

Work-in-progress paper for DPSA 2023

Thank you for taking the time to read this paper. Our discussion and conclusion are still in the draft stage, and contain some bullet points rather than written-out paragraphs. Feedback and comments on these sections are especially welcome, as well as ideas for possible, appropriate outlets for publication.

Compliance Burden versus Program Integrity Protection: A Survey Experiment on Citizen Support for Administrative Documentation Requirements in Public Service Policy

November 2023

Rasmus Stenderup^a & Mogens Jin Pedersen^a

^a Københavns Universitet

Abstract

Many public service policies entail some level of formal documentation from citizens or public employees. On the one hand, these administrative requirements are often onerous and perceived as "burdens" or "red tape." On the other hand, formal documentation requirements can have well-defined purposes, such as safeguarding program integrity by reducing instances of fraud, waste, and abuse. Using data from a pre-registered survey experiment among Danish residents ($n = 2,004$), we examine citizen attitudes toward the design of public service policy, with a specific focus on their support for policy reforms that either increase or decrease the extent of formal documentation requirements. A design allowing for analyses of how these opposing policy changes impact citizens' support, taking into account the inherent trade-off between heightened compliance burden and enhanced program integrity—and the role of whether the change in administrative requirements applies to citizens or public employees. We find that citizens tend to support administrative reforms that remove formal documentation requirements aimed at mitigating the risks of fraud, waste, and abuse—regardless of whether these reforms target citizens or public employees. Furthermore, these effects appear to be influenced by personal factors such as political partisanship and experience within specific policy areas, whereas experience with public employment does not appear to play a significant role.

Keywords: administrative requirements; administrative burden; red tape; public service policy; democratic governance

1. Introduction

Many public service policies entail formal protocol documentation and registration. Administrative documentation requirements—what we henceforth refer to as *ADRs*¹—that occur on both sides of the demand-supply equation of public service delivery. For example, a policy may require service recipients to complete a set of forms and provide a range of materials documenting their service eligibility. Similarly, public employees may be obliged to record various information documenting the specifics of their service provision and handling of cases. Although their extent differs across domains and programs, ADRs inhabit the procedural processes of the delivery of public services to citizens.

ADRs can be onerous and consequential—regardless of whether they befall the receivers or providers of public services. When ADRs are placed on prospective or enrolled service recipients, ‘administrative burden’ (Herd and Moynihan 2018) may arise. ADRs may cause citizens to experience compliance costs in their interactions with government (Moynihan, Herd, and Harvey 2014). Burdens that are costly in terms of their time and effort, can have negative effects on psychological well-being (Baekgaard et al. 2021) and on program access and take-up (Herd and Moynihan 2018; Linos and Riesch 2020; Moynihan et al. 2022), and are often unequally distributed among the target service beneficiaries (Christensen et al. 2020; Olsen, Kyhse-Andersen, and Moynihan 2022). Similarly, ADRs occurring on the side of the public employees may invoke perceptions of ‘bureaucratic red tape’ among them (Bozeman 2000; Bozeman and Feeney 2011). A construct that has been defined from a psychological process approach (Campbell 2019; George et al. 2021) as “... *role-specific subjective experiences of compliance burden imposed by an organization [onto the employees]*” (Pandey 2021)—and which can have negative effects on organizational performance and employee outcomes (George et al. 2021; Jacobsen and Jacobsen 2018; Pandey, Pandey, and Van Ryzin 2017).

However, many ADRs are also purposeful: they serve official purposes relating to legitimate public values (Bozeman 2007; Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007; Rutgers 2014) and protection of ‘program integrity’ in terms of detecting and preventing fraud, waste, and abuse of public resources (Sunstein and Gosset 2020: 75-76)². For example, ADRs may constitute deliberative program integrity activities that ensure that budgets are appropriately and efficiently spent on delivering high-quality and necessary service—by minimizing the risks that eligibility decisions and services provided involve intentional deception (*fraud*), inappropriate or inefficient utilization of services or misuse of resources (*waste*), and exploitation of loopholes or bending the rules (*abuse*)³.

¹ We use the term ‘ADRs’ as referring to (a) formal documentation and registration requirements relating to the delivery of public services, (b) that are placed on either the citizens and service users or the public employees, and (c) which are formally codified in public service policy and its protocol.

² For brevity, we henceforth use ‘program integrity’ as referring broadly to public agencies’ capacity to fulfill their mission while addressing fraud, waste, and abuse (Deloitte 2021). The term is widely used in the context of the US health care system (Agrawal et al. 2013) and especially the Medicaid program (e.g., Herd et al. 2013; Artiga and Rudowitz 2019; CMS 2023; MACPAC 2017), but it has conceptual and taxonomical properties that are of general applicability and relevance.

³ Examples of *fraud* in public service delivery include intentional deception or misrepresentation resulting in illegitimate access to services or in billing for services not rendered. Examples of *waste* include misuse of resources (not caused by criminally negligent actions) resulting, directly or indirectly, in unnecessary service costs, such as unintentional

Research Focus

ADRs are inherently Janus-faced: Whether placed on service recipients or service providers, ADRs introduce a compliance burden. However, ADRs also serve as an important and integrity-preserving means for the identification and prevention of fraud, waste, and abuse of public resources. Recognizing this trade-off dynamic between the consideration of low compliance burden and protection of program integrity, this article examines the administrative dilemma that ADRs impose on the design of public service policy in the context of democratic governance.

Our inquiry focuses on the sentiment toward ADRs among the broader public, i.e., the citizens—a key stakeholder group in the public service value chain of public service delivery and performance (Andersen, Brewer, and Leisink 2021; Crane, Matten, and Moon 2004; Winter and Nielsen 2008). In particular, we study citizen attitudes toward public service policy design with respect to ADRs. Our research focus is three-fold:

First, we examine what the broader public thinks about ADRs that serve program integrity but explicitly introduce a compliance burden. Are citizens more supportive of public service policy reforms that *remove* such ADRs (thus reducing burden at expense of poorer prevention of fraud, waste, and abuse) than reforms that *add* such ADRs (thus enhancing prevention of fraud, waste, and abuse at expense of greater burden)?

Second, we examine whether the change in compliance burden and program integrity protection (i.e., incurred by change in extent of ADRs) occurs on the demand or supply side of public service delivery. Is the public's sentiment toward reforms that remove versus add purposeful ADRs (ADRs involving trade-off between burden and program integrity) contingent on whether the change in burden befalls *citizens* or *public employees*? In other words, do the subjects of ADRs (citizens or public employees) moderate public attitudes toward policy reforms involving changes in the extent of ADRs?

Third, we also examine the moderating effects of personal attributes on the public's sentiment toward reforms that remove versus add purposeful ADRs. Specifically, we examine heterogeneous effects relating to the three personal respondent characteristics: (a) *political partisanship*, (b) *experience with the policy context*, and (c) *experience as public employee*. Moreover, as exploratory analyses, we also examine the influences of age, gender, education, target policy area (employment policy, specialized social policy, business subsidy policy), and aspect of program integrity addressed by the ADRs (fraud, waste, abuse).

For clarification, we note that most, if not all, ADRs are associated with some extent of compliance burden. Yet we are not suggesting that all ADRs necessarily exist because of overt or deliberate consideration of program integrity among political and administrative officials. For example, some ADRs may serve primarily to prompt deliberation and cognizance about a specific issue or to generate data for performance management activities or other evaluation purposes. We posit that many ADRs within public service policy design address and speak to

errors in service access and payments or inefficiencies in workflows (such as duplicate work or unnecessary expenditures). Examples of *abuse* include improper billing practices, payments, and access to or provision of services.

considerations of program integrity—whether intentionally or unintentionally—and that these ADRs encapsulate and map onto an inherent trade-off dynamic between compliance burden and protection of program integrity. A trade-off dynamic that has been understudied and calls for theoretical and empirical substantiation.

We develop theory and derive hypotheses drawing on research on administrative burden, red tape, public sector stereotypes, and social identity theory. In particular, we theorize that citizens tend to value protection of program integrity equally with administrative processing ease—and they, therefore, will exhibit similar sentiment toward reforms that remove versus add purposeful ADRs (H1). However, public attitudes that we theorize will be conditional on whether the subjects of the change in burden are citizens or public employees (H2), whether the respondents hold left-wing or right-wing political ideological beliefs (H3), and whether the respondents themselves have prior experiences as service recipients within the policy area in question (H4) and as a public employees (H5).

