

The Co-evolution of Reputation Management, Governance Capacity, Legitimacy and Accountability in Crisis Management

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Abstract

This chapter addresses the following questions: What is the relationship between governance capacity, accountability, governance legitimacy, and reputation management in crisis management? To what extent do these elements co-evolve? First, the basic concepts such as crisis and crisis management, governance capacity, governance legitimacy, accountability and reputation management are presented. We then present our theoretical perspectives – an instrumental and an institutional one. Third, we analyze the dynamic relationship between our central concepts. A main argument is that handling the relationships between governance capacity, legitimacy, accountability, and reputation management in unsettled and turbulent situations such as crises is a key challenge. These are frequently mutually affecting processes, resulting in ambiguities and hybrid and complex relationships. We argue that there is a need to go beyond vertical principal-agent approaches and rethink these relationships in a way that resonates with the new reality of modern governance systems in turbulent times. A main lesson is to analyze how public organizations actually work in practice in crises, rather than engaging in wishful thinking about how they ought to work. This approach might be less heroic, but hopefully more realistic. The real challenge is to move towards a more responsible crisis management that incorporates governance capacity, accountability, reputation and responsiveness to citizens' demands and governance legitimacy, so that it can act decisively for the public good.

Introduction

Dealing with crises is a main responsibility of government authorities. Crises strike at the core of democratic governance and challenge not only capacity but also legitimacy and accountability. They are a test of whether an organization can meet citizens' expectations. Crisis management studies often focus on *governance capacity*, investigating how the government can effectively prepare for, handle and learn from different types of crises. One way to do this is to study how governments structure their organizations as a whole and specifically the units responsible for crisis management – by focusing on type of specialization and coordination – and how they use their overall capacity and resources (Christensen, Lægreid, & Rykkja, 2016). For example, the experience from 9/11 was that the different capacities of the crisis management 'didn't find each other', which created problems of handling and later on led to the establishment of Department of Homeland Security, to increase coordination.

Governance capacity hinges on a whole set of important *accountability* relationships. A crucial question is to whom account is to be rendered and what one is accountable for. When there are many accountability forums, the problem of "many eyes" may arise (Day & Klein, 1987). This question normally concerns the formal accountability of the government to parliament, the accountability of the administrative leadership to the political leadership, the accountability of professional groups inside the public apparatus and how accountability is handled with respect to laws and rights. In most cases, there are multiple accountability relations, and the relationship between accountability and performance is frequently contested and ambiguous (Bovens, 2007).

Our argument is that a well-functioning crisis management system needs both governance capacity and governance legitimacy. While governance capacity relates to more formal accountability relations, *governance legitimacy* can involve what is called horizontal or societal

accountability, meaning that the political and administrative leadership try to justify or win support for their actions from the population and the media without having any formal obligation to do so (Schillemans, 2011). Thus, governance legitimacy is partly based on citizens' trust in government (Easton, 1965). One can distinguish between input legitimacy, judged in terms of responsiveness to citizens, throughput legitimacy, judged in terms of the quality (i.e. efficacy, accountability, transparency, openness, inclusiveness) of governance processes, and output legitimacy, judged in terms of effectiveness of policy outcomes (Sharpf, 1999; Schmidt, 2012). In this perspective, governance legitimacy has a dynamic relationship to governance capacity. High governance capacity may enhance governance legitimacy, but there is no guarantee that it will, especially in situations of general mistrust in government. Conversely, a high level of governance legitimacy may help achieve more governance capacity, for example by getting the population to participate more actively in preventing and handling crises.

Furthermore, governance legitimacy is quite often connected to the emergence of what we call *reputation management*, i.e. when public bodies systematically try to influence how external stakeholders or constituencies perceive the government's actions. In contrast to stable, routine situations, crises represent unsettled and transitional situations, which make accountability relations more ambiguous, complex and uncertain (Christensen & Lægreid, 2017). The uncertainty and complexity vis-à-vis stakeholders, problems and solutions that characterizes times of crisis make reputation management more challenging.

Thus, the quality of crisis management depends on both government capacity and government legitimacy and can therefore be coupled to two more distinct lines of enquiry, i.e. accountability and reputation management. In this chapter, we will explore how this coupling could be analyzed, with our ultimate goal being to provide new insights concerning the quality of

governmental institutions' crisis management. An underlying argument is that that we should avoid the “tyranny” of always having to choose dependent and independent variables. Here, we claim that there is a merit in also looking for mutually affecting processes and co-evolution between governance capacity, governance legitimacy, accountability, and reputation management. Subsequently, we will try to answer the following question:

- What is the relationship between governance capacity, accountability, governance legitimacy, and reputation management in crisis management? To what extent do these elements co-evolve?

