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Dysfunctional Rules in Organizations: The Mediating Role of Organizational Dehumanization in the Relationship Between Red Tape and Employees' Outcomes

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Abstract

This research investigates the extent to which employees facing unnecessary, ineffective, and burdensome rules (i.e., red tape) feel dehumanized by their organization, and examines the consequences of such a relationship for both employees and organizations. First, a cross-sectional study ($N=374$) shows that red tape is positively related to organizational dehumanization which, in turn, negatively influences employees' well-being (decreased job satisfaction and increased psychosomatic strains) and attitudes (decreased affective commitment and increased turnover intentions). Going one step further, a second, experimental study manipulating red tape ($N=197$) indicates that red tape has a positive causal effect on organizational dehumanization, hence decreasing job satisfaction and affective commitment, and increasing turnover intentions. Finally, a third, cross-sectional study ($N=479$) replicates these findings and shows that these links do not differ across the public and private sectors. Directions for future research and practical implications are discussed.

Keywords: organizational dehumanization, red tape, dysfunctional organizational rules, organizational sector, psychosomatic strains

Dysfunctional rules in organizations: The mediating role of organizational dehumanization in the relationship between red tape and employees' outcomes

These last years, the literature in organizational psychology and management has begun to devote increased attention to the construct of organizational dehumanization (OD), defined as the employee's perception of being treated as a tool or an object by their organization (e.g., Caesens et al., 2017). Such an interest may be explained by the common nature of the phenomenon (Baldissarri et al., 2017, 2022; Bell & Khoury, 2011) as well as by the negative implications it holds for employees (e.g., decreased job satisfaction) and organizations (e.g., decreased performance; see Brison et al., 2022 for an overview). Given its prevalence and harmful consequences, it is of utmost importance for researchers and practitioners to better understand the core determinants of OD.

Echoing Weber's (1947/2012) work on bureaucracy, scholars recently suggested that perceptions of OD "are based on the general policies and practices that the organization implemented" (Caesens et al., 2019, p.711) and may be induced by formal bureaucratic rules and procedures (Bell & Khoury, 2011; Brison et al., 2022; Caesens et al., 2017). Yet, the influence of dysfunctional organizational rules on OD remains underexplored. Filling this gap, the present research examines whether red tape, defined as unnecessary, ineffective, and burdensome organizational rules (Borry, 2016), is an important driver of employees' perceptions of being dehumanized by their organization.

Across three studies (two field studies and one experimental study), this research pursues a threefold objective. First, it examines for the first time the relationship between red tape and OD. As these two constructs have never been studied in a single integrative model, we follow Spector's (2019) recommendations. Specifically, we first analyze the extent to which they are positively correlated (Study 1) and then examine their causal relationship (Study 2; experimental

design). The second objective is to investigate the consequences of the red tape–OD relationship on employees’ well-being (i.e., job satisfaction and psychosomatic strains) and attitudes (i.e., affective commitment and turnover intentions) while controlling for several variables that are known to influence OD (Study 3). In other words, the mediating role of OD in the relationships between red tape and employees’ well-being and attitudes is examined. Lastly, this research aims at investigating whether the effects of red tape on the aforementioned outcomes through OD differ across the public and private sectors (Study 3). The theoretical model is depicted in Figure 1.

[Figure 1]

By doing so, this research makes several contributions. First, by exploring the relationship between red tape and OD, it provides a direct response to the recent call of scholars (e.g., Caesens et al., 2019) who stressed the importance to identify the antecedents of OD to contribute to theory development. Second, by conceptualizing OD as a mediator explaining the negative consequences of red tape, this research broadens the red tape literature (Blom et al., 2020; Bozeman & Feeney, 2011; George et al., 2020) and provides new insights into the – understudied – psychological mechanisms underpinning the pathological nature of red tape (Kaufmann & Tummers, 2017; Quratulain & Khan, 2015). Finally, by focusing on red tape, and on whether its detrimental effects differ across organizational sectors, this research has important implications for practitioners and policymakers interested in evidence-based management. Doing so is also critical with regards to theory as several scholars urged for an empirical investigation of the factors moderating the negative consequences of red tape (Blom et al., 2020; George et al., 2020).

The relationship between red tape and organizational dehumanization

The concept of dehumanization was first introduced within the social psychology literature and refers to the denial of one’s human characteristics (Haslam, 2006). Specifically,

Haslam (2006) proposed a dual model that distinguishes between two forms of dehumanization, namely the animalistic and mechanistic form. The former occurs when people are denied characteristics that separate them from animals, while the latter arises when individuals are denied attributes that distinguish them from an object or a machine. Even though the two forms can exist in organizational settings, mechanistic dehumanization has been argued to be more likely to occur (Bell & Khoury, 2011). Accordingly, based on the concept of mechanistic dehumanization, OD has been defined as “the experience of an employee who feels objectified by his or her organization, denied personal subjectivity, and made to feel like a tool or instrument for the organization’s ends” (Bell & Khoury, 2011, p.168). Put differently, OD arises when employees perceive that their organization denies the characteristics that separate them from an object or a machine and treats them as interchangeable, fungible, and passive tools (Bell & Khoury, 2011; Caesens et al., 2017). This view of employees as mere instruments, rather than full human beings, also resonates with the concept of work objectification in which employees are deprived of their humanness, subjectivity, and feelings (Andrighetto et al., 2016; Baldissarri et al., 2017, 2022).

Empirical work demonstrated that such perceptions of being treated as a tool or an instrument entail negative consequences for both employees (e.g., decreased job satisfaction) and organizations (e.g., decreased performance; see Baldissarri et al., 2022 and Brison et al., 2022 for an overview). Given these adverse effects, a body of research has started to identify the predictors of OD. Particularly, factors related to the organization (i.e., organizational culture, perceived organizational support, and procedural justice; Auzoult & Personnaz, 2016; Bell & Khoury, 2016; Caesens et al., 2017), the supervisor (i.e., abusive supervision and leader–member exchange; Caesens et al., 2019; Sainz & Baldissarri, 2021; Stinglhamber et al., 2021), the work environment (i.e., office designs; Taskin et al., 2019), and the job itself (i.e., job autonomy and

meaningfulness, repetitiveness of movements, fragmentation of activities, dependence to the machine; Andrighetto et al., 2017; Baldissarri et al., 2017; Caesens et al., 2019) were found to influence perceptions of OD. Surprisingly, although the dehumanizing potential of organizational rules was discussed several decades ago (e.g., Weber, 1947/2012), little is known about the impact of dysfunctional organizational rules on the perception of being dehumanized by one's organization. Accordingly, this research proposes to examine, for the first time, the relationship between red tape and OD.

The term "red tape" dates back to the 16th century and refers to the English practice of tying official documents with a red-colored tape (Bozeman & Feeney, 2011). Nowadays, the term refers to a negative characteristic of bureaucracy and describes dysfunctional organizational rules (Bozeman, 2000; Bozeman & Feeney, 2011). Specifically, red tape is defined as formal organizational rules, regulations and procedures that are perceived as unnecessary, ineffective, and burdensome by an employee (Borri, 2016). It is thus a subjective phenomenon (i.e., a perception) that depends on one's values, experiences, and goals and it arises either when the rule is implemented (i.e., the rule is dysfunctional from the beginning) or after its implementation (i.e., the rule was once functional but later turned into red tape; Bozeman, 2000; Bozeman & Feeney, 2011). A central tenet of red tape theory is that it is an organizational pathology that is necessarily bad in nature and that nothing good can come out of it (Bozeman, 2000). Supporting this pathological view of red tape, empirical work showed that red tape is deleterious for both employees (e.g., negatively related to job satisfaction; Blom et al., 2020) and organizations (e.g., negatively related to performance; George et al., 2020).

