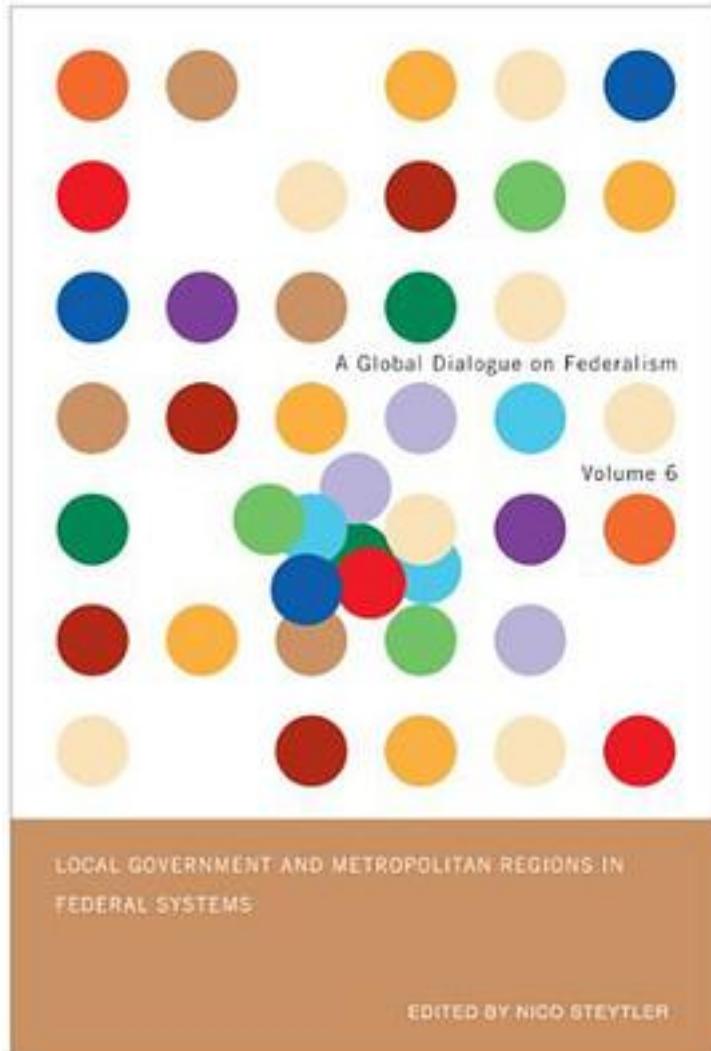


Local Government and Metropolitan Regions in Federal Countries



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While local government is found in all federal countries, its place and role in the governance of these countries varies considerably. In some countries, local government is considered an essential part of the federal nature of the state and recognized in the constitution as such, whereas in others it is simply a creature of the sub-national states/provinces. When referring to local government it is more correct to refer to local governments (plural), as these institutions come in all shapes and sizes, performing widely divergent functions. They range from metropolitan municipalities of mega-cities to counties, small town councils, and villages. Their focus is either multi-purpose in the case of municipalities or single purpose in the case of special districts and school districts. What unites these institutions of state is that there is no level of government below them. That is also their strength and the source of their democratic claim - they are the government closest to the people. Political science experts from across the globe examine local governments by drawing on case studies of Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Germany, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Switzerland, Spain, South Africa, and United States. Contributors include Raoul Blindenbacher (Forum of Federations), Martin Burgi (Ruhr-University Bochum), Luis Cesar (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro), Jaap de Visser (University of Western Cape), Habu Galadima (University of Jos), Sol Garson (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro) Boris Graizbord (National College of Mexico), Rakesh Hooja (HCM Rajasthan State Institute of Public Administration, India), Andreas Kiefer (European Affairs Office of the Land Salzburg), Andreas Ladner (Swiss Graduate School of Public Administration), George Mathew (Institute of Social Sciences, India), Thomas Minger (Conference of Cantonal Governments, Switzerland), Mike Pagano (University of Illinois at Chicago), Chandra Pasma (Forum of Federations), Graham Sansom (University of Technology Sydney), Franz Schausberger (Salzburg University), Nico Steytler (University of Western Cape), Francisco Velasco Caballero (Universidad Autonoma de Madrid), and Robert Young (University of Western Ontario).

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