We test our hypotheses using data from a pre-registered factorial survey experiment among a representative sample of Danish residents ($n = 2,004$). An experimental design comprising three separate trials—each involving a distinct policy area context (*employment policy*, *specialized social policy*, *business subsidy policy*). Each trial presents a scenario describing plans for a policy reform of the extent of ADRs—with 2×2 factorial manipulation of the change in ADRs (*remove* versus *add*) and of the target of that change in ADRs (*citizens* versus *public employees*). We also randomly assign the particular aspect of program integrity addressed by the ADRs (*fraud*, *waste*, or *abuse*).

Relevance

Our examination contributes insights into the broader public's attitudes toward public service policy design—in terms of the extent of ADRs that involve protection of program integrity but also imposition of compliance burden. Insights that are widely unevidenced but relevant.

First, our research endeavor relates to an understudied yet important aspect of policy design in the field of public administration and management. Research has examined policy attitudes among politicians, managers, employees, and service users. For example, research has examined how policy makers and street-level bureaucrats' tolerance of administrative burdens in social welfare policies is linked to their personality traits, personal beliefs, and individual experience (Aarøe et al. 2021; Baekgaard et al. 2021; Bell et al. 2021). Research on policy attitudes with a focus on citizens and/or service users has centered on general service performance (Hvidman and Andersen 2016; Hvidman 2019) and service satisfaction (Andersen and Hjortskov 2016; Favero and Kim 2020; Grimmlikhuijesen and Prumbescu 2017; Hjortskov 2017; James 2011; Thau et al. 2021; Van Dooren et al. 2023; Van Ryzin 2006; Zhang et al. 2021). However, intriguingly limited attention has been directed at citizens' attitudes toward more generic and universal aspects of public service delivery and policy design such as the extent of ADRs. Among the few notable exceptions, Keiser and Miller (2020) examine how information about the extent of burdens affects public favorability of social welfare programs and their recipients, while Halling et al. (2022) examine how ideology, income, and personal experience predict citizens' tolerance of burdens in social policies. We aim to broaden the scope by providing attention to a variety of policy area contexts while

focusing directly on the broader public's support for policies entailing different extents of ADRs.

Thus, we speak to a gap in the literature on how the broader public supports particular features of general public service policy—with a focus on procedural protocol requirements that are present to some extent in most to all domains and programs of public service. With a focus on ADRs, we begin to unravel a broader question of the public's attitudes toward features of policy concerning the procedural processes and processing of service delivery. Research shows that a given policy may entail administrative burden costs among citizens and perception of red tape among employees that can be harmful for task performance and other outcomes (e.g., see Halling and Baekgaard 2022 and George et al. 2021 for recent reviews). However—and while such insights into the consequences of policy components, such as the extent of ADRs, are important and valuable—understanding of the broader public's attitudes toward the particular features that are formally codified in public service policy and its protocol is needed.

Why is this important? Unraveling the public attitudes surrounding components of public service policy, such as the extent of ADRs, is appropriate from the perspective of democratic accountability and governance. From the governance perspective of the New Public Service (Denhardt and Denhardt 2015a; 2015b), scholars argue that public officials are engaged in truly democratic governance when they engage in authentic interactions with the public and use their discretion to reflect the interests of the broader public (Rivera and Knox 2023). Democratic governance and accountability involve bureaucrats behaving in action-oriented ways that advance the public interest through more direct interaction and cooperation with citizens. New Public Service “... *creates a new arrangement of the welfare state in which public administrators make themselves available to support and reinforce citizen interests directly as opposed to implementing policies that are abstractly conceived at higher levels of government.*” (Rivera and Knox 2023: 66). To this end, policymakers with vested interest in evidence-based policy-making—for engaging in policy design and reforms based on evidence and knowledge about the public's interests and policy preferences—need insights into what the citizens think and feel normatively about the design of public service policy, including generic features of policy such as the extent of ADRs.

Similarly, public policy research has long emphasized the role of public opinion in public policy design and formation. Public opinion has substantial impacts on the configuration and format of public policy (Burstein 2003; 2006; Shapiro 2011), as citizens' policy support is an important feature of political context that influences policymakers' actions and behaviors. Public opinion is often a proximate cause of policy, affecting policy more than policy influence opinion (Page and Shapiro 1983). A notion underpinning that real-life policymakers are, indeed, attentive of and interested in the public's attitudes toward public service policy design, including the extent of ADRs prescribed by policy.

In sum, this article contributes knowledge of both theoretical and practical importance and novelty. We theorize and uncover insights into an important aspect of public service delivery and policy design: what citizens think about the extent of ADRs in public service delivery and policy design. In particular, we highlight and uncover a trade-off dynamic related to the burden imposed by ADRs and program integrity protection inherent in public service policy design. In doing so, we draw attention to an understudied component of public service policy design: program

integrity activities serving to reduce fraud, waste, and abuse of public resources. Furthermore, this article contributes insights with substantive implications for practice. We will return to emphasize and discuss the contributions of our findings to both the literatures on policy design and democratic governance as well as the practical implications for policymakers.

2. Theory

What does the public think about ADRs that serve program integrity but introduce a compliance burden?⁴ Are citizens more supportive of public service policy reforms that *remove* ADRs—thus reducing burden at the expense of poorer prevention of fraud, waste, and abuse—versus *adding* ADRs—thus enhancing prevention of fraud, waste, and abuse at the expense of greater burden?

Extant research appears to offer unclear and contrasting expectations. *On the one hand*, research suggests that citizens may value ADRs that serve to enhance protection of program integrity in public service delivery and policy design. Research on 'burden tolerance' find notable public support for the notion that access to eligibility-based programs should entail some level of administrative requirements on the side of the service recipients (Halling et al. 2022; Keiser and Miller 2020). Similarly, explicit information about the legitimate performance trade-offs in objectively burdensome rules—e.g., that administrative delays might serve broader procedural goals—make citizens associate such rules with lower levels of red tape (Campbell 2020).

Furthermore, classical assumptions of management models of “mistrust” (Le Grand 2007; 2010) and Principal-Agent theory (Eisenhardt 1989) viewing citizens and employees as being self-serving—i.e., maximizers of personal benefits and slack resources—also support the expectation that the broader public holds positive attitudes toward ADRs that prevent others from exploiting public resources. Connected to negative stereotypes concerning public sector organizations (Marvel 2016; Hvidman and Andersen 2016; Hvidman 2019) and the inhabiting public employees as being lazy and incompetent (Bertram et al. 2022: 238-239; although see also Willems 2020), citizens may perceive a justification and need for bureaucratic checks and control such as ADRs to mitigate instances of fraud, waste, and abuse.

On the other hand, other research suggests that citizens value a limited extent of ADRs in public service delivery and policy design. For example, research on the distributional consequences of administrative burden finds that citizens' human capital, such as cognitive resources and administrative capacity (Döring and Madsen 2022; Christensen et al. 2020; Chudnovsky and Peeters 2021), matters for how the individual is influenced by administrative barriers, thus leading to inequalities in welfare program take-up. An detrimental effect of burden that speaks to the public value of equity in public service provision, and the notion that fair treatment entails citizens being "*treated on the basis of a holistic approach and*

⁴ Although ADRs may generally be associated with some extent of administrative burden or red tape in the form of compliance burdens experienced by target citizens or employees, ADRs refer simply to formal documentation and registration requirements ingrained in policy. Thus, ADRs are conceptually distinct from the concepts of “administrative burden” and “bureaucratic red tape.”

moderation rather than excessive adherence to abstract principles" (Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007: 369). Research that aligns with the notion that the broader public may prefer a minimal extent of ADRs in public service delivery. A notion that extends to ADRs targeted public employees as it has been argued that bureaucratic discretion enables especially frontline workers to achieve social equity (Rivera and Knox 2023; Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007). Similarly, general perceptions of empathy (Gross and Wronski 2021) and deservingness (Aarøe and Petersen 2014; Nicholson-Crotty et al. 2021) toward citizens in need of public assistance may result in attitudes disfavoring ADRs and the accompanying burdens they introduce.

Furthermore, ADRs may be perceptually associated with 'red tape'. Speaking to the public value of efficiency (Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007), ADRs could generally be seen to take resources and time away from core service tasks. Finally, the notion that many public service organizations are already riddled with excessive levels of ADRs—administrative protocol processes that are burdensome and inefficient (Hvidman and Andersen 2016; Hvidman 2019)—may go against any preferences for more ADRs.

