



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Reputation and bureaucratic politics

Rimkute, D.; Ladner, A.; Sager, F.

Citation

Rimkute, D. (2022). Reputation and bureaucratic politics. In A. Ladner & F. Sager (Eds.), *Handbook on the politics of public administration* (pp. 255-265). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing. doi:10.4337/9781839109447.00030

Version: Publisher's Version
License: [Leiden University Non-exclusive license](#)
Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/4245209>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

23. Reputation and bureaucratic politics

Dovilė Rimkutė

INTRODUCTION

Bureaucratic reputation theory suggests that public organizations engage in cautious endeavours to gain, establish, maintain, or enhance a positive reputation which is argued to be consequential for public organizations' authority, legitimacy, and power (Carpenter 2010b). The distinctive feature of bureaucratic reputation scholarship is its meticulous attention to *external audiences* and how public organizations manage audiences' expectations, public claims, and stakeholder demands. In order to influence external audiences' judgements about their overall organizational conduct, public organizations – according to bureaucratic reputation theory – engage in tactical reputation-management activities. An increasing body of scholarship has convincingly demonstrated that reputational considerations affect public organizations' communication and responses to external claims, the content of their core outputs, as well as public organizations' overall performance.

A bureaucratic reputation perspective is of growing relevance for the scholarship of bureaucratic politics. Over the past decade, *bureaucratic reputation theory* – originating from the seminal work of Daniel Carpenter (2010b) examining bureaucratic reputation and regulatory power of the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) – has received notable scholarly attention. Bureaucratic reputation theory has become the prevailing theoretical account in the study of the bureaucracy and bureaucratic politics. Scholars focusing on explaining regulatory agency processes, outputs, and behaviour have explored the potential of a bureaucratic reputation account to explain agency communications (e.g., Boon et al. 2020; Busuioc and Rimkutė 2020a; Christensen and Lodge 2018; Gilad et al. 2015; Maor et al. 2013; Maor 2020; Müller and Braun 2021), performance (e.g., Krause and Corder 2007; Krause and Douglas 2005), accountability (e.g., Busuioc and Lodge 2017), legitimacy (e.g., Busuioc and Rimkutė 2020b; Rimkutė 2020a), stakeholder engagement practices (e.g., Arras and Braun 2018; Busuioc and Jevnaker 2022; Fink and Ruffing 2020; Moffitt 2010), and professional outputs (e.g., Rimkutė 2018, 2020b, 2022).

Although the theory was developed and applied in the US context (e.g., Carpenter 2001, 2010a, 2010b; Krause and Corder 2007; Moffitt 2010), its theoretical relevance has successfully entered European and Latin American contexts (e.g., Peci 2021). The theoretical appeal of a reputational lens has been recognized not only by scholars focusing on national-level bureaucracies (e.g., Christensen and Lodge 2018) but also increasingly penetrated into international and supranational bureaucratic politics scholarship (e.g., Busuioc and Rimkutė 2020b). The lens has been employed to explain the patchy cooperation patterns in the multilevel EU governance system (Busuioc 2016), EU agencies' attempts to close their legitimacy gaps (Rimkutė 2020a), and EU bureaucracies' struggles to address incompatible multiple external demands and minimize potential reputational losses (Müller and Braun 2021; Rimkutė 2020b; van der Veer 2021).

The extensive application of bureaucratic reputation theory in diverse contexts has resulted in significant theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions which in turn enabled bureaucratic politics scholars to learn more about bureaucratic processes, outputs, and behaviour. Bureaucratic reputation literature has been used to enrich and reconsider mainstream political science and public administration concepts such as accountability, autonomy, legitimacy, regulatory authority, and power. Busuioc and Lodge (2017), for example, have suggested that literature on accountability could be brought forward by incorporating insights from reputational literature. In a similar vein, long-established debates regarding the core legitimation imperatives of regulatory agencies working at arm's length from political institutions have been reconsidered by introducing a reputational insight, instigating a novel research agenda (Busuioc and Rimkutė 2020b; Rimkutė 2022). Furthermore, bureaucratic reputation literature has been used to ask and apprise 'big questions' concerning bureaucratic politics. Bertelli and Busuioc (2021), for example, have explored the democratic implications of reputation-sourced authority of regulatory agencies and warned that public organizations with strong bureaucratic reputations could potentially ignore democratic checks and evade accountability.

