

THE NARRATIVE CORES OF NEIGHBOURHOOD REPUTATION AS REVEALED BY TEMPORAL DISCOURSES

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ABSTRACT

Neighbourhood reputation is an elusive but much discussed and studied concept that greatly influences people's perceptions of and attitudes towards the residential areas of a city. The temporality related to neighbourhood reputation is a less studied topic. The emergence of a place-based reputation is a complex social, spatial, temporal, and cultural process that is affected by the neighbourhood's residents and visitors, local and social media, and non-residents who are knowledgeable about the area. We based our study of reputation on interviews with focus groups, city officials, and politicians. According to the interview data, neighbourhood reputation is articulated through four temporal discourses: the past, presentation, representation, and the future. Ultimately, underlying these four temporal discourses we found causes for neighbourhood reputation and stigmatisation that we named as narrative cores.

Key words: reputation; neighbourhood; temporality; narrative core; focus groups/expert interviews; Finland

INTRODUCTION

Neighbourhood reputation is an important aspect of a functioning and affluent city (August 2014; Wacquant *et al.* 2014; Rosen 2017; Halliday *et al.* 2020; Junnilainen 2020). Neighbourhoods are described as places where local identities and emotions are strengthened, social relationships are established, and meaningful lives are created (Pais *et al.* 2014). These residential spaces can foster attachment, nostalgia, and a sense of belonging (Colin 2021). Neighbourhoods are historically, socially, economically, and functionally differentiated entities, and images of them are constantly recreated by different observers, residents, and stakeholders across time and space (Jupp 2021). Images and narratives can manifest, for example, as a neighbourhood with

a positive reputation gradually turning into a negative one or vice versa. However, major changes in a neighbourhood's reputation occur slowly.

The implications of such reputations, whether elevating or dispiriting, affect people's perceptions of themselves and their communities, since neighbourhoods position residents as mentally and physically part of a city (Wacquant *et al.* 2014; Waerniers 2017; Baumann & Yacobi 2022; Lemanski 2022). Perceptions and interpretations of the state of a neighbourhood vary depending on the observer, time of visit, and duration of residence in the area. Observations are also influenced by semiotic cues caused by physical structures, cultural standpoints in the act of perception, and social pressures (Scollon & Scollon 2003). A negative neighbourhood

reputation is based on common perceptions of its disorder and inability to cope with that disorder (Sampson 2012; Pais *et al.* 2014). Having inadequate service and transportation infrastructure can also cause a neighbourhood to be excluded from the urban centre and create infrastructural stigma, which underlines the structural causes of urban inequality (Baumann & Yacobi 2022). Moreover, neighbourhood stigma can influence political investment decisions (Baumann & Yacobi 2022; Lemanski 2022). Temporality is an important factor in the formation of neighbourhood reputation (Butler-Warke 2021). Places are constantly changing whilst retaining the historical, physical, and narrative layers of preceding eras; thus, it is essential to apply a temporal perspective when exploring the power of narratives in the emergence of stigma and a bad reputation. Moreover, recognising multiple temporalities within a city implies the recognition of marginalised places and populations. The way residents connect with the past, present, and future, which reveals the formation of individual and collective identities, plays an integral part in that process of recognition (Lombard 2013).

In this article, we study residents' and city officials' perceptions and experiences of neighbourhood reputation. Our findings indicate four types of discourses: the discourse of the past, nostalgia, and history; the discourse of presentation and experiential knowledge; the discourse of representation and second-hand information; and the discourse of the future and anticipation. According to our interpretation, the discourses of presentation and representation indicate the temporal dimension of the present. Furthermore, these four discourses revealed underlying concepts for neighbourhood reputation and stigmatisation that we named as 'narrative cores'.

To date, little attention has been paid to the role played by the different temporalities embedded within narratives in the creation of a place's reputation. One suggestion is that we should move beyond 'slice-through-time investigations' towards the theorisation of place-based stigma that is not temporally fixed (see Butler-Warke 2021). The objective of the current study is to identify the temporal

discourses connected to the perspectives of narratives related to a neighbourhood's reputation. The study answers the following research questions:

1. How are different temporalities identified in discourses related to reputation?
2. In what way do temporality in discourses reveal sources of neighbourhood reputation?

This study contributes to the discussion of neighbourhood reputation and stigma by investigating how such reputation and stigma are created, relayed, and interpreted in local communities and their surroundings. Our study was conducted in Vaasa, Finland, which has a population of about 69,000 (Statistics Finland 2023). The reputational burdens, histories, and characteristics of the two studied neighbourhoods are well-known to people living in the city. Vaasa is an innovative, wealthy, and developing Nordic city, interested in improving these two deprived neighbourhoods.

