ROUTLEDGE CRITICAL STUDIES IN PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

Organizational Reputation in the Public Sector

Edited by
Arild Wæraas and Moshe Maor

Organizational Reputation in the Public Sector

A favorable reputation is an asset of importance that no public sector entity can afford to neglect because it gives power, autonomy, and access to critical resources. However, reputations must be built, maintained, and protected. As a result, public sector organizations in most OECD countries have increased their capacity for managing reputation. This edited volume seeks to describe, explain, and critically analyze the significance of organizational reputation and reputation-management activities in the public sector.

This book provides a comprehensive first look at how reputation management efforts in public organizations play out, focusing on public agencies as formal organizations with their own hierarchies, identities, and cultures—existing in a network of other public organizations with similar or different functions, power, and reputations. From this unique perspective, the chapters in this volume examine issues such as organizational identity, power, actors, politics, and stakeholders within the public sector. Paying specific attention to strategies and processes, and illustrating with examples from the countries of Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Ireland, Israel, and Sweden, the book deepens our understanding of reputation management efforts at various levels of government.

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Routledge Critical Studies in Public Management

Edited by Stephen Osborne

The study and practice of public management has undergone profound changes across the world. Over the last quarter century, we have seen

- increasing criticism of public administration as the overarching framework for the provision of public services,
- the rise (and critical appraisal) of the 'New Public Management' as an emergent paradigm for the provision of public services,
- the transformation of the 'public sector' into the cross-sectoral provision of public services, and
- the growth of the governance of inter-organizational relationships as an essential element in the provision of public services

In reality, these trends have not so much replaced each other as elided or coexisted together—the public policy process has not gone away as a legitimate topic of study, intra-organizational management continues to be essential to the efficient provision of public services, and the governance of inter-organizational and inter-sectoral relationships is now essential to the effective provision of these services.

Further, while the study of public management has been enriched by the contribution of a range of insights from the 'mainstream' management literature, it has also contributed to this literature in such areas as networks and inter-organizational collaboration, innovation, and stakeholder theory.

This series is dedicated to presenting and critiquing this important body of theory and empirical study. It will publish books that both explore and evaluate the emergent and developing nature of public administration, management, and governance (in theory and practice) and examine the relationship with and contribution to the overarching disciplines of management and organizational sociology.

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Foreword

From the vantage of 2014, the appearance of *Organizational Reputation in the Public Sector* is both a surprising and gratifying development.

Surprising: When in 1998 and 1999 I refashioned a dissertation on corporate identity in executive departments into a book on reputation and bureaucratic autonomy, reputation was a concept only occasionally mentioned in the literature on public agencies. The reigning theoretical configurations of the time were legislative dominance in the political science literature (accompanied by the insistence of others that executive actors also played a significant role) and neutral competence and public-service motivation in the public administration literature. The state of theorization and of empirical research remained disappointing, with political scientists in particular running from agency to agency trying to demonstrate 'political control' or the lack thereof. I saw the need for an alternative theory, but I was far from certain that reputation was the right alternative, or that it would succeed.

Gratifying: Reputation-based theories have not entirely supplanted these earlier models—nor would I wish them to, in a world where no single theory can explain all organizational behavior, public or private. Yet accounts premised upon organizational image have now become a standard reference for explaining the decisions of agencies, the varying success of government and administrative strategies, the discretion and deference that agencies are accorded by politicians and political institutions, the alliances and liaisons that agencies make (or do not), the coming and going of personnel, and even the life and death of agencies themselves. As Arild Wæraas and Moshe Maor explain in their thoughtful introduction to this volume, I was not the first to happen upon this insight. Scholars ranging from Herbert Simon to James Q. Wilson to Martha Derthick, among others, had written of the importance of reputations to agency function and dysfunction. What those scattered remarks lacked was a theoretical framework that integrated various observations, proposed causal mechanisms, advanced hypotheses for testing, and directed our attention to certain variables and measures. Those accounts also lacked an in-depth empirical analysis of reputations themselves, which requires attention to the multiple audiences in which reputations live. A decade and a half of scholarship has gone a long way toward filling these gaps.

What this collection of studies shows more than anything is that the baton has truly been passed. The true advances in the study of organizational reputation are occurring not just outside my office, but often outside of North America. This is not to gainsay the crucial work on organizational reputation being done by American scholars such as George Krause, Susan Moffitt, Colin Moore, and others. It is to say that the work of scholars in Denmark, France, Israel, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and other locales is increasingly 'where the action is.' This globalization of discourse can only be a good thing, and it is my fervent hope that policy makers and scholars in the United States will better open their eyes and ears to consider the valuable research and rich policy lessons being produced elsewhere in the world.