Thus, we theorize—given absence of compelling evidence favoring clearly and unambiguously one of the two positions—that the public may on average be equally supportive of policy changes that *remove* ADRs versus *add* ADRs in public service delivery. While citizens may have strong preferences against the compliance burden flowing from ADRs, they may have similarly strong preferences for program integrity protection efforts in terms of ADRs that minimize the risks of fraud, waste, and abuse. On this basis, we derive the following hypothesis:

H1: *On average, citizens have similar sentiments toward policy reforms that add ADRs (for protecting program integrity at the expense of compliance burden) and policy reforms that remove ADRs (for reducing compliance burden at the expense of protection of program integrity).*

Target of ADRs

However, we theorize that the average effect of policy changes that *remove* ADRs versus *add* ADRs in public service delivery may depend on whether the change in the extent of ADRs befalls the citizen or the public employees.

First, citizens (relative to public employees) may be perceived as generally more socially vulnerable and in need of help—feelings relating to empathy and potential deservingness heuristics (Aarøe & Petersen 2014; Nicholson-Crotty et al. 2021)—making them believe that the burden of program integrity protection should generally and largely be placed on public employees. Similarly, researchers have argued that to ensure high levels of both service take-up and program integrity in a welfare program, the associated compliance burden should be borne by public employees (Herd et al. 2013).

Second, social identity dynamics (Hogg, Terry, and White 1995; Pedersen and Nielsen 2020; Tajfel and Turner 1979) may make citizens less sympathetic to the burden placed on their own in-group (i.e., other citizens like themselves) relative to the burden placed on their own out-group (i.e., public employees). Although, empirical research indicates that individuals' racial identity may matter little for burden tolerance (Johnson and Kroll 2021), social identity theory suggests that

citizen attitudes toward ADRs could be shaped by in-group/out-group dynamics relating to variation in social identity congruity.

We recognize that citizens may feel that public employees are already subjected to extensive ADRs—and that citizens tend to have an inherent aversion against ‘red tape’ and excessive bureaucratic rules and procedures (Campbell 2019; George et al. 2021; Hvidman and Andersen 2016). Such sentiment could pull our expectations in the opposite direction. However, we also note how the administrative burden literature (Herd and Moynihan 2018) emphasizes a counterpoint: the presence of a general perception among the broader public that many welfare policies and programs already entail considerable burden for citizens and service users. Thus, we derive the following hypothesis:

H2: *Citizens’ attitudes toward policy reforms that add versus remove ADRs depend on whether the change in requirements befalls citizens or public employees.*

In particular, we expect that citizens will have preferences for policy reforms that add additional ADRs when those ADRs befall public employees rather than citizens—and, vice versa, that citizens will prefer policy reforms that remove existing ADRs from citizens rather than reforms that remove ADRs from public employees (H2a). Moreover, we expect that citizens will have preferences for policy reforms that remove ADRs for citizens compared with reforms that add additional ADRs for citizens (H2b) and that citizens will have preferences for policy reforms that add ADRs for public employees compared with reforms that remove ADRs for public employees (H2c).

Partisanship and Experiences

Personal characteristics may also influence citizens’ attitudes toward policy reforms that change the extent of ADRs in public service delivery.

First, citizen attitudes may be affected by personal political partisanship. From research on motivated reasoning in political behavior and attitude formation (Kunda 1990; Taber and Lodge 2006), we know that partisanship (political ideological beliefs) may influence popular perceptions of government and policy support (Bolsen, Druckman, and Cook 2014; Druckman 2012; Druckman, Kuklinski, and Sigelman 2009; Prior, Sood, and Khanna 2015). In particular, political attitudes may influence the general perception of ADRs and their justification. Therefore, we theorize that left-wing-oriented citizens may be relatively more lenient and sympathetic to ADRs given concerns of program integrity protection—whereas right-wing-oriented citizens may tend to have greater opposition toward bureaucratic controls and procedures such as ADRs. Also, right-wingers may have a more pronounced perception and feelings that the bureaucracy is already riddled with excessive burden and ‘red tape.’ Thus, we derive the following hypothesis:

H3: *Citizens’ attitudes toward policy reforms that add versus remove ADRs depend on their political ideology.*

In particular, we expect that left-wing-oriented citizens will tend to have preferences for reforms that add (versus remove) ADRs (H3a), whereas right-wing-oriented citizens have preferences for reforms that remove (versus add) ADRs (H3b).

We do recognize a potential contrasting perspective: that right-wing citizens may prioritize program integrity and that left-wing citizens may be inclined to be more trustful of both citizens and public employees, implying less control—and hold greater sympathy for not burdening neither citizens nor public employees. Evidence in support of this perspective appears in the literatures on burden tolerance among citizens (Halling et al. 2021; Keiser & Miller 2020), street-level bureaucrats (Bell et al. 2021), and policymakers (Baekgaard et al. 2021).

Second, citizen attitudes may be affected by their own social identities and personal experiences with a given policy context or as a public employee. From a rational self-interest perspective, service recipients and public employees may disfavor ADRs—and the associated extra effort—that are placed on themselves, respectively, as service recipients and public employees.

- [To be written out:
 - Social identity theory (xxx) and associated in-group/out-group biases (xxx): Individuals may disfavor ADRs and associated burden that are placed on their own in-group (relative to out-group). Relates to general empathy and lenience associated with shared experiences and familiarities with other in-groups (Balliet, Wu, and De Dreu 2014; xxx).
 - Supported by burden tolerance research on the importance of experiences as service user etc. (Baekgaard, Moynihan, and Thomsen 2021; Halling, Herd, and Moynihan 2022; Keiser and Miller 2020; xxx)].

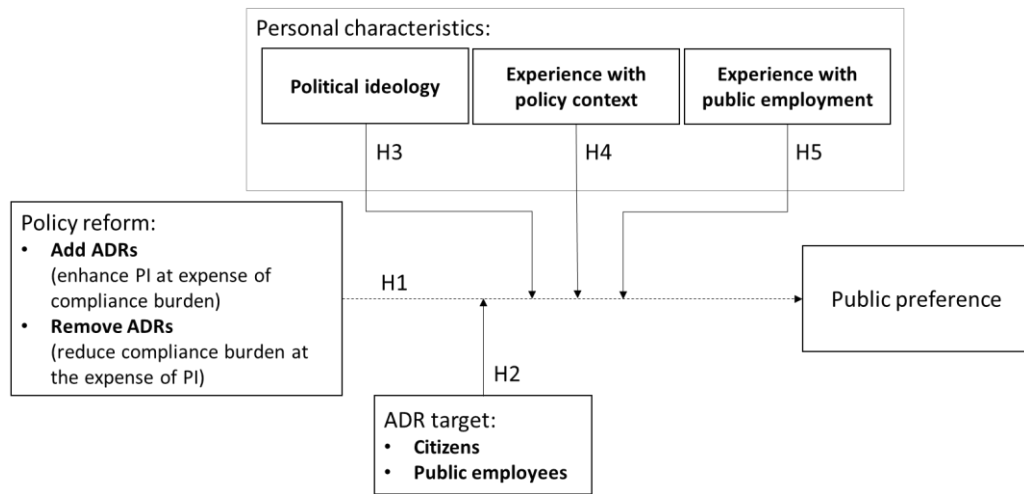
Thus, we derive the following two hypotheses—relating to our expectations of moderation by policy area experience and experience as public employee, respectively:

H4: *Citizens' attitudes toward policy reforms that add versus remove ADRs depend on policy area experience. Having personal experience with the policy context in question increases preferences for reforms that remove ADR (versus add) ADRs targeted citizens.*

H5: *Citizens' attitudes toward policy reforms that add versus remove ADRs depend on employment experience. Having personal experience as a public employee will reduce or negate preferences for reforms that add (versus reduce) ADRs targeted at public employees.*

Figure 2.1 provides an overview of our theoretical focus and hypotheses.

Figure A.1: Overview of the theoretical focus and hypotheses



3. Data and Design

We test our hypotheses using data from a 2x2 factorial experimental design embedded in an electronic survey among a sample of approximately 2,000 Danish residents.

The data were collected by Epinion in December 2022. By design of the Epinion sampling approach⁵, our sample is representative of the population of Danish adults (age 18+) in terms of age, gender, and geographical (regional) location.

Our hypotheses and research design were pre-registered at AEA RCT Registry (<https://doi.org/10.1257/rct.10590-1.0>). Data and code files are available at Harvard Dataverse [to be uploaded].