The idea that organizational rules may induce feelings of dehumanization may be traced back to Weber's (1947/2012) study of bureaucracy. Even if Weber conceived bureaucracy as an ideal type seeking to increase organizational efficiency, he also acknowledged its dehumanizing

side (Lounsbury & Carberry, 2005). Specifically, he claimed that bureaucracy may become an “iron cage”, a rigid structure where workers are dehumanized and made subservient to dysfunctional organizational rules (e.g., red tape) that are implemented “without regards for persons” (Weber, 1978, p.975). In line with this, several scholars noted that red tape induces a lack of control and discretion in employees’ work, restrains them in their choices, and impedes them from applying their skills and knowledge (Blom et al., 2020; George et al., 2020; Kaufman, 1977; Shim et al., 2017). When facing red tape, employees are denied their natural desires for self-expression and growth (Baldwin, 1990) and might consider that their work becomes a sort of “machine-like activity” where they are deprived of any ability to influence, make decisions, or take initiatives. This might lead to the feeling that they must mechanically follow rigid and meaningless rules without being able to break away from them (Fucks & Dien, 2013).

Importantly, Caesens et al. (2019) recently stated that OD perceptions “are based on the general policies and practices that the organization implemented” (p.711). Indeed, as organizational rules represent the organization and are considered as its way to communicate (March et al., 2000), employees may attribute the dehumanizing experience of red tape to the whole organization. By implementing and enforcing unnecessary, ineffective and burdensome rules, organizations convey to employees that they consider them as mere tools whose only role consists in mechanically applying dysfunctional rules rather than “do[ing] the thinking” (Osborne & Pasterik, 1997, p.17).

In line with this, we hypothesize that red tape is positively related to OD (H1a) and, more particularly, that red tape has a positive causal effect on OD (H1b).

The mediating role of organizational dehumanization in the relationships between red tape and outcomes

Both red tape and OD are negative organizational phenomena that are deleterious for employees and organizations (Brison et al., 2022; George et al., 2020). On the one hand, red tape has been described as a negative job demand that frustrates employees, creates a misfit between their characteristics and the organization's, and thwarts their personal goals (Quratulain & Khan, 2015). Based on this, scholars highlighted a wide range of undesirable consequences, including emotional exhaustion, job dissatisfaction, low organizational commitment, turnover intentions, withdrawal behaviors, low innovation, and low performance (Blom et al., 2020; George et al., 2020). The mechanisms explaining these adverse effects remain however understudied (Kaufmann & Tummers, 2017; Quratulain & Khan, 2015).

On the other hand, because OD thwarts the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Lagios et al., 2022), empirical work showed that it negatively affects employees' well-being (e.g., decreased job satisfaction and increased emotional exhaustion and psychosomatic strains) and attitudes (e.g., decreased affective commitment and increased turnover intentions; Caesens et al., 2017, 2019; Lagios et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2021, 2022; Sainz & Baldissarri, 2021). Moreover, as it diminishes employees and motivates them to dissociate from the organization (Bell & Khoury, 2011), OD has been found to have a negative influence on work behaviors (e.g., decreased performance and voice behaviors; Stinglhamber et al., 2021; Taskin et al., 2019).

In line with this, and consistent with the first hypothesis, we posit that OD mediates the relationships between red tape and employees' well-being (i.e., decreased job satisfaction [H2a] and increased psychosomatic strains [H2b]) and attitudes (i.e., decreased affective commitment [H2c] and increased turnover intentions [H2d]).

The relationships between red tape and the outcomes through organizational dehumanization across organizational sectors

Even though empirical work gathered considerable evidence regarding the pathological nature of red tape (Blom, 2020; George et al., 2020), it is currently unclear whether its detrimental consequences are similar across organizational contexts (i.e., public or private sector). In line with this, George et al. (2020) recently noted in their meta-analysis that “one of the most important research avenues for future red tape work centers on assessing its impact in different sectors” (p.647).

While not directly related to the public–private sector distinction, organization theorists have acknowledged for a long time that the effects of organizational rules are context-dependent. For instance, through a qualitative analysis conducted among police officers, Manning (1977) demonstrated that the same rule can lead to different outcomes depending on the social context in which it is implemented. Similarly, Dehart-Davis (2017) argued that the way employees respond to organizational rules is “based on an assessment of context” (p.81) and Bozeman and Scott (1996) noted that the effects of organizational rules “depend heavily upon organizational context” (p.6). In sum, based on these studies, one may expect the negative consequences of red tape to vary across organizational sectors.

More precisely, it could be expected that the effects of red tape on OD and the subsequent outcomes would be weaker in public organizations than in private ones. This stems from the fact that red tape in the public sector arises in part because public organizations are under the control of the government legislative, executive and judicial branches which may sometimes have contradictory interests or goals (Baldwin, 1990; Kaufman, 1977). As such, because red tape depends on external factors and is not under the discretionary control of their organization, public sector employees may be less inclined to attribute the dehumanizing experience of red tape to their organization. Conversely, because red tape in private organizations is not – or to a lesser extent – imposed by external parties, private sector employees may see red tape as being

voluntary created by their organization. As a result, they may hold their organization more responsible for the dehumanizing consequences of red tape. While such theoretical arguments suggest that the negative consequences of red tape would vary across organizational sectors, empirical evidence – albeit scarce – does not support these differentiated effects. Indeed, George et al.'s (2020) meta-analysis showed that the harmful consequences of red tape on individual (e.g., decreased job satisfaction) and organizational (e.g., decreased performance) outcomes did not differ across organizational sectors. Yet, their analyses only included two studies conducted in private organizations and the authors called for more work aiming at comparing the effects of red tape across public and private organizations.

In light of these conflicting views, we seek to examine in this research how the effects of red tape on the outcomes through OD will differ across public and private organizations. Given that existing theoretical and empirical work is limited and contradictory, we left as an open research question whether, and how, the negative consequences of red tape will differ across organizational sectors.

Studies' Overview

Hypotheses were examined across three studies which all received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the authors' institution. Study 1 is a cross-sectional study examining whether red tape is positively related to OD (H1a) which, in turn, influences employees' well-being (H2a and 2b) and attitudes (H2c and 2d). Study 2 is an experimental study where red tape was manipulated using scenario vignettes to investigate its causal effect on OD (H1b), and their subsequent effects on employees' well-being (H2a) and attitudes (H2c and 2d). Lastly, Study 3 is a cross-sectional study that sought to replicate and extend the findings of Studies 1 and 2. On the one hand, it tested for the third time the mediating role of OD (H2a, 2b, 2c, and 2d) and, on the other hand, it examined whether these relationships differ across the

public and private sectors. All items used in this research are listed in online supplements (see Section 1).

Study 1

Method

Participants and procedure

We relied on a convenience sample composed of Belgian employees coming from a variety of organizations and sectors. Participants were recruited via social networks and were invited to complete an online questionnaire. They were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. In total, 381 participants completed the survey but seven of them were removed from the analyses because they did not answer to the variables of interest (e.g., red tape, OD). The final sample was thus composed of 374 participants. Of these participants, 45.7% ($N=171$) were men and 54.3% ($N=203$) were women, with a mean age of 45.47 years old ($SD=10.18$). The majority held a master's degree (54.5%; $N=204$) and had been working in their organization for 11.32 years ($SD=9.72$). Most participants worked in the information and communication technologies field (16%; $N=60$) and in organizations employing between 10 and 299 employees (41.2%; $N=154$). Finally, 82.6% of the participants ($N=309$) had a full-time contract.

Measures

Unless otherwise indicated, all items were assessed with 7-point Likert agreement scales.

Red tape ($\alpha=.73$) was measured with the three-item scale developed by Borry (2016). Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they perceive the rules and regulations in their organization to be unnecessary, ineffective, and burdensome using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*necessary/effective/not burdensome*) to 7 (*unnecessary/ineffective/burdensome*).

OD ($\alpha=.95$) was assessed using the 11-item scale developed by Caesens et al. (2017; e.g., “My organization considers me as a robot”).

Job satisfaction ($\alpha=.93$) was measured with the four items of Eisenberger et al. (1997; e.g., “All in all, I'm very satisfied with my current job”).

Psychosomatic strains ($\alpha=.88$) were assessed with eight items from Spector and Jex (1998). Participants reported on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*always*) how often they experienced symptoms such as nausea or fatigue during the last 30 days.

Affective commitment ($\alpha=.91$) was measured with Meyer et al.'s scale (1993; e.g., “This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me”). Because of space limitations in the survey, only the three highest-loading items were used.

Turnover intentions ($\alpha=.93$) were measured using the three-item scale of Jaros (1997; e.g., “I intend to leave my organization in a near future”).