We begin the chapter by briefly presenting some of the basic concepts, such as crisis and crisis management, governance capacity, governance legitimacy, accountability and reputation management. We then present our theoretical perspectives – an instrumental and an institutional one. Third, we analyze the dynamic relationship between our central concepts before concluding the chapter with a summarizing discussion

Basic concepts: Crises, Crisis Management, Governance Capacity, Governance Legitimacy, Accountability and Reputation Management

A *crisis* may be defined as “a situation in which there is a perceived threat to the core values or life-sustaining functions of a social system that requires urgent remedial action in uncertain circumstances” (Rosenthal, Charles, & ‘t Hart, 1989: 10). Crises are often seen as a threat to an organization’s reputation, as they might damage that reputation and affect how stakeholders interact with the organization (Coombs, 2007). One way to characterize crises is in terms of their *cause(s)*, whether, for instance, they are man-made or of natural origin (which is not always easy to determine) (Smith, 2006). Another way is to look at crisis *phases*. One can distinguish between

four phases of crisis management: prevention, preparation, mitigation, and aftermath (Boin et al., 2005). A third dimension is to consider the *degree of uncertainty* and the *uniqueness* of a crisis (Gundel, 2005), and a fourth one concerns the *degree of transboundary features* (Ansell, Boin, & Keller, 2010). A fifth dimension is how a crisis is *perceived* by different actors. This includes a subjective element, which also ties in with the dynamics of governance capacity and legitimacy (Christensen, Lægneid & Rykkja, 2016). Handling a crisis may involve balancing different considerations, for instance a need for increased prevention against a need for a stronger response, or a strategy emphasizing more resilience (Wildavsky, 2003). When a crisis is characterized by uncertainty, ambiguity and unpredictability, decisions are often made in complex, disorganized and dynamic circumstances. Furthermore, transboundary crises transcend the borders of ministerial areas/sectors and administrative levels and challenge existing interfaces between organizations, which may in turn create serious coordination problems (Kettl, 2003).

Public organizations have to deal with crises. *Crisis management* can therefore be defined as the processes by which a public organization systematically deals with a crisis. It may include preventive aspects, operative aspects (what should happen during the crisis), and learning and/or change aspects (what should happen after it has occurred). This involves processes of identification, assessment, understanding, and coping. Crisis management also has a technical aspect – i.e. organizing and structuring an organization in order to deal with a crisis in an instrumental sense, as well as a broader institutional-cultural aspect, which embraces how to understand conflicts as well as issues like power, trust, and legitimacy. Both the technical and the institutional-cultural features aspects affect the way the political and administrative leadership faces and handles crises.

Governments have to allocate resources to different purposes and policies, of which handling crises is just one of many. *Governance capacity* in crisis management thus includes formal structural and procedural features of the governmental administrative apparatus and how they work in practice (Christensen, Lægreid, & Rykkja, 2016). Overlapping domains among public organizations are often necessary in crisis management, because they function as back-up systems (Landau 1969). But overlap may also lead to conflicts and turf wars. In other words, it is difficult to develop ‘positive’ coordination where coherence is consciously sought. ‘Underlap’ and ‘negative coordination’, where the actors agree to avoid interfering in each other’s programs and policies is more common (Lodge & Wegrich, 2014; Scharpf, 1994) and often seen in administrative systems with strong line ministries, departmentalization and silo arrangements. Moving from negative to positive coordination by building integrated and coherent programs, arrangements and services is often a major challenge (Bouckaert et al., 2010).

One can distinguish between four types of governance capacity (Lodge & Wegrich, 2014): coordination, analytical, regulation, and delivery. *Coordination capacity* is about bringing together disparate organizations to engage in joint action, which in crisis management basically means that capacity or resources ‘find each other’ via positive coordination. Normally coordination challenges are at the forefront in crisis (Boin & Bynander, 2014). *Analytical capacity* is about analyzing information and giving advice as well as assessing risk and vulnerability. It is about having the right kind of competence and enough of it and using these resources appropriately. *Regulation capacity* is about control, surveillance, oversight, and auditing, which may have preventive effects or be important preconditions for handling crises well. *Delivery capacity* is about the handling of the crisis in practice, about following chains of command and providing public services in practice, meaning being able to follow plans and what have been learned in training when a crisis strike.

Any government is dependent on the participation and trust of citizens for handling crises. *Governance legitimacy* accordingly focuses on the relationship between government authorities and citizens or between government authorities and the media, which channel and interpret information from the government to the public at large (Christensen, Lægreid, & Rykkja, 2016). It concerns citizens' perceptions of whether the authorities' actions, in our case those related to crisis management, are desirable and appropriate – i.e. whether they match generally held norms, values, and beliefs (Jann, 2016; Suchman, 1995). Governance legitimacy may deal with the degree of cultural support for the action the public leadership takes during a crisis (Meyer & Scott, 1983; Selznick, 1957). However, such perceptions may also reflect institutional myths, 'social constructions of reality' and 'taken-for-grantedness' (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Legitimacy affects how people understand government but also how they act towards government authorities in crises. Easton (1965) makes a useful distinction between *diffuse* and *specific* support, which means that people may either generally trust government institutions and their actors or trust specific institutions and actors. In crisis situations if citizens generally trust institutions they will potentially regard crisis management efforts positively and be willing to participate, giving the system some resources to fall back on (Cyert & March, 1963).

