



From zero to villain: Applying narrative analysis in research on organizational reputation

Johanna Kuenzler 

KPM Center for Public Management,
University of Bern, Bern, Switzerland

Correspondence

Johanna Kuenzler, KPM Center for Public
Management, University of Bern, Bern,
Switzerland.
Email: johanna.kuenzler@kpm.unibe.ch

Funding information

Schweizerischer Nationalfonds zur
Förderung der Wissenschaftlichen
Forschung, Grant/Award Number:
407640_177405

Abstract

What narratives accompany the emergence of a negative reputation? I combine research on public organizations' reputation with narrative analysis. Narratives offer multiple benefits to reputational research, playing an important role in human cognition and comprising social constructions of both organizations and other actors. Organizations profit from insights of narrative analysis concerning their reputation management. I apply the Narrative Policy Framework to the Swiss Child and Adult Protection Agencies (CAPA). A quantitative analysis of 667 narratives in mass media shows that the emergence of the CAPA's negative reputation was accompanied by villain depictions early on, with narratives assuming a different quality after an implementation scandal. Also the CAPA's target groups underwent marked changes in their depictions, most notably with problem causers being cast as heroes in several narratives, thus questioning the CAPA's basic legitimacy as problem-solving organization. These findings provide the CAPA with concrete starting points to amend their reputation.

KEYWORDS

child and adult protection policy, narrative policy framework, organizational reputation, quantitative media analysis, theories of the policy process

This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

© 2021 The Authors. *European Policy Analysis* published by Wiley Periodicals LLC on behalf of Policy Studies Organization.

摘要

坏声誉的出现伴随着什么样的叙事?我将叙事分析应用于公共组织声誉研究。叙事为声誉研究提供多重益处,它在人类认知中发挥重要作用,并形成了组织和其他行动者的社会建构。组织受益于关于其声誉管理的叙事分析见解。我将叙事政策框架 (NPF) 应用于瑞士儿童和成人保护机构 (CAPA)。一项关于大众媒体中667次叙事的定量分析显示, CAPA坏声誉的出现伴随着早期的反面人物叙事,这些叙事在一次丑闻事件后呈现了与以往不同的性质。CAPA的目标群体也显著改变了其叙事,最明显的则是在多个叙事中将问题制造者描述为正面人物,这因此对CAPA作为问题解决组织的基本合法性提出质疑。研究发现为CAPA提供了修补其声誉的具体出发点。

关键词

叙事政策框架, 组织声誉, 定量媒体分析, 儿童和成人保护政策, 政策过程理论

Resumen

¿Qué narrativas acompañan al surgimiento de una reputación negativa? Combino la investigación sobre la reputación de las organizaciones públicas con el análisis narrativo. Las narrativas ofrecen múltiples beneficios a la investigación de la reputación, desempeñan un papel importante en la cognición humana y comprenden las construcciones sociales tanto de organizaciones como de otros actores. Las organizaciones se benefician de los conocimientos del análisis narrativo sobre la gestión de su reputación. Aplico el Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) a las Agencias de Protección de Niños y Adultos de Suiza (CAPA). Un análisis cuantitativo de 667 narrativas en los medios de comunicación muestra que la aparición de la reputación negativa de la CAPA estuvo acompañada de representaciones de villanos desde el principio, con narrativas que asumieron una calidad diferente después de un escándalo de implementación. También los grupos objetivo de la CAPA sufrieron cambios marcados en sus representaciones, sobre todo con los causantes de problemas que se presentan como héroes en varias narrativas, cuestionando así la legitimidad básica

de la CAPA como organización de resolución de problemas. Estos hallazgos proporcionan a la CAPA puntos de partida concretos para enmendar su reputación.

Palabras clave

Marco narrativo de políticas, reputación organizacional, análisis cuantitativo de los medios, política de protección de niños y adultos, teorías del proceso de políticas

1 | REPUTATION THROUGH THE LENS OF NARRATIVES

What narratives accompany the emergence of a negative reputation? The article at hand aims to answer this research question.

Public organizations' reputation matters. On the one hand, an organization's reputation is crucial in determining whether its employees are motivated and whether qualified personnel can be acquired (Alon-Barkat & Gilad, 2016; Busuioc & Lodge, 2016). On the other hand, reputation influences the organization's interactions with its environment. Whether cooperation with other organizations is feasible (Busuioc, 2016) and whether an organization is able to act autonomously within its field of jurisdiction (Hinterleitner & Sager, 2018) both depend on the organization's reputation. Thus, public organizations have a vital interest to know about and protect their reputation.

Research on organizational reputation in public administration has boomed in the last decade (Maor, 2020). Among others, scholars have conceived measurement tools for reputation (Lee & van Ryzin, 2019), they have focused on effects of reputation (Maor & Sulitzeanu-Kenan, 2013) and on attempts to influence a reputation (Busuioc & Rimkutė, 2020).

A topic that reputational scholars have overlooked so far are narratives. I argue that the study of narratives offers three important benefits to research on organizational reputation. First, narratives play an important role in human cognition. Thus, their analysis provides important clues concerning the formation of an organization's reputation with their audiences. Second, narratives comprise social constructions. Therefore, they may serve as an informational source when determining the state of an organization's reputation. Third, narratives often do not only focus on one actor but also focus on several, detailing relationships between them. Accordingly, reputational scholars may learn about an organization's environment and about relational dynamics by studying narratives. The analysis exemplifies this last benefit by zooming in on organization's target groups, an audience whose relationship with an organization so far has not been systematically conceptualized in reputational research. Thus, this article provides multiple contributions to the burgeoning literature on organizational reputation (Bustos, 2021) and answers recent calls to advance "the narrative turn" in public administration research (Barker, 2021; Nowell & Albrecht, 2019).

Knowledge retrieved from the analysis of narratives is also relevant for public organizations. It may serve as a basis both to evaluate the current reputation and how it emerged and to devise strategies to reach a desired reputation (Wæraas & Sataøen, 2014). For example, being aware of a particularly harmful narrative may enable an organization to create a useful counter-narrative.

I conduct a first application of narrative analysis in reputational research by investigating the narratives that accompanied the emergence of a negative reputation. Relying on the *Narrative Policy*

Framework (NPF) as a prominent variant of narrative analysis (Kuenzler and Stauffer, 2021), I focus on the case of the Swiss Child and Adult Protection Agencies (CAPA). The CAPA are interesting both from a theoretical and from a practitioner's perspective. From a theoretical point of view, they allow for the observation of an organizational reputation from their inception, further exhibiting a considerable reputational development within only 3 years. Thus, researchers may examine a large within-case variation while holding the context constant. For practitioners, the CAPA constitute a remarkable case as they experienced what may be considered a reputational worst-case scenario (Luoma-aho, 2007; Malay & Fairholm, 2020). Instead of exploiting the opportunity of a new name to achieve a positive reputation, the CAPA quickly became "Switzerland's most hated authority"¹ (Dorer, 2017). Therefore, an in-depth examination provides valuable learnings for other organizations.

Lastly, the CAPA are also an interesting case for researchers committed to the NPF's advancement. Examining the CAPA provides the opportunity of exploring narratives in an organizational context and allows for an application of the framework in a non-U.S. area—a call frequently made by NPF scholars (Shanahan et al., 2017).