Control variables. As recommended by Becker (2005), the empirical relationships between the sociodemographic control variables and the dependent variables were examined. The analyses were run with and without the sociodemographic control variables correlating with the dependent variables (see Table 1), and the findings were contrasted. As the interpretation of the results remained the same when the sociodemographic control variables were included, results reported below are free from any control variables for parsimonious reasons (Becker, 2005).

[Table 1]

Results

Measurement model

Confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) were conducted to examine the distinctiveness of the variables included in the model using *Mplus* 8.5 (MLR estimator). Results indicated that the

six-factor model had an acceptable fit with the data ($\chi^2(449)=997.27$; RMSEA=.06; SRMR=.06; CFI=.91; TLI=.90) and was superior to all more constrained models.

Relationships among variables

Means, standard deviations, reliability coefficients, and correlations between the variables are displayed in Table 1.

Structural model

We tested a structural equation model in which red tape was related to job satisfaction, psychosomatic strains, affective commitment, and turnover intentions through OD. This hypothesized model displayed an acceptable fit with the data ($\chi^2(453)=1029.49$; RMSEA=.06; SRMR=.06; CFI=.91; TLI=.90). An alternative model adding direct paths between red tape and job satisfaction, affective commitment, and turnover intentions was however superior to the hypothesized model ($\Delta\chi^2(3)=32.38$, SBc=29.33, $p<.001$) and was thus considered as the final model ($\chi^2(450)=997.10$; RMSEA=.06; SRMR=.06; CFI=.91; TLI=.91).

[Figure 2]

As indicated in Figure 2, results showed that red tape is positively related to OD, consistent with H1a. In turn, OD was negatively related to job satisfaction and affective commitment, and positively related to psychosomatic strains and turnover intentions. Moreover, red tape had a direct negative effect on job satisfaction and affective commitment, and a direct positive effect on turnover intentions. Results of latent bootstrap analyses showed that all four indirect effects were significant (job satisfaction=-.28; BC 95% CI=[-.37; -.19]; psychosomatic strains=.29; BC 95% CI=[.18; .39]; affective commitment=-.27; BC 95% CI=[-.36; -.17]; turnover intentions=.20; BC 95% CI=[.12; .28]), hence supporting H2a, 2b, 2c, and 2d.

Discussion

Study 1 provided first evidence that red tape is positively related to OD. Results also showed that OD mediates the relationships between red tape and employees' well-being and attitudes. Although informative, Study 1 relied on cross-sectional data that do not allow causal conclusions to be drawn. To address this issue, an experimental study manipulating red tape was conducted, thereby strengthening the findings of Study 1 (H1b, 2a, 2c, and 2d). Importantly, since most measures of red tape are criticized for failing to "accurately assess the complexity of the construct" (Borri, 2016, p.577), Studies 2 and 3 relied on two measures of red tape to ensure to capture the very essence of red tape (Campbell, 2020). As such, besides Borri's (2016) scale, the hypotheses were also tested with the six-item scale developed by Vermeeren and van Geest (2012; see online supplements). Both scales encompass the burdensome, ineffective, and unnecessary dimensions that are at the core of the red tape construct.

Study 2

Method

Participants and procedure

Given the experimental nature of Study 2, an a priori power analysis was first conducted to determine the appropriate sample size. Based on a medium effect size ($d=.40$), results indicated that at least 113 participants were needed to reach a minimum power of .80 ($\alpha=.05$). Accordingly, 200 participants were recruited on Prolific and received monetary compensation for their participation. The survey took approximately 5 minutes to complete and respondents received £0.70 for their participation. To be eligible to participate, they had to (1) be English-native speakers, (2) have a minimum of 90% approval rate in previous surveys completed on the platform, (3) not work as self-employed, and (4) work part-time or full-time. After being guaranteed that their responses would be anonymous and kept confidential, participants were randomly assigned into one condition (i.e., low or high red tape condition). They were then asked

to carefully read a vignette describing an employee confronted to either few red tape (i.e., low red tape condition) or much red tape (i.e., high red tape condition) in their work (see Section 2 in online supplements). The vignettes were developed with close attention to the three core dimensions of red tape (i.e., uselessness, inefficacy, burdensomeness) and following the guidelines suggested in the literature (e.g., Wason et al., 2002). Participants were then invited to take the perspective of the employee described in the vignette and to complete an online questionnaire assessing the variables of interest (i.e., OD, job satisfaction, affective commitment, and turnover intentions). Three participants were excluded from the analyses as they failed to correctly answer one attentional check question. The final sample was thus composed of 197 workers. Among these participants, 45.2% were men ($N=89$), 53.8% were women ($N=106$), and 1% ($N=2$) did not specify their gender. Their age ranged from 20 to 72 years old ($M=39.8$; $SD=11.7$) and they mainly worked in the private sector (67%; $N=132$).

Since the vignettes were especially created for this study, they were first pre-tested on 60 other participants recruited on Prolific. The pre-test survey took approximately 3 minutes to complete and respondents received £0.50 for their participation. After reading the vignette, participants completed the same red tape scale as the one used in Study 1 (i.e., manipulation check) by taking the perspective of the employee described in the vignette. Results of an independent samples t test indicated that the participants in the high red tape condition perceived more red tape ($M=5.29$; $SD=1.06$) than the participants in the low red tape condition ($M=2.68$; $SD=1.21$), $t(58)=-8.94$, $p<.001$ ¹. These findings provided support for the effectiveness of the manipulation.

Measures

¹ Similar results were obtained with the second scale of red tape (i.e., Vermeeren and van Geest, 2012; see Section 3.1 in online supplements).

OD ($\alpha=.97$), job satisfaction ($\alpha=.94$), affective commitment ($\alpha=.90$), and turnover intentions ($\alpha=.96$) were measured with the same scales as in Study 1. The only difference is that affective commitment was assessed with the full scale (six items) of Meyer et al. (1993).

Control variables. As shown in Table 2, none of the sociodemographic control variables were correlated with the dependent variables included in the model. Consequently, results reported below are free from any control variables (Becker, 2005).

[Table 2]

Results

Measurement model

CFAs were performed to ensure that all the constructs included in the model were distinct (*Mplus* 8.5; MLR estimator). Results showed that the four-factor model fitted the data well ($\chi^2(246)=499.41$; RMSEA=.07; SRMR=.04; CFI=.94; TLI=.93) and was superior to all more constrained models.

Relationships among variables

Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations, reliability coefficients, and correlations among the variables.

Structural model

We tested a structural equation model in which the experimental manipulation of red tape (coded -1 for the low red tape condition and 1 for the high red tape condition) impacts OD which is, in turn, related to employees' job satisfaction, affective commitment, and turnover intentions. While this model displayed a good fit with the data ($\chi^2(269)=546.47$; RMSEA=.07; SRMR=.05; CFI=.93; TLI=.92), an alternative model adding direct paths between the experimental manipulation of red tape and job satisfaction and turnover intentions was shown to be superior to the hypothesized model ($\Delta\chi^2(2)=258.79$, $SBc=257.63$, $p<.001$). This model fitted the data well

($\chi^2(267)=528.79$; RMSEA=.07; SRMR=.05; CFI=.93; TLI=.93) and was therefore considered as the final model.

[Figure 3]

Results indicated that the experimental manipulation of red tape had a positive causal effect on OD, hence supporting H1b. Moreover, OD was negatively related to job satisfaction and affective commitment, and positively related to turnover intentions. The experimental manipulation of red tape had a direct negative effect on job satisfaction and a direct positive effect on turnover intentions (see Figure 3). Results of latent bootstrap analyses showed that all three indirect effects were significant (job satisfaction=-.31; BC 95% CI=[-.41; -.21]; affective commitment=-.39; BC 95% CI=[-.49; -.29]; turnover intentions=.33; BC 95% CI=[.24; .42]), hence supporting H2a, 2c, and 2d.