Last but not least, scholarship on bureaucratic reputation has been recently brought forward by scholars through the introduction of analytical tools to capture the core concepts of bureaucratic reputation. Scholars have utilized survey tools to develop and validate multidimensional reputation barometer (Lee and Ryzin 2019; Overman et al. 2020), employed Machine Learning techniques to train algorithms that can predict diverse reputational dimensions (Anastasopoulos and Whitford 2019; Peci 2021; Rimkutė and De Vos 2020), and advanced analytical tools enabling empirical observations of agency–audience communications and interactions (Müller and Braun 2021; Salomonsen et al. 2021).

In view of the rising relevance of bureaucratic reputation scholarship for bureaucratic politics, this chapter discusses the core concepts and theoretical arguments of bureaucratic reputation theory, reviews key empirical studies, and identifies future research avenues.

BUREAUCRATIC REPUTATION THEORY: CORE THEORETICAL ARGUMENTS AND EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The theoretical appeal of a reputational account originates from its ability to theoretically capture the multidimensional nature of bureaucratic goals and reputations as well as encompass the multiplicity of audiences by acknowledging the relevance and influence of compound external actors on bureaucratic conduct. More specifically, first, a reputational account emphasizes the importance of the multiplicity of organizational goals: i.e., the need to cultivate a bureaucratic reputation vis-à-vis audiences that value different aspects of public organizations' activities. These aspects include technical conduct, performative capacity, legal-procedural appropriateness, and moral image (Carpenter and Krause 2012). To respond to external expectations, public organizations can deploy different reputation-management strategies (i.e., emphasis on technical, performative, legal-procedural, or moral aspects of their activities) to legitimize their organizational conduct. *The multidimensional nature of bureaucratic reputations, however, poses the challenge for bureaucracies to find the 'right' balance in promoting diverse organizational goals.*

Second, contrary to the mainstream theoretical perspectives emphasizing the relevance of political principals (principal-agent (P-A) approach), private interest groups (regulatory capture theory), or activists advocating for the public good (public interest theory), a reputational account suggests that bureaucrats' behaviour is determined by an array of audiences and reputational threats originating from the multiplicity of conflicting stakeholders (e.g., political actors, private interests groups, professional peers, scientific community, mobilized public interests groups, general public) observing and judging the regulatory outputs and/or processes of agencies (Carpenter 2001; Gilad et al. 2015). Bureaucratic reputation theory argues that in order to understand bureaucratic politics one should start studying the setting in which bureaucrats operate as well as identifying relevant actors and reputational threats that they impose on bureaucratic organizations. Carpenter (2010a: 832) suggested, 'When trying to account for a regulator's behavior, *look at the audience, and look at the threats*'. *The multiplicity of external audiences, therefore, poses the challenge for bureaucracies to reconcile conflicting audience expectations and demands.*

In the remainder, this section discusses the core concepts and theoretical arguments of bureaucratic reputation theory. In particular, it focuses on the two challenges that public organizations face: (1) the need to find the 'right' balance between diverse organizational goals and reputation-management strategies and (2) the necessity to attend to the multiplicity of conflicting audience expectations and demands. The reputation of public organizations depends on how well they are able match audience expectations with their organizational conduct and respond to the demands of the most critical audiences in an apt way.

The Multidimensional Nature of Organizational Goals and Reputations

Reputation-based explanations originate from the assumption that bureaucracies actively pursue multiple reputation-management strategies to influence the judgements of audiences that monitor and assess their behaviour (Carpenter 2010b; Carpenter and Krause 2012). Bureaucracies are careful in choosing which signals they want to send and which audiences they want to please in order to craft audiences' perceptions about their organizational conduct. To influence audiences' verdicts about explicit characteristics of their accomplishments (and thereby cultivating their reputation), public organizations may decide to send carefully prepared hints about their technical, performative, legal-procedural, or moral conduct.