The remainder of the article is structured as follows. Following the introductory chapter, we explain the theoretical background of the study and introduce the concepts of stigmatised neighbourhoods, narratives, and temporality. Next, we introduce our methodology and analysis of the empirical data drawn from seven Community Urban Planning Lab (CUPL) sessions aimed at neighbourhood residents together with interviews with city officials, politicians, and other key figures in the research context. Thereafter, we present the two neighbourhood case studies, followed by the empirical results according to the temporal discourses of the past, presentation, representation, and future. In the discussion and conclusion section, we answer the research questions and discuss the importance of narrative cores in temporal discourses of neighbourhood reputation in a view of a broader literature.

NEIGHBOURHOOD REPUTATION IN RELATION TO NARRATIVES AND TEMPORALITY

There is an extensive academic discussion of neighbourhood reputation and stigma (e.g. August 2014; Wacquant *et al.* 2014;

Jensen *et al.* 2021; Baumann & Yacobi 2022; Lemanski 2022). A negative reputation can have far-reaching effects on a neighbourhood. A blemish on the reputation of a neighbourhood influences not only the residents but also other people, such as politicians, commercial operators, officials, journalists, and citizens more generally (August 2014; Wacquant *et al.* 2014). In the research literature, these discussions are often embedded within the territorial stigmatisation theory developed by Loïc Wacquant, which combines Goffman's (1964) classic theory of stigma and Bourdieu's (1990) theory of symbolic power (Born 2023). Territorial stigmatisation refers to spaces and places that have become notorious as 'isolated and bounded territories increasingly perceived by both outsiders and insiders as social purgatories' (Born 2023, p. 538; see also Holmes 2022). Moreover, territorial stigmatisation is said to be 'a consequential and injurious form of action through collective representation fastened on place' (Wacquant *et al.* 2014, p. 1278). In addition, stigmatised neighbourhoods often appear homogenous for those who are not living there (Virág & Váradi 2018). Globally, stigmatised neighbourhoods can be somewhat excluded from urban development, and private investment plans can be rejected due to the stigma (Baumann & Yacobi 2022; Lemanski 2022). However, in the European context, there have been several development projects and initiatives aimed at revitalising stigmatised neighbourhoods (e.g. Van Gent *et al.* 2018; Holmes 2022).

Narratives in the creation of reputations – In narratives, a distinction is made between 'us' and 'them' (Junnilainen 2020; Watt 2020; Alvarez & Ruiz-Tagle 2024). Narratives are influential as 'stigmatization is a socially constructed, symbolic representation of a place created and manipulated by external agents, which, once established, becomes decisive for the future of that place and its residents' (Alvarez & Ruiz-Tagle 2024, 1). Language and visibility also carry signs that are indications of myths that shape attitudes and approaches to the world (Rosen 2017; Junnilainen 2020; Alvarez &

Ruiz-Tagle 2024). Visuality, and in a broader sense, sensory experience and feelings, affects the perception of a place image and therefore created narratives (see e.g. May & Lewis 2022; Vanke 2024; Natapov *et al.* 2024). Physical elements and the appearance of a city are important aspects in experiencing and consuming urban space, since the aesthetics and cultural meanings attached to a specific place can have a positive effect (Luo *et al.* 2022). Various participatory art projects can also reduce territorial and place-based stigma by giving new dimensions for experiencing neighbourhoods (Warr *et al.* 2021) and creating narratives about a neighbourhood.

Residents of stigmatised neighbourhoods can implement different strategies in their narratives to deal with reputational issues (August 2014; Wacquant *et al.* 2014; Halliday *et al.* 2020; Jensen *et al.* 2021). Residents might like their neighbourhood despite its negative reputation and thus establish a counternarrative (August 2014; Wallin 2023); they can resist the stigma and possibly blame others; or they can accept the stigma and try to distance themselves from it (Wacquant *et al.* 2014; Virág & Váradi 2018; Halliday *et al.* 2020; Taei *et al.* 2023). Therefore, narratives in a neighbourhood can be contesting and even oppose each other, but they engage in complex interaction (Waerniers 2017; Halliday *et al.* 2020).

Temporality and narratives of reputation

– History and future, in themselves, are built on narratives in which neighbourhood residents construct their individual, territorial, and collective identities through selected events of the past, present, and future (e.g. Lombard 2013). Studying discourses can yield information about the formation and origins of neighbourhood reputation. Ringel (2016) suggests exploring the roles of time in general and how the past and future are played out in the present. According to Ringel (2016), temporality is a contested and contingent social phenomenon. The past, present, and future constitute a continuum that shapes the discourses, identities, and reputation of a place (Lombard 2013; Waerniers 2017). In addition, according to Butler-Warke (2021),

reputation and stigma can change over time, and therefore the temporal perspective is vital for studying reputation.