From my own view, I think the literature on organizational reputation does need some improvements, and I am pleased to see progress in this direction being made in the present volume.

BETTER DIFFERENTIATION IN EMPIRICAL ACCOUNTS

A critical challenge that arises in assessing any social science theory is the problem of observational equivalence. In the older debates over whether agencies were politically dominated by a legislature or politically autonomous, critics were rightly concerned that what looked like evidence for one claim was in fact consistent with a range of models. Hence the observation that Congress paid little attention to agencies (few hearings, for instance), while being used as evidence for agencies' autonomy, was in fact consistent with strong control (in which case there would be little need for hearings). For reputation-based accounts, too, scholars need to examine alternative explanations of the facts that are usually offered as evidence for the account. Do public managers and agencies care not so much about reputation but really about "getting it right," regardless of whether anyone notices? If so, they might show responsiveness to criticism of their performance in either case. Do agencies pursue ceremonial restructuring not only to mollify audiences and critics but also because it is the cheapest manner of reform from a cost standpoint? As is so often the case when alternative explanations arise, the focus must be placed ever more squarely upon measurement, both quantitative and quantitative. What does a reputation look like, such that we can tell it apart from the 'facts of performance'? Where would a reputation-based account conflict with other accounts?

FOCUS ON MULTIPLE AUDIENCES, MULTIPLE IDENTITIES

If the focus on reputations is to be extended to richer and more nuanced models and empirical studies, the idea that agencies can have more than one reputation will need to be advanced. By definition, the public organizations

we study have multiple officials and representatives, and they have plural publics. As political scientists, public management scholars, sociologists, anthropologists, economists, and other analysts train their eyes ever more on financial regulatory agencies and central banks, for instance, we must be wary of reducing the agencies themselves to their leaders and top appointees, and we must be equally wary of reducing their audiences into some sloppy amalgam of 'Wall Street' and global capital acting as if it were a unitary force.

NORMATIVE THEORY

A major weakness of reputation-based theory, to my reading (and I include my own writings in the criticism), lies in the lack of prescriptions for organizational change and structure. As the theory is better developed, it will become ever more critical to explain to politicians, reform commissions, and our students what the 'upshot' is of reputation-based theory, and what difference it makes for how practitioners and authorities should approach their work. As Professors Wæraas and Byrkjeflot have written recently, the translation from positivist understanding of how agencies behave in our studies to how we should try to restructure them, their cultures, or their incentives is fraught with mapping and translation issues. Yet given the evident force of organizational reputations in administrative life, that attempt must be carried forward.

I close here, in deep appreciation of Professor Wæraas and Professor Maor, who have taken up international leadership of this strain of research. As the baton has been passed, it is time for me to get out of the way and cheer on the athletes as they complete the next lap of many to come.

Daniel Carpenter

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Preface

This book began with a simple observation: Whereas there are a number of books about reputation management in a business setting, very few provide an exclusive focus on organizational reputation in a public sector setting. With the exception of Daniel Carpenter's pioneering works, we were aware of none. Yet reputation management in practice is certainly not something that is exclusive to the private sector. Public sector organizations of all kinds, ranging from central government agencies and ministries to public educational institutions and even municipalities, engage in activities to build, maintain, and protect their reputations. And although there is an emerging body of research on these activities, it does not have the characteristics of a coherent field of research. So, we felt it was necessary to increase our knowledge of the reputational strategies and efforts of public bureaucracies in the form of an edited collection of contributions from colleagues who share our interest in reputation in the public sector.

An edited volume is the joint efforts among the editors, the contributors, and the publisher. This volume is no exception: It has been more than a three-year-long process of numerous revisions, email exchanges, meetings, telephone and Skype calls, seminars, and even a conference. We started out in 2011 with some ideas that we shared with colleagues and subsequently developed into a book proposal. Because Arild was involved in a research project on municipal reputation and brand management financed by the Norwegian Research Council, the idea was to publish an edited volume on this topic exclusively. However, the attention quickly shifted toward reputation-management strategies and processes in a broader sense (although, as the observant reader will notice, the book includes a separate section on reputation management in local government). In July 2012, we signed the contract with Routledge. In April 2013, we chaired a panel on reputation management in the public sector at the XVII IRSPM conference in Prague, which turned out to be a successful event that significantly moved our project forward. And finally, in June of this year, we were ready to submit all chapters.