More specifically, the ability to cultivate a *technical reputation* is regarded as an authoritative device enabling agencies to address multiple audiences and even repel aggressive attacks by influential interest groups or other organized groups. As a result, at times public organizations may choose to address their reputational considerations by stressing the technical diligence and accuracy of their professional outputs, soundness of (scientific) evidence, methodological quality and rigorousness, and rigorous evidence selection criteria. In such cases, public organizations focus on conveying strong messages about their technical conduct and their commitment to the highest professional standards. Public organizations choose to send strong professional and technical signals by emphasizing the technical, scientific, or professional features of their tasks and staff, i.e. by highlighting reputational aspects such as methodological expertise, scientific precision, and analytical capacity.

The performative reputation entails the public organizations' duty to realize their core mandate and 'execute charges on its responsibility in a manner that is interpreted as competent and perhaps efficient' (Carpenter and Krause 2012: 27). The capacity of public organizations

to effectively achieve their ends and declared objectives can be a powerful tool to gain, maintain, or enhance organizational reputation (Carpenter 2010b) because at times bureaucracies are judged simply by their ability to attain the goals set by diverse audiences. To that end, the ability of a public organization to carry out its mandate in an effective way is regarded as an important characteristic of the performative reputation (Carpenter 2010b: 46). Furthermore, when it comes to performative conduct, relevant audiences may ask if the public organization displays sufficient strength and assertiveness in the pursuit of its aims or its declared duties, i.e., if the regulatory agency possesses sufficient regulatory power and is able to demonstrate adequate regulatory vigour, e.g., ability to coerce specific (regulatory) audiences (e.g., regulated industry).

A proper management of *legal-procedural* activities may also be an effective tactic to foster the reputation of an organization (Carpenter 2010b). Carpenter argues that ‘an organization’s legal-procedural reputation relates to the justness of the processes by which its behavior is generated’ (2010b: 47). Whenever the decision of a regulatory agency casts doubts, audiences may ask if the agency respected appropriate procedures to come to its decisions. Procedural appropriateness, therefore, may not only be legal prerequisite but also could serve as an effective reputation-management strategy because the supply of due process mechanisms is attributed a value in itself, which, in turn, influences the appraisal of a public organization.

Public organizations may choose to pay special attention to *their moral reputation* and focus on the following questions: Does it protect the interests of consumers? Does it ‘exhibit compassion for those adversely affected by its decisions or those in its environment who are less fortunate or more constrained? Is it flexible with respect to human needs?’ (Carpenter 2010b: 46). Public organizations have a responsibility to protect the public from emerging risks by issuing timely public alerts about possible regulatory threats, putting protective standards in place, regularly reviewing new scientific evidence, and by assuring public safety. To that end, public organizations may choose to focus on wider moral implications, e.g., the protection of the public and the environment from potential risks and hazards (see, for instance, Rimkutė 2018). Furthermore, the moral reputation is often associated with the ethical conduct of a public organization, e.g., being inclusive, open, transparent, fair, and accessible.

The wide assortment of reputation-balancing strategies creates great leeway for public organizations to cultivate their bureaucratic reputations. Public organizations can concurrently engage in diverse reputation-advancement strategies. In the vivacious interface with their audiences, public organizations can emphasize different aspects of their broad bureaucratic responsibilities, e.g., regulatory agencies can engage in different activities when it comes to their technical duties, roles, and tasks (Busuioc and Rimkutė 2020b). They can decide to highlight miscellaneous organizational liabilities (i.e., technical, performative, procedural, moral) when carrying out and communicating about their core tasks (Carpenter and Krause 2012). The successful management of bureaucratic reputation involves discovering the optimal tactic to respond to the fundamental external expectations by emphasizing the ‘correct’ organizational liability or striking the ‘correct’ balance between technical, procedural, performative, and moral reputation-management strategies (Busuioc and Rimkutė 2020b).

Empirical research focusing on uncovering which reputational dimensions and under what conditions public organizations choose to focus has recently provided us with new insights. The most recent studies have shown that, indeed, public organizations are very careful in cultivating their multidimensional reputations. Regulatory agencies functioning at the EU level were found to adapt their reputational signals over time (Busuioc and Rimkutė 2020a).