Experimental Design

Survey respondents were exposed to three separate trials, each involving a distinct policy area context. Each trial was prefaced by the following text: “*Imagine that there are plans for a reform in the area of [policy area text]*”—with the text in brackets specifying one of three distinct policy areas:

- “... employment policy, which includes, e.g., allocation of unemployment benefits and early retirement rights”
- “... specialized social policy, which includes, e.g., allocation of public subsidies to cover additional expenses for adults with disabilities”
- “... business subsidy policy, which includes, e.g., allocation of subsidies for business projects promoting green transition or making energy consumption more efficient”

⁵ For nationally representative data collection, Epinion uses an “auto sampler” to distribute surveys via Norstat’s online panel. The auto sampler ensures that the invitations distributed each day are representatively distributed by gender, age, and geography. The autosampler corrects for unrepresentative reply rates during data collection, and at some point, the invitation distribution is manually corrected to ensure representativity.

Each policy area appeared once and only once across the three trials, and the order of the trials (and, thus, the policy areas) was counterbalanced. Each trial included the same 2×2 factorial experimental setup—but with random assignment of the factorial attributes within each trial (i.e., the manipulations differed at random across the three trials within respondents). In each trial, after the introductory text, respondents were presented with plans for policy reform. Our 2×2 factorial experimental design involved manipulation (random assignment) of cues in the form of text describing the reform. For manipulation of *the change in the extent of ADRs*—remove or add—the reform was presented as either:

- A. Introducing certain administrative documentation requirements with the aim of avoiding [fraud/waste/abuse], but at the expense of the administrative work becoming heavier
- B. Removing certain administrative documentation requirements with the aim of easing administrative work, but at the expense of increasing the risk of [fraud/waste/abuse]

As denoted by the text in brackets, we manipulated, within trials, whether the intended gain/cost in terms of program integrity protection related specifically to matters of either fraud, waste, or abuse. To manipulate *the targets of the change in ADRs*, the reform was presented as having the targets of the change in ADRs as either (A) citizens or (B) public employees. An overview of the full text and cues appears in Appendix D.

Outcome

We measured our outcome variable—citizen attitudes toward change in the extent of ADRs—by a composite index measure three Likert-scale items: (a) “Implementing the reform is a good idea,” (b) “The reform is a step in the wrong direction” (reversed), and (c) “The benefits of the reform are far greater than its disadvantages.” Item order was counterbalanced.

All items used a 7-point response scale (anchored at 1 = ‘Fully disagree’ and at 7 = ‘Fully agree’). Indicating acceptable scale reliability, Cronbach’s alpha was .828. We generated the outcome measure using the item row means.

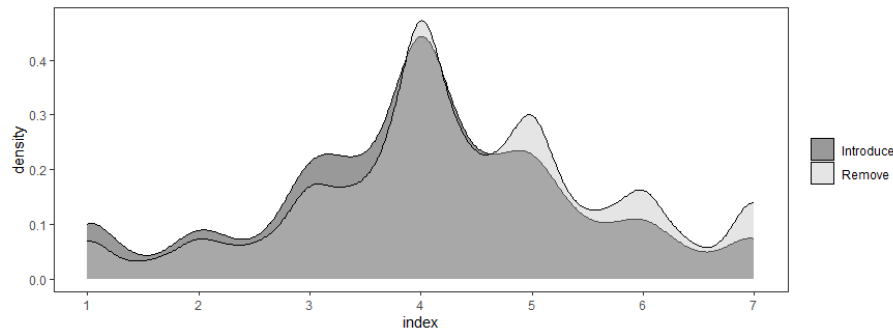
Descriptive Sample Statistics

[To be written:

- Brief text that provides description of the sample (gender, age, regional location)
- Table on Descriptive Sample Statistics appear in Appendix A
- Brief note on balance test (across experimental conditions)]

Descriptively, the average respondent’s attitude toward bureaucratic reforms involving a change in the extent of ADRs, as captured by our outcome measure, is close to the middle score of “4” on the measure, indicating indecisive or neutral attitudes among many respondents. However, as Figure 3.1 illustrates, the tails of the distributions are descriptively indicative of a slightly stronger positive sentiment toward reforms that remove ADRs (relative to reforms that add ADRs).

Figure A.1: Density plot of outcome distribution by reform type



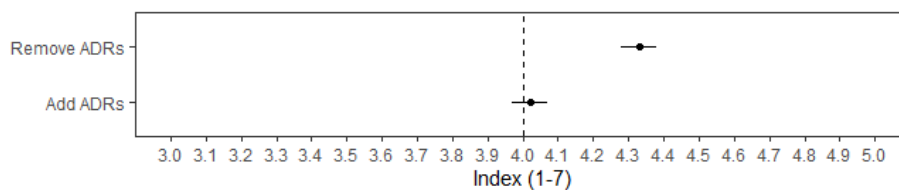
4. Results

As our estimation approach, we use the pooled data across the three trials. We use an OLS regression estimator with dichotomous factorial treatment variables and standard errors clustered at the respondent level.

Change in the Extent of ADRs

We do not find support for hypothesis H1. In contrast to our theorizing of a null-effect, we find a substantive difference between citizens' attitudes toward bureaucratic reforms that add additional ADRs versus those that remove existing ADRs. As **Error! Reference source not found.** shows, citizens are relatively more positive toward reforms that remove existing ADRs (at $p < .05$). The estimated difference is .31 points on the 7-point outcome scale (see Table B.1 in the appendix). An effect size corresponding to 4.4 percent of the maximum variation in the distribution of the outcome measure, and a change in the outcome measure of .22 of a standard deviation (i.e., a Cohen's d of $\approx .22$), and thus a "small effect" (Cohen 1988). Thus, in contrast to H1, we find a preference for removing ADRs (relative to adding ADRs), although the effect is small in substantive magnitude.

Figure A.1: Average attitudes toward bureaucratic reforms that add additional ADRs vis-a-vis reforms that remove existing ADRs with 95 pct. confidence intervals (model presented in Table B.1, 0).



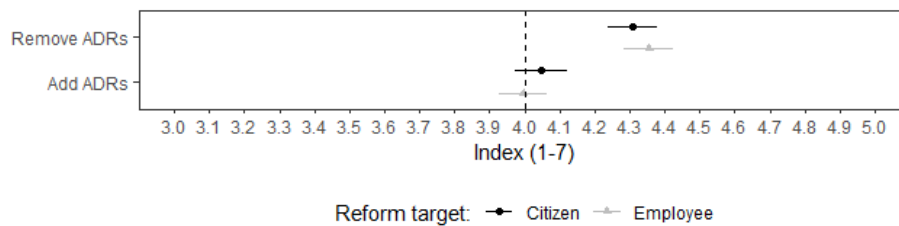
Moderating Effects: Target of ADRs

We find limited support for hypothesis H2 concerning the moderating influence of who the targets of ADRs are (citizens or public employees) on the effect of change in ADRs on citizens' attitudes.

As Figure A.1 shows, we do not find support for H2a. For reforms that target citizens relative to those that target public employees, we see no significant differences in attitudes toward adding versus removing ADRs.

Moreover, we theorized that citizens prefer reforms that remove ADRs when those reforms target citizens (H2b) and reforms that add additional ADRs when those reforms target public employees (H2c). As Figure A.1 shows, our data lend support to H2b, while the results directly contrast our H2c. Specifically, the citizen respondents appear to prefer policy reforms that remove (vs. add) ADRs—as observed in our testing of H1—and irrespective of whether the changes in ADRs target citizens or public employees.

Figure A.1. Average attitudes toward bureaucratic reforms that add additional ADRs vis-a-vis reforms that remove existing ADRs targeting either citizens or public employees with 95 pct. confidence intervals (model presented in Table B.1, 0).

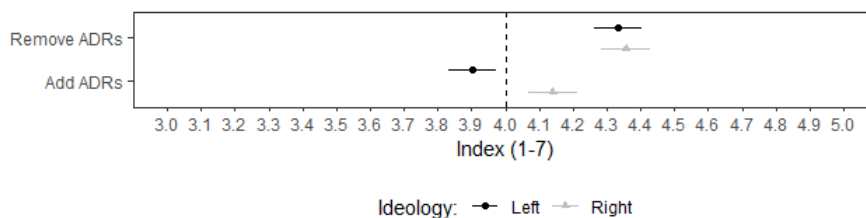


Moderating Effects: Partisanship and Personal Experience

We find mixed support for hypothesis H3 concerning the moderating influence of respondents' political partisanship. As Figure A.1 shows, both left- and right-wing-oriented citizens prefer bureaucratic reforms that remove (vs. add) ADRs. Results that depart from our H3a expectation (that left-wing-leaning citizens prefer reforms that add relative to remove ADRs), but align with our H3b expectation (that right-wing-leaning citizens prefer reforms that remove relative to add ADRs). Directly contrasting H3a, left-wing-leaning citizens not only appear to oppose reforms that add ADRs. They also appear to disfavor additional ADRs to a greater extent than their right-wing-leaning counterparts.