The article is structured as follows. First, I substantiate the research gap and show how the NPF may be combined with research on reputation by formulating propositions for the empirical analysis. Next, I introduce the research design by presenting the case of the CAPA and by providing information on data and methods. 667 narratives are collected by means of a quantitative content analysis of mass media between 2013 and 2016. Following up, I present the results of the analysis. Findings indicate that narrative depictions of the CAPA as villain accumulated over time and assumed a different quality after an implementation scandal that spurred the CAPA's negative reputation. Also, the CAPA's target groups underwent marked changes in their depictions, most notably with problem causers being cast as heroes in several narratives, thus questioning the CAPA's basic legitimacy as problem-solving organization. Such narratives questioned the CAPA's legitimacy. In the remainder of the article, I reflect on the findings' broader implications and highlight opportunities for future research.

2 | REPUTATION AND NARRATIVES

This section substantiates the research gap and provides propositions for a combination of reputational research and the NPF.

2.1 | Establishing the gap, or how narratives fit in with research on reputation

Research on the reputation of public organizations commonly bases on the definition by Carpenter and Krause (2012, 26), who conceive of organizational reputation as "a set of beliefs about an organization's capacities, intentions, history, and mission that are embedded in a network of multiple audiences." A crucial feature of this definition is the conception of a reputation not being formed by the organization itself, but by the audiences observing it; reputation is the conglomerate of individual beliefs. Individuals in turn are not neutral observers, but interpret information both cognitively and affectively (Capelos et al., 2016).

A systematic literature review on organizational reputation shows that research on the affective side of reputation is scarce (Bustos, 2021, 25). This is a considerable research gap since preliminary evidence shows the centrality of affective information processing for reputation formation. Several studies on the effects of organizational communication demonstrate through survey experiments that

symbols and brands may outweigh substantial information on organizations (Alon-Barkat, 2020; Teodoro & An, 2018). However, symbols and brands are not the only elements capturing individuals' attention and influencing their cognitive processes. Linguistic elements such as frames (Chong & Druckman, 2007) and narratives (Berinsky & Kinder, 2006) have also been shown to crucially influence human cognition (Ertas, 2015; Jones & Song, 2014).

Narratives are heuristic devices that convey a variety of information in condensed form (Jones & McBeth, 2010). An important difference between brands and narratives is the fact that the latter are not the intellectual property of organizations. Everybody can create narratives to convince others of their opinion, and while common decency may demand that one should not disseminate lies, recent experiences with "alternative facts" and "post-truth" have taught us that this standard is not always adhered to (Jones & McBeth, 2020). Thus, narratives are both interesting and dangerous for public organizations, and their analysis helps filling an important gap in reputational research.

As mentioned in the introduction, a further benefit of narratives is that they contain social constructions. Individuals, groups, and organizations are not portrayed neutrally in narratives but evaluated normatively, for example, when framed as the narrative's villain. Hence, examining the social constructions of a public organization in narratives may contribute to the assessment of an organization's reputation. While recently developed survey instruments such as the ones by Lee and van Ryzin (2019) or Overman et al. (2020) undisputedly provide more nuanced information on reputation, the study of narratives bears two advantages. First, to arrive at an assessment of an organization's overall reputation—the conglomerate mentioned above—via surveys, extensive and representative samples are necessary. This may not always be within the scope of researchers interested in reputation. Second, the ability of surveys to establish insights about the past is limited through the restricted memory of human beings and the ensuing danger of distortions. As narratives are often retained in written form such as newspaper articles or social media posts, studying such sources allows for estimations of past reputational dynamics. This is a feature sought after by public organizations (Bustos, 2021, 26).

Finally, narratives offer the opportunity to study relational dynamics in reputation. In his systematic literature review, Bustos (2021, 25) highlights the need for more research on organizations' audiences. I agree and propose to go one step further: It is not only audiences themselves that matter but also depictions of the relationships between an organization and its audiences. Such depictions provide an important informational basis for individuals forming their reputational beliefs. In particular, the relationship of an organization with its target groups is relevant in this respect, as it is the target groups who directly experience an organization's actions (Mintrom & Williams, 2015). Target groups have not yet received systematic attention in research on reputation. Either they are treated as one of many audiences and stakeholder groups (e.g., Boon et al., 2020) or they are directly mentioned with regard to the policy field under examination (e.g., pharmaceutical firms as regulatees of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in Carpenter, 2010). I propose a systematic conceptualization of the relationship between an organization and its target groups (cf. following section). To conduct an empirical examination of this conceptualization, I take advantage of narratives' relational characteristics.

2.2 | Combining the *Narrative Policy Framework* with research on reputation

In the following, I present the *Narrative Policy Framework* (NPF) and formulate propositions that aim at leveraging the substantial advantages of the NPF for research on reputation.

The NPF was introduced by Jones and McBeth in 2010 and has since found remarkable resonance in the public policy research community (e.g., Dunlop et al., 2021; Gjerstad and Fløttum, 2021;

Kuhlmann and Blum, 2021; Schlaufer et al., 2021; Tosun and Schaub, 2021; Vogeler et al., 2021). The most frequent elements are the narrative characters; a narrative may contain villains who cause a problem, victims who suffer from a problem, and heroes who solve a problem. Furthermore, narratives often include a plot that establishes a temporal and causal order, and a moral of the story, that is, a normatively charged ending (Shanahan et al., 2017, 176). These recognizable and repeating elements render different narratives comparable with each other. The person who constructs a narrative fills the elements with policy-specific actors and information that fits their strategic goal (Shanahan et al., 2017, 177). For example, if somebody wants to convince others to close a country's borders for migrants (moral of the story), they might construct a narrative that depicts migrants as villains, the domestic population as victims, and border guards as heroes.

An NPF analysis captures all institutions, groups, and individuals that appear in a specific policy field's narratives. Researchers decide themselves whom they want to investigate and which categories to use on them, which renders the NPF's applicational possibilities diverse and flexible. For the present purpose, I focus on a public organization and on its target groups.

The following propositions are formulated considering the phenomenon of interest as defined in the research question, that is, the emergence of an organization's negative reputation. Furthermore, the propositions base on the premise that the depiction of an actor as hero is equivalent with a positive social construction, while the depiction as villain implies a negative social construction. This premise has been established by previous NPF research (Crow & Wolton, 2020, 663).

A first proposition reads as follows:

Proposition 1 A public organization's emergence of a negative reputation is associated with an increase in narratives depicting the organization as a villain.

Postulating a connection of a negative reputation with villain depictions appears evident, and indeed, Terry (1997) illustrates how former US president Ronald Reagan systematically used villain depictions to legitimize the dismantling of bureaucracy. Nonetheless, as the interaction between reputation and narratives constitutes a new research area, an empirical examination is advisable.