We want to thank all the contributors to this volume for their efforts and patience. Bringing together researchers from different academic disciplines and countries is always a challenge, especially when the field of research is

emerging and somewhat fragmented. However, in our case we are pleased to say that the hard work has paid off. We do want to acknowledge the efforts of the contributors to adhere to our guidelines and produce chapters of high quality that we believe will contribute to this emerging field of research. In addition, we want to thank the editorial team at Routledge for their help and encouragements along the way: Manjula Raman, Lauren Verity, and especially Laura Stearns, who was positive to the idea of a book on organizational reputation in the public sector from the very beginning. We also appreciate the financial support of the Norwegian Research Council in the development of this book. Last, but not least, we want to thank our families for their support and understanding during this long process.

1 Understanding Organizational Reputation in a Public Sector Context

Arild Wæraas and Moshe Maor

INTRODUCTION

When the term *reputation* is used about public sector organizations, the connotation that most likely comes to mind is 'bad.' Because government organizations have been associated with negatively charged words such as *inefficiency, bureaucracy, waste, incompetence,* and *rigidity* for so long, it is hard to imagine that public entities would have an interest in improving and protecting their reputation at all. However, as this book will emphasize, public entities are in fact concerned with their reputations and have begun to implement measures to nurture, maintain, and protect them. Research from multiple countries and institutional contexts presents mounting evidence that public sector organizations have become more cognizant of the value of a favorable reputation and, as a result, are gradually treating the management of reputation as a concern of strategic importance. The definition of unique competencies, development of communication strategies, careful timing of decisions, use of reputation-management consultants, and systematic use of media training and reputation measurement indices are only some of the visible activities that attest to the assumed importance of cultivating a favorable reputation.

The notion that public sector organizations benefit from a favorable reputation is not original. As noted by Carpenter and Krause (2012), reputation is discussed in several classic texts, including Simon, Smithburg, and Thompson ([1950] 1991); Kaufman (1981); and Wilson (1989). A more systematic, theoretical, and empirical focus did not emerge until after the millennium shift through the works of Carpenter (2001, 2002). Along with subsequent contributions (Carpenter 2010; Carpenter and Krause 2012; Gilad and Yogev 2012; Maor 2007, 2010, 2011; Gilad, Maor, and Ben-Nun Bloom 2013; Maor, Gilad, and Ben-Nun Bloom 2013; Maor and Sulitzeanu-Kenan 2013, 2014; Moffitt 2010; Picci 2011; Wæraas and Byrkjeflot 2012), these works form an emerging field of research that is not concerned with the general standing of political bodies or the public sector as a whole. Instead, the field draws attention to the reputation of individual administrative entities that behave more or less as autonomous actors within the

political-administrative system. Although these entities are not all competing with each other, all of them can be assumed to benefit from cultivating and protecting a favorable reputation. These entities include bureaucratic organizations such as executive departments and ministries, central and local government agencies and units, regulatory agencies at various levels, public health care institutions, and educational institutions.

The benefits of enjoying a favorable reputation in the public sector context and the growing interest of public sector organizations in managing their reputation provide important background for this book. Our knowledge of these topics and their implications is limited. Compared to the field of corporate reputation, which has its own conference (The International Conference on Corporate Reputation, Brand Identity, and Competitiveness) and its own academic journal (*Corporate Reputation Review*), the field of reputation that pertains specifically to public bureaucracies is currently an emerging and immature, yet promising, field of research. Given that we currently find ourselves in a "reputation society" (Masum and Tovey 2011)—where decision making is characterized by increasing emphasis on track records—scholarly attention to the reputation of public sector organizations is warranted. How reputations are formed, how they are built and protected, and how they matter are only some of the key questions that need to be addressed in more detail. By searching for answers to these questions, it is our hope that this book will provide the basis for a more coherent field of research.

In the remaining sections of this chapter, we discuss the concept of reputation as it has been defined in business studies. We then give a more detailed introduction to the existing research on organizational reputation in the public sector, followed by a presentation of the various contributions in this volume.

WHAT IS ORGANIZATIONAL REPUTATION?

