

## Leishiyo Keishing

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### What is politics?

Politics is exciting because people disagree. They disagree about how they should live. Who should get what? How should power and other resources be distributed? Should society be based on cooperation or conflict? And so on. They also disagree about how such matters should be resolved. How should collective decisions be made? Who should have a say? How much influence should each person have? And so forth. Politics is nothing less than the activity through which human beings attempt to improve their lives and create the Good Society. Politics is, above all, a social activity. It is always a dialogue, and never a monologue. Nevertheless, the disagreement that lies at the heart of politics also extends to the nature of the subject and how it should be studied. People disagree about what it is that makes social interaction 'political', whether it is where it takes place (within government, the state or the public sphere generally), or the kind of activity it involves (peacefully resolving conflict or exercising control over less powerful groups). Disagreement about the nature of politics as an academic discipline means that it embraces a range of theoretical approaches and a variety of schools of analysis. Finally, globalizing tendencies have encouraged some to speculate that the disciplinary divide between politics and international relations has now become redundant.

(an extract from a journal)