Indeed, political partisanship exhibits a significant interaction effect on policy attitudes toward reforms that add vs. remove ADRs. The effect size of this partisanship interaction is .215 points on the 7-point outcome scale (see Table B.2 in appendix), indicating a small yet statistically significant interaction (at $p < .05$). As Figure 4.3 shows, left-wing-leaning citizens tend to view reforms introducing new ADRs (aimed at reducing the risks of fraud, waste, and abuse) as a less favorable idea than right-wing-leaning citizens.

Figure A.1. Average attitudes by respondent ideology toward bureaucratic reforms that add additional ADRs vis-a-vis reforms that remove existing ADRs with 95 pct. confidence intervals (model presented in Table B.2, 0).

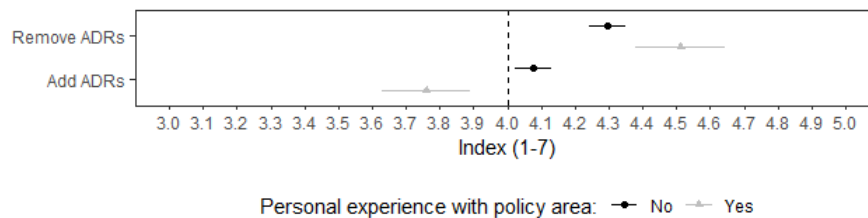


We find support for hypothesis H4 concerning the moderating influence of respondents' personal experience with the specific policy area in which the proposed reform is intended to take place. As Figure A.2 shows, personal

experience with a given policy area has a substantive moderating effect on people's attitudes toward bureaucratic ADRs reform in that policy area. The attitude toward bureaucratic reform among people with policy area experience (compared to those without such experience) is significantly more negative in the context of adding ADRs and significantly more positive in the context of removing ADRs.

The effect of policy area experience interaction is .533 points on the 7-point outcome scale, indicating a substantive and significant interaction effect (at $p < .001$) (see Table B.2 in appendix). Personal experience with a given policy area makes individuals inclined to more strongly oppose bureaucratic reforms that increase the compliance burden for protecting program integrity in that policy area. Similarly, they tend to be relatively more favorable toward reforms that remove ADRs at the expense of program integrity in that policy area (compared to individuals without such policy area experience).

Figure A.2. Average attitudes by respondent policy area experience toward bureaucratic reforms that add additional ADRs vis-a-vis reforms that remove existing ADRs with 95 pct. confidence intervals (model presented in Table B.2, 0).



Finally, we do not find support for hypothesis H5 concerning the moderating influence of respondents' personal experience as public employees. Public employment does not appear to affect the impact of reforms that remove versus add ADRs on attitudes toward those reforms. As Figure 4.5 shows, we find no significant interaction effect of experience with public employment on attitudes toward bureaucratic reforms that remove versus add ADRs.

Figure A.3. Average attitudes by respondents' public employment experience toward bureaucratic reforms that add additional ADRs vis-a-vis reforms that remove existing ADRs with 95 pct. confidence intervals (model presented in Table B.2, 0).

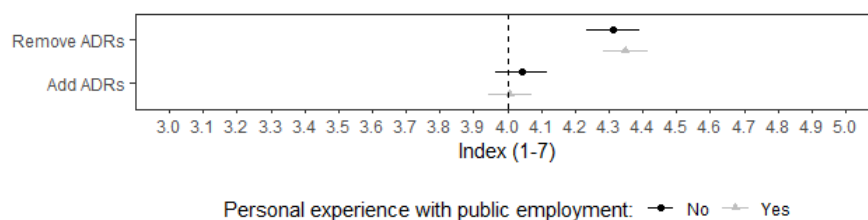
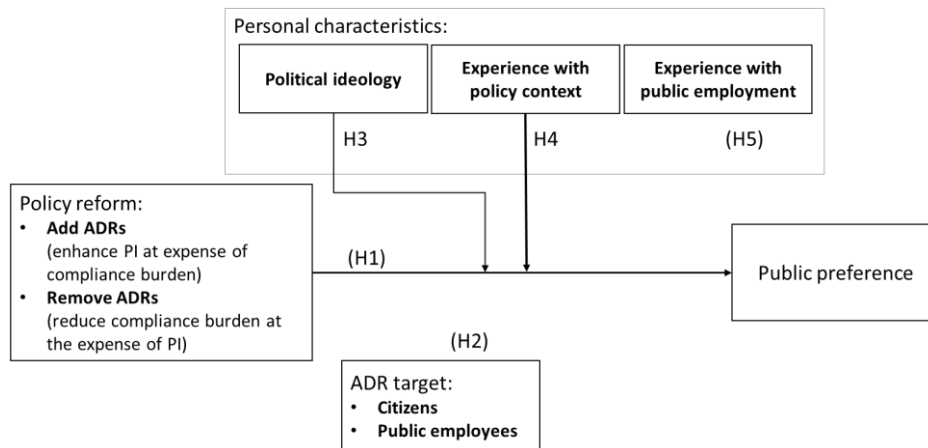


Figure A.4 provides an overview of how our findings relate our hypotheses. The thickness of the arrows denote the substantive size of the estimated effects, while the parentheses indicate failure to reject the null for a given hypothesis.

Figure A.4: Overview of findings related to our theoretical focus and hypotheses.



5. Auxiliary Analyses

We conduct a set of supplementary analyses to explore potential heterogeneous effects and probe the robustness of the findings surrounding our testing of H1 and H2. Specifically, we test for heterogeneous effects by five distinct factors. Three demographic factors: *age*, *gender*, and *education*, and two factors related to our experimental design: *target policy area* (employment policy, specialized social policy, or business subsidy policy—appearing in counterbalanced order once and only once across the three trials) and the specific *aspect of program integrity* addressed by the ADRs (fraud, waste, or abuse—randomly assigned within trials).

We use the same OLS estimation procedure as in the main analysis. For each of the five factors, we run two model specifications (see Table B.3 in Appendix) similar to those we use for testing of H1 and H2, respectively, but with inclusion of relevant factor dummies and interaction terms.

The analyses show that our main H1 results—that people in general prefer reforms that remove as opposed to add ADRs—is widely robust across variations in the factors we examine. One exception relates to the target policy area. We find that the policy context strongly conditions individuals' preferences for bureaucratic reforms that change the extent of ADRs. We find no effects for the area of business subsidy policy, and positive effect of removing (as opposed to adding) ADRs that are of relative greater size in the area of specialized social policy relative to the area of employment policy.

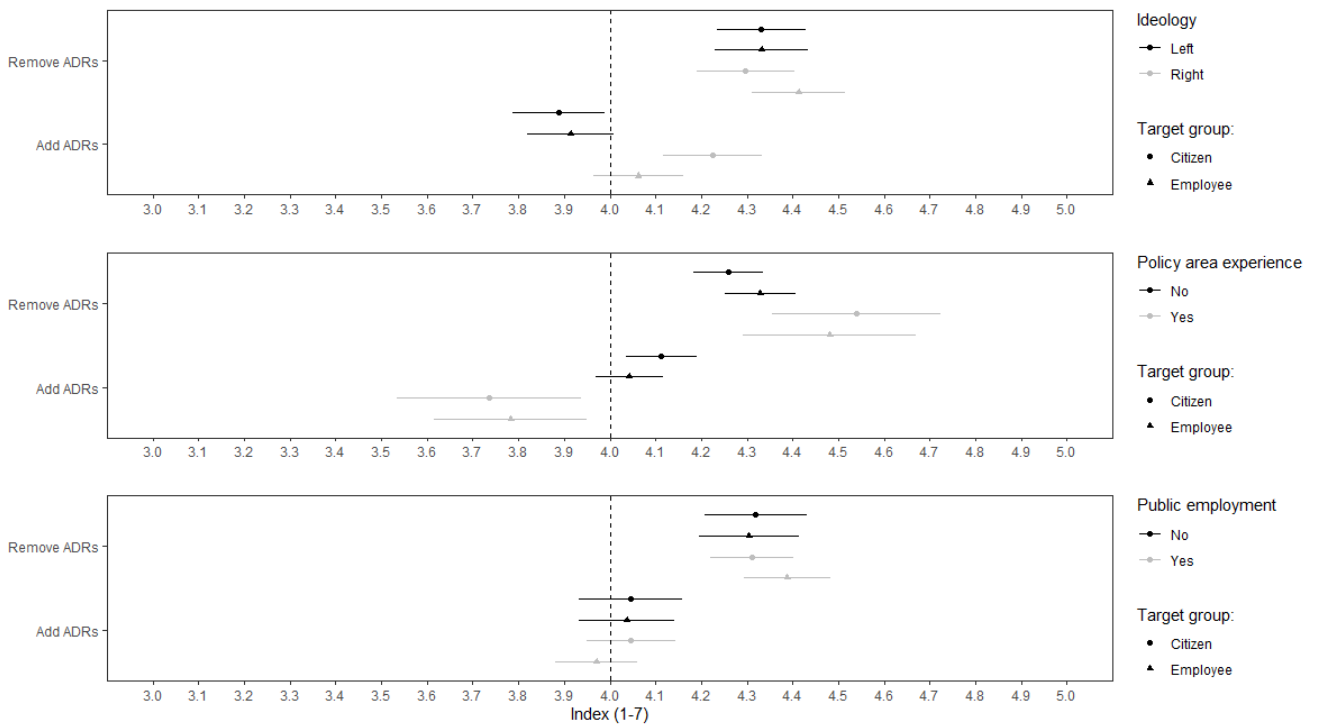
Our main H2 finding that the target group of ADRs reform does not substantively influence peoples' reform attitudes also appears to extrapolate across variations in all but one factor. Regarding education levels, people with long higher education appear to have relatively more negative attitudes toward imposing ADRs on public employees vis-à-vis citizens.