Discussion

Through the use of experimental scenario vignettes manipulating red tape, Study 2 showed that red tape has a positive causal effect on OD that, in turn, negatively influences employees' well-being and attitudes. Building on the compelling evidence of Studies 1 and 2, we conducted a third, cross-sectional study which aimed at replicating and extending these findings. Specifically, besides testing for the third time the mediating role of OD (H2a, 2b, 2c and 2d), Study 3 examines whether the relationships between red tape and the outcomes through OD vary across organizational sector. Importantly, all analyses in Study 3 were performed by controlling for six theoretically relevant variables that have been suggested or are likely to influence employees' perceptions of OD. Precisely, we controlled for (1) job autonomy, (2) task variety and (3) meaningfulness of work because controlled, repetitive, and meaningless tasks have been argued to contradict the self-creating essence of what it means to be human and to thus increase perceptions of OD (Andrighetto et al., 2017; Baldissarri et al., 2017; Bell & Khoury, 2011;

Demoulin et al., 2021; Väyrynen & Laari-Salmela, 2018). We also added (4) centralization and (5) hierarchy as control variables because the inability to participate in decision-making and a great distance between employees and management have been argued to increase OD (Väyrynen & Laari-Salmela, 2018). Lastly, we controlled for (6) formalization because it is a concept closely related to red tape. While red tape is an organizational pathology (i.e., bad in nature) referring to dysfunctional rules, formalization is a neutral organizational attribute (i.e., neither good nor bad) that refers to the number of rules (Bozeman & Feeney, 2011; Bozeman & Scott, 1996).

Study 3

Method

Participants and procedure

Participants were recruited on Prolific and were invited to complete an online questionnaire in exchange for monetary compensation. This questionnaire took approximately 8 minutes to complete and respondents received £1.10 for their participation. The anonymity and confidentiality of their responses were guaranteed. To take part in the study, participants had to meet the same criteria as in Study 2 and individuals who participated in Study 2 (and in the vignettes pre-testing) were not allowed to take part in this third study. In total, 500 participants fully completed the survey but 21 of them were excluded from the analyses because they did not correctly answer at least one attentional check question. The final sample was thus composed of 479 workers. Among these participants, 43.6% were men ($N=209$), 56.2% were women ($N=269$), and 0.2% ($N=1$) did not specify their gender. Their age ranged from 19 to 68 years old ($M=39.6$; $SD = 11.03$) and most of them held a bachelor's degree (42.8%; $N=205$). Participants had been working in their organization for 8.16 years ($SD=6.74$), primarily in teaching and education (13.2%; $N=63$). Most participants worked in organizations employing between 50 and 249

employees (20.9%; $N=100$), held a full-time contract (79.3%; $N=380$), and worked in the private sector (58.7%; $N=281$).

Measures

Red tape ($\alpha=.73$), OD ($\alpha=.95$), turnover intentions ($\alpha=.95$), job satisfaction ($\alpha=.94$), affective commitment (six items; $\alpha=.92$), and psychosomatic strains ($\alpha=.87$) were measured with the same scales used in Studies 1 and 2.

Organizational sector was assessed by asking participants to indicate whether they work in the public or private sector.

Control variables. We here again relied on the recommendations of Becker (2005) to treat the sociodemographic control variables. Table 3 indicates that several sociodemographic control variables were correlated with the dependent variables. As the inclusion of these variables did not change the interpretation of the results, only results without the control variables are reported for parsimonious purposes (Becker, 2005).

Regarding the six theoretically relevant control variables, they were all assessed with 7-point Likert agreement scales except if otherwise indicated. Job autonomy was measured with the three-item scale developed by Spreitzer (1995; e.g., “I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job”; $\alpha=.94$). Task variety was measured with the four items from Morgeson and Humphrey (2006; e.g., “My job involves performing a variety of tasks”; $\alpha=.95$). Meaningfulness of work was assessed with the four-item scale developed by Kristensen et al. (2005; e.g., “Is your work meaningful?”; $\alpha=.91$). Participants indicated their responses on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*to a very small extent*) to 5 (*to a very large extent*). Centralization was assessed with the three items from Kaufmann et al. (2019; “Even small matters have to be referred to someone higher up for a final answer”; $\alpha=.89$). Hierarchy was measured with the single item proposed by Bozeman (2000; i.e., “Please assess the extent of hierarchical authority in your organization, with 0

signifying few layers of authority and 10 signifying many layers of authority”). Formalization was assessed with the five items from Schminke et al. (2000; e.g., “A ‘rules and procedures’ manual exists and is readily available within this organization”; $\alpha=.84$). Participants indicated their responses on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*very inaccurate*) to 5 (*very accurate*).

Results

Measurement model

CFAs were performed to examine the distinctiveness of the 11 latent variables included in the hypothesized model² using *Mplus* 8.5 with its MLR estimator. Results indicated that the 11-factor model fitted the data well ($\chi^2(1322)=2535.93$; RMSEA=.04; SRMR=.06; CFI=.93; TLI=.93) and was superior to all more constrained models.

[Table 3]

Relationships among variables

Table 3 presents the means, standard deviations, reliability coefficients, and correlations between the variables. Table 4 displays the means and standard deviations of each variable as a function of organizational sector, as well as the results of a series of independent-sample *t* tests examining how scores on each variable differ across organizational sectors. Results indicated that the levels of red tape, OD, job satisfaction, psychosomatic strains, turnover intentions, and affective commitment did not significantly differ across organizational sectors. Regarding the theoretically-relevant control variables, the levels of job autonomy, task variety, and centralization did not differ significantly across organizational sectors, while meaningfulness of work, formalization, and hierarchy were found to be higher in the public sector.

[Table 4]

² Hierarchy was measured with a single item and was thus not included in the CFAs.

Structural model

We tested a structural equation model in which red tape was related to job satisfaction, psychosomatic strains, affective commitment, and turnover intentions via OD, controlling for the six theoretically relevant control variables. The hypothesized model displayed an acceptable fit with the data ($\chi^2(1399)=2879$; RMSEA=.05; SRMR=.08; CFI=.92; TLI=.91). Yet, an alternative model adding direct paths between red tape and job satisfaction, affective commitment, and turnover intentions³ was shown to be superior to the hypothesized model ($\Delta\chi^2(11)=193.71$, $SBC=176.10$, $p<.001$). This alternative model fitted the data well ($\chi^2(1388)=2685.29$; RMSEA=.04; SRMR=.06; CFI=.93; TLI=.92) and was thus retained as the final model.

[Figure 4]

As indicated in Figure 4, red tape had a significant positive effect on OD, controlling for the six theoretically relevant control variables. In turn, OD was negatively related to job satisfaction and affective commitment, and positively related to psychosomatic strains and turnover intentions. Red tape was also shown to have a direct negative effect on job satisfaction and affective commitment, and direct positive effect on turnover intentions⁴. Results of latent bootstrap analyses indicated all four indirect effects were significant, controlling for the six theoretically relevant control variables (job satisfaction=-.12; BC 95% CI = [-.16; -.07]; psychosomatic strains=.07; BC 95% CI=[.03; .12]; affective commitment=-.21; BC 95% CI=[-.27; -.14]; turnover intentions=.16; BC 95% CI=[.10; .21]), supporting H2a, 2b, 2c, and 2d⁵.

Multi-Group Analyses

³ This model also added direct paths between (1) job autonomy and job satisfaction, (2) task variety and affective commitment, (3) meaningfulness of work and turnover intentions, job satisfaction, and affective commitment, (4) centralization and psychosomatic strains and turnover intentions, and (5) formalization and affective commitment.

⁴ See Section 4.1., Figure S1 in online supplements for more detail (i.e., standardized coefficients) regarding the direct paths between the six theoretically relevant control variables and the dependent variables.

⁵ Similar results were obtained with the second scale of red tape (i.e., Vermeeren and van Geest, 2012; see Section 4.2 in online supplements).

test whether the effects of red tape on the outcomes via OD differ across organizational sector, multi-group analyses were performed (Wang & Wang, 2020). Employees working in the public sector formed the first group ($N=281$) while employees working in the private sector formed the second group ($N=198$). After demonstrating a strict measurement invariance between the two groups (Wang & Wang, 2020; see Section 4.1 in online supplements), we tested whether the structural path between red tape and OD (controlling for the six theoretically relevant control variables) varied across the public and private sectors. We began by establishing a structural model in which the path coefficient between red tape and OD was free to vary across groups. This unconstrained model showed a good fit with the data ($\chi^2(1064)=1803.44$; RMSEA=.05; SRMR=.07; CFI=.93; TLI=.93) and was then compared with another model in which the effect of red tape on OD was constrained to be invariant across groups (the paths between the six theoretically relevant control variables and OD were free to vary). This constrained model fitted the data well ($\chi^2(1065)=1803.90$; RMSEA=.05; SRMR=.07; CFI=.93; TLI=.93). Results indicated that the constrained model did not display a significantly worse fit with the data than did the unconstrained model ($\Delta\chi^2(1)=.46$, $SBc=.46$, $p=.497$), meaning that the effect of red tape on OD is not significantly different across public and private organizations⁶.