Experiences of nostalgia for and reflections of the past are common ways of recollecting life in neighbourhoods (e.g. Pastak & Kährrik 2021). Narratives of known incidents, people, buildings, and landmarks are markers and signs constituting a shared meaning of local identities as well as reputation (Scollon & Scollon 2003). Regarding neighbourhoods, narratives can be defined, according to Junnilainen (2020) and Blokland (2009), as historically informed, collective place-making processes that affect the definition of a community through public discourses (Pinkster *et al.* 2020; Niskavaara *et al.* 2023; Alvarez & Ruiz-Tagle 2024).

The immediate acts of perception, social practices, and discussions take place in the present. Reputation is socially constructed representation of a neighbourhood formed by several agents (Alvarez & Ruiz-Tagle 2024). These agents include media, public officials, and academia but also grass-root level everyday interactions. Especially the media are often accused of spreading negative images of certain neighbourhoods (Breek *et al.* 2018; Halliday *et al.* 2020; Jensen *et al.* 2021). However, Breek *et al.* (2018) have demonstrated that social media can be used to build a positive image of a stigmatised neighbourhood. Social media can facilitate active interaction in a neighbourhood and thus can help to build a more inclusive narrative. Novel ideas and events can likewise generate new and attractive narratives (Breek *et al.* 2018; Halliday *et al.* 2020). Even so, positive stories do not necessarily change the negative image of an area, and negative stories can exist alongside positive ones (Halliday *et al.* 2020; Pinkster *et al.* 2020).

The temporal dimension of the future can include narratives of change, even utopias, that may prompt the slow transformation of a neighbourhood and its place identity (Wittmayer *et al.* 2019; Halliday *et al.* 2020; Sergeeva & Winch 2021). Such future discourses were found in our interview data, and they contain plans and visions as well as alternative development paths (Bode & Dietrich 2013; Jarva 2014; Milojević &

Inayatullah 2015; Wittmayer *et al.* 2019). Visionary narratives have the potential to produce the future by maintaining or reshaping a situation (Wittmayer *et al.* 2019; Halliday *et al.* 2020). Similarly, narrating possible alternative futures can help the residents of stigmatised areas promote positive change in their neighbourhoods (Halliday *et al.* 2020; Awuh 2022). For example, regional or local development and social programmes can be means of establishing and fostering positive reputations and thus boost the temporal discourses of the future.

However, not all members of a community will share a common narrative about a neighbourhood (Junnilainen 2020). Depending on the roles of stakeholders, there are different expectations related to urban regeneration (Raco *et al.* 2008). Therefore, temporality can also be used in policy narratives to analyse the present situation or create re-branding for certain areas (Jupp 2021). Negative policy narratives about stigmatised areas can also be utilised as a justification for gentrification or the demolition of a housing block, disregarding the needs of the people (Wacquant *et al.* 2014; Doucet 2020). In addition, diverse temporalities can be linked to power relations, belonging, and the spatial formation of a neighbourhood (Drozdowski & Webster 2021; Jupp 2021).

DATA AND METHODS

Data for the study were collected during autumn 2020 and spring 2021. Data collection was related to a research project that aimed to study the social sustainability in two neighbourhoods in Vaasa. Two collection methods were used. First, we held seven CUPL sessions for separate groups of informants who were representatives and residents of the neighbourhoods. Second, we conducted 19 semi-structured interviews with city officials, politicians, and other key players in the city.

In the CUPL sessions, informants were free to explain their views on the development of their neighbourhoods along with their hopes and future needs. The discussion topics covered in the CUPL sessions were (1) places, (2) communality, (3) housing, and (4) mobility.

The CUPL interviewees are coded C1–C7. Reputation emerged unprompted as one of the main cross-sectional themes related to all important discussion topics during the sessions. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the CUPL sessions had to be held remotely via Microsoft Teams. The remote connection posed a challenge to the research, but we were able to involve participants from all the targeted groups.

In the interviews with city officials, politicians, and other key players, we used an interview guide. The three main themes were relationships with the neighbourhood, expectations about development work, and inclusion and social innovation. Eighteen interviews were conducted remotely via Zoom or telephone, and one was conducted face-to-face. Individual interviews are coded I1–I19. We used the qualitative data analysis programme NVivo to engage with the data. We created a framework for the analysis by prereading the data with the deductive idea of place-based reputation. Then, we analysed the interview data more carefully and observed that notions of reputation contain clearly three temporal dimensions; the past, the present, and the future. From here, we delineated discourses of the past, presentation, representation, and future to help us interpret the interview data through temporalities. According to our interpretation, the temporal dimension of the present includes two different discourses. The first discourse is related to presentation that refers to individual experiential knowledge of a neighbourhood. It shares individual and instant experiences of a place. The second discourse is related to stories about a neighbourhood and therefore, the temporal discourse of representation includes second-hand knowledge and rumours. In the next phase, after several iterations, we created the concept of the narrative core, that combines discourses with the idea of more constant neighbourhood reputations.

