



# The Latest Research

Despite their numbers and importance to the day-to-day lives of citizens, local governments are surprisingly understudied by political scientists. Certainly, systematic comparative studies on local governance are few and far between in the discipline's major journals. Part of the reason for this may be the astonishing variety of local governments and their sometimes bewildering numbers of responsibilities. It is hard to say something

generalizable about local governments because, unlike state governments, they are not necessarily comparable units. A county, a school district, and a municipality not only have different responsibilities, but they may also be organized and run very differently. Yet one thing common to all governments is the need for accountability. Local governments exist to provide certain goods and services, and some do a better job of it than others.

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