Discussion

Study 3 provided further evidence regarding the mediating role of OD in the relationships between red tape and employees' well-being and attitudes. Importantly, these results held when controlling for six theoretically relevant control variables, which further strengthens the findings of Studies 1 and 2. Interestingly, these relationships were not found to differ across the public and private sectors.

⁶ Similar results were obtained with the second scale of red tape (i.e., Vermeeren & van Geest, 2012; see Section 4.2. in online supplements).

General discussion

The purpose of this research was to empirically examine the relationship between red tape and OD. Precisely, we explored whether (1) red tape is positively related to, and even causes, OD, (2) OD mediates the relationships between red tape and employees' well-being (i.e., decreased job satisfaction and increased psychosomatic strains) and attitudes (i.e., decreased affective commitment and increased turnover intentions), and (3) the effects of red tape on the outcomes through OD differ across the public and private sectors.

First, using two different scales of red tape, this research demonstrated that red tape is positively related to OD. Importantly, the relationship between these two constructs remained significant even when several variables that have been argued or are likely to influence employees' perceptions of OD were controlled for. These results thus suggest that red tape is related to OD over and beyond the lack of job autonomy, task repetitiveness, meaninglessness of work, centralization, hierarchy, and formalization. Further, a second, experimental study using scenario vignettes manipulating red tape suggested that red tape has a positive causal effect on OD. By demonstrating that red tape is an antecedent of OD, this research extends the nomological network of OD and responds to the call of several scholars regarding the need to further examine its predictors (e.g., Caesens et al., 2019), especially through causal designs (Brison et al., 2022). Moreover, in line with Bozeman and Feeney's (2011) recommendations, this research provides causal evidence regarding the pathological nature of red tape and goes beyond existing work which has mainly relied on cross-sectional data that make causal inferences impossible. As noted by Bozeman (2012), the use of experimental designs has "much to contribute to knowledge of red tape" (p.260). Taken together, this research brings strong empirical evidence that red tape induces the perception that the organization treats its employees as easily replaceable tools or cogs whose only role consists in mechanically applying rigid and

dysfunctional rules. These findings echo Weber's (1947/2012) writings on bureaucracy as well as more contemporary work on organizational rules (e.g., Mohr, 2020) where their dehumanizing side is discussed. The results also corroborate prior scholars' assumptions suggesting that organizational rules are an important driver of OD perceptions (Bell & Khoury, 2011; Brison et al., 2022; Caesens et al., 2017, 2019).

Second, the findings showed that OD mediates the relationships between red tape and employees' well-being and attitudes. In other words, and across three studies, this research points out that OD is an important underlying mechanism explaining why employees facing red tape are more likely to report poor well-being (i.e., decreased job satisfaction and increased psychosomatic strains) and negative attitudes (i.e., decreased affective commitment and increased turnover intentions). Here again, the results remained similar when job autonomy, task variety, meaningfulness of work, centralization, hierarchy, and formalization were controlled for. On the one hand, these findings replicate previous work showing that red tape is significantly related to employees' job satisfaction, affective commitment and turnover intentions (e.g., Blom et al., 2020; Quratulain & Khan, 2015), and add new evidence for its influence on employees' psychosomatic strains. On the other hand, this research is consistent with previous studies that showed significant relationships between OD and employees' job satisfaction, psychosomatic strains, affective commitment, and turnover intentions (e.g., Caesens et al., 2017, 2019; Lagios et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2021, 2022; Stinglhamber et al., 2021; Sainz & Baldissarri, 2021; Taskin et al., 2019). Overall, by demonstrating that the negative consequences of red tape may be explained by the feeling of OD it induces, this study sheds light on a new mechanism explaining why red tape is deleterious for employees and organizations. This greatly contributes to the literature on red tape as the mechanisms underlying its negative consequences are understudied and have been limited to variables such as job dissatisfaction (e.g., Quratulain & Khan, 2015). As

claimed by Kaufmann and Tummers (2017), incorporating organizational psychology concepts (i.e., OD) in the study of red tape “help[s] broaden the depth and scope of red tape research (...) [and] enhancing our understanding of red tape” (p.1321).

Finally, the results showed that the effects of red tape on the outcomes through OD do not differ across the public and private sectors. While this finding challenges the idea that the effects of organizational rules are context-dependent, it is nonetheless consistent with George et al.’s (2020) meta-analysis. A potential explanation for this result could be that public and private organizations are organizational contexts that do not substantially differ (Boyne, 2002). Indeed, over the past decades, public organizations have begun to adopt the managerial values and practices of the private sector (e.g., strategic management, management by objectives) to cope with the increased pressure and competition induced by a more changing and challenging business environment (Boyne, 2002; Diefenbach, 2009; George & Desmidt, 2014). As public organizations became more “business-like”, that is focused on value maximization, cost-effectiveness, performance, and efficiency (Diefenbach, 2009; George & Desmidt, 2014), the differences between the public and private sectors have decreased, which would thus explain why red tape has comparable effects across public and private organizations. Overall, these results suggest that the deleterious consequences of red tape are quite similar across organizational sectors, making red tape a universal, rather than a context-specific, problem (George et al., 2020).

Limitations and future research

Despite its contributions, the present research has several limitations that must be acknowledged. First, as we solely relied on self-reported measures, we cannot exclude the possibility that the results were affected by common method variance (CMV) and social desirability. Several methodological and statistical precautions were nonetheless taken to reduce the CMV, such as guaranteeing the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants’ responses,

using scales that have been previously validated, and computing a Harman's one-factor test that presented a very poor fit with the data (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Notably, we used two different scales of red tape that yielded similar results, which lessens the threat of CMV and bolsters our confidence in the results.

A second limitation of this research has to do with the experimental manipulation used in Study 2. Although the vignettes were developed following best practices recommendations (e.g., Wason et al., 2002), it remains that they were based on fictive scenarios, which may raise concerns regarding external validity and the generalizability of the results obtained (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). To overcome this limitation, future research should improve the levels of realism of the vignettes, for instance, by increasing participants' immersion (e.g., video vignettes) or by confronting them with scenarios that they are likely to experience in their work (i.e., actual derived cases approach; Aguinis & Bradley, 2014).

Third, even though the experimental design of Study 2 suggested that red tape is an antecedent of OD, bidirectional effects may exist between these two constructs. One could indeed argue that experiencing OD may lead to perceive that organizational rules are ineffective and dysfunctional. It would thus be interesting for future work to measure red tape and OD at multiple time-points (e.g., cross-lagged panel design) in order to better understand the red tape–OD relationship. Further, the use of longitudinal designs would allow researchers to examine the cumulative effects of red tape, that is how it influences employees who have experienced it over long periods of time (Igic et al., 2017). Indeed, consistent with Frese and Zapf's (1988) accumulation model, the negative consequences of red tape could accumulate over time and persist even when red tape is reduced.

Lastly, given that both red tape and OD are subjective phenomena, it would be worthwhile to investigate the individual factors moderating the way employees perceive and react

to red tape. An interesting avenue would be to test the moderating role of employees' bureaucratic orientation, that is the tendency of employee "to prefer authority and norms, strict adherence to procedures and rules, and impersonal and formal work relationships" (Conner & Douglas, 2005, p.216). Because bureaucracy-oriented employees prefer to work in organizational settings where control is exercised through adherence to rigid rules and policies, one may expect them to be less sensitive to the dehumanizing consequences of red tape.