THE CASE STUDY NEIGHBOURHOODS

This study focuses on two neighbourhoods – Ristinummi and Olympiakortteli – in the city

of Vaasa. The city administration is eager to be involved in the latest development initiatives and to create innovations; however, these areas of the city have not maintained the same pace of development as other neighbourhoods in Vaasa. This study is interested in investigating these less desirable neighbourhoods in the context of a city that aims towards development. Although the two neighbourhoods have divergent historical and planning backgrounds, they share similar challenges, especially stigmatisation. Moreover, Ristinummi and Olympiakortteli have higher levels of unemployment and more immigrant residents than the average within the city and Vaasa Region. Both neighbourhoods contain social housing.

The Ristinummi area is a typical Finnish satellite neighbourhood that was built in the mid-1970s based on modernist urban planning and ideals. It is located about 7 km from the city centre. A severe recession in the early 1990s had a negative impact on the general well-being of the community and neighbourhood, whose demographic composition was changed by an increasing concentration of immigrants in the following decades. Given that immigration was relatively low in Finland into the 1990s, this development led to the emergence of stigmatisation and a racist attitude towards the neighbourhood (Harris *et al.* 2020).

The second case study concerns the Olympiakortteli quarter, which was built in the mid-1990s. This neighbourhood differs from Ristinummi, being a densely built-up area near the city centre that consists of one large block of various high-rise buildings in colourful pastel hues. Olympiakortteli was an attempt to create a more diverse urban environment in Vaasa. However, according to interviewees, it was not entirely successful, as the closed block structure is thought to isolate the neighbourhood both socially and functionally from the rest of the city, thus strengthening the storylines of its bad reputation. The planning of Olympiakortteli was already a subject of debate in the local media at an early stage of the project.

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

A glorious history with tragic events as landmarks in the forming of reputations – Inter-

view data revealed that the discourse of the past, nostalgia, and history was often strongly marked by fond memories of the time the neighbourhoods, especially Ristinummi, were founded. In 1975, a housing exhibition was organised in Ristinummi, which was a major event that brought new people to the city: 'Ristinummi was elegant in the '70s. I remember then, when I was a little boy, I visited the housing exhibition in Ristinummi' (I19).

During the 1970s and 1980s, there was a strong community spirit in Ristinummi as new residents and young families moved to blocks of flats from the countryside because of the economic restructuring of society. Ristinummi was a working-class neighbourhood, and most of the people living there had similar life circumstances, that is, new jobs in industry and young families. Interviewees' memories of that time were extremely positive: 'back then, in the '80s, the sense of community was strong, and all kinds of volleyball tournaments and village parties were organised' (C7). Nevertheless, the concentration of working-class people in the neighbourhood led to a recognisable reputation emerging in the 1980s. As one interviewee stated: 'we moved then [1986] to Ristinummi, and people were asking us, 'Why did you move there? It has nothing but drunkards and workers!' (I17).

However, it was in the 1990s that the negative reputation of Ristinummi became entrenched, largely due to the economic depression of the early 1990s that shook Finnish society. As one respondent explained: 'then it changed. There were quarrels and other [bad] things in some places [in Ristinummi]' (I8). One of the CUPL participants explained several sad events in detail:

Well, mainly in the '90s, a lot happened here. There was a dynamite explosion in the house next to our house, and one or two people died there. One woman was shot with a shotgun in Kappelinmäki [an address in Ristinummi]. There were stabbings ... and police were assaulted. (C7)

Such events inevitably deepened the stigma of the neighbourhood. Individual occurrences, such as the above-mentioned dynamite explosion, affected the neighbourhood's

reputation. Narratives formed by single events had the power to shape the reputation of the neighbourhood.

Olympiakortteli was a newly built development in the 1990s, and there were high hopes for the block: 'it won some architecture competition because it was planned so well and would be a good living environment' (I7). However, the type of population immediately began to influence the reputation of the block. One interviewee stated: 'the image that was building up was that there were lots of students and immigrants ...and there was a lot going on.' (I3). Similarly, another interviewee who lived in Olympiakortteli in his youth, reminisced: 'in my youth, people were saying that you could follow the ammunition shells and blood trails to find your way there [to Olympiakortteli]. This was a cynical joke back then' (I14).

The discourses of the past built-up narratives of a glorious history in Ristinummi, which interviewees saw through the lens of nostalgia. However, tragic events contributed to the neighbourhood's stigmatisation, whilst some long-term residents and especially young people saw elements to be proud of.