Legitimacy is difficult to define, but related concepts like trust, confidence, satisfaction, and reputation have been used as proxies (Christensen, Lægreid & Rykkja, 2016). According to Scharpf (1999), there are three types of government legitimacy: *input legitimacy*, *throughput legitimacy* and *output legitimacy* (see also Schmidt, 2013). Input legitimacy focuses on citizens' assessment and acceptance of governance actions. In crises this relates to support for and participation in parties and public decision-making processes and concerns representativeness and responsiveness. Throughput legitimacy focuses on processes within the administrative apparatus

and peoples' perceptions of these. It concerns organization, resources and competence, but also fairness, impartiality and openness. Output legitimacy deals with perceptions of policies, means, and measures related to crisis management and is often closely related to judgements about governance capacity.

One central aspect of legitimacy is making actors in the government accountable. Bovens (2007: 447) defines *accountability* as “the relationship between an actor and a forum, in which the actor has an obligation to explain and justify his or her conduct, the forum can pose questions and pass judgment, and the actor may face consequences”. Therefore, the basic factors in accountability relations are information, debate and consequences. In contrast to responsibility, which is more about entrusting someone with a task, accountability is generally retrospective, i.e. an organization or person is held to account or has to answer for something that has already happened. In a crisis, accountability relations are often ambiguous (Christensen, Lægreid & Rykkja, 2016). Public organizations face the *problem of many eyes* or who the subordinate actors – the accountors – are supposed to *account to* and which criteria should be used to judge them. This is quite difficult in a complex and hybrid public apparatus. Public organizations also face the problem of *many hands*, meaning whether it is individuals or organizations, political or administrative executives, street-level bureaucrats or managers who should account to superior forums – the accountees – for their actions (Thompson 1980). Consequently, actors may be held to account by a number of different forums, and there are different ways of categorizing who is accountable to whom (Bovens, 2007; Romzek & Dubnick, 1987; Willems & Van Dooren, 2011).

There are also several different types of accountability. *Political accountability* is a key feature in the chain of delegation implied by the “the primacy of politics” (Pollitt & Hupe, 2011).

It is defined as a chain of superior/subordinate relationships. The cabinet is accountable to the parliament and the civil service is accountable to the political executive. Here the accountability relationship is mainly seen as a vertical one in which the hierarchy gives the forum formal power over the actor.

Administrative accountability is based on a person's position in a political-administrative hierarchy where an administrative superior may call a subordinate to account for his or her performance of delegated duties. Traditional administrative accountability is chiefly concerned with compliance with process features like rules and procedures. *Managerial accountability* is connected to performance management, output and outcomes and makes those with delegated authority answerable for carrying out tasks according to agreed performance criteria (Day & Klein, 1987; Askim, Christensen, & Lægreid, 2015). Several authors argue that NPM-related reforms have shifted the balance from legitimacy based on appropriate inputs and processes to legitimacy based on outputs and outcomes (Bovens, 2007; Byrkjeflot, Christensen, & Lægreid, 2014).

Professional accountability focuses on the importance of professional peers or peer review. Professions in public organizations are constrained by codes of conduct – a system marked by deference to expertise (Mulgan, 2000) and a reliance on the technical knowledge of experts (Romzek & Dubnick, 1987). *Judicial accountability* deals with the rule of law and actors' formal rights.

Bovens et al. (2010) add another dimension by distinguishing between mandatory *vertical accountability* of the types explained above, and voluntary *horizontal accountability or societal/social accountability*. In the second instance, the 'accountee' is not hierarchically superior to the 'accountor'. But the accountor may nonetheless feel pressure from the environment

to justify or defend his or her actions, particularly when governance legitimacy and reputation management are at stake.

The accountability debate has traditionally revolved around principal-agent issues and ‘agency drift’ (where the agent is prone to withhold information, serve their own bureaucratic interests and generally eschew accountability), but it has to a lesser degree addressed the very similar problem of ‘forum drift’ (Schillemans & Busuioc, 2014). In crisis or unsettled situations some ambiguity or uncertainty often surrounds who the agents and who the principals are. Therefore, there is a need to go beyond the principal-agent model. Our suggestion would be to supplement it with a combined structural-instrumental and cultural-institutional approach (Olsen, 2015; Christensen & Lægreid, 2017). Below we outline the arguments in favor of this.

Reputation and *reputation management* are treated in quite diverse strands of the literature – from studies of branding to mission statements, image-building, self-presentation, etc. in both private and public organizations (Carpenter, 2010; Carpenter & Krause, 2012; Wæraas, Byrkjeflot, & Angell, 2011; Maor, 2010). These represent a synthesis and a reinvention of old and new strands of related theory from the fields of anthropology (Goffman, 1959), political science (Edelman, 1964) and organization theory/neo-institutionalism (Brunsson, 1989; Czarniawska & Sevon, 1996; Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