Practical implications

This research holds several practical implications for organizations, whether they are public or private. Given that organizational rules play a key role in shaping employees' perceptions of OD, organizations should devote particular attention to the rules they implement. Particularly, managers and policymakers should seek to promote organizational rules that: (1) are written; (2) are logically constructed; (3) have their purpose understood by employees; (4) employ an optimal level of control; and (5) are consistently applied (DeHart-Davis, 2017). Indeed, such effective rules, known as green tape, reflect trust and procedural justice (DeHart-Davis, 2017) and may thus convey that employees are considered and valued, hence reducing perceptions of OD (Bell & Khoury, 2011, 2016). Moreover, because over-control is one of the most important sources of red tape (Bozeman & Feeney, 2011), organizations may want to invest in delegation training courses. Allowing employees to participate in decision making and goal setting has indeed been shown to decrease red tape and its adverse effects (Kaufmann et al., 2019).

Another tool to fight red tape would be to perform a red tape audit, which is a means of gathering the information needed to identify functional and dysfunctional rules (Bozeman, 2000). This methodology consists of six steps: (1) identify the rules to which the organization is subject; (2) distinguish between the rules under the control of the organization from those under the

control of external authorities and focus on the former; (3) identify the employees affected by the rules; (4) determine the intended and unintended impacts of the rules; (5) in consultation with the employees, categorize each rule as either acceptable, in need of modification, or candidate to abolition; and (6) implement the rule changes. Although a red tape audit may be difficult to implement, it is an effective way to cut red tape (Bozeman, 2000) and may thus be an efficient strategy to lessen OD.

Lastly, organizations should strive to adopt additional means to reduce OD. At an organizational level, organizations should promote fair organizational procedures (Bell & Khoury, 2016), provide employees with training opportunities (Caesens et al., 2017), and foster a climate of self-expression among employees (Baldissarri & Andrighetto, 2021). At a relational level, given that any dehumanizing treatment emanating from the supervisor generalizes to the whole organization (Caesens et al., 2019; Sainz & Baldissarri, 2021; Stinglhamber et al., 2021), organizations should encourage high-quality relationships between supervisors and subordinates. This could for instance be achieved through training programs focused on constructive feedbacks or active listening skills (e.g., Caesens et al., 2019).

Conclusion

The results of the present research suggest that unnecessary, ineffective, and burdensome organizational rules make employees perceive that their organization treats them as mere tools or cogs to be used. In turn, this perception of OD is related to poor well-being and negative attitudes. Interestingly, these relationships were not found to vary across the public and private sectors.

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Table 1*Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations among Variables for Study 1*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.
1. Gender	-	-	-										
2. Age	45.47	10.18	-.15**	-									
3. Education	-	-	-.11*	.00	-								
4. Organizational size	-	-	-.02	.16**	.12	-							
5. Organizational tenure	11.32	9.72	-.01	.48***	.12*	.09	-						
6. Red tape	3.41	1.35	-.06	-.04	-.05	.21***	-.01	(.73)					
7. Organizational dehumanization	2.88	1.51	-.03	.04	-.04	.24***	.02	.49***	(.95)				
8. Job satisfaction	5.14	1.44	.01	-.07	.00	-.16**	-.08	-.48**	-.62***	(.93)			
9. Psychosomatic strains	2.88	1.19	.14**	-.07	-.06	.07	.05	.32***	.52***	-.49***	(.88)		
10. Affective commitment	4.69	1.59	-.01	-.01	.03	-.19***	.13*	-.51***	-.59***	.62***	-.36***	(.91)	
11. Turnover intentions	2.97	1.76	-.15**	-.17**	.10	.10*	-.15***	.43***	.51***	-.59***	.41***	-.52***	(.93)

Note. $N=374$. Reliability alpha values are on the diagonal. Gender was coded 0 for *male* and 1 for *female*. Education was coded 1 for *did not complete high school*, 2 for *high school*, 3 for *some college*, 4 for *bachelor's degree*, 5 for *master's degree*, and 6 for *Ph.D.* Organizational size was coded 1 for *1-9 employees*, 2 for *10-49 employees*, 3 for *50-249 employees*, 4 for *250-499 employees*, 5 for *500-999 employees*, 6 for *1000-1999 employees*, 7 for *2000-4999 employees*, 8 for *5000-9999 employees*, and 9 for *more than 10000 employees*.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 2*Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations among Variables for Study 2*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
1. Gender	-	-	-							
2. Age	39.76	11.70	-.05	-						
3. Organizational sector	-	-	.25**	.01	-					
4. Experimental manipulation of red tape	-	-	.03	-.04	.07	-				
5. Organizational dehumanization	4.66	1.47	-.08	-.06	-.05	.46***	(.97)			
6. Turnover intentions	4.11	1.83	-.04	-.06	.02	.55***	.76***	(.96)		
7. Affective commitment	3.50	1.39	.03	.10	.02	-.46***	-.77***	-.79***	(.90)	
8. Job satisfaction	4.18	1.51	.09	.04	.03	-.48***	-.68***	-.77***	.75***	(.94)

Note. $N=197$ (excepted for gender $N=195$). Reliability alpha values are on the diagonal. Gender was coded 0 for *male* and 1 for *female*.

Organizational sector was coded 0 for *public sector* and 1 for *private sector*. The experimental manipulation of red tape was coded -1 for *the low red tape condition* and 1 for *the high red tape condition*.

** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 3*Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations among Variables for Study 3*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.	17.	18.
1. Gender	-	-	-																	
2. Age	39.06	11.03	.05	-																
3. Education	-	-	-.06	-.07	-															
4. Organizational size	-	-	.02	-.08	.13**	-														
5. Organizational tenure	8.16	6.74	.01	.45***	-.06	.12*	-													
6. Organizational sector	-	-	-.17***	.02	-.16***	-.16***	-.08	-												
7. Red tape	3.19	1.21	-.03	-.12*	.08	.04	-.04	.01	(.73)											
8. Organizational dehumanization	4.04	1.53	-.03	-.04	-.02	.17***	.06	.05	.45***	(.95)										
9. Job satisfaction	4.88	1.68	.04	.04	.05	.05	.00	-.08	-.48***	-.57***	(.94)									
10. Psychosomatic strains	2.96	1.06	.12**	-.11*	-.08	-.06	-.06	.01	.19***	.28***	-.29***	(.87)								
11. Affective commitment	4.00	1.59	.04	.07	.03	-.08	.10*	-.09*	-.48***	-.71***	.73***	-.24***	(.92)							
12. Turnover intentions	3.59	2.08	-.03	-.15***	.00	-.04	-.08	.05	.45***	.61***	-.75***	.34***	-.70***	(.95)						
13. Task variety	5.57	1.31	-.03	.01	.05	-.04	.09*	-.06	-.19***	-.17***	.31***	-.01	.30***	-.19***	(.95)					
14. Meaningfulness of work	3.67	.99	.12**	.14**	.11*	.04	.12**	.16**	-.39***	-.35***	.56***	-.10*	.53***	-.42***	.42***	(.91)				
15. Job autonomy	5.03	1.46	-.10*	-.03	.10*	-.02	.06	-.03	-.21***	-.36***	.40***	-.19***	.36***	-.30***	.27***	.27***	(.94)			
16. Centralization	2.76	1.49	-.01	-.03	-.01	-.05	-.04	-.04	.25***	.37***	-.39***	.31***	-.32***	.39***	-.11*	-.25***	-.48***	(.89)		
17. Hierarchy	5.66	2.52	-.04	-.06	.15***	.50***	.12*	-.28***	.03	.10*	-.03	.01	-.02	.02	.01	.07	-.03	.07	-	
18. Formalization	3.81	.98	-.05	.01	.01	.39***	.06	-.15***	-.18***	.00	.20***	.03	-.07	-.12*	.17***	.27***	-.04	.03	.28***	(.84)

Note. $N=479$ (excepted for gender $N=478$). Reliability alpha values are on the diagonal. Gender was coded 0 for *male* and 1 for *female*.

Education was coded 1 for *did not complete high school*, 2 for *high school*, 3 for *some college*, 4 for *bachelor's degree*, 5 for *master's degree*, and 6 for *Ph.D.* Organizational size was coded 1 for *1-9 employees*, 2 for *10-49 employees*, 3 for *50-249 employees*, 4 for *250-499 employees*, 5 for *500-999 employees*, 6 for *1000-1999 employees*, 7 for *2000-4999 employees*, 8 for *5000-9999 employees*, and 9 for *more than 10000 employees*. Organizational sector was coded 0 for *public sector* and 1 for *private sector*.

