical position that brings together the concept of determination  
149 by examining the consequences of acting upon that concept, and not by striving to grasp a timeless form that  
150 concepts partakes (Fott, 1991). The meaning of pragmatic perspective does not develop hierarchically (top-down)  
151 from those with knowledge to those who lack knowledge but instead developed through lateral relationship  
152 through individuals working together to create dynamic knowledge (Glassman and Kang, 2010). To further  
153 emphasis, in 1902 Dewey placed teachers, and non experts at the center of the process of designing classroom-  
154 learning experiences. His argument was that only teachers could psychologise the subject matter as they teach.  
155 He further states that this is a reinterpretation of the basic concepts and methods that the teacher could deliver,  
156 reflecting in an engaging and powerful way of teaching (Smith Iii and Girod, 2003).

157 In the context of philosophy, Dewey had a different outset of metaphysics as opposed to the previous scholars  
158 of pragmatism. He initially shared his stand on anti-foundationalist worldview such as process, pluralism and the  
159 critique of enlightenment philosophy. However, in the last 25 years of his life, he had a radical view that strongly  
160 critiqued the a priori basis of reality that surrounds the philosophies of materialism and idealism. Branded as a  
161 "reluctant metaphysicist", he then realizes that he had ignored 'life as an experience, an emergent happening'.  
162 Therefore, the metaphysics for Dewey was to discover a reality called radical empiricism that is forever immediate  
163 and emergent, discovered and created, instead of ultimate, abstract or cognitive reality (Cutchin, 2008).

164 Much of his work has been a reflection to scholars especially in their interpretation of his metaphysics and his

165 approach on pragmatism ??Fott, in the topic of policy Dewey postulates that policies be treated as experiments,  
166 with the aim of promoting continual learning and adaptation in response to experience over time ??Swanson et  
167 al., 2010) h) Harold Lasswell ??arold Lasswell (1902-1978), known as the founding father and a contemporary  
168 pioneer (Bell, 1993) of public policy as a field of study that would foster and achieve a commonwealth of human  
169 dignity for all (Lasswell, 1971). He believed that democratisation was an on-going process and addressed the  
170 challenging process of how to ensure that policy-making is an interaction between knowledge, producers and  
171 users. His studies include the contribution of important insights, concepts, methodologies and exemplars where  
172 he looked ahead of his time (Bell, 1993, Eulau, 1958). However, his main contribution would be his concern with  
173 methodology concept of developmental analysis (Bell, 1993) where the methodological problem is nothing but a  
174 connecting statement of value of preference, statement of facts and statement of expectations (Eulau, 1958). In  
175 the concept of decision making, W. Bell (1993) mentions that Lassell quotes three essential ingredients -facts,  
176 expectations and values.

### 177 8 i) Expectation

178 Laswell postulates that making decisions diligently means having expectations of the future and (Bell, 1993)  
179 that prediction of the future is the rationale behind any decision-maker's agenda, Lass well has identified that  
180 there are three types of decision-making behaviours predicting on three types of level of thoughts (Eulau, 1958  
181 ?? Almond, 1987). The goal-thinker, relating his analysis towards achieving a selection of objectives, the trend-  
182 thinker involves the analysis of past trends and the scientific-thinker referring to the analysis of limiting conditions  
183 through application of appropriate skill (Eulau, 1958). Laswell further emphasises that 'knowing the future' is  
184 not part of the decision-making process, but he understood that various alternatives might be presented as  
185 possibilities for the future. This would be seen as real and that deliberate decision making is inconceivable  
186 without some knowledge of predicting the future (Bell, 1993)

### 187 9 j) Facts

188 In the concept of decision making, W. Bell (1993) mentions that Lass ellunder stood that making a conscious  
189 decisions would fall upon having a worldview. A worldview seen as a basic set of beliefs that guide action (Lincon  
190 and Guba, 1985), beliefs about how the world really is and how it works including understanding the cause and  
191 effect relationship and understanding trends (Bell, 1993). In Las well's work, he also commented that cognitive  
192 maps of physical and social realities from navigating and manipulating the world would require some knowledge  
193 on how realities work.