Coming to the propositions regarding target groups, as mentioned above, a systematic conceptualization is needed. The causal model of public policies (Sager et al., 2017, 47–49) is useful in this regard. Public organizations are the implementers of public policies. To solve a societal problem, policies and their implementers may target two different groups: On the one hand, they can provoke behavior changes with the problem causers, for example, with firms that are monopolizing the market. On the other hand, they may alleviate suffering by assisting the persons affected by problems, for example, by granting unemployment benefits to individuals without jobs. Thus, public organizations' target groups may be divided into problem causers and problem affected.²

Concerning social constructions, narrative depictions of problem causers as villains and problem affected as victims may be assumed as standard, since a policy has undergone a democratic process of societal legitimation before being adopted. However, an emerging negative reputation of the organization implementing the public policy may cause shifts in these depictions. For problem causers, two scenarios are conceivable. With the organization turning villain, they might be left to themselves and continue to cause the problem. Therefore, no shift in their narrative depiction would become visible. Another possibility is that the villainous organization turns on the problem causers in a non-appropriate way, thus provoking a shift in the depiction of problem causers to victims. Due to this theoretical ambiguity, I formulate two diverging propositions:

Proposition 2a A public organization's emergence of a negative reputation is not associated with a

change in the depiction of problem-causing target groups as villains.

Proposition 2b A public organization's emergence of a negative reputation is associated with an increase in narratives depicting the problem-causing target groups as victims.

Finally, I propose the following for the target groups affected by the problem:

Proposition 3 A public organization's emergence of a negative reputation is not associated with a change in the depiction of problem-affected target groups as victims.

This last proposition bases on the consideration that as the organization supposedly helping the affected has turned into a villain, the affected are left alone with the continuing problem.

3 | RESEARCH DESIGN

The following section is divided into two parts. First, I introduce the case of the Swiss Child and Adult Protection Agencies (CAPA) and describe the phenomenon of interest, that is, the emergence of their negative reputation. Second, I present the methods and data applied in the analysis.

3.1 | The CAPA and their negative reputation

The Swiss Child and Adult Protection Agencies (CAPA) are regional public organizations that are charged with the implementation of the Child and Adult Protection Policy (CAPP). The policy's goal is to help persons in need that are unable to assume their rights and control their assets (Germann et al., 2017), such as orphans, abused children, or elderly persons affected by dementia—in terms of the established target group categorization, they are the problem affected. Since such persons often find themselves in relationships of intensive and asymmetrical dependency with others, many CAPA interventions do not only involve the problem affected, but also involve other persons in their immediate environment, such as parents or close relatives. While those relatives are not always responsible for the suffering of the problem affected, in many cases they contribute to the problem constellation. For example, if a person with dementia lives in a family with intense asset conflicts, somebody might try to take advantage of the affected person's state and arrange an alteration of the will. In such a case, the CAPA may get active to withdraw the problem causer's guardianship rights and install a neutral representation for the affected person. Thus, the CAPA have both problem-causing and problem-affected target groups.³

While throughout the twentieth century, local lay authorities had been in charge of implementing the CAPP, the Swiss national parliament judged in 2008 that this task was too complex for laypersons and that forthwith, experts such as lawyers, psychologists, and social workers should take over (Hildbrand et al., 2020). Organized in more than 140 CAPA situated all over Switzerland, these experts took up their work in January 2013.

Within as short a period as 3 years, the CAPA's negative reputation emerged. By 2016, civil society groups had formed, vouching to fight the CAPA's "despotism" (Gisler, 2015), politicians had launched popular initiatives to abandon the CAPA, and facades of CAPA offices had been sprayed with graffiti that read "Murderers!". Several CAPA employees had even to be put under temporary police protection. While in the last few years, the situation has calmed down again, the CAPA are still famous for being "Switzerland's most hated authority" (Dorer, 2017). A popular initiative that wanted

to curb the CAPA's power gathered 96,000 signatures (Steiger, 2019), and until today, CAPA employees report difficulties in approaching their target groups.

A major implementation scandal played a decisive role in this development. On New Year's Day 2015 in Flaach, a small village near Zurich, a woman killed her 5-year-old son and 2-year-old daughter. The local CAPA had placed the children in a children's home in November 2014 after the police had arrested the parents on suspicion of fraud. Although the mother was released after a few days, the CAPA decided that the children should remain in the children's home until further notice. The mother could take the son and daughter to her place for the holiday season. Still, she was to return them to the children's home on January 2 and await the investigation's conclusion. Instead of doing so, she committed the double infanticide and tried to kill herself. Police prevented the suicide and arrested the mother (Kappeler, 2015).

With the children's grandparents and later also the mother herself accusing the CAPA of having caused the infanticide through their insensitive and inhumane behavior, the situation escalated rapidly into a veritable firestorm that spread all over the German-speaking part of Switzerland and affected not only the local, but all CAPA. While administrative examinations later would discharge the CAPA involved in the double infanticide of being responsible for the children's death (Vögeli, 2016), the recent developments delineated above indicate that this acquittal had little to no effect on the CAPA's reputation.

3.2 | Data and methods

The analysis was conducted using the Child and Adult Protection Policy (CAPP) dataset (Kuenzler & Stauffer, 2021). The CAPP dataset comprises all policy narratives surrounding the CAPP that were published in the six major newspaper outlets of both the German- and French-speaking region of Switzerland (*Blick*, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, *Tages Anzeiger*, *24 Heures*, *Le Matin*, *Le Temps*) between 2013 and 2016. The newspaper selection is to ensure representativeness in terms of both circulation and political positioning, featuring the biggest tabloids (*Blick* and *Le Matin*), as well as central-leftist (*Tages Anzeiger*, *Le Temps*) and conservative quality newspapers (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, *24 Heures*). The focus on print rather than digital media arises from the intention to capture narratives that had the potential to achieve broad societal impact. During the period of investigation, print media reached a total population coverage of approximately 50% (Vogler & Hauser, 2015, 48).

A keyword search in the news database *Factiva* delivered a total of 848 newspaper articles. These articles were analyzed by two researchers, applying an established codebook from NPF research (cf. Appendix 1). Paragraphs served as unit of analysis.

One researcher coded the newspapers from the German-speaking region, the other the ones from the French-speaking region. Coding units were defined thematically (Krippendorff, 2003, 107–9) and captured narratives uttered by specific speakers (the narratives' "authors") in a text. The thematic categorization implied that one article could yield several narratives and one narrative could span more than one sentence. An intercoder reliability test on a subset of 90 articles displayed solid results for the villain code (Krippendorff's $\alpha = 0.907$). By contrast, the codes of hero and victim displayed low values ($\alpha = 0.565$ and $\alpha = 0.663$, respectively), prompting the researchers to redo the analysis of these codes together in the entire dataset. When conflicts of opinion occurred, the researchers discussed the specific observations until a consensus emerged.

The CAPP dataset comprises 1,088 narratives. The analysis at hand bases on a subset of 667 narratives, which corresponds to all narratives published in German-speaking newspapers⁴ between January 1, 2013 (when the CAPA took up their work), and February 5, 2016 (when the reports on the press conference about the administrative examination ceded).

Figure 1 provides an overview of newspaper articles mentioning the CAPA over time. To make the dataset amenable to the analysis of temporal developments, I computed a LOESS model (span = 0.15, cf. Figure 1 blue line) and subdivided the period of investigation into seven phases by tracing the curves' minimum turning points (cf. Figure 1 red lines, Table 1). Compared with segmenting the investigated timespan according to fixed slots of, for example, three-month length, the LOESS model provides the advantage of capturing trends in the data. Thus, each phase represents a "wave" of newspaper articles that feature the CAPA. The phases' start and end dates, and the number of articles and narratives within these phases are listed in Table 1.

