

## Size and Local Democracy

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How large should local governments be, and what are the implications of changing the scale of local governments for the quality of local democracy? These questions have stood at the centre of debates among scholars and public sector reformers alike from antiquity to the present. This monograph offers the first systematic cross-national investigation of these questions using empirical evidence gathered specifically for this purpose. Results provide insights that offer important touchstones for reform activities and academic research efforts in many countries.

'This is a clearly structured, well written and highly innovative contribution to the old question of whether size matters for the quality of democracy. By analysing survey and aggregate data from 234 municipalities in Switzerland, the Netherlands, Denmark and Norway, the authors present broad empirical evidence on the varying impact of size on democracy. Size relates differently to various attributes of good citizenship and plays a different role in the four countries. The theoretically and methodologically ambitious study conveys important and interesting results and deserves broad attention in the community.'

– Oscar W. Gabriel, University of Stuttgart/German Research Institute of Public Administration, Speyer, Germany

'How big is good? Leaders committed to one answer have spent billions, destroyed entire cities and towns, and created new bureaucracies – from Scandinavia to Japan. This study should transform discussion of how a "simple" question is asked, and answered. It shows that most of the clear and simple answers are wrong; size impacts are often minimal, or embedded in complexities. The logic and rigor of the answers sets this book apart from everything earlier. It is a model that should inspire imitation on related topics.'

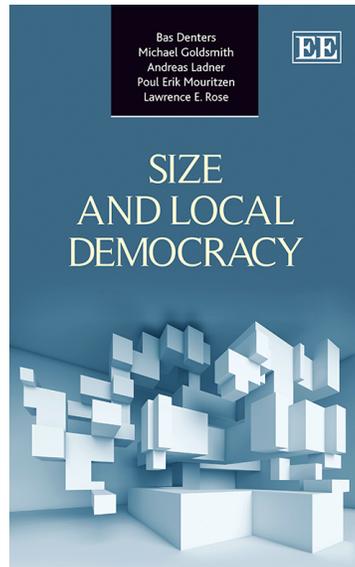
– Terry Nichols Clark, University of Chicago, US

'This book synthesizes a burgeoning literature addressing the impact of size on the quality of local democracy, understood across several dimensions. It is a stimulating read, based on prodigious research, and with practical import for those who work in and study local politics. Strongly recommended.'

– John Gerring, Boston University, US

'The authors of this important book have addressed a neglected question in the study of public policy and local politics: how large should local units be? Denters and Co should be congratulated for effectively and succinctly interrogating the evidence in an accessible and robust manner. Contrary to the reformers, they find that small may be more beautiful after all. Democracy may be enhanced by smaller units: it is important to say this and this book does so with complete authority.'

– Peter John, University College London, UK



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