The book provides a the state-of-the-art of local government studies, with an emphasis on contributions by political science. Particular attention is paid to the development of the research agenda in the field, of which a potential future development is outlined.

The first chapter of the book outlines the development of the research agenda of the field of local government studies; while community power studies were central topics from the 1930s and into the 1950s and 60s, policy-oriented research became increasingly popular in the 1970s. Institutional issues have always been important concerns to the scholars in this field. The next chapter raises a question of increasing relevance in a globalising world: Will local government have any meaningful role in such a world? Various answers, mostly in the affirmative, are suggested. Local government studies face specific methodological challenges; these are reviewed in a separate chapter; the role of local government studies as a laboratory for the social sciences is highlighted. The book also provides a global overview of the infra-structure of research in the field (research institutes and groups, data bases, etc). Finally, ideas regarding a research agenda for the future are presented and a Laswellian platform for collaborative and comparative research is elaborated.

From the Contents:
- Michael Goldsmith, From Community to Power and Back Again?
- Susan Clarke, Globalisation and the Study of Local Politics: Is the Study of Local Politics Meaningful in a Global Age?
- Peter John, Methodologies and Research Methods in Urban Political Science
- Vincent Hoffmann-Martinit, The Infrastructure of Research and Academic Education
- Harald Baldersheim and Hellmut Wollmann, Assessment of the Field and Future Research Agenda

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