Although EU agencies were found to predominantly rely on technical and performative reputational dimensions, empirical evidence suggests that over time regulatory agencies are becoming more entrepreneurial: ‘While it appears EU agencies become more reputationally-astute and over time expand their toolbox of reputational strategies, they are tentative political entrepreneurs. Agency communications remain for the most part aligned with the regulatory state discourse: while moving away from a “strict” emphasis in their early days on the communication of technical aspects, they remain skewed towards legitimation strategies that emphasize the core features of the EU regulatory state’ (Busuioc and Rimkutė 2020a: 566). Furthermore, studies focusing on uncovering conditions under which agencies choose to emphasize diverse reputational dimensions have suggested that reputational considerations matter in how agencies communicate about their organizational goals and conduct (Rimkutė 2020a, 2020b). Agencies were found to focus on protecting their reputational uniqueness and respond to reputational threats that have a high potential to impose serious reputational losses. In particular, agencies were found to rigorously address reputational threats that target their reputational vulnerabilities (Gilad et al. 2015; Maor et al. 2013; Müller and Braun 2021; Rimkutė 2018). For example, in light of grave political allegations surrounding the glyphosate debate, US and EU regulatory agencies’ officials engaged in public debates to assertively defend their reputation and refute accusations that damage their reputation (Rimkutė 2020b). The Director of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) took a strong position by addressing audiences that exercised arbitrary criticisms and undermined the prescribed scientific processes and legal procedures that agencies must follow: ‘Unfortunately, the recent claims appear to be part of an orchestrated campaign and the latest in a series of efforts to discredit the scientific process behind the EU assessment of glyphosate [...]. While of course we welcome all interested parties to scrutinize our work, it is important that the integrity of the legally pre-scribed scientific process is not purposefully undermined for short-term political gain’ (EFSA 2017: 2). This, in turn, illustrates that so-called neutral bureaucrats (Rourke 1992) at times engage in political debates and blame avoidance games to shield their organizational reputation in the eyes of audiences that matter for their organizational reputation. Public officials dealing with this salient issue – i.e., the glyphosate controversy – acknowledged that they went beyond their legally mandated day-to-day activities and engaged in political debates in order to contain political tensions (Rimkutė 2020b). The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), for example, engaged with their political and non-political audiences in order to reduce political tensions and attend to external expectations: ‘We paid a lot more attention to serving everybody’s questions and being a hundred percent transparent about the process. Given that there was so much political tension, we paid more attention to being very extensive in our communication: we wrote Q&As, we put a lot of information on our website, which is not normal for every case. We had enormous numbers of press questions and answers [...]. So, we had a quite extensive session to make sure that everybody was heard properly’ (ECHA representative #1) (see Rimkutė 2020b: 1646). However, while bureaucrats are generally responsive to grave public allegations and may engage in political controversies, they tend to emphasize their reputational distinctiveness, i.e., bureaucrats working in regulatory agencies dealing with risk regulation often choose to emphasize the technical nature of their tasks, roles, and identities (Rimkutė 2020b): ‘It is the role of politicians to represent the values, needs and expectations of their constituents through democratic processes. This is outside the responsibility of organizations such as EFSA, which were created to advise EU policymakers on scientific matters’ (Uhl 2018: 381).

While scholarship focusing on how agencies manage their multidimensional reputations has significantly advanced our knowledge, we still know little of which reputational dimensions public organizations prioritize, which of them prevail across time and across the diverse set of public organizations that possess distinct reputational considerations. In particular, we know little of how precisely reputational threats affect public organizations' strategic choices to tailor their organizational responses and conduct. While the literature has set us on the right track by developing and validating reputational dimensions' measures (Lee and Ryzin 2019; Overman et al. 2020), future research could advance the field by further theorizing causal effects and mechanisms and empirically investigating factors that encourage agencies to cultivate their bureaucratic reputation in diverse ways.