Visuality and direct experience in building the reputation of a neighbourhood – Interview data also demonstrated that the discourse of presentation applied to perceptions of the neighbourhood that were born by first-hand experience and subjective impressions. Residents from Ristinummi found the debate about the reputation of their neighbourhood unfair. 'One can, of course, say that all the people in Ristinummi are happier with the place than those who do not live there' (C1).

The respondents valued Ristinummi's sports facilities and green spaces. The nearby golf course and skate park could attract other people to the area, thereby improving the neighbourhood's reputation in the eyes of residents from elsewhere: 'there is a skate park there that seems to be popular with children and young people alike. Then there is the big golf course, which is obviously a good national level course' (I1).

The perceived visual environment is an important factor in reputation formation. Respondents

felt that Ristinummi and Olympiakortteli differed in terms of general maintenance and cleanliness from other neighbourhoods in Vaasa. This uneven development across neighbourhoods within the city area could lead to a lack of community spirit and trust. Ristinummi, in particular, seemed to be excluded from the development of the rest of the city, aligning with Jupp's (2021) view of the importance of implementing policy solutions based on residents' experiences and perceptions: 'everything here is worn out; our pavements, bus stops ... The general look is so uncared and different from the rest of Vaasa' (C7).

The desire for an attractive environment was a theme that united the neighbourhoods. In the following quote, the respondent distinguished the neighbourhood from more affluent neighbourhoods in the city area: 'when you enter Olympiakortteli, you get the impression of dirt. Children's playgrounds and other things are dirty, old stairwells are full of graffiti, and lifts are just ruined. I now consider it almost art, but not everyone agrees' (C6).

Residents had experiences that reinforced potential prejudices. Experiences of places are principally subjective, but how outsiders and visitors, in particular, articulate and share their place experiences contributes to the formation of a reputation. One negative experience of a neighbourhood can define the image of the place for a long time: 'it is partly through that experience that the reputation, so to speak, is earned. For example, when I went to the dentist there, there was a janitor wearing a bullet-proof vest' (C4).

Reputation as formed by the media and storytelling – The discourse of representation concerns how neighbourhoods are interpreted through second- or third-hand information. Residents living elsewhere have their own views of neighbourhoods that do not always accord with those held by the people who actually live in the areas. Beliefs about neighbourhoods are reshaped in social media or local newspapers: 'when a neighbourhood gains a certain reputation, it is terribly difficult to get rid of. Losing the reputation is easy, but restoring it is extremely difficult. Opinions are deeply rooted in people' (I6).

The reputation of a neighbourhood is directly connected to the discourse of representation, which addresses reproduced and narrated experiences. Some stories may be intentionally or unintentionally exaggerated: 'everyone probably has an image, but that image is coloured by second-, third-, or more-hand information, which may not be in any way fact-based. A wide variety of stories are constructed, and those stories always take a particular form, depending on who spreads them' (I9).

Collective mindscapes shape perceptions and observations concerning a neighbourhood's physical landscape. Reproduced discourses are adapted and relayed even if people do not necessarily have personal experiences of the neighbourhood. Therefore, expressions in this discourse can be prejudiced, political, or even racist. A city official shared their view of how townspeople experience Ristinummi: 'many people think that the area is just getting worse, or it is static, and nothing is happening there. [They think] that it is disadvantaged because of all these hobos, junkies, and other disreputable characters' (I5).

The importance of aesthetics was emphasised by people living outside the neighbourhood. This was not so much a question of the environment's cleanliness but rather the symbolic meanings behind its visual markers: 'there are some apartment buildings in the Olympiakortteli. [...] they don't look particularly good to passers-by, those houses. But it's just that both areas have a lot of problems, and yes: I feel that every Vaasa resident knows it' (C5).

The role of local newspapers and social media in shaping the reputations of neighbourhoods is significant, as highlighted in the data on many occasions: 'the press and media generally talk about different neighbourhoods in Vaasa, and when something happens in other residential areas, it happens in Vaasa, and when something happens in Ristinummi, it happens just in Ristinummi' (I8).

Novel plans reflect positively on neighbourhoods' reputations – The interview data also revealed that the discourse of the future included development plans, visions, and hopes alongside worries and possibilities. All the participants thought that, despite

the stigma, both neighbourhoods had the potential to develop better reputations in the future; doing so would simply require some innovative planning and action towards change: 'we have a good opportunity to do this work and build a better reputation for Ristinummi – build a future for this place' (C1).

