

PART I



INTRODUCTORY CONCEPTS

CHAPTER 1 Introduction to Politics and Public Administration



INTRODUCTION TO POLITICS AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- describe basic tenets of political theory such as power, compliance, and the rule of law;
- define politics and the various ways that it affects Canadian citizens;
- explain the evolution of government as a social institution and how we as citizens determine the extent of a government's authority and legitimacy;
- describe the relationship between politics and public administration from a practical, as well as a theoretical, standpoint;
- understand, in general, the purpose and content of this textbook; and
- distinguish between the role of politics as a practice and how it is depicted in the media.

WHAT IS POLITICS?

To many people, the terms “politics” and “public administration” are both mysterious and intimidating. This disconnection is reinforced daily by media reports of dishonesty, corruption, and ineptitude, which seem increasingly frequent. It may surprise you that anyone pays attention to what goes on in government, let alone becomes involved in public life. However, thousands of people continue to play a part in governing Canada, and without them, we would have no country. The evolution of our system of government reveals much about our history and our values as Canadians. And, despite the seemingly endless barrage of criticism, Canada’s governmental foundation remains one of the best models of problem-solving through political compromise and dialogue in the world today.

How did our political structure come to be respected globally? What are the essential components of Canadian political structure, and how do they interact with one another? What is the historical context for this intricate and ever-changing dance among political partners? And, finally, how does all of this express itself in the realms of law enforcement and public safety? These are but a few of the many topics covered in the chapters that follow. We begin with core terms essential for a clear understanding of politics and public administration.

Politics is about relationships. Folksinger Pete Seeger once noted that putting two human beings together in a room is all that is required to begin a political dialogue. We have competing opinions and ideas about what is desirable, and, as a result, our relationships with one another are about power. The capacity to make others comply with your wishes means, in other words, that you have power over them. The study of politics concerns itself with the distribution of power and how it is used in a particular social context. This study ranges from individuals’ interactions to the international level, where nation-states coexist and compete with one another. Wherever and whenever individuals or groups come into contact with each other, there are relationships to navigate, and that is politics.

Politics is fundamentally about power and who decides how it is to be used. We can think of power as the capacity of one person or group to impose decisions on another person or group. In other words, politics is about getting your own way or trying to get your own way. Likewise, compliance or deference refer to the obedience that an individual or group demonstrates in response to the wishes of those who have power.

There are different types of power, and many ways to achieve it. Charisma, compromise, influence, negotiation, persuasion, and even brute force are only some of them. Perhaps without knowing it, you have already experienced examples of this in your own life. Most of us, for example, can relate to having to share space in our own homes. Maybe you had to share a room with a sibling at some point or for all of your adolescence. Perhaps you also had to negotiate shared domain over the backyard, garage, or basement for play, recreation,

politics

the social system that decides who has power and how it is to be used in governing the society’s affairs

or even just time alone. How did you decide how to share this space? Were there agreements or rules? What happened when someone broke those rules or agreements? Did your age, attitude, or status have any influence on preferential treatment? What role did your parents play in managing the space? All of these questions help to illustrate the power relations between you and members of your family. Now consider what it would be like to come to a decision about virtually anything in a country of 38 million people. This happens every day as government officials engage in the shared task of running Canada. We elect politicians at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels of government to represent our individual and collective interests and bring them to the attention of the state.



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau speaking to the press and Tk'emlups te Secwepemc community members and First Nations leaders at the Tk'emlups Pow wow Arbour in Kamloops.

WHAT IS POWER?

It is useful to establish the fundamental elements of political theory so that, as we move to examine Canada's political structure, you will be able to make useful connections between politics as an academic discipline and politics as it is practised in reality. In political theory, power is often subdivided into three main categories: force, persuasion, and legitimate authority. Force, or coercion as it is sometimes called, refers to the threat or actual use of violence (death, injury) or social sanctions (imprisonment, fines) to enforce compliance. Persuasion refers to debate, discussion, compromise, and any other non-violent means of achieving one's will. While force and persuasion embody external submission on the part of an individual, legitimate authority refers to an internal recognition by an individual that others have the power to impose their will by virtue of their position or the institution they represent. In other words, we respect

their decision because we respect the source of their power and agree to obey its representatives.