* $p<.05$. ** $p<.01$. *** $p<.001$.

Table 4*Results of Independent-Sample T Tests for Each Variable of Study 3*

	Public Sector		Private Sector		<i>t(df)</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Red tape	3.19	1.30	3.20	1.15	-.14(477)
Organizational dehumanization	3.96	1.52	4.09	1.53	-.97(477)
Job satisfaction	5.04	1.65	4.77	1.69	1.69(477)
Psychosomatic strains	2.95	1.09	2.98	1.04	-.29(477)
Turnover intentions	3.47	2.10	3.66	2.07	-.97(477)
Affective commitment	4.17	1.57	3.88	1.60	1.99(477)
Job autonomy	5.08	1.49	4.99	1.45	0.66(477)
Task variety	5.66	1.30	5.50	1.31	1.36(477)
Meaningfulness of work	3.85	0.94	3.54	1	3.43(477)***
Centralization	2.82	1.50	2.71	1.48	0.77(477)
Formalization	3.98	0.86	3.68	1.04	3.44(464.12)***
Hierarchy	8.93	3.12	7.16	2.90	6.39(477)***

Note. *N*=479.

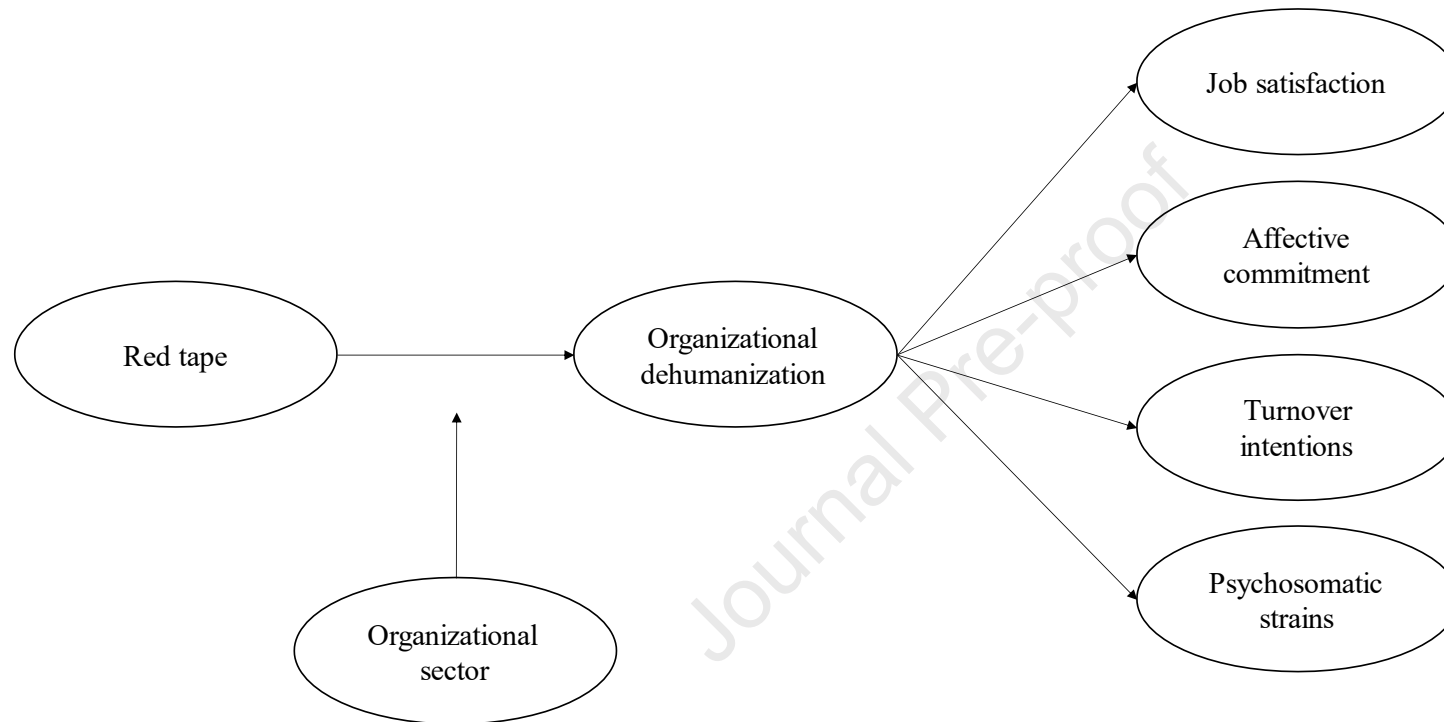
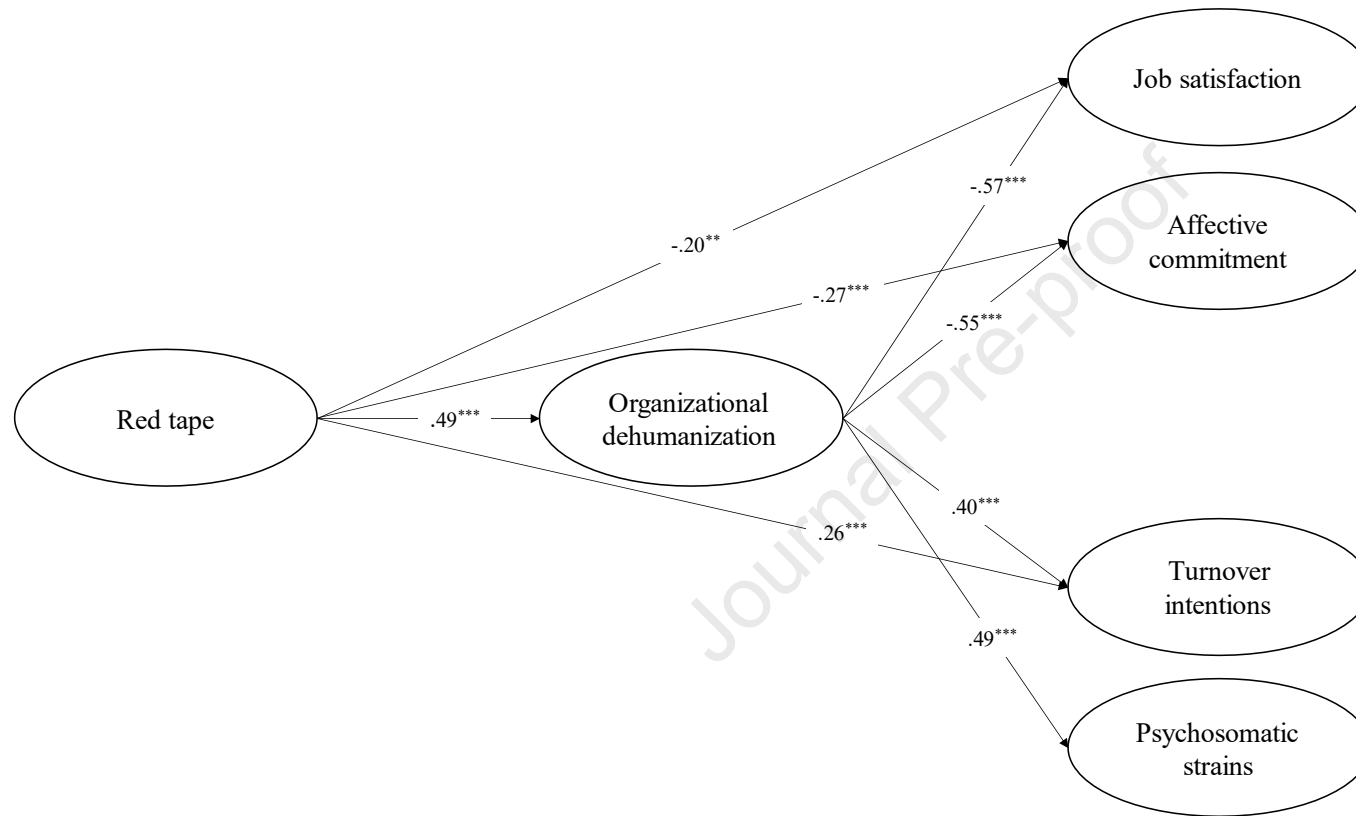
Figure 1*Theoretical Model*