The Multiplicity of Audiences and Conflicting External Demands

Bureaucratic reputation literature argues that public organizations *must vigilantly address external expectations and demands*, which includes a thoughtful management of external requests among conflicting political and non-political audiences by, for example, strategically engaging in diverse communication strategies to shape reputational images and actively manage expectations. Unsuccessful management of expectations and demands of pertinent audiences can lead to disputes, serious harm to organizational legitimacy, and diminished regulatory power and authority (Carpenter and Krause 2012). Vice versa, successful endeavours to establish strong bureaucratic reputations can lead to favourable organizational assets, e.g., legitimacy, regulatory authority and power, or even increased resources. Scholars even argued that exceptionally successful attempts to cultivate strong bureaucratic reputations 'can be deployed to tie the hands of legitimate political principals, to deflect oversight of agency action, and to disguise—at least for some time—regulatory failures' (Bertelli and Busuioc 2021: 45). As a result, public organizations have strong incentives to cultivate positive bureaucratic reputations by attuning their communications (e.g., Boon et al. 2020; Busuioc and Rimkutė 2020a; Christensen and Lodge 2018; Gilad et al. 2015; Maor 2020; Maor et al. 2013; Müller and Braun 2021), performance (e.g., Krause and Corder 2007; Krause and Douglas 2005), accountability practices (e.g., Busuioc and Lodge 2017), legitimacy sources they draw on (e.g., Busuioc and Rimkutė 2020b; Rimkutė 2020a), stakeholder engagement practices (e.g., Arras and Braun 2018; Busuioc and Jevnaker 2022; Fink and Ruffing 2020; Moffitt 2010), and professional outputs (e.g., Rimkutė 2018, 2020b, 2022).

A positive multidimensional reputation can be received from diverse constellations of formal (e.g., political principals) and informal (e.g., civil society, professional peers, regulated industry, general public) audiences (Carpenter and Krause 2012). Whether a public organization is perceived as successful is contingent on the relevant audiences' positive assessment of its organizational conduct. Therefore, as reputational literature argues, public organizations will do their utmost to address the expectations of the most pertinent audiences, on which their legitimacy, regulatory power, and autonomy depend the most.

Gaining, maintaining, and enhancing a strong positive reputation on all reputational dimensions, however, is an especially difficult task. The challenge to establish a positive bureaucratic reputation is rooted in the multiplicity and heterogeneity of audiences. Public organizations must carry out their mandates in vibrant environments encompassing high audience heterogeneity (Busuioc and Lodge 2017; Busuioc and Rimkutė 2020a, 2020b; Carpenter 2001, 2010b; Carpenter and Krause 2012; Gilad et al. 2015; Maor et al. 2013; Rimkutė 2018, 2020a, 2020b;

Thomann et al. 2018; van der Veer 2021). Public organizations' conduct is simultaneously observed by a variety of audiences that hold diverse anticipations about agencies' role and contribution in a political system (Busuioc and Lodge 2017; Carpenter 2001). For example, scholars used terms such as 'blame culture' to refer to bureaucracies being increasingly under attack by a wide set of actors, 'audit society' to describe increasing emphases on monitoring and tracking organizational activities, and 'fishbowl transparency' to refer to demands of full openness of the decision-making process (see, for example, Hinterleitner 2020). Furthermore, heterogeneous audiences encompassing conflicting expectation about bureaucrats' role not only observe their conduct but also actively exercise influence by, for example, engaging in public claims that if not properly addressed may have grave consequences for their bureaucratic reputation (Gilad et al. 2015; Maor et al. 2013; Rimkutė 2020b; Salomonsen et al. 2021). As a result, in view of the multiplicity and incompatibility of external demands bureaucrats must prioritize which demands they respond to and which ones they disregard.