Reputation is often both complex and hybrid. A reputation is derived from an aggregate evaluation by stakeholders of how well an organization meets stakeholder expectations based on its past behavior (Wartick, 1992). *Organizational reputation* may be defined as ‘a set of beliefs about an organization’s capacities, intentions, history, and mission that are embedded in a network of multiple audiences’ (Carpenter, 2010: 33). This means that in their reputation management leaders of organizations, like political and administrative executives, systematically use symbols

that appeal to diverse actors in their environment in order to build a reputation (Wæraas & Maor, 2015: 4). These ‘networks of multiple audiences’ include leaders of other countries and international organizations, parliaments and elected representatives, other executive political and administrative leaders, interest groups, policy experts, the media, the general public, etc. Reputation management focuses on the core mission and tasks of an organization, which reflect its historical path, on its main resources and competences, and on its outputs and outcomes. It both facilitates and guides members of the organization but also helps external constituencies to understand its activities (Morphew & Harley, 2006: 457). Whether leaders manage the reputation of their organization successfully depends not only on the agency’s ability to present itself, but also on the perceptions of the ‘networks of multiple audiences’, including the balance between the perceptions’ of internal and external actors. Their ‘presentation of self in everyday life’ (Goffman, 1959) is particularly challenging if the gap is large between the mainly symbolic ‘front-stage’, and ‘back-stage’ where the ‘real’ action takes place.

One of the main goals of reputation management is to strike a balance between being ‘excessively vague or unrealistically aspirational or both’ (Morphew & Harley, 2006: 457). An organization’s reputation can be managed in different ways. One way is to develop a rather narrow, integrated and specific profile (van Riel & Fombrun, 2007). The advantage is that both the members of the organization and the external stakeholders know exactly what the organization stands for, which may enlist support. The disadvantage is that this does not sufficiently communicate the complexity and different interests of the organization (Wæraas & Solbakk, 2009, 459). This may create conflicts if members of an organization are required to actively represent it or ‘live the brand’, to use the jargon term (Ind, 2004). The other option is to have a rather broad identity profile, encompassing a range of internal and external stakeholders. The advantage of

using such broad symbols is that they have a ‘bridging’ function (Røvik, 2002) and can communicate different and flexible messages to different audiences in what has metaphorically been labeled ‘polyphony’ (Christensen et al., 2005). The disadvantage of this is that trying to please everybody may result in a profile that is overly ambiguous and a general set of symbols that do not say anything to anyone. Or as Morpew and Harley (2006: 456) say, symbols related to a broad and common purpose may be seen as ‘rhetorical pyrotechnics – pretty to look at but of little structural consequence’.

Reputation management is also linked to accountability (Busuioc & Lodge, 2015). Accountability is to a great extent about managing and cultivating an organization’s reputation vis-à-vis different stakeholders and audiences and addressing issues of ‘path-dependency’ and appropriateness, fairness and reliability (Jann, 2017). Accountability is related to justifying the organization’s existence and to preserving its identity, building alliances and enhancing political support and survival (Busuioc & Lodge, 2015). In this sense, reputation comes close to legitimacy (Suchman, 1995). One difference, though, is that reputation can be managed, and hence manipulated while legitimacy cannot. Thus legitimacy is a broader concept than reputation (Jann, 2017).

Analytical framework: Combining a structural/instrumental and an institutional perspective

In order to better understand the relationship and potential co-evolution between governance capacity, governance legitimacy, accountability, and reputation management during crises, we advocate applying a combined structural/instrumental and an institutional approach (Christensen et al., 2016). This implies that there is a need to study *organizational structures* for governance capacity but also *cultural* and *symbolic features* linked to governance legitimacy, accountability and reputation.

An instrumental organizational perspective focuses on the formal structures of public organizations (Christensen et al., 2007). Formal organization is seen as an instrument for achieving goals, and it channels and influences the models of thought and the decision-making behavior of civil servants (Egeberg, 2012; Simon, 1957). It is based on a 'logic of consequence', where 'bounded' rational actors can predict the consequences of their choices and find the appropriate means (March & Olsen, 1989; Simon, 1957). It is assumed that leaders will score high on rational calculation and political control (Dahl & Lindblom, 1953), meaning that they have relatively clear intentions and goals, choose structures that correspond with these goals, have insight into the potential effects and have the power to control decision-making processes and implement their decisions. The assumption is that there is a tight coupling between formal policy, daily practice and intended outcome. We use the perspective to focus on the relationship between governance capacity on the one hand and governance legitimacy and reputation management on the other. This means that formal organization and capacities may both influence and be influenced by legitimacy and reputation, in a co-evolutionary way.

A cultural perspective emphasizes informal norms, values and practices that have developed over time through a process of institutionalization. Central organizational features result from mutual adaptation to internal pressure, reflecting what internal actors have brought into the organization and how they interact with it, and to external pressure, namely, the immediate task environment. Together these create the organization's unique cultural identity (Selznick, 1957). A crucial argument concerns *path-dependency*, meaning that contexts, norms and values surrounding the establishment of a public organization – its 'roots', in other words – will strongly influence the 'route' or path it takes later (Krasner, 1988). Also related to core organization, competence, goals and services is the 'logic of appropriateness' (March, 1994). The assumption is that every

institution over time develops such a logic (or logics). When actors face a crisis they try to match the situation with their own institutional identity (asking: what is typical?) and with various decision-making rules (asking: what am I supposed to do in a situation like this?). We use the perspective primarily to discuss the relationship and potential co-evolution between accountability on the one hand, and legitimacy and reputation on the other.