Despite the considerable amount of scholarly work published on organizational reputation, researchers are still debating its meaning. Definitions and uses are at times quite divergent, and reputation can easily be conflated with related concepts such as image, prestige, legitimacy, and status (Deephouse and Suchman 2008; Dutton and Dukerich 1991; Rindova, Pollock, and Hayward 2006). This terminology confusion creates a challenge for researchers who seek to describe and analyze the significance of reputation and reputation management in the private as well as the public sector. The picture becomes even more complex when considering that the concept of reputation is approached from a variety of academic disciplines. Fields such as corporate communication, strategy, management, marketing, economics, and organization studies investigate different aspects of reputation, each with their own traditions of doing research and analyzing the phenomenon

(Lange, Lee, and Dai 2010; Rhee and Valdez 2009; Rindova et al. 2005; Walker 2010).

In a review of 54 articles published on reputation, Walker (2010) finds that Fombrun's definition of reputation from 1996 is more frequently referenced than other definitions. Fombrun (1996, 72) defined reputation as a "collective representation of a firm's past actions and results that describe the firm's ability to deliver valuable outcomes to multiple stakeholders." According to Walker, Fombrun's definition emphasizes that reputation is (1) based on perceptions, (2) the aggregate perception of all stakeholders, and (3) comparative. Walker (2010) adds two additional dimensions: Reputation is (4) either positive or negative and (5) stable and enduring. Similarly, Deephouse and Suchman (2008) note that reputation is fundamentally (1) a continuous measure, by placing each actor on a continuum from worst to best; (2) rival, in the sense that an organization's reputation can increase only at another organization's expense; (3) differentiating, in the sense that reputation encourages organizations to distinguish themselves from their peers; and (4) economic, in the sense of being a strategic resource that contributes to competitive advantage. Fombrun (2012, 100) refines his own 1996 definition in the following way: "A corporate reputation is a collective assessment of a company's attractiveness to a specific group of stakeholders relative to a reference group of companies with which the company competes for resources." With this definition, Fombrun accentuates the comparative and competitive nature of reputation (c.f. Deephouse and Suchman 2008).

Different theoretical perspectives highlight the multifaceted aspects of reputation. Definitions tend to fall into one of three overarching perspectives: the economics, social constructivist, and institutional perspectives (Rindova and Martins 2012): From the *economics* perspective, reputation is formed among stakeholder groups as a result of actions chosen by the organization. Organizations signal their 'true' attributes through these actions, forming reputations with "specific stakeholders regarding specific characteristics" (Noe 2012, 116). Their reputation is a valuable asset or resource that enables them to achieve positive outcomes. As they decide which actions to take vis-à-vis their stakeholders to reach these outcomes, they are assumed to be able to control their own reputational signals. Organizations are players in a market and rely on these signals to judge and predict each other's competitive abilities and economic behavior (Weigelt and Camerer 1988).

From the *social constructivist* perspective, reputation refers to more than lower-level, attribute-specific perceptions. Organizational reputation is analyzed at the collective stakeholder level and is understood as a socially constructed aggregate product (Power 2007; Rao 1994; Rindova and Martins 2012; Rindova, Pollack, and Hayward 2006), referring to collective knowledge or recognition rather than an assessment of a relevant attribute. From this perspective, reputations are derived not only from the actions of organizations but also from social interactions between stakeholder groups. As stakeholders and organizations interact, a range of information,

meanings, and interpretations is created, shared, and confirmed. Consequently, in contrast to the economics perspective, the social constructivist perspective assumes that organizations have a lower degree of control over their own reputation.

The *institutional* perspective shares the social-constructivist view that reputation is associated with collective knowledge and recognition, but emphasizes the larger macro-cultural context in which organizations compete and from which reputations develop (Fombrun 2012). Powerful institutional intermediaries within organizational fields such as monitoring organizations, the media, and financial analysts are important sources of reputation formation by disseminating 'objective' information about organizational attributes (Elsbach and Kramer 1996; Rindova and Martins 2012). Reputations refer to organizations' relative positions in rankings created by these intermediaries. The institutional perspective calls attention to these relative positions by, for example, highlighting the various responses undertaken by organizations when they perceive their position to be incorrect or unjustified (Elsbach and Kramer 1996; Martins 2005).

RESEARCH ON ORGANIZATIONAL REPUTATION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

All three perspectives on reputation can be identified in the literature on bureaucratic and administrative reputation. Two main research traditions have emerged: the political science and the organizational. Whereas the first shares notable viewpoints with the economics perspective on reputation, the other is inspired by the social constructivist and institutional perspectives.