To make the narratives amenable to further analysis, I subsequently categorized all coded narrative characters according to whether they represent the CAPA,⁵ a representative of the CAPA's problem-affected⁶ or problem-causing⁷ target groups (cf. Appendix 1). The evaluation of propositions primarily bases on counts of these categories over time but is complemented with in-depth qualitative analyses of narrative content.

4 | FINDINGS

I now turn to the assessment of the theoretically devised propositions.

4.1 | Assessment of proposition 1: Narrative depiction of the CAPA

Out of the 667 coded narratives, 240 (35.98%) feature the CAPA as a narrative character, with the CAPA appearing as either a hero, villain, or victim. Table 2 ("Proposition 1") and Figure 2 give evidence of the steady build-up of narrative CAPA depictions as a villain from their inception until phase 4, which includes the time of the double infanticide in Flaach. The frequency of narratives featuring the CAPA generally decreases afterward, indicating a loss of public attention and a certain saturation effect. Nevertheless, the relative share of the CAPA as a villain remains high.

An in-depth examination of narratives featuring the CAPA as a villain reveals a wide range of accusations. Recurring themes are, for example, overpriced measures, incomprehensible communication, or flawed decisions due to allegedly lacking engagement of CAPA employees with their target groups. While many of these accusations resurface time and again throughout the entire period of investigation, the double infanticide marks a pronounced turning point in the quality of CAPA villain depictions that is best understood by recurring to the concept of reputational dimensions. According to Carpenter (2010, 46–47), an organization's reputation may be evaluated by referring to its performance, procedures, technical expertise, or moral standing. Before January 2015, the CAPA are mostly depicted as villains based on criticisms concerning their performance—they are described as slow, malfunctioning, etc.—or concerning procedural aspects such as a lacking inclusion of implementation partners. After the double infanticide, the moral dimension of their reputation becomes dominant, which goes along with an intensification of criticism. Instead of being deficient in specific areas of their work, the CAPA are now evil and cruel authorities who destroy their target groups' lives. A politician's warning to the public is exemplary for this development:

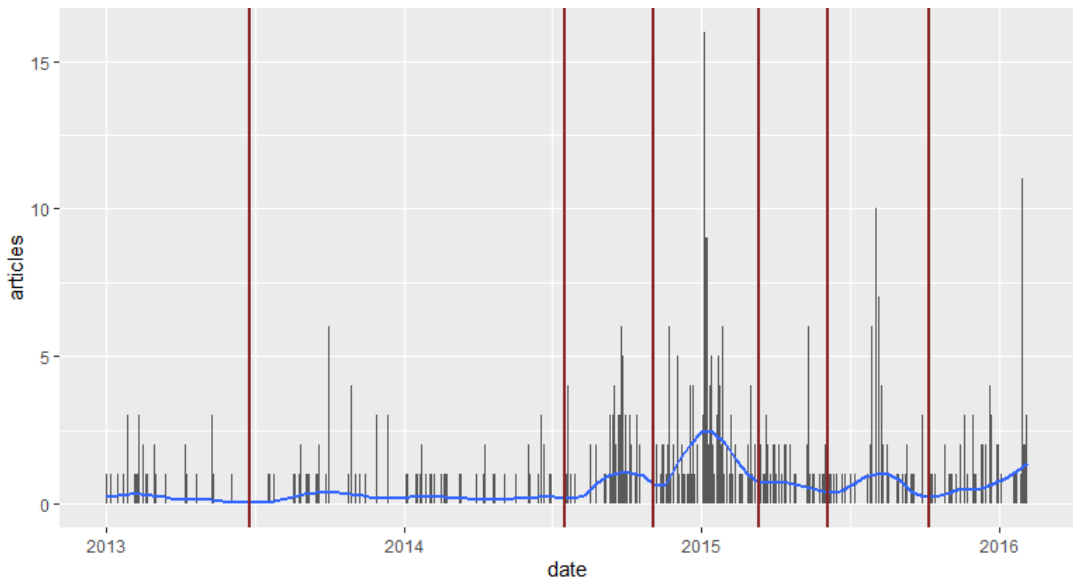


FIGURE 1 Newspaper articles mentioning the CAPA over time. Key: X-axis displays the period of investigation, and Y-axis displays the frequency of newspaper articles mentioning the CAPA. Blue line: LOESS model, span = 0.15. Red lines: phase borders generated on the basis of LOESS model. Please note that Sundays were eliminated from the calculation, as none of the investigated newspapers appears on this day of the week

TABLE 1 Phases' start and end dates, number of articles and narratives

Phase	Start date	End date	Number of articles	Number of narratives
1	01.01.2013	26.06.2013	31	12
2	27.06.2013	18.07.2014	76	77
3	19.07.2014	03.11.2014	67	118
4	04.11.2014	12.03.2015	168	230
5	13.03.2015	04.06.2015	56	68
6	05.06.2015	07.10.2015	68	105
7	08.10.2015	05.02.2016	66	57
		Total:	532	667

Do not turn to the CAPA, first look for other options. Once you are caught in their clutches, you will never be able to escape again.

(Blick, 6 January 2015)

Even though after several weeks, attention subsides as the number of narratives about the CAPA decreases, criticism based on moral aspects remains prevalent in the rest of the dataset.

Overall, proposition 1 is partly corroborated by the data. The emergence of the CAPA's negative reputation was associated with an increase in narratives depicting them as a villain. However, a loss of attention after the double infanticide led to a drop in the frequency of CAPA villain depictions.



TABLE 2 Overview of narrative depictions in the dataset

Phase	Date range	Proposition 1				Sum CAPA as character per phase	Propositions 2a and 2b				Proposition 3						
		CAPA as hero	CAPA as villain	CAPA as victim	CAPA as character		Problem causer as hero	Problem causer as villain	Problem causer as victim	Sum problem causer as character per phase	Problem affected as hero	Problem affected as villain	Problem affected as victim	Sum problem affected as character per phase			
1	01.01.2013–26.06.2013	100%	0%	0%	1	0%	100%	0%	1	0%	0%	1	11%	0%	8%	89%	9
2	27.06.2013–18.07.2014	27%	68%	5%	22	7%	82%	11%	27	11%	11%	27	0%	7%	14	93%	15
3	19.07.2014–03.11.2014	6%	47%	2%	51	14%	57%	29%	17	29%	29%	17	0%	33%	14	67%	21
4	04.11.2014–12.03.2015	2%	87%	11%	85	3%	69%	28%	60	28%	69%	60	0%	4%	24	96%	25
5	13.03.2015–04.06.2015	0%	100%	0%	16	0%	17	41%	28	41%	59%	28	4%	12	11	46%	24
6	05.06.2015–07.10.2015	3%	90%	7%	41	17%	63%	20%	71	20%	63%	71	0%	6%	17	94%	18
7	08.10.2015–05.02.2016	21%	71%	8%	24	5%	74%	21%	19	21%	74%	19	0%	11%	8	89%	9
Total:		18	206	16	240	20	151	56	223	56	151	223	2	23	96	121	

Note: The table displays narrative depictions (hero, villain, victim, and sums of narrative depictions) for CAPA, problem-causing, and problem-affected target groups per phase and in total. Non-cursively printed numbers denote absolute frequencies, percentage values are displayed in cursive.