A version of this perspective assumes that major crises can produce a ‘punctuated equilibrium’ implying a shock effect that can alter institutionalized beliefs and routines and open the way for more radical change (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993). Streeck and Thelen (2005) stress the more general argument that institutional changes may differ depending on whether they are incremental or abrupt, and on whether the result is continuity or discontinuity. In some crisis situations there might also be ‘punctuated backsliding’ due to a combination of external and internal forces (Kettl, 2007).

A symbolic or myth perspective addresses the institutional environment, consisting of myths and symbols, and standards or scripts that are taken for granted about how to develop and organize an institution (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983), non-material myths and symbols spread fast between nations and organizations, either making organizations similar or isomorphic or else being translated and edited as they travel around (Røvik, 2002; Wedlin & Sahlin, 2017). One of the main reasons for adapting to or importing such myths and symbols about an organization’s reputation is that they may enhance the legitimacy of a public organization. Balancing talk and action gives the leadership more flexibility and makes it look modern and rational (Brunsson, 1989). A loose coupling between ‘front stage’ talk, representing ‘window-dressing’ and image building, and ‘back-stage’ action makes this possible and desirable. Public leaders cannot deliver on all talk and promises, either because they do not want to or because

they do not have enough resources or do not know how to (Goffman, 1959). In the end, there may be a loose coupling between formal policy and daily practice, but also between daily practice and intended outcome (Bromley & Powell, 2012). Accordingly, we use the perspective primarily to look at the relationship between legitimacy and reputation on the one hand and capacity and accountability on the other.

The relationship between governance capacity and governance legitimacy

The links between governance capacity and governance legitimacy in crisis situations have received little attention (Christensen, Læg Reid, & Rykkja, 2016). However, the relationship between governance capacity and governance legitimacy might be a two-way street. First, seen from an instrumental perspective, strong governance capacity is a major precondition for scoring high on governance legitimacy, and hence developments in governance capacity may affect legitimacy. If a government is able to prevent a crisis, or handle it well, citizens will probably generally trust and support it. However, a government may have problems with showing the efficacy of capacity, for example in the fight against terrorism, where there are major issues of secrecy involved (Christensen & Lodge, 2016). The same may happen when a government's prevention or handling of a crisis is not very visible or the effects are disputed, as in the case of many environmental crises. It may also depend on the viewpoint of stakeholders or citizens, some of whom will have more knowledge of governance capacity than others, or if the effects of the capacity are diverse, reflecting heterogeneity.

The extent to which the various types of governance capacity translate into governance legitimacy depends on how visible they are for the citizens. Coordination and delivery capacity may have a rather high public profile during crises, and the legitimacy may be rather low when

these ‘capacities don’t find each other’ and handling is flawed, as seen in the Norwegian police’s handling of the terrorist attacks in 2011 (Christensen, Lægreid, & Rykkja, 2015). In the Norwegian field of societal security and crisis management, coordination problems related to ministerial capacity have been countered by introducing the principle of collaboration and new network arrangements that rely largely on soft measures, informal relationships and trust (Lægreid & Rykkja, 2015). Analytical capacity, on the other hand, is normally rather hidden other than to those with special knowledge and insights. Analytical capacity is nonetheless critical for dispelling the impression that the responsible organizations do not have the relevant competence. It may also be used positively to obtain support for typical economy-of-scale reorganizations, as seen in the Norwegian case when the police force was centralized or regionalized in larger emergency units (Christensen, Lægreid, & Rykkja, 2017). Finally, regulation capacity is also rather invisible to most people, at least for part of the crisis management process. It usually becomes relevant in the aftermath of crises, especially when learning and feed-back processes assume a political aspect, affecting legitimacy.

Conversely, governance legitimacy might affect governance capacity. When people’s trust in government, whether diffuse or specific, is high, ensuring the various kinds of governance capacity required for crisis management is easier. It gives the government a greater degree of freedom in coordinating, analyzing, regulating and delivering. A high level of diffuse support, often developed over a long period in a culturally oriented process, gives the government overall more leeway for preventing and handling crises (cf. Easton, 1965). In these situations, the flawed handling of one particular crisis will not normally have long-term consequences. After the terrorist attacks in Norway in 2011, for example, trust in the police decreased, especially during the period when the police were under heavy criticism, but it went straight back up again to its usual high

level a short while later (Christensen & Læg Reid, 2015; Wollebæk et al., 2012). Overall Norwegian citizens became more skeptical about certain specific aspects of crisis management after the terrorist attack, but there was no decrease in their general support for the authorities (Christensen & Aars, 2017). If legitimacy is based on more specific support, however, this generally limits governance capacity, especially when that capacity involves actors in the organization's environment (i.e. stakeholders).

Our argument is that the match or mismatch between governance capacity and citizens' expectations (i.e. legitimacy) will affect perceptions of the quality of crisis management (Christensen, Læg Reid, & Rykkja, 2016; Schneider, 2011). Not only what the government does, but also how it is assessed by citizens, matters. The more legitimacy the government has, seen as 'high slack', the better it can perform its tasks (Rothstein, 1998). When there is a gap between capacity and expectations, crisis management runs into trouble. This gap can be closed either by strengthening capacity or by reducing expectations, or a combination of the two.