Several (uncertain) plans generated positive visions for Ristinummi. A discussion took place about industrial areas developing nearby, which were perceived as having the potential to give Ristinummi new residents a new boost: 'probably, in the future, the housing in this neighbourhood will be influenced by the development of the industrial area on the east side of the airport. Something like a battery industry may be set up, which has been discussed a lot, but there may be other options' (C1). Various interviewees were convinced that this kind of development, which offered knock-on possibilities, would take place in the Ristinummi and Olympiakortteli areas. These narratives arose from the assumption that the proximity of progress would automatically spill over into other neighbourhoods in a beneficial way: 'I am really convinced that, sooner or later, we will gain new jobs in the battery industry' (I12).

Despite these progressive visions, residents expressed worries about the near future. Services are already declining in Ristinummi, and a new plan to centralise all the health services in the hospital area of the city centre was seen as a setback: 'we are a bit worried about the centralisation of the health-care centre' (C1).

Residents with an immigrant background mostly concentrated on expressing their hopes for improvements in the near future. These stories reflected various expectations, such as the renovation of houses and children's playgrounds and making the surrounding areas cleaner. Residents of Olympiakortteli wished for shared places to spend time and socialise with other residents: 'well, the basketball court would be an amazing place to organise a few common village parties, gatherings, or yard sales. Yes, there is potential!' (C6). Another innovative idea for the future was to hire an artist in every neighbourhood to brighten the lives of the

residents. The artist could do anything that came to mind, 'and it wouldn't even cost much!' (I4).

The respondents made frequent mentions of an existing proposal for a new development plan in the Ristinummi area that most thought would be a good start for the improvement, and in some parts, rebuilding of the area. Nearby Olympiakortteli also had a new plan for a mixed-use block, named Wasa Station, that was mentioned several times as a means to increase the future potential of Olympiakortteli. Although it is not certain that these plans will be implemented, they are examples of the neighbourhoods' wider connection to the city's development projects.

TEMPORALITIES REVEALING THE NARRATIVE CORES OF REPUTATION

Four temporal discourses emerged from the interview data related to neighbourhood reputation. The discourse of the past emphasised nostalgia for a past that had been disrupted by various tragic events during the years of recession. The discourse of presentation described visual and direct experiences of deteriorating circumstances but also positive feelings towards the neighbourhoods and the green spaces surrounding them. In both neighbourhoods, the residents considered the negative reputations to be undeserved, which seems to be a common issue worldwide (Jensen *et al.* 2021; Tai *et al.* 2023; Wallin 2023; Alvarez & Ruiz-Tagle 2024).

In the discourse of representation, the negative reputation was exaggerated, with local media coverage and various social media channels playing a significant role in fuelling it (Breek *et al.* 2018; Jensen *et al.* 2021). The counternarratives of the residents included the 'green neighbourhood' identity that has been recognised in other studies (Wallin 2023). Dirty stairwells and graffiti in the playground can reinforce a negative image that is connected to the discourses of both presentation and representation, which involve speech or text formed through second- and third-hand knowledge. These observations emphasise the importance of visibility, sensory experience and emotions in the formation of place attachment

and the reputation of a neighbourhood and the city in general (see e.g. May & Lewis 2022; Vanke 2024; Natapov *et al.* 2024).

Lastly, the discourse of the future expressed hope for change in the neighbourhood. Place-based reputation accumulates and affects the city's economy, in turn reducing its willingness to invest in neighbourhoods with negative reputations; however, industrial investments and urban development projects in surrounding areas send out positive signals and provide grounds for reputational shifts (Wittmayer *et al.* 2019; Halliday *et al.* 2020; Sergeeva & Winch 2021).

All four temporal discourses can exist at the same time in public discussion and policies concerning neighbourhoods. However, we noticed that reputations are maintained due to certain permeating themes hidden in temporal discourses. After analysis, we created the concept of the narrative core to describe a shared theoretical level combining discourses with the idea of more constant neighbourhood reputations. The narrative core becomes perceptible through temporal discourses in various lingual practices. The narrative core itself is more time-resistant than the temporal discourses that reveal it. In exploring the four temporal discourses, we found five narrative cores: (1) nostalgia: nostalgia for the time at which the neighbourhood communities emerged, (2) incidents: single well-known incidents as symbols of reputation, (3) progress: neighbourhoods joining in with the development of surrounding areas, (4) stance: purposeful narrating and the misguided outsider's gaze, and (5) territory: reputational space as a source of identity.

Narrative cores explain how a neighbourhood reputation is created, renewed, and recycled through time-resistant themes. Applied to the narrative core of nostalgia, they show how everything used to be better in the communities of the past. Within the narrative core of incidents, locations, and events are inseparable as reasons and causes linked to the site and its stigmatisation. In the narrative core of progress, expectations are supported by the anticipation manifested in stories related to construction work, technological improvements, or regional planning. The narrative core of stance means that

those living outside can influence the perceptions and beliefs of the neighbourhood through their opinions. Stance also concerns power and racist stories connected to neighbourhoods. The narrative core of territory challenges the idea of community itself: a community does not necessarily have unambiguous values in a location or site shared by residents but can be a nexus for many kinds of identities, activities, and stories (Niskavaara *et al.* 2023). These five narrative cores (Table 1) can contain features from different temporal discourses simultaneously.