Figure 2

Standardized Coefficients for the Retained Structural Equation Model of Study 1

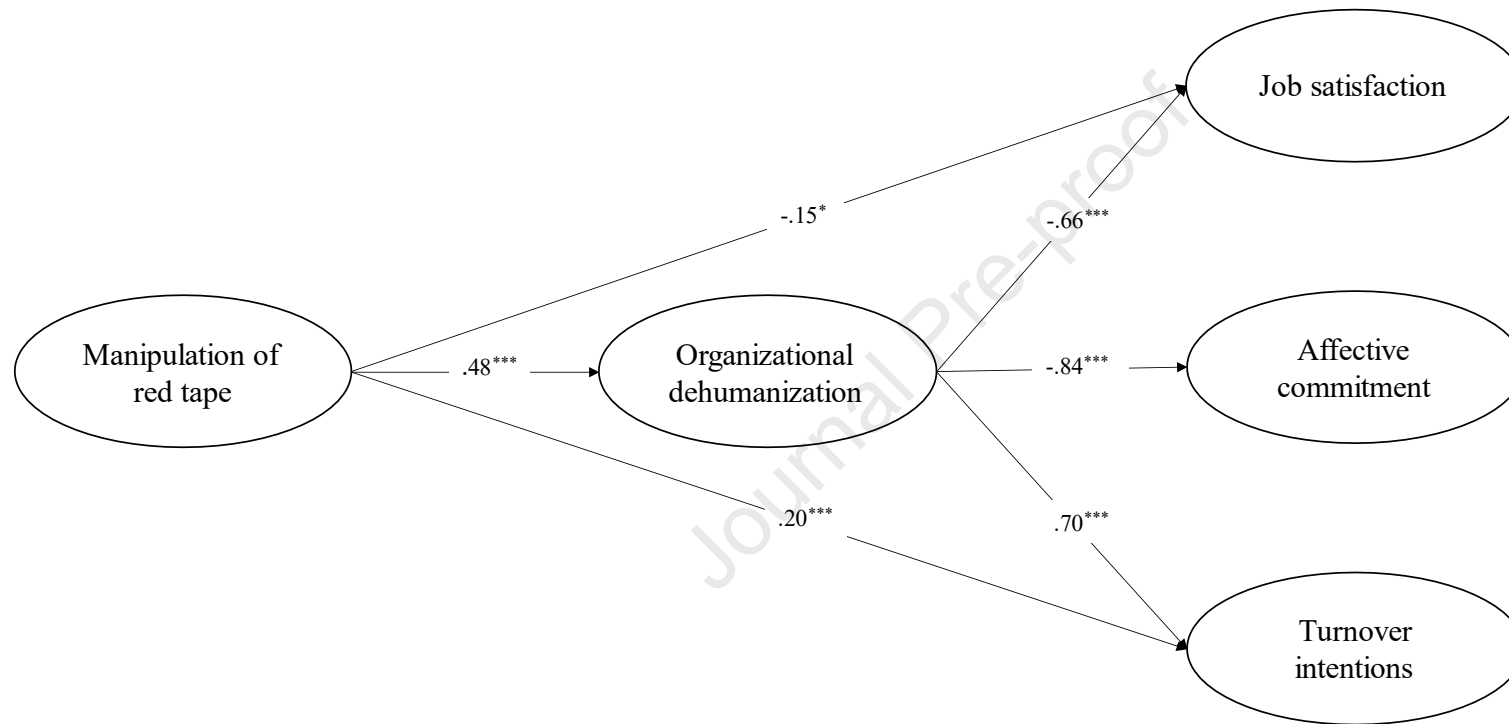


Note. $N=374$.

** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Figure 3

Standardized Coefficients for the Retained Structural Equation Model of Study 2

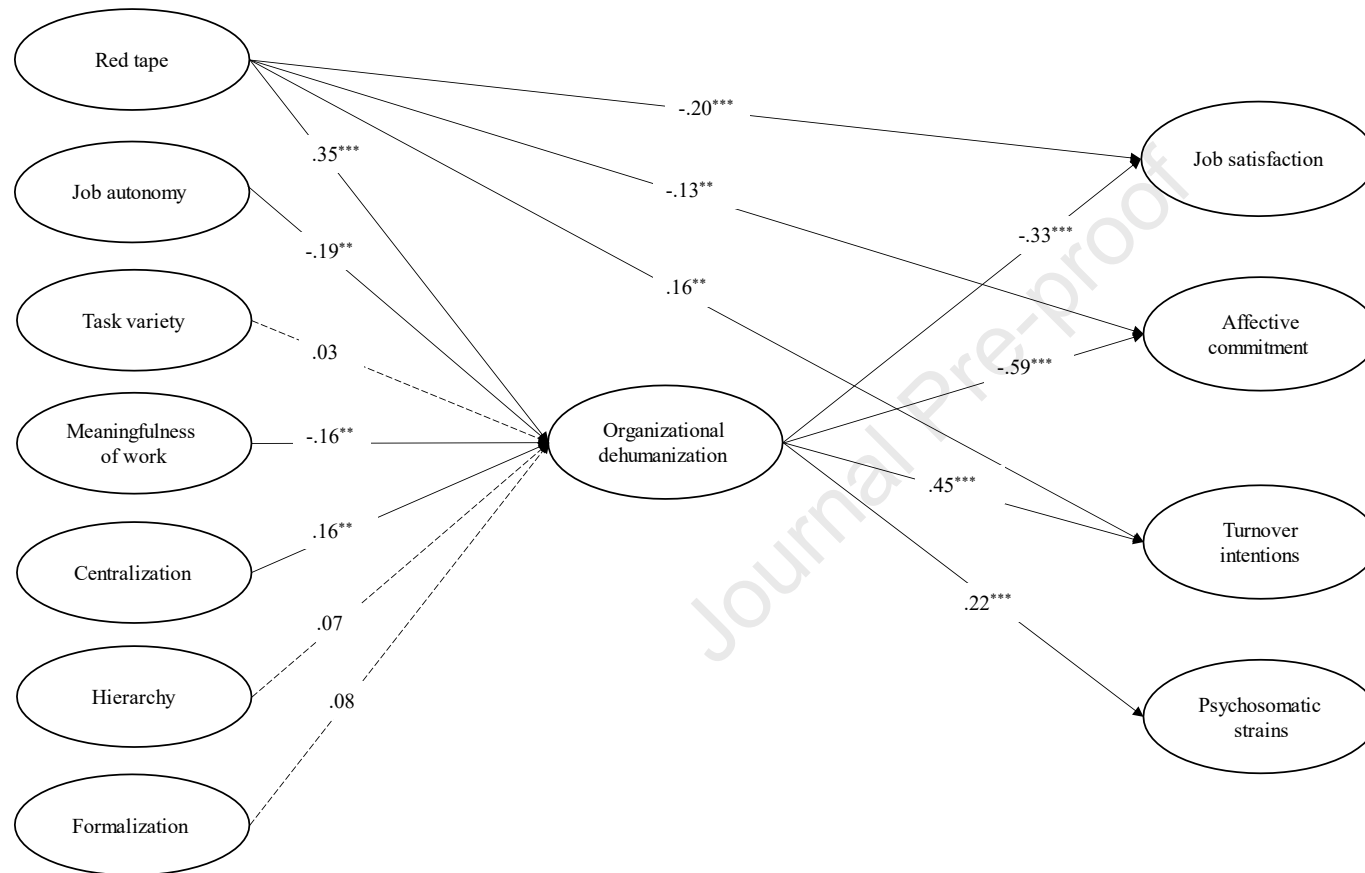


Note. N=197.

* $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

Figure 4

Standardized Coefficients for the Retained Structural Equation Model of Study 3



Note. $N=479$. For clarity purposes, the direct paths between the six theoretically-relevant control variables and the dependent variables are not displayed (see Section 4.1., Figure S1 in online supplements for the full figure). Dotted arrows represent non-significant paths.

** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.