The relationship between accountability and governance legitimacy

The connection between accountability and legitimacy is blurred and contested in the literature, often due to a lack of conceptual clarification and operationalization (Jann, 2017). Furthermore, it is often seen as a phenomenon with reciprocal effects. First, scoring high on most accountability types (political, administrative, professional, vertical, or horizontal) may enhance governance legitimacy, but how visible the different types of accountability are for the general public and media varies enormously, which may foster more use of symbols. The media tend to focus on political accountability, especially the relationship between government and parliament, so this may be a critical factor influencing governance legitimacy. If government is perceived as weak or

if a cabinet has a turbulent relationship with the parliament this may have a negative impact on legitimacy; this seems to happen more often with minority than majority governments. Another aspect of political accountability is also important, namely the relationship between the political and administrative leadership. Normally the administrative apparatus will have little reason to make its own government or ministry look bad vis-à-vis the parliament, but internal tensions may affect legitimacy in a negative way. Administrative, managerial, professional and judicial accountability will normally have a rather loose connection with legitimacy, but may become more exposed in a crisis. The ambiguity of accountability is especially clear when things go wrong (Gregory, 1998). Managerial accountability might be biased towards hierarchy and punishment and thus might tend to undermine trust and legitimacy (Behn, 2001).

One of the major features of horizontal or societal accountability is that it aims to improve governance legitimacy, which often includes both cultural and symbolic elements. The other types of accountability also play into this relationship. The fact that this type of accountability is not mandatory gives it more flexibility. This means that the government can more systematically target certain stake-holders in the environment with specific messages to increase its legitimacy. One of the problems with this is that it is often difficult to predict how actors in the environment will react to the government's justification for structural and policy changes. This type of accountability exposes governmental actors and may increase insecurity in public decision-making processes. Overall, it is not easy to discover to what extent and how accountability impacts on legitimacy (Jann, 2017).

Second, scoring high on legitimacy will generally enhance the score on most accountability types and relationships in crisis management. If the government enjoys overall strong trust and diffuse culturally based support, political accountability will probably be easier to fulfill, because

the information given by the government to parliament or by administrative leaders to the political executive will be judged in a generally positive way because of strong societal support. Furthermore, administrative and managerial accountability will go more smoothly and with less public exposure. Professional accountability will be easier to handle, because professional autonomy and competence are seen in a more positive light. The same goes for judicial accountability, i.e. there will be fewer questions about due process, the rule of law and users'/citizens' rights. And there will be fewer reasons to try to further societal accountability towards the media and the general public.

The relationship between governance capacity and reputation management

Different types of governance capacity may have diverse effects on reputation management. Lack of coordination or delivery capacity, both instrumental features, may severely limit what kind of symbols can be used or it may have negative effects on those that are used. An example is the way the Norwegian police handled their reputation after the terrorist attacks in 2011 (Christensen & Læg Reid, 2015). When the report from the official Inquiry Commission was issued in 2012, which criticized the police for lack of coordination and major delivery problems, the police leadership acted as if everything had gone quite well, saying that they were nearly 100% satisfied with their own actions. This caused an uproar in the media and heavy criticism from affected stakeholders, who accused the police of being self-gratulatory and lacking in empathy, showing that the police lost the PR-fight.

Analytical capacity normally remains under the radar when it comes to reputation management, but professional reputation may be spotlighted if competence is disputed, as was the case in the handling of the outbreaks of mad cow disease in the 1990s, for example (Rykkja, 2008). Regulation capacity has traditionally been rather loosely connected to reputation management, but

this has changed in the last decade. One example of this is the increasing tendency to establish public oversight and audit units with communications expertise, which may combine instrumental and symbolic features. These units have a tendency to pursue the control of public and private organizations more aggressively, which leads to more pressure on reputation management in both the controlled and the controlling organizations.

Governance capacity may be facilitated by reputation management, meaning that the right use of myths and symbols will portray the prevention and handling of a crisis as a success. Balancing talk and action may be difficult for public leaders, however, and often there is a tendency to over-sell success. This may be enhanced by so-called 'superstitious learning' (March & Olsen, 1975), where the probability of success is exaggerated, while lack of knowledge or changing conditions are under-communicated. This again may give rise to counter-myths and problems of reputation management. So, leaders face the challenge of supporting capacity with the right reputation symbols, but at the same time being careful not to undermine that capacity when conditions change and the gap between talk and action increases.

The literature on the relationship between governance capacity and organizational reputation has mainly been preoccupied with traditional hierarchies (Carpenter, 2001; Maor, 2010; Roberts, 2006), but it is also relevant for the organization of networks, including those involved in crisis management. Network actors may be driven by a desire to protect their reputation by avoiding blame. A study of blame avoidance and reputation in the crisis response network after Hurricane Katarina reveals that network members tend to be concerned about their extra-network organizational reputation, which might enhance blame avoidance strategies when failure occurs (Moynihan 2012). Such behavior might also undermine intra-network relationships. It is therefore

important to understand how crisis communication can be used to protect reputation during a crisis (Coombs, 2007).