### 194 10 k) Values

195 The classification of goals or base value included power, wealth, respect, well-being, affection, skill, rectitude, and  
196 enlightenment (Almond, 1987) were also understood by Lasswell as a part of decision making and policy making.  
197 This was considered the basis towards the guessing the consequences of action while judging the relative goodness  
198 or badness of that different consequences (Bell, 1993). 1) Joining the dots, the old and the new Philosophy is  
199 not a contemplation, reflection or communication. It is not a contemplation because contemplations are things  
200 themselves as seen in creation of a specific concept, not a reflection because philosophy is not needed to reflect  
201 on anything, and philosophy does not find refuge in communication (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994). The theme  
202 of philosophy is broad, and hence indefinite and can be seen from various points of views (Heidegger, 1956).  
203 However, May (1992) suggests that:

204 "We all 'do philosophy' in the ordinary course of our work, no matter how diverse our interests and approach  
205 to inquiry" However, she also suggests that if the person pays more attention to when and how philosophies  
206 are used, a more thoughtful outcome can be produced (May, 1992). Hook (1970) has similar thoughts where he  
207 mentions that philosophy is legitimately concerned with large problems of human affairs and that philosophers  
208 should have a say in issues concerning the public. But most importantly, philosophies are guidance to humanity  
209 (Nussbaum, 1998).

210 In the era of Plato, they established true aristocracy of Greek philosopher-politician regime (Salkever, 2007),  
211 whereby ruling to them was a simple fabrication of technical matter of construction or fashioning laws and  
212 institutions (Steinberger, 1989). IbnKhaldun and Confucius were also great philosophers and also served as policy  
213 makers. This would be a reasonable relationship as philosophical underpinnings would be useful in managing  
214 strategies (Mir and Watson, 2000). However, authors have questioned the basic principles of ethics, political  
215 philosophy (Ferguson, 2004) that should be within the policy making system (Bell, 1993).

216 The question now lies in the modern philosophers, and where their stance is in their say of policies. John  
217 Dewey believed that the central and continuing issue revolving around philosophy involved the problems of moral  
218 choice and that policies were the means as to how all humans must act (Hook, 1970). In the case of Lass well, he  
219 claimed that political philosophy with its rational methods has no better claim than the capacity to set future  
220 goals in the area of social science (Easton, 1950). As mentioned earlier, the concept of decision making, W. Bell  
221 (1993) mentions that Lassell quotes three essential ingredients -facts, expectations and values. It is believed that  
222 both Dewey and Lass well are merely 'preaching' about their philosophical underpinnings and thoughts on public  
223 policy but none of them were actively involved in the actual constructions of policies.

224 This shifts from the early days where philosophers and politicians were the same people and today where  
225 political philosophers and policy makers may be two separate individuals. In modern day policies, it is reasonable  
226 to assume that some overlap of philosophers and politicians may occur. Figure ?? : illustrates the possible linkages  
227 and evolution of policies and philosophers, then and now. m) Rural Tourism Policies in Malaysia Malaysia has  
228 always placed rural development as their forefront of its development plan. In the 7th Malaysian plan, the  
229 government highlighted the importance of community participation in tourism. Also highlighted in the 9th  
230 Malaysian plan were to create opportunities for farmers to expand and diversify agricultural products such as  
231 agro tourism (Kunasekaran et al., 2011). Nonetheless, the success and the sustainability of it depends on the  
232 role of the government and its agencies in formulating policies, shape practices and deliver services (Baum and  
233 Szivas, 2008).

234 Research has found that despite all these policies, conservation enactments and legislations and efforts to  
235 conserve the environment are in place, recent studies have shown that it is still evident that the concerns regarding  
236 the protection and conservation of these areas remain a topic amongst scholars (Corpuz, 2008, Jakobsen et al.,  
237 2007, Praveena et al., 2012, Teh et al., 2005, Teh and Cabanban, 2007). Also a similar study postulates that  
238 there is serious attention that needs to be focused on the policies surrounding tourism and ecotourism in order to  
239 mitigate further environmental impact (Siew et al., 2012). a backbone towards rural tourism policies in Malaysia.  
240 The aim of this plan is to assist the Government both at Federal and State level in the development of Malaysia's  
241 ecotourism potentials, with the effective tools for conserving of the natural and cultural heritage of the country  
242 while providing socio-economic benefits to the local communities (Chin, 2010).