It is legitimate authority that justifies political power in a modern democracy such as Canada. We agree to abide by the laws of our country as they are passed down from our political establishment because those who create them (politicians) are ultimately answerable to us through the electoral process. In other words, political accountability ensures that political power is used in a fair, reasoned, and justifiable manner.

WHAT IS GOVERNMENT?

“Why can’t we all just get along?” This might be considered a standard observation of a newcomer to the study of politics. After all, if politics is about relationships, then we can just agree not to bother one another, and everything should be fine, right? This formula for social harmony appears enticing (particularly to those familiar with the 1960s); however, it presupposes an almost intuitive sensitivity and saint-like deference. People will eventually disagree about something, and some *formal* mutually acceptable process is needed to resolve these disputes. We achieve this to varying degrees through the institution of government. A brief story might help to clarify some of these concepts for you.

LIFE IN HOBBS HALL

It’s your first day at college, and you are ecstatic. You were lucky enough to land a room in Hobbes Hall, the new campus residence. Funds for its creation were donated by a group of political science instructors in recognition of Thomas Hobbes, a 17th-century British political philosopher.¹ The opportunity to stay at Hobbes Hall appealed to you because there is only one rule: “There are no rules.” Because the place is new, the donors have decided to allow students total freedom to create, in effect, a society as they might wish it to be. All summer long, you anticipated the possibility of living away from your parents, free of obligations and responsibilities to anyone but yourself. The first couple of weeks at Hobbes Hall are great, if a little noisy. Everyone you meet is happy, and it appears as if the semester will be a positive experience. Soon, however, differences in

1 This story reflects many of the so-called truths illustrated by Hobbes in *Leviathan* (1985, chapters XIII, XVII). Written in 1651, this seminal work of political theory demonstrated the absolute necessity of sovereign government by describing a world in which there were no rules at all. The inevitable result, according to Hobbes, would be a “war of every man against every man” because people would have no legitimate authority through which to resolve conflicts, nor would they trust one another to be fair and impartial. Thus, the dictums contained within *Leviathan* underscore the importance of public respect for the rule of law and the agents of public law enforcement who uphold it.

lifestyle begin to create rifts in the residential population. Some people play loud music at all hours, others leave dirty dishes in the communal kitchen sink for days on end, and still others have friends over who show no concern for the litter they leave behind. This is a never-ending source of irritation for you, but others on your floor don't seem to mind. "Take it easy," they tell you, reminding you that there are neither rules nor enforcement protocols and that the minor annoyances are not worth getting upset over.

By November, the residence has taken on the look of a trash heap. Nobody has assumed any social obligation to keep common areas clean. It seems that individuals have resorted to looking after only what is directly under their control, and some have not even bothered to do that. One weekend, several rooms are broken into and valuables stolen. This causes a furor among residents, and some blame neighbours for the incidents. A couple of weeks later, it happens again. This time, accusations result in some pushing and shoving. It is clear to you that things are getting out of hand. Leaving the situation alone is bound to have disastrous consequences as students trade recriminations and threaten one another with revenge for alleged acts and suspected wrongdoings. Order and security presuppose collective responsibility, but this, in turn, necessitates rules, thus limiting individual freedom. You discuss this with other concerned students, and, collectively, you draw up an agenda to discuss the situation. Your first challenge is to convince everyone living at the residence that these issues must be addressed. In other words, all individuals affected by these decisions must recognize and respect their validity and agree to abide by the principles they represent. They must accept that these rules are objective and are applied fairly to all. There are some other fundamental issues to be addressed:

1. What is an acceptable balance between individual freedom and the "collective good"?
2. Who will draft the rules and oversee the interests of Hobbes Hall?
3. How will the rules be enforced?
4. How will disputes be mediated in a manner that all parties will find acceptable?
5. What if a complaint is made against a residence action, rule, or decision?

Although fictitious, this scenario illustrates the absolute necessity of government in human affairs. Because we are social by nature, we need to organize ourselves in a way that protects us all from external and internal threats, yet allows us to preserve and nourish our individual differences. The questions posed above address some of the fundamental challenges that face modern democracies such as Canada. They also touch on the importance of public respect and acceptance of government's authority over its citizens. For example, you cannot simply draft your own rules for Hobbes Hall and expect others to abide by them. You lack

any legitimate authority to do so. Being selected by your peers to represent their interests through a residence election may grant this power to you. However, you maintain this position only so long as you maintain their respect and support. The power that we grant our politicians, although much broader in scope, is no different. They must be prepared to justify their decisions during their term in office and make every effort to demonstrate to the public that they are acting in the best interests of constituents.