Second, successful reputation management – i.e. when an image of a governmental organization is created that is seen as positive by the general public or different stake-holders in the environment – potentially enhances governance capacity and leeway in crisis management. Agencies tend to strive for autonomy and some agencies achieve it through a favorable reputation. Organizations with a positive reputation among social groups are better able to create and maintain autonomy (Carpenter, 2001). However, reputation is also an unstable source of autonomy, as illustrated by the development of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the USA (Roberts, 2006). In a politicized bureaucracy, the reputation of groups critical to fulfilling its public mission can be a potent but also fragile source of autonomy and may be more so if that autonomy is enhanced by law or tasks.

Not only social groups but also professions might play a role in building and maintaining a reputation. If an organization has a positive image, it will gain acceptance for a wider range of actions, and subpar performance will have fewer negative consequences. Therefore, combining talk and symbols on the one hand, and action on the other overall generates more capacity than relying on action alone would (Brunsson, 1989). Nevertheless, as mentioned above, there are a lot of potential problems with reputation management that may affect governance capacity (Wæraas & Maor, 2015). Government organizations may have limited discretion in branding their own organization. They may have problems choosing a consistent image or profile, they may struggle with symbols if they are strongly regulative or if they have unpopular ‘unsolvable’ tasks, or else they may try to be too unique and oversell their performance and competence. These aspects may all limit governance capacity in crisis management.

The relationship between accountability and reputation management

Different types of reputation symbols may be connected with and influenced by the diverse accountability types in a variety of ways. Again political and societal accountability seem to be the most interesting types, and it is therefore not surprising that in many countries the number of employees employed by the government for communication purposes has increased. As shown above, however, political accountability has two dynamic relationships – namely that between government and parliament and that between the political and administrative leaderships. A majority government may find it easier to portray itself as strong vis-a-vis parliament, while a minority government may have more problems with what Wæraas and Byrkjeflot (2012, 193-200) label the ‘consistency problem’, especially when there is a coalition government. There is a consistency problem when the government seeks to communicate what it stands for collectively while single parties push their favorite issues. This is compounded by the ‘politics problem’, meaning that political and administrative leaders may disagree on how to pursue reputation management, either because of real disagreement about the profile to be furthered, or because of general conflicts in their relationship or else because of the simple fact that the government will manage its reputation differently in dealing with the parliament than in dealing with its own administrative apparatus.

As suggested above, scoring high on societal accountability gives government actors more flexibility, including in reputation management. But Wæraas and Byrkjeflot (2012) also mention other potential problems. The ‘consistency problem’ suggests that it may be difficult to put across a consistent message. Especially if the public organization is heterogeneous and different messages are presented to different stakeholders, there is a potential problem of conflict. The ‘charisma

problem' deals with the fact that government organizations often have to deal with complex and not easily solved problems. It is easier to sell programs and policies that have positive and less complicated connotations. The 'uniqueness problem' deals with trying to create an image that may cause internal problems, especially in heterogeneous public organizations. Finally, the 'excellence problem' is about the backlashes and critique that an organization may receive if it tries to oversell its own performance and competence.

The general message is that successful reputation management makes accountability relationships instrumentally easier to handle. Another message is that there is a need for different types of symbols and myths for different types of accountability. Collective symbols are often connected with political accountability, i.e. the government tries to present itself to parliament as serving national goals. Administrative leaders try to cater to collective purposes when they are accountable. The symbols used are internally directed when talking about administrative and managerial accountability. In the case of crisis management this would mean focusing on, for example, whether adequate plans have been made and executed in the correct manner, or it may relate to specific performance indicators in crisis management. The symbols related to professional accountability are more divided between internal and external purposes. One example is food safety, where internal symbols concerning professional quality are combined with external symbols of professional competence in advising people on food and food safety (Christensen & Lodge, 2016). Judicial accountability also has the same divided profile: internally the symbols are about due process while the external symbols concern rule of law and peoples' rights. Symbols connected with societal accountability are often diverse and external, for example when a public organization tries to convince the public as well as specific stake-holders that it has handled a crisis well.

Discussion and conclusion

The main argument in this chapter is related to the dynamic co-evolution of governance capacity, legitimacy, accountability and reputation in crisis management. We have shown the mutual influence between these crucial elements of crisis management, where governance capacity and accountability both influence and are influenced by governance legitimacy and reputation management. Thus we are facing coevolution and mutual affected processes.

The relationship between governance capacity and governance legitimacy is under-researched. Following Suchman (1995), we believe there is a need to examine how governments handle legitimacy in crises using both an instrumental and an institutional approach. Typically during and after a crisis, a main challenge is to maintain and restore trust in the capacity of government to deal with such situations. Without citizens' trust in government bodies there is no legitimacy, and the implementation of societal security policies is likely to fail. In order to ensure this legitimacy, governance capacity needs to be in place. However, governance capacity is not only a question of policy design and efficient implementation by crisis management bodies, but also about citizens' perceptions of the governance apparatus (Rothstein, 1998). The complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty of crises pin-point accountability issues that go beyond traditional instrumental principal-agent relations (Olsen, 2017). Accountability in such situations might be an issue of political communication, and reputation management is often important because the system is exposed and lack of cultural compatibility may hamper changes (Carpenter, 2010; Carpenter & Krause, 2012; Christensen & Lægveid, 2015). From a myth perspective, reputation is about understanding the role of ideas and evolving belief in organizations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Reputation is then about how ideas shape agencies.