The *political science* approach focuses empirically on executive agencies and their standing within a political-administrative system (Carpenter 2001, 2010; Gilad and Yogev 2012; Maor 2007, 2010, 2011, 2014; Maor, Gilad, and Ben-Nun Bloom 2012; Maor and Sulitzeanu-Kenan 2013, 2014; Moffitt 2010). In this approach, there are no disagreements among scholars over Carpenter's (2010, 45) definition of organizational reputation as "a set of symbolic beliefs about the unique or separable capacities, roles, and obligations of an organization, where these beliefs are embedded in audience networks." "Reputation uniqueness" according to Carpenter (2001, 5) refers to the demonstration by agencies that they can create solutions (e.g., expertise, efficiency) and provide services (e.g., moral protection) found nowhere else in the polity. Reputations provide governmental agencies with decisive benefits on top of their formal authority and powers. Reputations "are valuable political assets—they can be used to generate public support, to achieve delegated autonomy and discretion from politicians, to protect the agency from political attack, and to recruit and retain valued employees" (Carpenter 2002, 491).

The theoretical premise of studies within this tradition is that governmental agencies are generally rational and politically conscious organizations. The derived research examines how agencies' strategic balancing of their overall reputations is undertaken through their response to reputational threats based on their understanding of their distinct reputations. Suffice to mention that studies demonstrate that executive agencies endogenously construct their jurisdictions (Maor 2010), the public visibility of their errors (Maor 2011), and their decision duration insofar as regulatory enforcement is concerned (Maor and Sulitzeanu-Kenan 2013). Recently, studies have been directed at how agencies' strategic balancing of their overall reputations is undertaken through their *selective response* (i.e., choice between levels of a particular type of response) or *differential response* (i.e., choice between types of responses) to certain external signals. This stream of research tries to show how reputational concerns translate into actions by governmental agencies, by focusing on the internal shaping of administrative organizations' uneven responsiveness to—and management of—their multiple audiences. Findings show how agencies tend to keep silent regarding issues on which they generally enjoy a strong reputation and on issues that lie outside their distinct jurisdiction, while responding to opinions about core functional areas in which their reputation is weaker and areas wherein their reputation is still evolving (Maor, Gilad, and Ben-Nun Bloom 2013). This is a classic example of a selective response. Regarding differential response, Gilad, Maor, and Ben-Nun Bloom (2013) highlight how agencies have a greater propensity to acknowledge problems, yet mostly shift blame to others when faced with claims that regulation is overly lenient (namely, underregulation), and to deny allegations that regulation is excessive. And Maor and Sulitzeanu-Kenan (2014) demonstrate that the effect of negative media coverage on agency outputs is moderated by the level of previous-year agency outputs, i.e., negative coverage is followed by an increase in agency outputs when previous year outputs are below average and a decrease in agency outputs when previous year outputs are above average. These two types of agency response to reputational threats appear to be the result of the agency's increased interest in change following reputational threats, which is channeled to activities that are internally identified as lagging (e.g., public relations during natural disasters, consumer engagement, or stakeholder consultation).

Works drawing on the *organizational* approach to reputation also focus on public agencies but tend to treat any public sector entity as an 'organization' in search of a stronger reputation, and reputation management as an 'organizational' and taken-for-granted prescription with allegedly universal validity ready to be installed in any context (Wæraas and Byrkjeflot 2012). Hence, the focus includes all kinds of administrative units in the public sector ranging from ministries and central government agencies (Luoma-aho 2007, 2008; Wæraas 2013) to public health care units (Arnold et al. 2003; Byrkjeflot and Angell 2007; Luoma-aho 2013; Wæraas and Sataøen 2014)