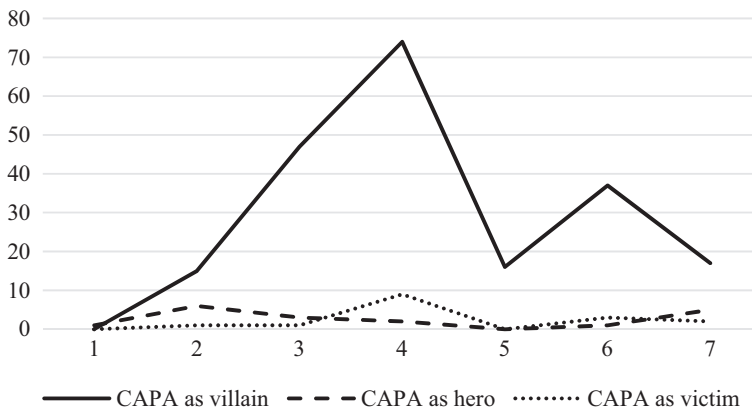


FIGURE 2 Development of CAPA narrative depictions during the period of investigation. Key: X-axis displays the seven phases of the investigated period (cf. Table 1), and Y-axis displays frequencies of CAPA narrative depictions

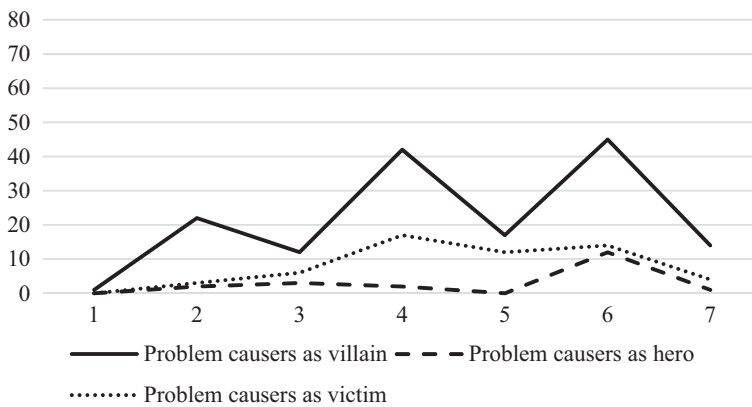


FIGURE 3 Development of problem-causing target group narrative depictions. Key: X-axis displays the seven phases of the investigated period (cf. Table 1), and Y-axis displays frequencies of problem-causing target group narrative depictions

4.2 | Assessment of propositions 2a and 2b: Narrative depiction of problem-causing target groups

The depiction of problem-causing target groups features marked changes over time (cf. Table 2, “Propositions 2a and 2b,” and Figure 3). While at the beginning of the investigated period, problem causers do not appear in the public discourse, already the second phase (June 2013 to July 2014) marks an increase with villain depictions clearly dominating. While the remaining period of investigation features considerable fluctuations in the number of narratives casting problem causers as villains, they continue to overweigh in the overall depiction of this target group. A frequent example in this category is the mother who committed the double infanticide in Flaach:

Yet here, it was not the CAPA, but the mother who committed grave injustice against her children.

(Blick, 7 January 2015)

Also less drastic examples make up this development, such as parents who subject their children to permanent surveillance or single parents who manipulate their children to the detriment of their ex-partners. Overall, these narratives correspond to the CAPA's basic policy problem definition: Asymmetrical power relations, as they are frequently found in family constellations, may lead to abuse.

Over time, however, we see the emergence of alternative problem causer depictions. First, at the time of the double infanticide in Flaach, there is a surge of victim depictions. In these narratives, parents or near relatives are not causing a problem, but suffering from it: They are put under stress and harassed, their rights are curtailed. In almost 50% of these narratives, the villains are the CAPA, being responsible for the problem causers' suffering.

In a third stage, problem causers assume the role of heroes. Once again coupled in half of all instances with the CAPA as villains, we now see parents fighting for their families or elderly siblings "saving" each other from the CAPA. A case that reached prominence in this context is the story of a father whose children were placed in a home by the CAPA. In a cloak-and-dagger operation, he brought the children and their mother to the airport, where they boarded a plane to the Philippines, the mother's country of origin. Thus, the father removed his children from the CAPA's area of jurisdiction. A journalist reports:

For his resistance against the Child and Adult Protection Authorities (CAPA), on the internet the father is celebrated as a hero. His own Facebook page is flooded with friend requests, and in a new Facebook group fans document the case in real time. He gets comments such as "Awesome dad! Hero," the authorities by contrast are addressed with a "Fuck CAPA!"

(Tagesanzeiger, 29 July 2015)

Similar to the CAPA villain depictions, the depiction of problem causers experiences a significant drop in the last phase of investigation.

The consecutive emergence of problem causer depictions first as victims and then as heroes corresponds to a reevaluation and an empowerment, as the public seemed to perceive problem causers—at least in part, the continuing high amount of villain depictions also provides evidence of other opinions—as taking matters into their own hands. This entails a negation of the underlying policy problem: If the problem causers are heroes, then the underlying problem does not exist. Therefore, the hero depictions do not merely amend the evaluation of these individuals but question the very basis of the CAPA's interventions.

To conclude, propositions 2a and 2b both fail to capture the observed developments. While the depiction of problem causers as villains continuously dominates the examined narratives, both victim and hero depictions contest this social construction. The emerging negative reputation of the CAPA is accompanied by complex and changing dynamics in the depiction of the problem-causing target group.

4.3 | Assessment of proposition 3: Narrative depiction of problem-affected target groups

As Table 2 ("Proposition 3") reveals, the depiction of the CAPA's problem-affected target groups is roughly stable over time and predominantly casts them as victims. However, a non-negligible minority of narratives features villain depictions, peaking in phase 3 and phase 5 (cf. Figure 4). A qualitative

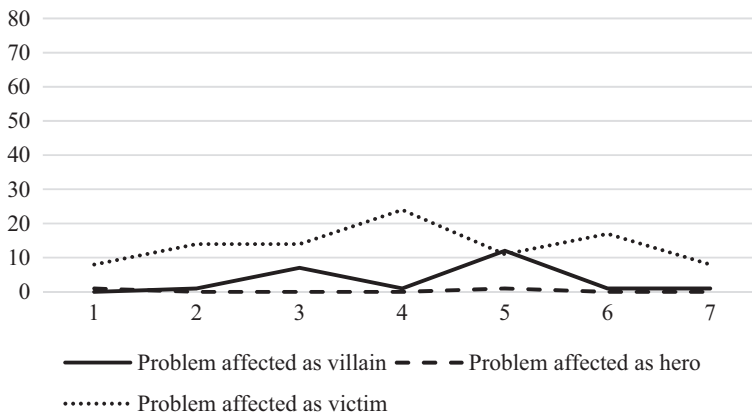


FIGURE 4 Development of problem-affected target group narrative depictions. Key: X-axis displays the seven phases of the investigated period (cf. Table 1), and Y-axis displays frequencies of problem-affected target group narrative depictions

examination reveals that the peaks are caused by two events that each sparked considerable media attention. In phase 3, six children from an Eritrean refugee family in need of support were depicted in several newspaper articles as overstraining the services of the village they lived in. The social construction of refugees has been ambivalent in Switzerland, with the right-wing populist Swiss People's Party regularly denouncing them as exploiting Swiss hospitality. Phase 5 was dominated by the case of a man running amok who had escaped a psychiatric clinic in which the CAPA had temporarily placed him. His killing spree results in several narratives depicting him as a villain. Thus, while the first case is characterized by a social construction from another policy field (migration) that superposes the construction common for the CAPA's policy field, the second case constitutes a rare example of a problem-affected person that has become a danger to society.