In this chapter, we have argued that more governance capacity, especially in the form of “better structures” or technical solutions, will not necessarily lead to better crisis management. Hence, what citizens expect the crisis management apparatus to be able to do, as well as what it actually does, matters (Lodge & Wegrich, 2014). Governance capacity may thus enhance or weaken governance legitimacy, accountability and reputation. Likewise, governance legitimacy, accountability and reputation may strengthen or constrain government capacity. Thus, we have to ask how trust in crisis management institutions as well as their reputation affects crisis management capacity. Not only what crisis management bodies do, but also citizens’ expectations regarding what they should do, matter for governance legitimacy, accountability, and reputation.

Handling the relationships between governance capacity, legitimacy, accountability, and reputation management in unsettled and turbulent situations such as crises is a key challenge. These are frequently mutually affecting processes, resulting in ambiguities and hybrid and complex relationships. We argue that there is a need to go beyond vertical principal-agent approaches and rethink these relationships in a way that resonates with the new reality of modern governance systems in turbulent times (Lægreid, 2014; Ansell, Trondal, & Øgård, 2017). Simply reinstalling hierarchical principal-agent-based relationships is problematic in the current more fluid state (Flinders, 2012). Especially in unexpected, unruly, and unsettled situations, we face mutually dynamic relationships between governance capacity, legitimacy, and accountability and reputation management. The crisis management apparatus is characterized by diversity and interdependencies and there are tensions for which there is no optimal, simple or general solution (Bossong & Hegemann, 2015; Christensen et al., 2016). Mixtures and layering rather than substitution of one arrangement by another is a main trend, which tends to enhance ambiguity, and the relationship between accountability and legitimacy is rather scattered (Jann & Lægreid, 2015).

In such circumstances there is a need for pragmatism (Ansell, 2011) and to analyze how multiple and hybrid relationships interact and change over time. To understand such relationships we need to combine structural/instrumental, cultural/institutional and myth approaches.

The use of symbols and myths is common in the construction of governance capacity and central forms of accountability in crisis management. These are frequently invoked to enhance governance legitimacy and societal horizontal accountability. The development of governance legitimacy may, for example, be influenced by dynamics between cultural and symbolic processes, i.e. when a cultural path is supported by or influenced by symbols of participation of different stake-holders in preparation for or handling of crises. Or else pressure from the environment may be fended off or modified by a combination of cultural norms and symbols, as seen in situations when crisis-induced pressure to merge military and civilian crisis management organizations produces few results (Christensen, Lægreid, & Rykkja, 2015). The symbolic or myth perspective is also central in reputation management. We see it when attempts are made to present crisis management organizations as modern and rational and catering to the concerns of different stakeholders.

When we face turbulent, unpredictable crisis situations it is rather unrealistic to operate with assumptions that posit clear and simple relationships between governance capacity, legitimacy, accountability, and reputation management. Restoring simple one-way relationships is probably not the way forward. We have to accept the increasing complexity of such situations and perhaps consider each situation separately. A main lesson is to start with an analysis of how public organizations actually work in practice in such circumstances, rather than engaging in unrealistic and wishful thinking about how they ought to work. This approach might be less heroic, but hopefully more realistic. The real challenge is to move towards a more responsible crisis

management that incorporates governance capacity, accountability, reputation, responsiveness to citizens' demands and governance legitimacy, so that it can act decisively for the public good (Kettl, 2009).

In working towards this goal, crisis management first of all faces important methodological issues. The research field is dominated by case studies. We know fairly little about how stakeholders react to crises or to the crisis response strategies used to manage crises. Experimental methods might be a way forward (Coombs, 2007). Second, on the empirical side, there is a need to study in more detail the relationship between governance capacity, legitimacy, accountability and reputation in different types of crises and in different countries. Third, on the theoretical side, the administrative system is characterized by mixed order and compound relations, implying difficult dilemmas and trade-offs. We need to take into account that public administration consists of a diverse repertoire of co-existing, overlapping, partly competing and mutually affecting relationships, especially in crisis situations (Olsen 2010). Institutional syncretism might be a way for crisis management to change, in between instrumental design and path dependencies characterized by recombination, refashioning, and repurposing of existing crisis management organizations in an adaptive way (Ansell, Trondal, & Øgård, 2017). In this perspective, achieving resilience after crises is less a question of engineering resilience by reducing complexity and bringing the system back to a pre-crisis equilibrium and more a question of establishing complex and dynamic resilience by absorbing hybridity and complexity.

A possible way to handle and manage unruly and wicked problems (such as crises) might be to adopt a probing strategy whereby feedback obtained via small investigations can form a strategy of response (Ansell, 2017). It is often difficult to anticipate and predict a crisis, and it might call for difficult trade-offs and produce unintended consequences. In such situations it

might be better to allow small-scale experimentation, adaptability and resilience. Unpacking this mixed order and understanding the dynamic relationships between governance capacity, governance legitimacy, accountability and reputation management seems a promising way forward in public administration research on crisis management as well as on reputation management.

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