to local government units (Nielsen and Salomonsen 2012; Kuoppakangas, Suomi, and Horton 2013; Ryan 2007) to higher education (Aula and Tienari 2011; Wæraas and Solbakk 2009). Furthermore, instead of focusing on specific attributes of reputation, the research within this tradition emphasizes the general standing of public organizations and the overall socially constructed and aggregate nature of reputation. Consequently, the rationality and degrees of freedom of the individual organization in controlling its own reputation are downplayed. In many cases, the starting point for analysis is the problematic reputation of a public sector entity, or the growing awareness of public sector entities in general concerning the significance of managing reputation. The research focus is directed at how public entities cope with the challenges of reputation and how they develop strategies for influencing various aspects of reputation formation. In so doing, studies draw inspiration from corporate communication and branding literatures, looking more at the symbolic management of reputation and branding than the significance or impact of reputation on other variables (Avery and Lariscy 2010; Byrkjeflot and Angell 2007; Nielsen and Salomonsen 2012; Wæraas, Bjørnå, and Moldenæs 2014; Whelan et al. 2010). Increased competition in the public sector between different entities (e.g., between schools, hospitals, child care units, municipalities) following New Public Management reforms is generally seen as a major background for engaging in reputation-management strategies. However, works also acknowledge the social imitation processes underpinning the diffusion of reputation management and the various carriers that help spread this idea, such as popular management books, management gurus, and consultants (Wæraas and Byrkjeflot 2012).

PURPOSE AND PLAN OF BOOK

In sum, the existing body of literature on organizational reputation in the public sector is still in its infancy, suffering from theoretical fragmentation and with works being written from diverging research traditions with few cross-references. The lack of an overall research agenda represents a challenge for bringing researchers together. Indeed, the authors of this book come from such diverse disciplines as political science, public administration, organization studies, business studies, corporate communication, and economics, all relying on different traditions of theorizing and doing research, and working out of different countries and cultural contexts. The result is an eclectic volume that represents a polyphony of voices. We share the view that collaboration and fertilization across disciplinary boundaries is necessary to kick-start this emerging field toward a more unified path. A large puzzle needs to be laid, and our book and its contributions are all pieces of this larger puzzle whose picture, we hope, will become clearer.

The purpose of this book is not only to bring together contributions from various disciplines but also to take a first comprehensive step toward a more

unified research domain on organizational reputation in the public sector. To do so, this book seeks answers to a number of questions. Some of the most important ones are the following:

- How can organizational reputation in the public sector be conceptualized and theorized?
- How do public sector organizations build and manage their reputations?
- What are the main strategies of reputation management that are available to public sector organizations?
- How do newly established public sector organizations build their reputation?
- How do public sector organizations respond to reputational threats?
- Do public sector organizations benefit from a good reputation, and how?
- What characterizes reputation management in times of severe crises?
- What goes on 'behind the scenes' when public sector organizations manage their reputation?
- How do stakeholder expectations shape reputation management?
- What is the role of politicians in reputation management?
- How do shared reputations affect reputation management?

The chapters of this book are organized into three parts. The first part, "Theoretical Perspectives," establishes the notion of bureaucratic reputation and delves into its theoretical dimensions. In chapter two, Moshe Maor seeks to evaluate where we are in understanding the reputation of public sector organizations. After highlighting different kinds of pressures that agencies regularly face in order to gauge the (in)security of reputation, he elaborates on the key insights of the literature, focusing on reputation management through changes in the timing and observability of agency decisions, as well as through changes in agency outputs. He also identifies five problems in applying bureaucratic reputation theories to public sector organizations. The chapter concludes with a section that highlights a number of substantive areas that are ripe for further scholarly exploration.

Chapter three, written by Lucio Picci, opens up the black box of reputation in a public sector setting. After describing the bureaucratic reputation game and defining the incentives, preferences, and strategies of the actors involved in these games, he discusses the organizational outputs of the strategies that are pursued. Public organizations might benefit more from having a 'satisficing' reputation: one that is good enough to escape criticism from audiences but not so good as to generate opposition from those actors whose interests are at odds with the organization's mission. Picci subsequently discusses how various reputational incentives may be strengthened, paying specific attention to a key issue he refers to as the overall legibility problem.

In chapter four, Haldor Byrkjeflot invites a critical examination of popular reputation-management prescriptions, or 'recipes,' that have spread from the private to the public sector through consulting firms and management gurus. He discusses why reputation-management recipes have increased in popularity in recent years and highlights several problems and paradoxes arising from their proliferation. Because reputation management will most likely continue to have an important impact on public organizations in the foreseeable future, developing alternative ideals that are more attuned to public institutions' characteristics and values is a challenge. The chapter ends with a review of eight paradoxes associated with the adoption of reputation-management recipes in the public sector.

The second part of this book examines reputation-management processes in central government entities. It begins with Ciara O'Dwyer's chapter, which is a study of the efforts of a newly established agency in Ireland to develop its reputation. The agency sought to develop a strong reputation by developing positive working relations with key stakeholders, working collaboratively and transparently, highlighting technical competence, and prioritizing the public interest. However, it failed to fully understand the importance of its relationship with its parent government department, thus threatening its ability to manage its reputation effectively. These findings indicate that agencies can develop a strong reputation but must be mindful of the extent to which central government can exert control over its operations.