The analyses also show that the specific aspect of program integrity—fraud, waste, or abuse—appears to matter for the respondents' policy attitudes toward reforms that change the extent of ADRs, indicating that citizens tend to be relatively more inclined to accept increasing ADRs to overcome fraud than abuse or waste.

We also find indications that age and gender might matter for policy preferences in substantially small but statistically significant ways. Relative to young people, older individuals tend to be more in favor of imposing ADRs onto citizens. Relative to men, women's average attitudes toward reforms involving changes in the extent of ADRs tend to be closer to the neutral middle score on our outcome measure.

Finally, to explore potential interaction effects between our factorial treatments and our observational moderation variables (confer H3-5), we have run three model specifications including our two factorial treatments as well as our measures of political partisanship, policy area experience, and experience with public employment.

Figure A.1. Average attitudes toward bureaucratic reform that add additional ADRs vis-a-vis reforms that remove existing ADRs with 95 pct. confidence intervals. By target group and ideology, policy area experience, or public employment.



As Figure A.1 shows, we find that whether bureaucratic reforms of extent of ADRs are targeting citizens or public employees matters for right-wing-oriented citizens, but not for those that are left-wing-oriented. Right-wing citizens are relatively more inclined to remove ADRs from employees and to add ADRs for citizens (see Table B.4 in appendix).

Personal experiences with the policy area and public employment do not appear to have significant interaction effects.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

It has been described as a "*paradox of governance [...] that people dislike experiencing administrative burdens, but also support imposing them in policies*" (Halling et al. 2022: 16). Here, we presented citizens with a compliance burden-

program integrity trade-off to study their attitudes toward bureaucratic reforms that either *add* or *remove* purposeful administrative documentation requirements (ADRs) for either citizens or public employees across diverse policy contexts.

We find no compelling evidence of any *strong* dislikes against or preferences for adding new purposeful ADRs in public service policy. The descriptive distribution of the respondents' outcome responses suggests that people may value both compliance burden reduction and program integrity protection in public service delivery. Results suggesting that citizens may not find it straightforward to say if or when one of the two traits of ADRs should be prioritized. This notion aligns with the findings in prior research on burden tolerance (Halling et al. 2022) and on the trade-off between rule burden and performance surrounding red tape (Campbell 2020).

Having said that, we do find that people prefer bureaucratic reforms that proposes to remove versus add ADRs, even when these ADRs are explicitly serving program integrity. However, the substantive size of the effect that we observe is small.

- [To be written: Potential explanation. Maybe people are trusting or thinking that program integrity protection can be better and more effectively served by other means. Alternatively, maybe they are influenced by the simple fact that an authority is suggesting to remove ADRs; a thinking along the lines of "maybe this instance of ADRs really is unnecessary then"].

While we theorized that citizens' attitudes toward bureaucratic reform would be moderated by the target group, i.e., whether it was proposed to add or remove ADRs for either citizens or public employees, we find no evidence to support this expectation. We hypothesized that the general public would prefer to remove ADRs for citizens and to add purposeful ADRs for public employees. Surprisingly, our (insignificant) result indicates, if anything, that the relation might be in opposite direction.

We do find moderation effects for political partisanship and for having personal experience with the policy context in question.

While there is no significant difference between left- and right-wing citizens in terms of attitudes toward removing ADRs, they differ significantly in their preferences for adding purposeful ADRs: Left-wingers on average are against, while right-wingers on average are favorable. A finding that contradicts our hypothesis, but lends support to previous research finding similar effects of ideology on burden tolerance (Halling et al. 2022; Baekgaard et al. 2021; Keiser & Miller 2020), suggesting that right-wingers prefer to maintain program integrity rather than reduce compliance burden in public service delivery.

Similarly, having personal experience with the policy area in question appears to have substantial effects on people's attitudes toward bureaucratic reform that either imposes or removes purposeful ADRs. Citizens with policy area experience are significantly more in favor of removing ADRs than those without. Analogously, citizens with policy area experience are significantly more against adding new ADRs than citizens without. This finding suggests that personal experience with a given policy area leads people to prefer reducing compliance burden, both for

citizens and public employees, at the cost of program integrity. A notion that aligns with the findings of previous research that personal experience with welfare benefits makes people less tolerant of administrative burdens (Baekgaard et al. 2021; Halling et al. 2022).

Leaning on social identity theory, we also expected that personal experience as a public employee would affect people's attitudes, but found no evidence to support such a claim. Previous research on the relation between social (racial) identity and burden perception also find no strong link between the two, proposing that existing literature on social identity and representative bureaucracy cannot be directly adapted (Johnson & Kroll 2021). Perhaps some identity groups are more salient than others when it comes to the question of the public's attitude towards the compliance burden-program integrity trade-off. We find that identifying as a public employee is not a particular influence.

Our findings should be inferred and extrapolated in perspective of limitations pertaining to our design and data. Most importantly, and despite claims to causal inferences, our vignette survey design is not the ideal setup for identifying citizen attitudes toward real-life policy design. Our vignette relates to fictive policies, and the information we disclose is brief and stylized. In the real world, most citizens are likely to form their policy attitudes based on more and potentially repeated stimuli. Second, we also note how our findings may not generalize to other countries with other welfare regimes and administrative traditions (xxx).

CONTRIBUTION TO RESEARCH AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

By providing an integration of literatures on policy design, administration burden, and red tape in the context of democratic governance, we draw attention to an overlooked administrative bureaucratic dilemma relating inherently to public service delivery and policy design, namely whether public service policy should be designed so that the burdens of ADRs are placed on citizens or public employees.

We hope that our work may inspire new research within the field of public administration and management—focused specifically on unraveling citizen support for procedural features of public service policy.

Moreover, this article enriches and refines extant literatures within the field of public administration and management.

- [To be written: Contribution to administrative burden literature]
 - We speak to the understudied notion that not all administrative burdens are necessarily (only) “bad.” For example, scholars argue that “... *As existing research tends to focus only on negative aspects of administrative burdens, it does not adequately account for their use as a countervailing force to achieve legitimate public values and prevent misuse of public resources*” (Nisar and Masood 2022).
 - Moreover, we add new and nuanced insights to the current and empirically “early” study of ‘burden tolerance’ (Aarøe et al. 2021; Baekgaard, Moynihan, and Thomsen 2021; Christensen et al. 2020; Halling, Herd, and Moynihan 2022; Keiser and Miller 2020)
 - In this perspective, we directly examine and juxtapose considerations of compliance burden and protection of program integrity in extent of ADRs. By examining public support for reforms that add versus remove ADRs, we explore whether citizens are willing to tolerate

greater burdens for ensuring the protection of program integrity. Analyses proving insights into how citizens may weigh and value the costs and benefits of compliance burden induced by ADRs and the consequent impact on their policy attitudes.

