



CENTER FOR ETHICS IN SOCIETY

Saint Anselm College



The Ethics of Local Control

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New Hampshire Municipal
Association Annual Conference

November 17, 2022

Our Questions

How much local control is good?
How much is just?

Local Control Is a Continuum

(Almost) everyone endorses some amount of local control... and (almost) everyone endorses some amount of central control.

Maximum centralization

Maximum decentralization



Centralized
world
government

Anarchy

Dimensions of Local Control

- Providing public services
- Fiscal policies (taxing and spending)
- Regulatory & criminal justice policies

A Few Benefits of Local Control

- Choice & competition among governments
- Policies reflect local preferences
- Local officials have more information about local needs than central officials

A Few Costs of Local Control

- Leads to an “arm’s race” among neighboring localities that is bad for everyone
- Provides an environment for local corruption and tyranny -- where the people active and engaged push their own interests and agenda
- Denies people outside of the community a voice in decisions that affect them

Now it's your turn

How much local control is good?
How much is just?