

What justifies using “politics” (and its cognates) in the broad sense in which I commonly use it?

Niebuhr evidently addresses a similar question when he says, “all subordination of life to leadership in the various activities of the community is in a sense ‘government,’ though pluralistic and democratic communities have understood how to create independent centers of authority without relating them to state authority” (*Reinhold Niebuhr on Politics*: 108).

The justification, then, for using “politics” in my broad sense is that the term “government,” with which “politics” always has to do, is itself properly used in a correspondingly broad sense—to mean, as Niebuhr puts it, the subordination of life to leadership in any of the various activities of the community. Thus, far from being simply synonymous with “the state,” “government” also has the broad sense that justifies using “politics” as I often use it.

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