- [To be written: Contribution to red tape literature]
 - CHECK: Studies on citizen attitudes toward or support for “red tape”
 - Confer also policy-makers signals to reduce “red tape”/bureaucracy (in the US and Denmark)

Furthermore, our findings indicates that there is no strong public support for placing compliance burdens on public employees as a means of protecting program integrity. A result that challenges previously proposed policy recommendations to shift compliance burdens from citizens to public employees to increase take-up while maintaining program integrity (Herd et al. 2013; Herd & Moynihan 2018: 259f). While an interesting finding, we also recognize that we did not make respondents *directly* prioritize or shift burdens between target groups, and, therefore, could have provided robust evidence for this notion. Doing so could be a fruitful avenue for further research.

Finally, our study provides useful information for political and administrative officials who are oriented toward designing public policy that aligns with the normative preferences of the constituency of citizens in democratic states, thus pursuing the ideal of the New Public Service paradigm that public administrators’ actions are reflective of the public interest (Rivera & Knox 2023: 71).

In particular, our findings speak to the potential net costs of ADRs in terms of public policy support. They also show that, in the eyes of citizens, ADRs implemented as means for enhancing program integrity could be placed on both the citizens and on public employees alike. Our exploratory analyses, however, indicate that what the public thinks is the appropriate target group of ADRs may vary between policy area contexts and perceptions of the deservingness of service beneficiaries.

Thus, our findings provide valuable insights for policymakers, aiding policy design, enhancing program integrity, and promoting evidence-based policy-making. Policymakers may leverage our findings to help justify and communicate the need for burdens imposed by ADRs, fostering, in turn, trust and confidence among citizens in government and the public administration.

- [To be written: Recommendations]
 - ADRs may not be the most appropriate means for protecting program integrity—i.e., minimizing the risk of fraud, waste, and abuse (cf. democratic governance and New Public Service). But what then?
 - ⇒ Maybe we need to accept some risk of violations of program integrity!?
 - ⇒ Another venue that speaks to current social trends: Digitalization (automatization of ADRs) as a potential solution, but one that also opens up a can of new challenges (cf. digital illiteracy etc.)
 - ⇒ Another venue is the use of nudges such as ‘defaults’ or ‘declarations’ (“tro og love”)

References

- Aarøe, Lene, and Michael Bang Petersen. 2014. "Crowding Out Culture: Scandinavians and Americans Agree on Social Welfare in the Face of Deservingness Cues." *The Journal of Politics* 76(3): 684–97.
- Aarøe, Lene, Martin Baekgaard, Julian Christensen, and Donald P. Moynihan. 2021. "Personality and Public Administration: Policymaker Tolerance of Administrative Burdens in Welfare Services." *Public Administration Review* 81(4):652–663.
- Agrawal, S., B. Tarcy, L. Hunt, J. Taitsman & P. Budetti. 2013. "Expanding Physician Education in Health Care Fraud and Program Integrity." *Academic Medicine* 88(8): 1081.
- Andersen, Lotte B., Gene A. Brewer, and Peter Leisink. 2021. "Stakeholders, Public Value(s), and Public Service Performance." In *Managing for Public Service Performance: How People and Values Make a Difference*, edited by Peter Leisink et al., 25–44. Oxford: Oxford Academic.
- Andersen, Simon C., and Morten Hjortskov. 2016. "Cognitive Biases in Performance Evaluations." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 26(4):647–662.
- Artiga, Samantha, and Robin Rudowitz. 2019. "Medicaid Program Integrity and Current Issues." Accessed May 23, 2023. *Kaiser Family Foundation*. <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/medicaid-program-integrity-and-current-issues/>.
- Baekgaard, Martin, Kim S. Mikkelsen, Jonas K. Madsen, and Julian Christensen. 2021. "Reducing Compliance Demands in Government Benefit Programs Improves the Psychological Well-Being of Target Group Members." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 31(4):806–821.
- Baekgaard, Martin, Donald P. Moynihan, and Mette K. Thomsen. 2021. "Why Do Policymakers Support Administrative Burdens? The Roles of Deservingness, Political Ideology, and Personal Experience." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 31(1):184–200.
- Balliet, Daniel, Junhui Wu, and Carsten K. W. De Dreu, 2014. "In-group Favoritism in Cooperation: A Meta-Analysis." *Psychological Bulletin* 140(6):1556–1581.
- Bell, Elizabeth, Ani Ter-Mkrtchyan, Wesley Wehde, and Kylie Smith. 2021. "Just or Unjust? How Ideological Beliefs Shape Street-Level Bureaucrats' Perceptions of Administrative Burden." *Public Administration Review* 81(4): 610–24.
- Bertram, Isa, Robin Bouwman, and Lars Tummers. 2022. "Socioeconomic Status and Public Sector Worker Stereotypes: Results from a Representative Survey." *Public Administration Review* 82(2): 237–55.
- Bolsen, Toby, James N. Druckman, and Fay L. Cook. 2014. "The Influence of Partisan Motivated Reasoning on Public Opinion." *Political Behavior* 36: 235–262.
- Bozeman, Barry. 2000. *Bureaucracy and Red Tape*. Prentice Hall.

- Bozeman, Barry. 2007. *Public Values and Public Interest: Counterbalancing Economic Individualism*. Georgetown University Press.
- Bozeman, Barry, and Mary K. Feeney. 2011. *Rules and Red Tape: A Prism for Public Administration Theory & Research*. New York: Routledge.
- Burstein, Paul. 2003. "The Impact of Public Opinion on Public Policy: A Review and an Agenda." *Political Research Quarterly* 56(1):29-40.
- Burstein, Paul. 2006. "Why Estimates of the Impact of Public Opinion on Public Policy Are Too High: Empirical and Theoretical Implications." *Social Forces* 84(4):2273-89.
- Campbell, Jesse W. 2019. "Red Tape from a Heideggerian Perspective." *International Journal of Organizational Analysis* 27(5):1657-72.
- Campbell, Jesse W. 2020. "Red Tape, Rule Burden, and Legitimate Performance Trade-Offs: Results from a Vignette Experiment." *Public Performance & Management Review* 43(4): 741-65.
- Christensen, Julian, Lene Aarøe, Martin Baekgaard, Pamela Herd, and Donald P. Moynihan, 2020. "Human Capital and Administrative Burden: The Role of Cognitive Resources in Citizen-State Interactions." *Public Administration Review* 80:127-136.
- Chudnovsky, Mariana, and Rik Peeters. 2021. "The Unequal Distribution of Administrative Burden: A Framework and an Illustrative Case Study for Understanding Variation in People's Experience of Burdens." *Social Policy & Administration* 55(4): 527-42.
- CMS (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services). 2023. "Program Integrity." Accessed May 23, 2023. [Medicaid.gov. https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/program-integrity/index.html](https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/program-integrity/index.html)
- Cohen, Jacob. 1988. *Statistical Power Analyses for the Behavioral Sciences* (2nd ed). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Crane, Andrew, Dirk Matten, and Jeremy Moon. 2004. "Stakeholders as Citizens? Rethinking Rights, Participation, and Democracy." *Journal of Business Ethics* 52(1/2):107-22.
- Deloitte. 2021. *Meeting Challenges to Program Integrity*. Accessed May 23, 2023. <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/finance/us-finance-meeting-challenges-to-program-integrity.pdf>
- Denhardt, Robert B., and Janet V. Denhardt. 2015a. *The New Public Service: Serving, Not Steering* (4th ed.). London: Routledge.
- Denhardt, Robert B., and Janet V. Denhardt. 2015b. "The New Public Service Revisited." *Public Administration Review* 75(5):664-72.
- Druckman, James N. 2012. "The Politics of Motivation." *Critical Review: A Journal of Politics and Society* 24(2):199-216.