The narrative core is a constant and time-resistant theme on which narratives of incidents, stories, and anecdotes are connected. It is a conceptual and theoretical explanation of everyday neighbourhood tales about local life and a reason for the place-based reputation. There can be several narrative cores acting as underlying intersections for temporal discourses as we found out whilst analysing the research data. Unlike the more flexible stories, a new narrative core emerges through a slow and self-directed socio-spatial process, and in most cases, cannot be guided purposely or in a planned manner. An extended period of time or major changes in the development of a neighbourhood are needed to alter narrative cores. A major change in the case of Ristinummi was the occurrence of several negative events (for example, a dynamite explosion in an apartment building) in the 1990s that contributed to the creation of a narrative core of incidents.

Figure 1 illustrates how the narrative core is revealed through four temporal discourses. Narrative cores are sources for multiple stories and anecdotes that build the reputation of a neighbourhood.

In Figure 1, the inner sphere of place-based reputation brings together the discourses of presentation and representation. The discourse of presentation encapsulated moments in which the interviewees spoke about something that they themselves had sensed and experienced or that had otherwise been factually observed in a location. The discourse of representation and second-hand information concerned experiences that had been reproduced and relayed by the media, including rumours, promotional materials, or casual talk made

Table 1. *Five narrative cores formed through four temporal discourses*

Narrative core	Temporal discourses	Importance for reputation
(1) Nostalgia	Nostalgia for the 'genius loci' linked especially to the early days of the neighbourhood. The discourse of the past dominates, and on many occasions, is used to replace the present	Strengthens the neighbourhood's sense of belonging and status as part of the city. Attachment to nostalgia and history alone can hinder the development of a neighbourhood
(2) Incidents	Singular, usually negative, event that lives in the collective memory for a long time, such as accidents and crimes in a neighbourhood. Incidental narratives refer mainly to the discourses of the past and representation	May define the general reputational stigma of a neighbourhood for decades to come. Remembered mostly in the context of a specific location
(3) Progress	Links to ongoing or planned major projects near or in the neighbourhood. Progress as a general theme is revealed in the discourses of future and presentation	Positive prospects of various construction and development projects can shift a reputation towards a more positive direction. Relying solely on uncertain future development plans can cripple neighbourhood development in the present
(4) Stance	Usually a negative, sometimes even a racist, interpretation of and way of talking about a neighbourhood from an outsider's perspective. Stance is connected to the discourse of representation	Those living outside can influence the perceptions and beliefs of the neighbourhood through their opinions. Reputation lives in people's speech and writing, where it cannot be controlled
(5) Territory	Territorial mindset strengthens the social cohesion of the neighbourhood and enables residents to claim their own living space. This narrative core mainly refers to the discourse of presentation	Roughness or greenness can become a resource for the neighbourhood. However, not all residents in the neighbourhood share the same sources of identity. Reputation builds the community spirit and highlights who is in and who is out of place

publicly available. The outer sphere of temporal awareness (or lack of it) contains clearly delineated past and future aspects, and it feeds the expectations for the inner sphere. The past and future discourses manifest themselves by connections to the place-based reputation. The discourse of the past was recognised in those cases where the speakers drew on memories or referred to historical or nostalgic aspects of the neighbourhoods. The discourse of the future covered speech about speculative or debatable subjects that might occur and thus open future possibilities for neighbourhoods. Many contradictory and even subjective narratives could have been discovered; however, we were more

interested in the logic behind the contesting discourses that reveal the five universal core themes that explain a fixed reputation and the myths behind them in neighbourhoods.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study set out to investigate the role of temporality in the creation of a neighbourhood's reputation. We have explained how four temporal discourses (Figure 1) play a vital role in the formation of five narrative cores as sources of place-based reputations (Table 1). This study found that the