In consequence, proposition 3 is partly corroborated. While the overall continuously dominating depiction of problem-affected target groups as victims during the emergence of the CAPA's negative reputation may be confirmed, the distinctive amount of villain depictions shows that the original proposition of problem-affected target groups being seen as victims is over-simplified.

5 | DISCUSSION

Table 3 provides a summary of the propositions' empirical assessment. In the following, I evaluate the application of narrative analysis to research on public organizations' reputation by harking back to the three benefits of narratives mentioned in this article's introduction.

With narratives constituting a central influence on human cognition, I first postulated that through their study, we may gain insights concerning the formation of an organization's reputation. The analysis at hand demonstrated this benefit, both leading reputational researchers' focus toward the affective side of reputation (Bustos, 2021) and enlarging their perspective to include persuasive communication stemming from other sources than the organization (Maor, 2016). The emergence of the CAPA's negative reputation was accompanied by a multitude of narratives that underwent varied dynamics. While the analysis was restricted to narrative characters, examining other narrative elements such as frequently mentioned problems and solutions in CAPA narratives or prevalent plot types—for example,

TABLE 3 Summary of proposition assessments

	Proposition	Finding
1	<i>A public organization's emergence of a negative reputation is associated with an increase in narratives depicting the organization as a villain</i>	Partly corroborated.
2a	<i>A public organization's emergence of a negative reputation is not associated with a change in the depiction of problem-causing target groups as villains</i>	Not corroborated.
2b	<i>A public organization's emergence of a negative reputation is associated with an increase in narratives depicting the problem-causing target groups as victims</i>	Not corroborated.
3	<i>A public organization's emergence of a negative reputation is not associated with a change in the depiction of problem-affected target groups as victims</i>	Partly corroborated.

if the CAPA are a villain, do they harm their victims purposefully or inadvertently? (Stone, 1989)—might enable further insights.

Next, I pointed to the social constructions contained in narratives as an informational source for the state of an organization's reputation. The analysis shows that in quantitative terms, this statement must be restricted (cf. Table 3, “Proposition 1”). Whereas the growing negative reputation did coincide with an increase in narratives depicting the CAPA as a villain, the general loss of public attention after the implementation scandal entailed a decrease in villain narratives. Therefore, more accurate quantitative predictions would necessitate the inclusion of research on general attention and media dynamics (e.g., Baumeister et al., 2001).

By contrast, in qualitative terms, the narratives indeed inform knowledge about the CAPA’s reputation. The villain depictions emerged early on and focused on different aspects of the CAPA, with a marked change from questions of performance and procedure to morality issues after the double infanticide in 2015. As opposed to general assertions concerning different reputational dimensions, the examination of narratives allows us to go one step further and identify the exact aspects that were relevant for the emergence of the CAPA’s reputation. For example, the main points of criticism concerning the CAPA’s performance were not excessive interventionism or exuberant passivity, but overpriced measures and flawed decision making.

Thus, while survey instruments (Lee & van Ryzin, 2019; Overman et al., 2020) are more precise measures of reputation, the analysis of social constructions in narratives is a useful tool to gain complementary information on the discourse surrounding an organization. Such information may serve as a basis for communicational countermeasures.

The third advantage of narratives announced in the introduction concerns their ability to capture relationships between multiple actors. The analysis at hand demonstrated this feature by focusing on depictions of the relationship between a public organization and its target groups. This analytic extension provided valuable information by revealing that the emergence of the CAPA’s negative reputation was accompanied by a partial reframing of its target groups. An increasingly positive depiction of family members that are often considered to be problem causers interfered with the CAPA’s basic legitimacy as a problem-solving organization. The fact that I did not anticipate such a development theoretically emphasizes the necessity to take into consideration such fundamental questionings of public organizations in societal debates.

Hence, the reputational approach benefits from an expansion toward relational dynamics between multiple actors. Theoretically, a multitude of scenarios are conceivable. While the dynamic in the

CAPA case corresponded to a trade-off between the organization's and the target groups' reputation, in other cases, mutual uplifting or down-pulling dynamics might occur. Reputational scholars have investigated similar phenomena for multiple organizations sharing a common reputation, for example, under the labels of the "bad apple" or "least common denominator" effect (Carpenter & Krause, 2012; Wæraas, 2015). By contrast, to my knowledge so far, no studies exist that investigate dynamics between multiple reputations of different actors. This constitutes an interesting avenue for future research.

Last, this article introduced the conceptualization of target groups as distinguished between problem causers and problem affected to research on reputation. In the case at hand, this differentiation proved useful, as the narrative dynamics varied considerably between the two groups. Both the distinction and additional reflections concerning the properties or social constructions of a public organization's target groups (Schneider & Ingram, 1993) may prove valuable for research on reputation, as they equip scholars with an enhanced understanding on an organization's behavior toward its audiences. Furthermore, this analysis shows that target groups' power should not be underestimated: Although formally, they are the subject of an organization's actions, this power balance may be challenged in a reputational context. Drawing back on Carpenter's seminal insights (2010), it is therefore not only organizations that leverage power through their reputation but also other actors such as organizations' target groups.

6 | CONCLUSION

This article provided a first application of narrative analysis in research on organizational reputation. Specifically, I investigated what narratives accompany the emergence of a negative reputation. The Swiss Child and Adult Protection Authorities (CAPA) served as empirical case, with their reputation having developed "from zero to villain" within only 3 years after their inception. I conducted a quantitative content analysis of 667 narratives that had been extracted from mainstream news media by means of the *Narrative Policy Framework* (NPF).

Findings indicate that narrative depictions of the CAPA as villain were prevalent early on. They accumulated over time and assumed a different quality after an implementation scandal that spurred the CAPA's negative reputation. While the target groups supposed to be beneficiaries of the CAPA's interventions were continuously cast as victims, the depiction of target groups often addressed by the CAPA as problem causers underwent marked changes. The emergence of narratives portraying these groups as victims and eventually even as heroes fighting the CAPA shows that the CAPA's legitimacy was increasingly questioned.

The combination of research on the reputation of public organizations with narrative analysis is fruitful both from a theoretical and from a practical perspective. Scholars interested in reputation benefit from the examination of narratives, as they are central heuristics for human cognition and thus important in the formation of reputation. Furthermore, they contain information concerning the social construction of a public organization and of actors in its environment, thus allowing for inferences on the organization's state of reputation and on relational dynamics with others.

The potential of the combination between reputation and narratives is far from being exhausted. Specifically, I would like to highlight three avenues for future research. First, the inclusion of narratives' authors into the analysis might allow for inferences of different actors' rhetorical strategies vis-à-vis a public organization, thus providing the organization with further information on reputational threats and opportunities. Second, the examination of new data sources such as social media, parliamentary debates, or direct communication by political parties, interest groups, or NGOs could

generate more specific information concerning the prevalent perceptions of an organization in different audiences. Third, comparisons between narratives circulating in public and an organization's actual implementation practices might reveal misperceptions that need to be tackled.

