

Politics

Defining politics is difficult, because there is no agreement on its definition. As the result, politics is defined in different ways. For example, politics has been defined as the exercise of power or authority, as a process of collective decision-making, as the allocation of scarce resources, as an arena of deception and manipulation and so forth.

However, presence of some common points could be noticed in all these definitions. First, politics is an activity, Second, politics is a social activity; it happens through interaction between or among people. Third, politics develops out of diversity, the existence of different opinions, needs or interests. Fourth, this diversity is closely linked to the existence of conflict: politics, involves the expression of differing opinions, competition between rival goals or a clash of opposing interests. Finally, politics is about decisions collective decisions which are in some way regarded as binding upon a group of people. It is through such decisions that conflict is resolved. However, politics is better thought of as the search for conflict-resolution rather than its achievement, since not all conflicts are, or can be, resolved. However, this is where agreement ends. There are profound differences about when, where, how and in relation to whom this 'politics' takes place. In relation to these questions, three different conceptions of politics can be identified. In the first one, politics is associated with the formal institutions of government and the activities which take place therein. In the second conception, politics is linked to public life and public activities. In the third conception, politics is related to the distribution of power, wealth and resources.