Chapter six is written by Tom Christensen and Per Lægreid. They address the reputation-management efforts of the Norwegian police following the terrorist attack on July 22, 2011. The police were criticized for being too self-congratulatory and lacking in empathy concerning both the way they handled the crisis and how they presented their own handling of it. Analyzing the response strategies from an instrumental and a cultural perspective, the chapter concludes that the reputation management of the police was primarily shaped by symbolic and cultural factors. Moreover, although the reputation-management efforts essentially failed, the impact on overall trust was minimal.

In chapter seven, Koen Verhoest, Jan Rommel, and Jan Boon investigate the relationship between reputation, trust, and agency autonomy. Building on a case study of the Flemish electricity and gas regulator, the authors seek to explain the policy autonomy of this agency. Its autonomy and collaboration with the political principal, the Flemish Minister of Energy, are much stronger than what could be expected, thus representing an empirical puzzle. Examining the role of reputation and trust in this regard, and discussing key differences and similarities between the two concepts, the authors find that the agency relied on reputation as a trust-building mechanism. This resulted in more de facto policy autonomy and deeper forms of collaboration.

Chapter eight is written by Yael Schanin. She examines how mass protest affects a bureaucratic organization's strategies and, more specifically,

how organizational reputation affects the way a bureaucratic organization reacts to public protest. These questions are examined in a study of how a social protest affected the communication policy and the regulatory policy of the Banking Supervision Department in the Bank of Israel. Employing both quantitative and qualitative methods, the chapter analyzes the change in the Israeli banking regulator's responses to expressions of public opinion and the change in the regulator's regulatory operation after the social protest. One important finding is that media policy takes care of short-term reputational threats, whereas regulatory policy takes care of long-term reputational threats.

The third part of the book aims to shed light on reputation management in local government. Chapter nine, written by Maria Blomgren, Tina Hedmo, and Caroline Waks, takes us 'behind the scene' of reputation-management processes in Swedish regional hospitals. It investigates how the internal complexities, interactions, and dynamics are managed; which factors condition the management of these types of processes; and which implications these factors might have for organizational self-presentations. The authors reach the conclusion that reputation management in hospitals is a complex, bottom-up process involving, and being conditioned by, negotiations, the institutional embeddedness of health care, medical professions, and communication professionals.

In chapter ten, Hilde Bjørnå explores the reputation-management strategies of three Norwegian municipalities. Relying on a combination of data sources, she studies how reputation-management strategies are shaped based on the municipalities' perceptions of stakeholder group expectations and how they vary across municipal contexts. She finds that the three cases all target different stakeholders and develop their strategies accordingly. She also finds that the strategies are likely to affect the competitive standing of the municipalities and that the main challenges associated with their strategies derive from their status as political and democratic organizations.

Chapter eleven, written by Heidi Houlberg Salomonsen and Jeppe Agger Nielsen, examines the politics of reputation management in Danish local government. The authors address the interests, roles of, and relationships between the politicians and the administration in this regard. The starting point is that although very little is known about the role of politicians in reputation-management processes, there are good reasons to expect a certain level of conflict between politicians and between politicians and their administrations. However, in the Danish local government context, politicians and administrators seem to share the same interests. A key finding is that both groups are involved and that reputation management is neither a depoliticized activity nor a topic of much disagreement.

Finally, in chapter twelve, Arild Wæraas explores the significance of shared reputations in Norwegian local government. In the Norwegian municipal sector, municipalities that are members of the same region share a common reputation with members of that region. The author explores the

significance of this reputation commons and investigates how the municipalities handle the challenge of sharing it. A key finding is that they rely more on communal strategies than differentiation strategies. The chapter concludes that municipal reputation building in Norway is not characterized by a reputation commons tragedy, despite the fact that the municipalities also focus on their own individual reputation.

In sum, these chapters offer a rich palette of the most recent research and thinking on reputation in public bureaucracies. As the reader will discover, there is much to learn about reputation issues from a number of contexts and administrative levels. However, this book is clearly only a first step toward a better understanding of the significance of reputation. Important questions and empirical as well as theoretical gaps remain. We hope that this first step will motivate both new and experienced scholars to join us in developing this emerging field.

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