From a practical perspective, public organizations may use the knowledge generated through narrative analysis as a basis for their reputation management. They receive a detailed picture of the narratives that circulate about them in public. This allows organizations on the one hand to identify harmful narratives that should be combatted and on the other hand to detect useful narratives that might be reinforced. A narrative analysis may also be used as a starting point for the generation of new narratives.

Exemplifying this usage on the case at hand, two lessons may serve as starting point for adaptations in the CAPA's reputation management. First, the analysis suggests that the CAPA are firmly associated with the villain character, notably regarding the moral dimension of their reputation. To amend this, communication focusing both on the policy's moral basis—to help persons that are unable to assume their own rights—and on the measures taken to uphold this basis is needed. As narratives are effective rhetorical devices, these messages might be delivered in the form of specific case descriptions that ended in the alleviation of the problem-affected target's suffering. Additionally, portrayals of employees conveying their ethic convictions and daily efforts to help persons in need might be helpful to alter the depiction of the CAPA as an impersonal, villainous organization.

Second, the analysis has highlighted that the problem-causing target group is particularly prominent in public discourse and is depicted as either suffering from or defending itself against the CAPA. Here too, communication is key: The CAPA should describe their principles when in contact with problem causers, elucidate the reasons why somebody is conceived as a problem causer, and explain the target groups' rights during a procedure. Furthermore, the CAPA should reinvestigate the cases gone public to determine whether mistakes from their side occurred and draw their own lessons.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My deepest thanks go to Fritz Sager for his useful advice and guidance throughout the last years. Further, I would like to thank Madalina Busuioc, Bettina Stauffer and the participants of the panel "The Politics of Bureaucratic Reputation" at the ECPR General Conference 2020 for their valuable inputs. Open Access Funding provided by Universität Bern, Blended deal.

ORCID

Johanna Kuenzler  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3969-7135>

ENDNOTES

- ¹ All translations in the article by the author.
- ² Please note that many policies target both groups simultaneously, for example, anti-tobacco policies that restrict tobacco companies' marketing possibilities and provide withdrawal programs for smokers.
- ³ Please note that the categorization of problem causers and problem affected refers to the normative evaluation imbued in the public policy and is not an individual judgment by the author. The socially constructed nature of problems necessitates a normative evaluation that may be derived from a policy's setup (Sager, Ingold, and Balthasar 2017, 11).
- ⁴ The analysis is restricted to the German-speaking part as it is only there that a negative reputation of the CAPA emerged. Why the CAPA in the French-speaking part were spared from this development is subject of Stauffer (2021).
- ⁵ That is, the agency itself, a specific local CAPA, or CAPA employees.
- ⁶ Problem-affected target groups are defined as persons affected by the problem the CAPA aims to solve, that is, persons that are unable to assume their rights and control their assets, such as orphans, abused children, or elderly persons affected by dementia.

⁷ Problem-causing target groups are defined as persons considered by the CAPA as contributing to the problem constellation, for example, abusive parents or relatives of a person with dementia involved in asset conflicts.

REFERENCES

- Alon-Barkat, S. (2020). Can government public communications elicit undue trust? Exploring the interaction between symbols and substantive information in communications. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 30(1), 77–95.
- Alon-Barkat, S., & Gilad, S. (2016). Political control or legitimacy deficit? Bureaucracies' symbolic responses to bottom-up public pressures. *Policy & Politics*, 44(1), 41–58.
- Barker, P. (2021). Continuing the narrative turn in public administration research. *Canadian Public Administration*, 64(1), 160–164.
- Baumeister, R. F., Bratslavsky, E., Finkenauer, C., & Vohs, K. D. (2001). Bad is stronger than good. *Review of General Psychology*, 5(4), 323–370.
- Berinsky, A. J., & Kinder, D. R. (2006). Making sense of issues through media frames: Understanding the Kosovo crisis. *The Journal of Politics*, 68(3), 640–656.
- Boon, J., Verhoest, K., & Wynen, J. (2020). What determines the audiences that public service organisations target for reputation management? *Policy & Politics*, 48(2), 295–315.
- Bustos, E. O. (2021). Organizational reputation in the public administration: A systematic literature review. *Public Administration Review*, 1–21. Early online. <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13363>
- Busuioac, E. M. (2016). Friend or Foe? Inter-agency cooperation, organizational reputation, and turf. *Public Administration*, 94(1), 40–56.
- Busuioac, E. M., & Lodge, M. (2016). The reputational basis of public accountability. *Governance*, 29(2), 247–263.
- Busuioac, E. M., & Rimkutė, D. (2020). The promise of bureaucratic reputation approaches for the EU regulatory state. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 27(8), 1256–1269.
- Capelos, T., Provost, C., Parouti, M., Barnett, J., Chenoweth, J., Fife-Schaw, C., & Kelay, T. (2016). Ingredients of institutional reputations and citizen engagement with regulators. *Regulation & Governance*, 10(4), 350–367.
- Carpenter, D. P. (2010). *Reputation and power: Organizational image and pharmaceutical regulation at the FDA*. Princeton studies in American politics. Princeton University Press.
- Carpenter, D. P., & Krause, G. A. (2012). Reputation and public administration. *Public Administration Review*, 72(1), 26–32.
- Chong, D., & Druckman, J. N. (2007). Framing theory. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 10(1), 103–126.
- Crow, D. A., & Berggren, J. (2014). Using the narrative policy framework to understand stakeholder strategy and effectiveness: A multi-case analysis. In M. D. Jones, E. A. Shanahan & M. K. McBeth (Eds.), *The science of stories: Applications of the narrative policy framework in public policy analysis* (pp. 130–156). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Crow, D., & Wolton, L. (2020). Talking policy in congressional campaigns: Construction of policy narratives in electoral politics. *Politics & Policy*, 48(4), 658–699.
- Dorer, C. (2017). “BLICKpunkt: Inakzeptabel.” 2018. <https://www.blick.ch/news/schweiz/blickpunkt/blickpunkt-inakzeptabel-id6600419.html>
- Dunlop, C., Kamkhaji, J., Radaelli, C., & Taffoni, G. (2021). The institutional grammar tool meets the narrative policy framework. *European Policy Analysis*, 7.
- Ertas, N. (2015). Policy narratives and public opinion concerning charter schools. *Politics & Policy*, 43(3), 426–451.
- Germann, U., Leimgruber, M., Lengwiler, M., Stüdl, B., & Togni, C. (2017). *Kindes- und Erwachsenenschutz*. Bern. <http://www.geschichtedersozialensicherheit.ch/institutionen/kindes-und-erwachsenenschutz/>
- Gisler, S. (2015). “Die Kesk-Kritiker formieren sich und zeigen Emotionen.”. *Limmattaler Zeitung*, March 14, 37.
- Gjerstad, Ø., & Fløttum, K. (2021). Climate change lifestyle narratives among Norwegian citizens: A linguistic analysis of survey discourse. *European Policy Analysis*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.1002/epa.2.1122>
- Hildbrand, L., Stauffer, B., Sager, F., & Kuenzler, J. (2020). Erzählungen des Kindes- und Erwachsenenschutzes: Eine Anwendung und Erweiterung des Narrative Policy Frameworks. *Swiss Political Science Review*, 26(2), 181–205.
- Hinterleitner, M., & Sager, F. (2018). Blame, reputation and organizational responses to a politicized climate. In T. Bach, & K. Wegrich (Eds.), *The blind spots of public bureaucracy and the politics of non-coordination* (pp. 133–150). Springer International Publishing.

