

(Continued)

Given the myriad forms of governance and responsibilities, who holds these governments accountable for doing a decent job and how? All the studies described below examine this general question. Given the numbers and variety, it is not surprising to find that accountability in local government comes in many different forms.

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- **Arnold, R. Douglas, and Nicholas Carnes.** "Holding Mayors Accountable: New York's Executives From Koch to Bloomberg." *American Journal of Political Science* 56 (2012): 949–963.

This study seeks to answer a simple question: How do citizens evaluate the performance of municipal executives? This question is important—one of the things we have learned from our study of state executives is that popular support is a key component of informal power, which is arguably the most important tool governors have for making policy and influencing the public agenda. Although such questions seem basic and have been the subject of intense study at the level of state executives, we have no comparable basis of knowledge at the local level. We are not even sure if citizens hold mayors accountable for the quality of municipal services or city life in general. Arnold and Carnes sought to fill that gap by doing the first-ever study to track mayoral approval across time, analyzing how approval ratings change in response to local conditions and whether that level of public opinion has electoral implications. They did this by examining responses on 150 public opinion surveys, administered over a 25-year period, that included questions on mayoral approval in New York City. They found that New Yorkers hold the mayor accountable for levels of crime and economic conditions—when crime rates go up and economic conditions worsen, mayoral approval dips. Those approval ratings translate into votes. What this study suggests is that citizens treat local executives the same way they treat state executives. Even if the relevant conditions are clearly beyond a mayor's control—a weakening national economy, for example—citizens hold the mayor accountable and punish him or her at the polls if conditions do not improve.

- **Tekniepe, Robert, and Christopher Stream.** "You're Fired! County Manager Turnover in Large

American Counties." *American Review of Public Administration* 42 (2012): 715–729.

While the Arnold and Carnes study noted above examined how citizens hold elected executives accountable, Tekniepe and Stream examined how elected officials hold hired bureaucrats accountable. As discussed in this chapter, county-manager systems are common forms of government at the county level. County managers are hired to run the day-to-day operations of county government, which makes them responsible for delivering the same sorts of public services that elected executives (such as mayors) are held accountable for. As the Arnold and Carnes study shows, if crime rates go up or local economic conditions take a turn for the worse, voters are more likely to vote to fire the executive in the next election. But what about county managers, technocrats who take on many of the day-to-day responsibilities of executive office but are hired by elected officials, not by the voters—do county managers get pushed out for the same sorts of reasons? This study suggests that the answer is no. Unlike mayors, county managers do not generally lose their positions because of local economic conditions. County manager turnover seems to have less to do with local quality-of-life considerations and much more to do with local political conditions. Tekniepe and Stream found that the best predictor of involuntary departure by a county manager was turnover in the county board or a shift in county board leadership. They conclude that political volatility seems to be the biggest threat to county manager job security.

- **Martell, Christine, and Robert Kravchuck.** "The Liquidity Crisis: The 2007–2009 Market Impacts on Municipal Securities." *Public Administration Review* 72 (2012): 668–677.

Markets, like elections and county boards, are also instruments of accountability. Investors will reward or punish bond issuers depending on their financial management history, their fiscal condition, and how they intend to use the funds raised by bonds. This study makes an interesting comparison study to the two just described because it looks at how local governments were punished by the securities market following the Great Recession. This happened even though local governments didn't necessarily do anything wrong.