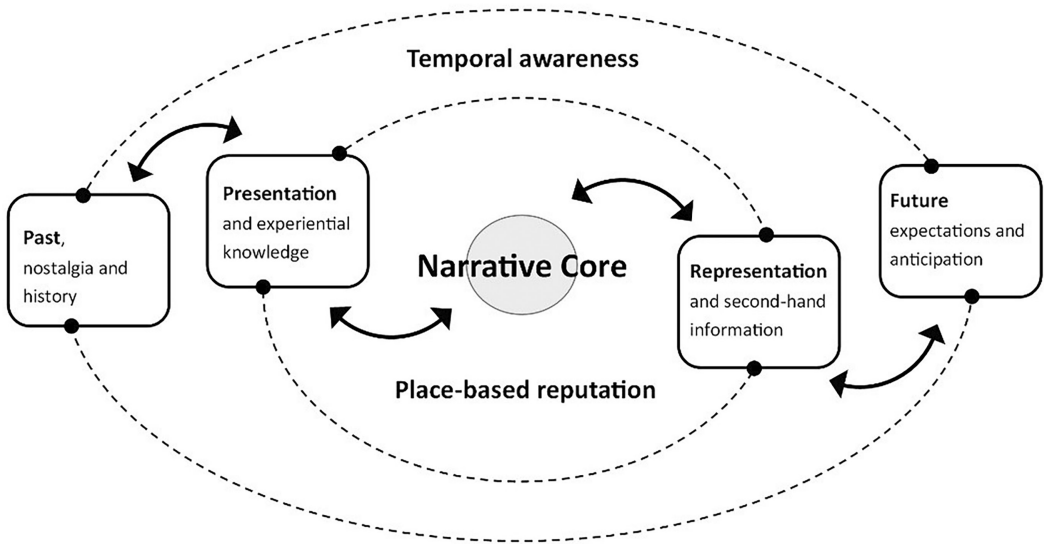


Figure 1. *The narrative core of neighbourhood reputation and temporal discourses.*

emergence of a neighbourhood reputation is a complex process that takes shape over time and space through various, sometimes contesting, narratives. This finding is consistent with that of Butler-Warke (2021), who states that stigma can vary over time and that temporality is therefore an important part of neighbourhood reputation. However, we found that certain reasons can explain a ‘sticky’ neighbourhood reputation, and that in some cases, these reasons seem to be time-resistant.

The first research question concerned how temporalities are identified in discourses related to reputation. The results show that there were clearly different temporalities in the discourses expressed in our interview sessions and that reputation altered over time but that some reputational themes were almost unchangeable or hard to change. All the discourses covered by the interviewees were based on their temporal awareness, which framed the idea of place-based reputation. The past, presentation, representation, and future were all means of constructing a reputation from different but mutually influencing perspectives. A few notable negative events can blemish the reputation of an entire neighbourhood and create stories that live for generations. Such negative stories continue to live alongside new positive changes and therefore maintain a general

negative reputation that is hard to change (Halliday *et al.* 2020; Pinkster *et al.* 2020; Butler-Warke 2021; Alvarez & Ruiz-Tagle 2024).

The second research question concerned the way temporality in discourses reveal the sources of neighbourhood reputations. The results show that storytelling is grounded in different modes of temporal distortion; thus, temporality is key to understanding the sources of reputations. Combining the concepts of time, place, narrative, and reputation provides us with a robust theoretical tool to identify the emergence of stigma. It is also vital to understand the intersections between the past, presentation, representation, and future (Lombard 2013; Ringel 2016; Butler-Warke 2021). Yet, it is important to acknowledge that people have agency to change the discourses about and future of a neighbourhood (Wittmayer *et al.* 2019; Butler-Warke 2021; Sergeeva & Winch 2021). Although stories change over time and space, we found that the reputational storylines connected to more time-resistant narrative cores can be difficult and slow to change. These results reflect those of Butler-Warke (2021), who categorised stigma as core and event stigma, with the core stigma being more ‘sticky’.

We constructed narrative cores based on our research data from Ristinummi and Olympiakortteli, and these cores were recognised as major reasons for the

neighbourhoods' reputational statuses. Nostalgia, incidents, progress, stance, and territory emphasise the process whereby a neighbourhood generates its own reputation through certain narrative cores that are a driving force for storylines, story fragments, and myths that amplify and contest each other (Wacquant *et al.* 2014; Pinkster *et al.* 2020; Jupp 2021; Baumann & Yacobi 2022; Lemanski 2022). Identifying narrative cores as part of neighbourhood development and policy decision-making processes helps planners and city developers recognise problematic reputational issues and their root causes. Narrative cores can also be approached as themes or depoliticised speech (Pinkster *et al.* 2020; Butler-Warke 2021; Alvarez & Ruiz-Tagle 2024) through which the development of neighbourhoods and identification of problems become easier for decision-makers and residents.

Reputation is built through relationships between neighbourhood residents, those living elsewhere in the city, and other actors who have the power to decide and influence what happens in the neighbourhood, such as politicians, the local media, and city officials. This finding broadly supports the work of other studies in this area linking the stickiness of stigma with power relations (Pinkster *et al.* 2020; Alvarez & Ruiz-Tagle 2024). The research indicates that neighbourhood reputation is renewed and recycled through stories that can be explained by narrative cores. Lack of temporal awareness also maintains and reproduces a bad reputation. Further research may explore, for example, how temporal awareness can influence the narrative cores and reputation of a neighbourhood.

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