Now that you are familiar with the problem for which government is intended to solve as a concept, it will be easier to understand how and why government functions the way it does in a country such as Canada and, more importantly, how it relates to justice and law enforcement. All countries rely on power to survive. One of the basic tests of state recognition is the state's ability to control a fixed population and geographic territory. As indicated earlier, the power required to acquire such prerequisites can be coercive or persuasive or granted by citizens through legitimate authority. Although non-democratic countries tend to resort to the more brutal elements of power, democracies rely on authority for their continued legitimacy. This requires democratic forms of government to be accountable to citizens. Furthermore, this must be evident at all stages in the political process; otherwise, citizens may lose faith in the legitimacy of the system and thus imperil its credibility. Because this textbook is concerned with Canadian political institutions, it focuses primarily on how we, as Canadians, facilitate and manage political power at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels of government while preserving public respect for it.

government

a formal system within which political power is exercised

What is government? A basic way to define **government** is as a formal system within which political power is obtained and exercised. Still, this doesn't capture the incredible complexity of government, both as a concept and as a practice. As a practice, it is the means by which we negotiate and coordinate collective action; as a concept, it is a pillar of civilization. Government is present in so many aspects of our lives that many of its activities go unnoticed, and we so often refer to it in this broad and interchangeable way—as a shorthand for our specific bureaucratic system, the general idea of the institution, and the particular leadership of the day or any previous period. As you will discover, with government, context is key.

authority

a government's ability to make decisions that are binding on its citizens

Government has a long history dating back as far as the beginning of human civilization itself, and many people have written about its form and function. **Authority** refers to government's ability to make decisions that are binding on its citizens. A government that is successful in convincing the general population to accept its authority (through persuasion or force) will enjoy the power to issue and enforce commands. We focus here on persuasion, but be mindful that not every society is governed through persuasion. When citizens respect where decisions come from, they will conform to the result of these decisions whether they like them or not. You may have heard the phrase "consent of the governed" before, and this is precisely what it means. Formally, this is called **legitimacy**,

legitimacy

the obligation citizens feel to obey the laws and pronouncements issued by those in authority

which refers to the obligation citizens feel to obey the laws and pronouncements issued by those in authority who have come to power by acceptable means.

Taken together, these concepts explain why we, as Canadians, abide by the laws that our governments make for us. Even if we disagree with a particular law, we still recognize that our politicians have the right to pass laws for the greater good of society. If each Canadian decided instead to disobey laws whenever they chose, the system of law and its enforcement would simply break down. Imagine the implications that this scenario could have in the area of transportation. The absence of a general acceptance of rules, enforced by police and other authorities, would quickly lead to misunderstandings over road use, disputes arising from accidents, arbitrary vehicle speeds, and ultimately unsafe conditions for everyone. As members of a society that recognizes the wisdom of authority and legitimacy in its political system, we assume that our governments will act for the greater good of society, even if this means that our personal freedom is limited by these decisions.

In a democracy, the concepts of authority and legitimacy are tied directly to what is known as the **rule of law**.² The rule of law ensures that all citizens, regardless of social rank, are subject to the laws, courts, and other legal institutions of the nation. For example, a prime minister who is found guilty of a crime cannot pass a law to make their infraction legitimate. The rule of law also demands that *all* government actions be legal—that is, they must be approved and accepted by a justice system that is free from state interference. This guards against the possibility that government officials might resort to illegal actions to accomplish a task. This is also why police services take such care to ensure that officers respect the law in the course of carrying out their duties. Violating the rights of an accused or collecting evidence illegally damages the credibility of an investigation, almost always results in charges being dropped, and may result in legal action being taken by the defendant. The rule of law ensures fair and equitable treatment for all by a government, and, as outlined later, it forms an integral part of Canada’s system of justice and public safety.

rule of law

the concept that all citizens, regardless of social rank, are subject to the laws, courts, and other legal institutions of the nation

HOW LAW ENFORCEMENT FITS IN

Policing is fundamental to Canada’s public justice system and is therefore essential to preserving the rule of law. If people lose faith in government, there is a risk that they will also lose faith in the rule of law. This is why, as a society, we go to such lengths not only to “do justice”—for example, protect the rights of accused individuals and ensure that police follow proper legal procedures—but also to demonstrate to all Canadians that justice is publicly administered—that is, justice must not only be done, but must be seen to be done.