Bureaucratic reputation literature suggests that bureaucrats engage in a careful and well-calculated management of reputational threats originating from various audiences exercising their demands (Carpenter 2010b; Gilad et al. 2015). By attending to external demands that are the most harmful to their bureaucratic reputation, public organizations were found to manage the negative consequences that public claims may bring to their overall reputation (Maor et al. 2013; Rimkutė 2020b; van der Veer 2021). When facing multiple public allegations bureaucrats engage in reputation-protection strategies that 'pertain to an agency's reaction to allegations and/or incidents that shed a negative light on its fulfillment of its core mission' (Gilad et al. 2015: 5). They do so because specific public claims may pose grave reputational threats and could have major implications to agency autonomy (Carpenter 2001), bureaucratic authority (Bertelli and Busuioc 2021), and even legitimacy and the right to contribute to democratic processes in a political system they operate (Rimkutė 2020a). Therefore, a strong incentive may occur for bureaucrats to engage in a strategic act in choosing which of the external demands are the most damaging to their reputations and, therefore, need their careful consideration.

While the difficulty to attend to the multiplicity of external demands exercised by a wide variety of actors is broadly recognized in the literature, only recently have scholars started to study how bureaucrats' prioritization decisions are shaped by the necessity to simultaneously address rival demands (Gilad et al. 2015; Maor et al. 2013; Müller and Braun 2021; Rimkutė 2020b; van der Veer 2021). Scholars, for example, have shown that bureaucrats are most attentive to reputational threats that target their reputational vulnerabilities (Gilad et al. 2015; Müller and Braun 2021; Rimkutė 2020b) and impose grave reputational losses and costs (Krause and Corder 2007; van der Veer 2021). Reputational scholarship has thus taught us that bureaucrats are strategic in choosing which demands to attend to. Government agencies are not always responsive to their political principals (Krause and Corder 2007; Krause and Douglas 2005). Instead, bureaucrats were found to assess reputational costs of being responsive to their political superiors, i.e., whether being receptive to political demands carries reputational damages to their bureaucratic competences. Evidence suggests that stable agencies concerned with their reputation for bureaucratic competence tend to resist political pressures to satisfying political demands, whereas less stable agencies are more likely to surrender to political pressures by adjusting their technical outputs in line with political preferences (Krause and Corder 2007). Furthermore, Potter (2019) has demonstrated that public officials regularly engage in 'procedural politicking' to insulate their substantive activities from political scrutiny and

interference. Potter illustrates how public officials working at US regulatory agencies use procedures to fight interventions from Congress, the President, and the courts in all stages of the policy process. The author argues that, in so doing, public officials exert significant influence over public policies.

Nonetheless, multiple research gaps persist in terms of how bureaucrats reconcile the multiplicity and conflicting nature of external demands and pressures. Existing studies on how public organizations manage conflicting external expectations are limited in their focus on the general organizational response strategies to public allegations – e.g., agency choice between silence and talk (Maor et al. 2013; Rimkutė 2020b); or agency choice between problem denial and admission (Gilad et al. 2015). While studies provide empirical support for the core bureaucratic reputation claims arguing that public organizations' responses to external demands are shaped by their careful assessment of external threats to their distinct and multidimensional reputations (Gilad et al. 2015), extant studies, however, do not explicitly focus on uncovering conditions under which public organizations are likely to respond to a particular demand. Organizational reputation scholarship provided a systematic examination of how agencies' reputational considerations shape their strategic response choice to external signals; however, we still have a limited understanding on how public organizations prioritize to which external demands and to which constellation of audiences they respond and which ones they regard as less important to attend to. We also know little about the extent to which the source, content, and context in which public demands are exercised affect bureaucratic responsiveness strategies. Future scholarship could advance bureaucratic reputation theory by theorizing and empirically examining how bureaucrats make decisions that involve choosing which set of external demands to prioritize in providing their response. This could add to our understanding of *bureaucratic responsiveness* that has long been of interest to scholarship of government and administration emphasizing the influence of external actors to bureaucrats' behaviour.