- Huda, J. (2019). Policy narratives across two languages: A comparative study using the Narrative Policy Framework. *Review of Policy Research*, 36(4), 523–546.
- Jones, M. D., & McBeth, M. K. (2010). A Narrative Policy Framework: Clear enough to be wrong? *Policy Studies Journal*, 38(2), 329–353.
- Jones, M. D., & McBeth, M. K. (2020). Narrative in the time of Trump: Is the Narrative Policy Framework good enough to be relevant? *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, 42(2), 91–110.
- Jones, M. D., & Song, G. (2014). Making sense of climate change: How story frames shape cognition. *Political Psychology*, 35(4), 447–476.
- Kappeler, A. (2015). “Mutter tötet ihre Kinder – haben die Behörden versagt?“. Schweiz am Sonntag, January 4, 5.
- Krippendorff, K. (2003). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. SAGE Publications.
- Kuenzler, J., & Stauffer, B. (2021). *Narratives from the Discourse on the Swiss Child and Adult Protection Policy (CAPP) between 2013 and 2016 [Dataset]*. Lausanne: FORS.
- Kuhlmann, J., & Blum, S. (2021). Narrative plots for regulatory, distributive, and redistributive policies. *European Policy Analysis*, 7.
- Lee, D., & Van Ryzin, G. G. (2019). Measuring bureaucratic reputation: Scale development and validation. *Governance*, 32(1), 177–192.
- Luoma-aho, V. (2007). Neutral reputation and public sector organizations. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 10(2), 124–143.
- Malay, J., & Fairholm, M. (2020). Agency legitimacy: A reputational power analysis of the bureau of land management. *Administration & Society*, 52(3), 343–374.
- Maor, M. (2016). Missing areas in the bureaucratic reputation framework. *Politics and Governance*, 4(2), 80–90.
- 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., & Sulitzeanu-Kenan, R. (2013). The effect of salient reputational threats on the pace of FDA enforcement. *Governance*, 26(1), 31–61.
- Mintrom, M., & Williams, C. (2015). Public policy debate and the rise of policy analysis. In E. Araral, S. Fritzen, M. Howlett, M. Ramesh & X. Wu (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of public policy* (pp. 3–16). Routledge.
- Nowell, B., & Albrecht, K. (2019). A reviewer’s guide to qualitative rigor. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 29(2), 348–363.
- Overman, S., Busuioac, E. M., & Wood, M. (2020). A multidimensional reputation barometer for public agencies: A validated instrument. *Public Administration Review*, 80(3), 415–425.
- Sager, F., Ingold, K., & Balthasar, A. (2017). *Policy-Analyse in der Schweiz: Besonderheiten, Theorien, Beispiele. Politik und Gesellschaft in der Schweiz*. NZZ Libro.
- Schlauffer, C. (2016). The narrative uses of evidence. *Policy Studies Journal*, 46(1), 90–118.
- Schlauffer, C., Khaynatskaya, T., Pilkina, M., Loseva, V., & Kumar Rajhans, S. (2021). Problem complexity and narratives in Moscow’s waste controversy. *European Policy Analysis*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.1002/epa2.1115>
- Schneider, A., & Ingram, H. (1993). Social construction of target populations: Implications for politics and policy. *American Political Science Review*, 87(2), 334–347.
- Shanahan, E. A., Jones, M. D., McBeth, M. K., & Radaelli, C. M. (2017). The narrative policy framework. In C. M. Weible & P. A. Sabatier (Eds.), *Theories of the policy process* (pp. 173–213). Westview Press.
- Stauffer, B. (2021). *Paradigms in public policy discourse: The interplay between macro- and mesolevel narratives and the case of Swiss child and adult protection policy*. Under review.
- Stauffer, B., & Kuenzler, J. (2021). Stories of the old world: The narrative policy framework in the European context. *European Policy Analysis*, 7.
- Steiger, P. (2019). “Zu wenig Unterschriften: Kesb-Initiative ist gescheitert.” Tages-Anzeiger Online. November 2. <https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/schweiz/standard/kesbinitiative-wird-nicht-ingereicht/story/14442329>
- Stone, D. A. (1989). Causal stories and the formation of policy agendas. *Political Science Quarterly*, 104(2), 281–300.
- Teodoro, M. P., & An, S.-H. (2018). Citizen-based brand equity: A model and experimental evaluation. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 28(3), 321–338.
- Terry, L. D. (1997). Public administration and the theater metaphor: The public administrator as villain, hero, and innocent victim. *Public Administration Review*, 57(1), 53–61.
- Tosun, J., & Schaub, S. (2021). Constructing policy narratives in the transnational public sphere: Insights from European citizens’ initiatives. *European Policy Analysis*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.1002/epa2.1125>

- Vögeli, D. (2016). "Mängel in der Kommunikation: Die Gutachter des "Falls Flaach" entlasten die zuständige Kesh, orten aber verfahrensrechtliche Schwächen." *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, January 30, 23.
- Vogler, D., & Hauser, L. (2015). Medienarena In fög - Forschungsinstitut Öffentlichkeit und Gesellschaft (Ed.), *Qualität der Medien: Jahrbuch 2015* (pp. 45–86). Schwabe.
- Vogeler, B., Schwindenhammer, S., Gonglach, D., & Bandelow, N. (2021). Agri-food technology politics: Exploring policy narratives in the European parliament. *European Policy Analysis*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.1002/epa2.1114>
- Wæraas, A. (2015). "Municipal reputation building in Norway: A reputation commons tragedy?" In A. Wæraas, & M. Maor (Eds.), *Organizational reputation in the public sector*. Routledge.
- Wæraas, A., & Sataøen, H. L. (2014). Trapped in conformity? Translating reputation management into practice. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 30(2), 242–253.

How to cite this article: Kuenzler, J. (2021). From zero to villain: Applying narrative analysis in research on organizational reputation. *European Policy Analysis*, 7(Suppl. 2), 405–424. <https://doi.org/10.1002/epa2.1123>

APPENDIX 1

Codebook

Code	Description / Definition	Source
<i>Narrative Elements:</i>		
Narrative's author	The person from whose perspective the narrative is told	Schlauffer (2016)
Hero	"[...] actor(s) who plan to or fix, solve, assist, or seek to resolve past, current or future problem. Need to possess intention and/or agency"	Crow and Berggren (2014)
Villain	"[...] actor(s) who create, cause, contribute, instigate, exacerbate, or plan to contribute to the problem. Need to possess intention and/or agency"	Crow and Berggren (2014)
Victim	"[...] actors(s) who suffers, is targeted, is effected by the problem and/or Villain"	Crow and Berggren (2014)
<i>Actor Categories:</i>		
CAPA	The CAPA as an agency type, specific local CAPA, CAPA employees	
Problem-affected target groups	Persons affected by the problem the CAPA aims to solve, that is, persons that are unable to assume their rights and control their assets, such as orphans, abused children, or elderly persons affected by dementia	
Problem-causing target groups	Persons considered by the CAPA as contributing to the problem constellation, for example, abusive parents or relatives of a person with dementia involved in asset conflicts	