² For further reading on the legislative history and social construction of the rule of law, see the late British judge and jurist Bingham (2011).



As part of the network of government agencies involved in law enforcement, police services represent an essential component of Canada's justice system by helping to maintain respect for the rule of law.

HOW AND WHY WE ACCEPT THE RULE OF LAW

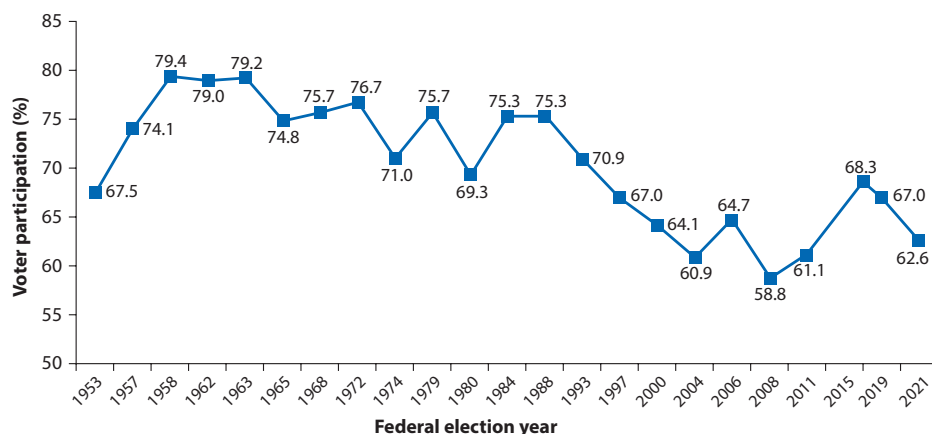
The process of demonstrating that justice has been carried out belongs in large part to the media, which cover both the successes and the failures of the justice system. For example, it is common practice for the media to publish the details of a court case. This practice is consistent with the public's right to know the workings of the justice system. In some rare situations, however, this right is suspended in order to ensure an accused person's right to a fair trial. Public trust in the legal system can never be taken for granted in any society. We must be reminded through the words and deeds of public officials that every effort is being made to ensure that justice is done so that when problems occur, they can be remedied efficiently and effectively.

An important reason Canadians consent to be governed—or live within the framework of laws, regulations, and political decisions—is that they can hold their political representatives accountable through the process of elections. Elections are a way to ensure continued citizen support for the authority and legitimacy of their governments, and they force elected politicians to be accountable for what they have done (or not done) during their term as elected representatives. However, not all eligible voters turn out to vote on election day. Participation at the federal level, for example, has generally declined since the 1990s (see Figure 1.1), and this often raises questions about the health of our democracy and the legitimacy of a particular government.

As explained in later chapters, Canadian political tradition, the process of choosing candidates, party affiliation, and other socio-economic issues play a large part in determining how the public's judgment manifests itself in the

political scene. Think about the last federal election for a moment. What were your motivations? Did you vote to hold the government to account or to extend and endorse their mandate to continue governing? If you did not vote, was it part of a general trend among the electorate with an overall low participation rate or did you have other reasons for not exercising your right? It is important to locate your own role in the political process, even at the early stage in our journey here. Politics is not something that just happens. As discussed, politics is about relationships, and your own voice is a factor in negotiating relationships between groups at all levels and regions of the country.

FIGURE 1.1 Voter Participation in Federal Elections, 1953–2021



THE ART OF GOVERNMENT: POLITICS AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The aim of this textbook is to give you a practical overview of Canada’s political structure and the bureaucracy through which much of its operation is carried out. Politics and public administration, which share a common purpose of furthering the public good, often go about doing so in different ways. The nature of this relationship can be complementary or competitive, resulting in new approaches to government policy.

For the purposes of this textbook, the term “politics” will be used to refer to the work of politicians at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels of government who are elected by the people they represent. We treat the subject of politics separately from that of public administration because, although one can argue that all aspects of government involve both political and administrative elements, it is politicians who must ultimately answer to us for what their particular level of government has done from one election to the next.