Furthermore, even though the most recent studies shifted their attention to explaining bureaucrats' decisions to choose which demand/claim to prioritize (van der Veer 2021), the studies either did not focus on the wide variety of audiences that bureaucrats have to attend to (e.g., political principals, professional peers, private interest groups, non-governmental organizations, general public), or did not account for the content of demands by exclusively focusing on the type of stakeholder exercising public claims. Consequentially, existing studies do not tell us much about how bureaucrats prioritize when adhering to incompatible public demands originating from a diverse set of actors that simultaneously voice their requests concerning diverse aspects of organizational conduct (technical, performative, legal-procedural, moral).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has demonstrated that bureaucratic reputation theory has been widely applied to explain bureaucratic politics. The theory has been used to reconsider and advance long-established concepts of public administration and political science, such as accountability, legitimacy, regulatory authority, and power. Reputation-based explanations informed normative debates regarding democratic implications of reputation-sourced authority of public organizations. Furthermore, rigorous empirical studies testing the core causal effects and mechanisms of bureaucratic reputation theory have been burgeoning not only by extending to various national/federal government contexts but also by successfully migrating into inter-

national and supranational settings. Such scholarly attention to bureaucratic reputation theory has advanced our knowledge of bureaucratic politics in general and bureaucratic processes, output, and behaviour in particular.

The appeal of bureaucratic reputation theory originates from its ability to theoretically capture the multiplicity of bureaucratic goals and the relevance of heterogeneous audiences (not only political principals) for bureaucratic conduct. The theory puts forward a couple of compelling research puzzles that prior scholarship has attempted to address: (1) how do public organizations strike the ‘right’ balance in cultivating multidimensional reputations and reconciling diverse bureaucratic goals; which reputation-management strategies prevails and under what conditions; (2) how do public organizations manage and attend to the multiplicity of audience and their *incompatible expectations and demands*; which audiences and demands do they prioritize and under what conditions which audience/demand receives attention from bureaucratic institutions. While scholarship on bureaucratic reputation has started to address these research puzzles, we still have an incomplete picture on how *the multidimensionality of reputations* and *the multiplicity of external audiences* and their imposed threats affect bureaucratic politics. As a result, focusing on explaining bureaucratic processes, outputs, and behaviour by considering the multidimensionality of reputations and the multiplicity of external audiences’ demands remains a promising future research avenue.¹

NOTE

1. This chapter is part of a project funded by the Dutch Research Council (NWO), Innovational Research Incentives Scheme Veni SSH. Grant/Award Number: VI.Veni.191R.078.