243 In the Malaysian rural tourism context, policies pertaining to conservation of environmental impacts would  
244 be The National Ecotourism Plan. This plan, drafted by The Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism and  
245 World Wide Fun for Nature (WWF) in 1996sets as Figure 2: shows the organisation in which the policy was  
246 formulated. At first glance, it is seen that no philosophers or political philosophers were present in the making  
247 of this policy. However, it is unknown at this juncture if philosophers were consulted or were within the policy  
248 makers themselves. Nonetheless, it is imperative that philosophy be taken into account as it serves as a practical  
249 guide to humanity (Nussbaum, 1998, Hook, 1970) and democracy ??Plato, 2003, Bell, 2006, Tan, 2003).

## 250 **11 III.**

## 251 **12 Conclusion**

252 Plato's philosophy was influenced heavily by Socrates (Plato, 2003), George W. Bush's philosophy was heavily  
253 influenced by Jesus Christ (Persons, 2004). As philosophy involves the problem of moral choice and policy (Hook,  
254 1970), philosophy should not be isolated from the policy making process. While philosophy can mean different  
255 things in different disciplines (May, 1992) the rural tourism industry in Malaysia is no exception. This is because  
256 this industry touches on three major dimensions which are economic, social and environmental situations while  
257 addressing tourism policies (Blancas et al., 2011). Therefore practical guides to ethics, humanity and democracy  
258 must be part of the system.

259 IV. <sup>1 2 3</sup>

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Figure 1: Figure 2 :

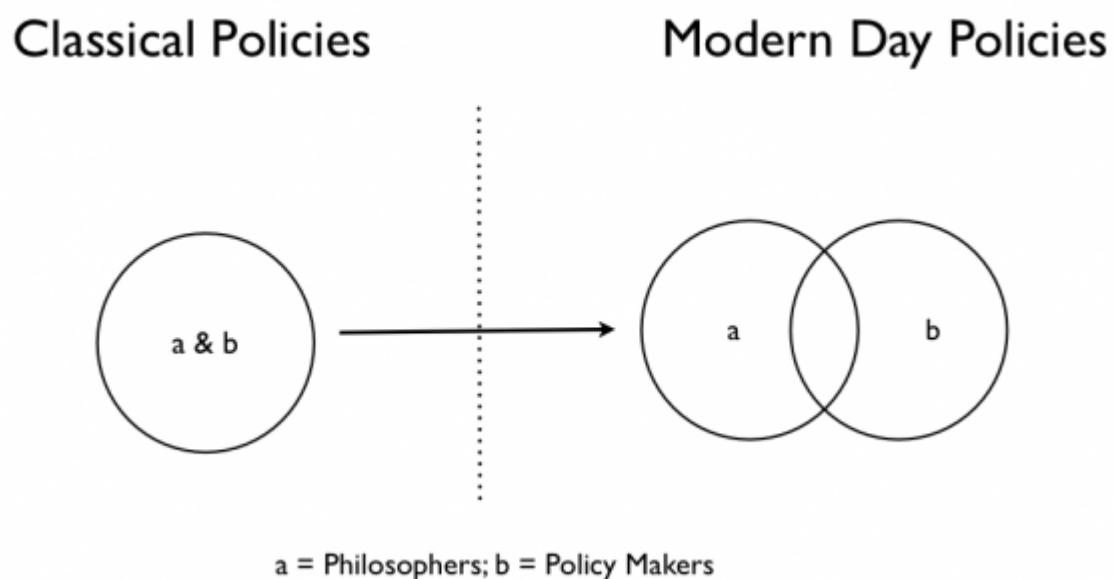


Figure 2:

### 260 .1 Acknowledgement

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