Public administration is more challenging to define because, as you will discover later in this textbook, it can be understood to include every non-elected person who is employed by government. Often referred to as the **civil service**

public administration

the branch of the political structure, consisting of public employees, that turns the policy decisions of elected politicians into action

civil service

people who are directly tied to the administrative function of a particular level of government; see also *public administration*

public service
civil service or public
administration

or **public service**, this branch of the Canadian political structure hypothetically includes anyone employed in a publicly funded activity, such as policing, fire-fighting, and teaching. However, convention normally limits public administration to people who are directly tied to the administrative function of a particular level of government, such as policy implementation and evaluation. The public service takes the policy decisions of elected politicians and turns them into concrete action. For example, suppose a local municipality's councillors hear concerns from constituents about the need for a sidewalk to help children travel safely to and from a school in an area with heavy traffic. The political will of the council is dictated to the municipality's public works department, which in turn sends out a crew to construct the sidewalk.

This simple example skips many of the intermediary steps involved in accomplishing such a task (see Chapter 8 for details), but it illustrates what might be called the “classic” model of communication between politicians and public servants. As outlined in later chapters, a complex system of communication exists among these branches of the Canadian political structure, and this system often blurs the line between those responsible for creating policy and those who are ultimately held responsible for implementing it.

WHY STUDY POLITICAL STRUCTURE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION?

You should now have some idea as to why students who are interested in the fields of justice and public safety must understand Canadian political structure and public administration. As an agent of law enforcement, it is essential that you understand your legal rights and obligations. This knowledge extends beyond the rules and regulations of your employer to encompass where and how the legitimate authority of the state is delegated to public agencies, such as police services, whose sworn duty it is to uphold laws passed by the state and to maintain respect for the rule of law. In this sense, you represent the public good and therefore have a responsibility to know how government works—that is, the origin and implementation of public policy through government legislation. This knowledge enables you to understand and appreciate more fully your role in the overall administration of justice and to understand the roles of other key players in developing, interpreting, and administering the law.

This textbook, and the course it represents, also provides you with an understanding of your rights and responsibilities as a Canadian citizen. This, too, should help to better acquaint you with the structure and day-to-day practice of government at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels and with their relationship to justice and public safety. Your familiarity with the Canadian political structure and public administration will give you an advantage as you prepare to meet the continuing challenges and changes that face our country.

STRUCTURE OF THIS TEXTBOOK

Following is a brief overview of some of the topics you will encounter as you read through the sections of this textbook. Keep in mind that while each chapter attempts to focus on a particular area of interest, all of the topics are interrelated because issues and decisions in one sector of government and public administration often have an impact on other sectors.

Chapter 2 presents a brief history of the events that led to Confederation in 1867 and how Canada's political structure was established at that time. The chapter explains the origin of the three levels of government in the context of the Canadian Constitution and provides some historical background that will help you better understand the political issues that face Canadians today.

Chapter 3 focuses on the Constitution from its inception as the *British North America Act* through its patriation in 1982, including attempts at constitutional reform. Attention is given to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, its impact on Canadians' individual and collective rights, and its effects on law enforcement and the role of the courts in the political and constitutional process.

Chapter 4 begins with an explanation of representative and responsible government and then explores the electoral process and the role of candidates. It goes on to examine the structure and roles of the three levels of government—federal, provincial, and municipal—and defines their executive, legislative, and judicial functions. The process of making laws at each level of government is also explained. The chapter introduces the interrelationships among the three levels of government, a topic that will be explored in more detail in later chapters. Chapter 4 also presents a brief history of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments.

Chapter 5 describes the evolution of government services in Canada in general and law enforcement in particular. The chapter then encourages you to look at the big picture by using what you learned in the previous chapters to discuss some current issues in Canadian politics as they relate to policing and the justice system. Particular attention is paid to influences on the political process at all levels of government and how these have direct and indirect effects on law enforcement. Chapter 5 concludes with a discussion of police responses to changing social realities.

With this political context in place, the focus shifts to an emphasis on public administration. Chapters 6 and 7 explore the meaning of public administration, with a view to helping you recognize its relevance and relation to the political process. In particular, you will discover how political and public administration entities rely on each other for mutual benefit and, ultimately, survival. It will become evident that tension also characterizes this relationship as political and administrative forces attempt to achieve specific goals. These chapters also briefly summarize theories of bureaucracy to see how they have influenced the evolution of modern public service in Canada. You will then have an opportunity to

explore the similarities and differences between private and public administration. Particular attention is given to recent trends toward government privatization of public facilities, such as prisons.