REFERENCES

- Anastasopoulos, L. J. and Whitford, A. B. (2019). Machine learning for public administration research, with application to organizational reputation. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 29(3), 491–510.
- Arras, S. and Braun, C. (2018). Stakeholders wanted! Why and how European Union agencies involve non-state stakeholders. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 25(9), 1257–1275.
- Bertelli, A. M. and Busuioc, M. (2021). Reputation-sourced authority and the prospect of unchecked bureaucratic power. *Public Administration Review*, 81(1), 38–48.
- Boon, J., Verhoest, K., and Wynen, J. (2020). What determines the audiences that public service organisations target for reputation management? *Policy and Politics*, 48(2), 295–314.
- Busuioc, M. (2016). Friend or foe? Inter-agency cooperation, organizational reputation, and turf. *Public Administration*, 94(1), 40–56.
- Busuioc, M. and Jevnaker, T. (2022). EU agencies’ stakeholder bodies: Vehicles of enhanced control, legitimacy or bias? *Journal of European Public Policy*, 29(2), 155–175.
- Busuioc, M. and Lodge, M. (2017). Reputation and accountability relationships: Managing accountability expectations through reputation. *Public Administration Review*, 77(1), 91–100.
- Busuioc, M. and Rimkutė, D. (2020a). Meeting expectations in the EU regulatory state? Regulatory communications amid conflicting institutional demands. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 27(4), 547–568.
- Busuioc, M. and Rimkutė, D. (2020b). The promise of bureaucratic reputation approaches for the EU regulatory state. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 27(8), 1256–1269.
- Carpenter, D. (2001). *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy: Reputations, Networks, and Policy Innovation in Executive Agencies, 1862–1928*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Carpenter, D. (2010a). Institutional strangulation: Bureaucratic politics and financial reform in the Obama administration. *Perspectives on Politics*, 8(3), 825–846.
- Carpenter, D. (2010b). *Reputation and Power: Organizational Image and Pharmaceutical Regulation at the FDA*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Carpenter, D. and Krause, G. A. (2012). Reputation and public administration. *Public Administration Review*, 72(1), 26–32.
- Christensen, T. and Lodge, M. (2018). Reputation management in societal security: A comparative study. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 48(2), 119–132.
- EFSA (2017, September 22). EFSA statement addressing allegations on the renewal assessment report for glyphosate. Retrieved from https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/170922_glyphosate_statement.pdf.
- Fink, S. and Ruffing, E. (2020). Stakeholder consultations as reputation-building: A comparison of ACER and the German Federal Network Agency. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 27(11), 1657–1676.
- Gilad, S., Maor, M., and Bloom, P. B.-N. (2015). Organizational reputation, the content of public allegations, and regulatory communication. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 25(2), 451–478.
- Hinterleitner, M. (2020). *Policy Controversies and Political Blame Games*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Krause, G. A. and Corder, J. K. (2007). Explaining bureaucratic optimism: Theory and evidence from U.S. executive agency macroeconomic forecasts. *The American Political Science Review*, 101(1), 129–142.
- Krause, G. A. and Douglas, J. W. (2005). Institutional design versus reputational effects on bureaucratic performance: Evidence from U.S. government macroeconomic and fiscal projections. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 15(2), 281–306.
- Lee, D. and Ryzin, G. G. V. (2019). Measuring bureaucratic reputation: Scale development and validation. *Governance*, 32(1), 177–192.
- Maor, M. (2020). Strategic communication by regulatory agencies as a form of reputation management: A strategic agenda. *Public Administration*, 98(4), 1044–1055.
- Maor, M., Gilad, S., and Bloom, P. B.-N. (2013). Organizational reputation, regulatory talk, and strategic silence. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 23(3), 581–608.
- Moffitt, S. L. (2010). Promoting agency reputation through public advice: Advisory Committee use in the FDA. *The Journal of Politics*, 72(3), 880–893.
- Müller, M. and Braun, C. (2021). Guiding or following the crowd? Strategic communication as reputational and regulatory strategy. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 31(4), 670–686.
- Overman, S., Busuioac, M., and Wood, M. (2020). A multidimensional reputation barometer for public agencies: A validated instrument. *Public Administration Review*, 80(3), 415–425.
- Peci, A. (2021). Agencies in the news? Public agencies' media evaluations in a low-trust context. *Governance*, 34(4), 1075–1095.
- Potter, R. A. (2019). *Bending the Rules: Procedural Politicking in the Bureaucracy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Rimkutė, D. (2018). Organizational reputation and risk regulation: The effect of reputational threats on agency scientific outputs. *Public Administration*, 96(1), 70–83.
- Rimkutė, D. (2020a). Building organizational reputation in the European regulatory state: An analysis of EU agencies' communications. *Governance*, 33(2), 385–406.
- Rimkutė, D. (2020b). Strategic silence or regulatory talk? Regulatory agency responses to public allegations amidst the glyphosate controversy. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 27(11), 1636–1656.
- Rimkutė, D. (2022). Expertise and regulatory agencies. In M. Maggetti, F. Di Mascio, and A. Natalini (eds.), *Handbook of Regulatory Authorities*. Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Rimkutė, D. and De Vos, H. (2020). Organizational reputation and strategic communication: An analysis of agency communications using machine-learning techniques. ECPR General Conference, Innsbruck.
- Rourke, F. E. (1992). Responsiveness and neutral competence in American bureaucracy. *Public Administration Review*, 52(6), 539–546.

- Salomonsen, H. H., Boye, S., and Boon, J. (2021). Caught up or protected by the past? How reputational histories matter for agencies' media reputations. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 31(3), 506–522.
- Thomann, E., Hupe, P., and Sager, F. (2018). Serving many masters: Public accountability in private policy implementation. *Governance*, 31(2), 299–319.
- Url, B. (2018). Don't attack science agencies for political gain. *Nature*, 553(7689), 381.
- van der Veer, R. A. (2021). Audience heterogeneity, costly signaling, and threat prioritization: Bureaucratic reputation-building in the EU. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 31(1), 21–37.