Abstract:

What sort of research and other work should accounting academics undertake to encourage an accounting that is for the public interest? To answer this question, I document that few articles published in the “leading” North American accounting journals in the 1990-2002 (pre-Sarbanes-Oxley period) have examined corporate accountability and governance, and none have provided systematic critiques of accountability and governance flaws. I argue that the journals’ methodological and ideological commitments discourage sustained critiques of accountability. More specifically, I argue that the journals’ positivist fact-value separation and rejection of praxis, methodological exclusivity, neoclassical economic emphasis on efficient markets, editorial ideology, and abdication of critical and historical reflection obstruct rather than promote timely awareness of accountability and governance problems. I then discuss opportunities for critical, historical, and other alternative research to further our understanding of accounting, accountability, and governance.