Chapter 8 focuses on the “glue” that binds politics and administration—public policy. Using examples, the chapter illustrates the many complex—and often unpredictable—stages that take place while policy is being created, implemented, and evaluated. The chapter ends by examining how creating public policy can be a difficult balancing act, especially when policy-makers strive to protect the Charter rights of all Canadians while, at the same time, attempting to keep government spending (and thus taxes) at a satisfactory minimum.

Chapters 9 and 10 complete our exploration of the complex world of public administration by examining the structure and organization of the civil service in Canada today, with particular emphasis on those components that play a role in the system of justice and law enforcement. These chapters describe the many ministries, agencies, and Crown corporations that constitute the public service. You will discover how public policy is transformed into administrative law and become aware of the differences between this type of legislation and others, such as constitutional law. As well, you will see how politicians and public servants work together to meet the challenges that arise in government. By analyzing examples, such as the role of Ontario’s Special Investigations Unit (SIU) in overseeing police activity, you will also discover that disagreement and conflict are an ongoing part of the relationship between government and the public service.

Chapter 11 examines Canada’s role in the world more broadly. It leans on core concepts from the previous chapters to explore how Canada contributes to global initiatives and order; leads, diverges from, and trails its closest trading partners and allies; and contributes to global development and innovation. It is our hope that you pair your new-found confidence as a Canadian citizen with a global perspective, are inspired to defend proud and essential institutions of government, and are committed to growing and improving.

Chapter 12 focuses on your part as a constituent in our government system. The chapter presents some of the benefits of getting involved in politics, especially at the municipal level, as well as some suggestions on how to do so. As you prepare for a career in law enforcement, it is our hope that, at this point, you will understand and feel confident about your role in Canadian society, both as a representative of law enforcement and as a private citizen.

Get Real!

Political Theatre

Our political discourse tends to emphasize drama, minimize nuance, and trivialize the serious business of government by reducing it to a game played between teams trying to score points on each other. We know from Bismarck that politics

is the art of the possible, but is the practice of that art supposed to be entertainment (Partington, 1996, p. 110)?

Well, no. Politics has always had a flair for the theatrical. Leaders, after all, build and maintain support by attracting an audience. The more that politicians compete for attention across our media platforms today, however, the more they act as though politics is entertainment. Is it any wonder why people routinely tell pollsters that they have no faith in the efficacy of government?

Politics is not meant to be entertainment, but can *actual* entertainment teach us anything about politics? Well, yes. Hollywood is often cliché and careless with stereotypes, but a few remarkable films succeed in making room for the nuance that the business of government requires. We can use two such films (no spoilers!) to further the lessons about the core themes of this chapter and our understanding of politics more generally.

Director Frank Capra's *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939) covers all of the core themes of politics in only two hours, and it is almost one hundred years old. There is no Canadian equivalent, unfortunately, but there are enough similarities between our democracies for us to be able to relate. The Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States empowers state governors to fill vacancies in the U.S. Senate between regular elections. The film tells the story of an everyman (James Stewart) who suddenly finds himself in Washington for the first time representing his state as a Senator. In short order, he learns how to navigate a sensationalist media, cynical insiders, entitled veterans, special interests, the party system, legislative procedure, and the writing and tabling of a bill. The story shows us that politics can leave us confused, frustrated, deceived, and defeated, but there is value in sticking to our character and principles. Can you think of any reasons why our media platforms might prefer to frame politics as an entertaining cutthroat quest for power and not in this redeeming and hopeful sort of way?

Monty Python and the Holy Grail (1975), an absurdist film by the legendary British comedy troupe, contains what is perhaps the best discussion about legitimacy ever written. Early in the film, King Arthur (Graham Chapman) gets drawn into an argument with two peasants who remind him that they did not consent to be governed by him or the system of government that he purports to represent. "Supreme executive power," says one of the peasants in response to Arthur presenting his own personal myth as the grounds for his legitimacy, "derives from a mandate from the masses. Not some farcical aquatic ceremony." Of course, the joke is that the peasants are using sophisticated language from the 20th century in an argument that takes place in the rather unsophisticated 10th century. Our ideas about legitimacy have come a long way in a millennium. It is easy to laugh at ignorance about our political system, but be warned, disregard for legitimacy is a serious threat to political stability and disrespectful of our traditions and institutions. Can you think of any recent examples where politicians asserted their own legitimacy on similarly questionable grounds?

Politics is an art because it takes skill to master and to succeed at it, and while it certainly does have a flair for the theatrical (we do like a good speech as much as we like a good story), it is far too high-stakes to ever be considered entertainment. Pretend, for example, that your region of the country needed sudden emergency disaster relief. Would the ensuing political debate to deliver such relief be just another point-scoring sound-bite on the news or a montage in the disaster movie cut on social media, or is it far too serious to trivialize as a zero-sum game?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

We can understand politics both as an abstract concept and as a concrete practice. At its root, politics is about power and who gets to decide how it is used. Power is the ability of one person or group to impose decisions on another person or group. The degree to which the latter person or group obeys the former determines the degree of compliance. Power can be exercised through external means, such as coercion and persuasion, or through citizen respect for legitimate authority. In concrete terms, politics, government, and public administration are different but interrelated components of the Canadian political structure. Politics is about power and who decides how it is to be used in the management of a country's affairs. Government is a system of organizing a society so that disputes

can be resolved or prevented. Public administration, as the term is used in this textbook, refers to the process of administering the functions of government and to the people who perform those functions (often called the civil service).

The concepts of authority and legitimacy, which are closely linked to the rule of law, help to explain why Canadians are willing to allow governments and their representatives to make laws and policy decisions and are willing to abide by those laws and decisions.

The remainder of this textbook discusses these topics and the interrelationships among them in more detail, with a view to placing the role of law enforcement in a larger political context.

KEY TERMS

authority, 8

civil service, 11

government, 8

legitimacy, 8

politics, 4

public administration, 11

public service, 12

rule of law, 9

WEBSITES

Canadian Civil Liberties Association: <https://ccla.org>

The Council of Canadians: <https://canadians.org>

Federation of Canadian Municipalities: <https://fcm.ca/home.htm>

Government of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/home.html>

Government of Ontario: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/government>

History of the Magna Carta: <http://www.history.com/topics/british-history/magna-carta>

House of Commons Procedure and Practice: <http://www.ourcommons.ca/MarleauMontpetit/DocumentViewer.aspx?DocId=1001&Language=E&Sec=Ch01&Seq=2>

How Social Media Can Make History: https://www.ted.com/talks/clay_shirky_how_cellphones_twitter_facebook_can_make_history

The Internet in Society: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uk8x3V-sUgU&playnext=1&list=PL72E201FF8C97750D&feature=results_main

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EXERCISES

TRUE OR FALSE?

- ___ 1. Government has existed for as long as human civilization.
- ___ 2. In political terms, “compliance” refers to the obedience of a person or group to the wishes of a person or group with power.
- ___ 3. Police services are the only government agencies responsible for preserving public faith in the rule of law.
- ___ 4. One of the fundamental challenges of politics is balancing individual freedom with the public good.
- ___ 5. In Canada, the prime minister has the right to pass a law to avoid being charged with a crime they have committed.

MULTIPLE CHOICE

- The rule of law ensures that:
 - all citizens are subject to the laws of the nation.
 - even top-ranking politicians cannot override the law.
 - government treats all citizens fairly and equitably.
 - all government actions are legal.
 - all of the above.
- “Politics” can be defined as:
 - the loss of authority.
 - power, decision-making, and who has control.
 - budgets and tax cuts.
 - the conflict between two formal political parties.
- In modern democracies such as Canada, public support of government rests on the concept(s) of:
 - legitimate authority.
 - zero-tolerance law enforcement.
 - supremacy of unelected authority, such as the police.
 - benevolent dictatorship.

4. High-profile court cases require substantial amounts of time and money to prosecute due to:
 - a. the rule of law.
 - b. statements made by government ministers.
 - c. special exemptions under the Constitution.
 - d. the public's demand for justice.
5. The fundamental role of public administration is to:
 - a. formulate public policy.
 - b. make laws for Canadians.
 - c. govern Canadian society.
 - d. make decisions that are binding on citizens.
 - e. turn the policy decisions of politicians into concrete action.

SHORT ANSWER

1. Define "politics" and explain the various ways that it affects Canadian citizens.
2. How do we, as citizens, determine the extent of a government's authority and legitimacy?
3. What is the relationship between politics and public administration from a practical, as well as a theoretical, standpoint?