- Druckman, James N., James H. Kuklinski, and Lee Sigelman. 2009. "The Unmet Potential of Interdisciplinary Research: Political Psychological Approaches to Voting and Public Opinion." *Political Behavior* 31:485–510.
- Döring, Matthias, and Jonas Krogh Madsen. 2022. "Mitigating Psychological Costs—The Role of Citizens' Administrative Literacy and Social Capital." *Public Administration Review* 82(4): 671–81.
- Eisenhardt, Kathleen M. 1989. "Agency Theory: An Assessment and Review." *Academy of Management Review* 14(1): 57–74.
- Favero, Nathan, and Minjung Kim. 2021. "Everything Is Relative: How Citizens Form and Use Expectations in Evaluating Services." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 31(3):561–577.
- George, B., Sanjay K. Pandey, Bram Steijn, Adelen Decramer, and Mieke Audenaert. 2021. "Red Tape, Organizational Performance and Employee Outcomes: Meta-Analysis, Meta-Regression and Research Agenda." *Public Administration Review* 81(4):638–651.
- Grimmelikhuijsen, Stephan, and Gregory A. Porumbescu. 2017. "Reconsidering the Expectancy Disconfirmation Model. Three Experimental Replications." *Public Management Review* 19(9):1272-1292.
- Gross, Kimberly, and Julie Wronski. 2021. "Helping the Homeless: The Role of Empathy, Race and Deservingness in Motivating Policy Support and Charitable Giving." *Political Behavior* 43(2): 585–613.
- Halling, Aske, and Martin Baekgaard. 2022. Administrative Burden in Citizen-State Interactions: A Systematic Literature Review. *Open Science Framework*. preprint.
- Halling, Aske, Pamela Herd, and Donald P. Moynihan. 2022. "How Difficult Should It Be? Evidence of Burden Tolerance from a Nationally Representative Sample." *Public Management Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2022.2056910>
- Herd, Pamela, Thomas DeLeire, Hope Harvey, and Donald P. Moynihan. 2013. "Shifting Administrative Burden to the State: The Case of Medicaid Take-Up." *Public Administration Review* 73(s1): S69–81.
- Herd, Pamela, and Donald P. Moynihan. 2018. *Administrative Burden: Policymaking by Other Means*. Russel Sage Foundation.
- Hogg, Michael A., Deborah J. Terry, and Katherine M. White. 1995. "A Tale of Two Theories: A Critical Comparison of Identity Theory with Social Identity Theory." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 58(4):255-269.
- Hvidman, Ulrik. 2019. "Citizens' Evaluations of the Public Sector: Evidence From Two Large-Scale Experiments." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 29(2):255–267.
- Hvidman, Ulrik, and Simon C. Andersen. 2016. "Perceptions of Public and Private Performance: Evidence from a Survey Experiment." *Public Administration Review* 76(1):111-120.

- Jacobsen, Christian B. & Mads L. Jakobsen. 2018. "Perceived Organizational Red Tape and Organizational Performance in Public Services." *Public Administration Review* 78(1): 24–36.
- James, Oliver. 2011. "Managing Citizens' Expectations of Public Service Performance: Evidence from Observation and Experimentation in Local Government." *Public Administration* 89(4):1419-1435.
- Johnson, Donavon, and Alexander Kroll. 2021. "What Makes Us Tolerant of Administrative Burden? Race, Representation, and Identity." *Journal of Behavioral Public Administration* 4(1). <https://www.journal-bpa.org> (June 21, 2023).
- Jørgensen, Torben B., and Barry Bozeman. 2007. "Public Values: An Inventory." *Administration & Society* 39(3):354-381.
- Keiser, Lael R., and Susan M. Miller. 2020. "Does Administrative Burden Influence Public Support for Government Programs? Evidence from a Survey Experiment." *Public Administration Review* 80(1):137-150.
- Kunda, Ziva. 1990. "The Case for Motivated Reasoning." *Psychological Bulletin* 108(3): 480-498.
- Le Grand, Julian. 2007. *The Other Invisible Hand: Delivering Public Services Through Choice and Competition*. Princeton: University Press.
- . 2010. "Knights and Knaves Return: Public Service Motivation and the Delivery of Public Services." *International Public Management Journal* 13(1): 56–71.
- Linós, Elizabeth, and Nefara Riesch. 2020. "Thick Red Tape and the Thin Blue Line: A Field Study on Reducing Administrative Burden in Police Recruitment." *Public Administration Review* 80(1):92-103.
- MACPAC (Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission). 2017. *Report to Congress on Medicaid and CHIP*. Accessed May 23, 2023. <https://www.macpac.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/June-2017-Report-to-Congress-on-Medicaid-and-CHIP.pdf>
- Marvel, John D. 2016. "Unconscious Bias in Citizens' Evaluations of Public Sector Performance." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 26(1): 143–58.
- Moynihan, Donald P., Eric Giannella, Pamela Herd, and Julie Sutherland. 2022. "Matching to Categories: Learning and Compliance Costs in Administrative Processes." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 32(4):750–764.
- Moynihan, Donald P., Pamela Herd, and Hope Harvey. 2014. "Administrative Burden: Learning, Psychological, and Compliance Costs in Citizen-State Interactions." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 25(1):43-69.
- Nicholson-Crotty, Jill, Susan M. Miller, and Lael R. Keiser. 2021. "Administrative Burden, Social Construction, and Public Support for Government Programs." *Journal of Behavioral Public Administration* 4(1).

Nisar, Muhammad A., and Ayesha Masood. 2022. "Are All Burdens Bad? Disentangling Illegitimate Administrative Burdens through Public Value Accounting." *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Administration*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23276665.2022.2088581>.

Olsen, Asmus L., Jonas H. Kyhse-Andersen, and Donald P. Moynihan. 2022. "The Unequal Distribution of Opportunity: A National Audit Study of Bureaucratic Discrimination in Primary School Access." *American Journal of Political Science* 66(3):587-603.

Pandey, Sanjay K. 2021. "The Psychological Process View of Bureaucratic Red Tape." In *Research Handbook Human Resource Management in the Public Sector*, edited by Eva Knies and Bram Steijn, 260-275. Edward Elgar.

Pandey, Sanjay K., Sheela Pandey, and Gregg Van Ryzin. 2017. "Prospects for Experimental Approaches to Research on Bureaucratic Red Tape." In *Experiments in Public Management Research: Challenges and Opportunities*, edited by Oliver James, Sebastian Jilke, and Gregg Van Ryzin, 219-43. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Page, Benjamin I., and Robert Y. Shapiro. 1983. "Effects of Public Opinion on Policy." *American Political Science Review* 77(1):175-190.

Pedersen, Mogens J., and Vibeke L. Nielsen. 2020. "Bureaucratic Decision-Making: A Multi-Method Study of Gender Similarity Bias and Gender Stereotype Beliefs." *Public Administration* 98(2):424-440.

Prior, Markus, Gaurav Sood, Kabir Khanna. 2015. "You Cannot Be Serious: The Impact of Accuracy Incentives on Partisan Bias in Reports of Economic Perceptions." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 10(4): 489-518.

Rivera, Jason D., and Claire C. Knox. 2023. "Bureaucratic Discretion, Social Equity, and the Administrative Legitimacy Dilemma: Complications of New Public Service." *Public Administration Review* 83(1):65-77.

Rutgers, Mark R. 2014. "As Good as It Gets? On the Meaning of Public Value in the Study of Policy and Management." *The American Review of Public Administration* 45(1):29-45.

Shapiro, Robert Y. 2011. "Public Opinion and American Democracy." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 75(5):982-1017.

Sunstein, Cass R. & Julien L. Gosset. 2020. "OPTIMAL SLUDGE? THE PRICE OF PROGRAM INTEGRITY." *Duke Law Journal Online* 70: 74-90

Taber, Charles S., and Milton Lodge. 2006. "Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs." *American Journal of Political Science* 50(3):755-768.

Tajfel, Henri, and John Turner. 1979. "An Integrative Theory of Inter-Group Conflict." In *The Social Psychology of Inter-Group Relations*, edited by William G. Austin and Stephen Worchel, 33-47. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Thau, Mads, Maria F. Mikkelsen, Morten Hjortskov, and Mogens J. Pedersen. 2021. "Question Order Bias Revisited: A Split-Ballot Experiment on Satisfaction with

Public Services among Experienced and Profession Users." *Public Administration* 99(1):189-204.

Van Dooren, Wouter, Morten Hjortskov, Steven F. De Vadder, and Koen Verhoest. 2023. "The Consistency of Question-Order Bias in a Changing Political Context." *Public Administration*, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1111/padm.12919>

Van Ryzin, Gregg G. 2006. "Testing the Expectancy Disconfirmation Model of Citizen Satisfaction with Local Government." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 16(4):599-611.

Willems, Jurgen. 2020. "Public Servant Stereotypes: It Is Not (at) All about Being Lazy, Greedy and Corrupt." *Public Administration* 98(4): 807–23.

Winter, Søren C., and Vibeke L. Nielsen. 2008. *Implementering af politik*. København: Hans Reitzels Forlag.

Zhang, Jiasheng, Wenna Chen, Nikolai Petrovsky, and Richard M. Walker. 2021. "The Expectancy-Disconfirmation Model and Citizen Satisfaction with Public Services: A Meta-Analysis and an Agenda for Best Practice." *Public Administration Review* 82(1):147-159.

Appendix A Sample statistics

Table A.1 Descriptive statistics and comparison with Danish public.

	Sample	Danish public (+18 years)	Diff.	Add ADRs	Remove ADRs	Citizens	Publ. employees
Age							
18-34	.252	.276	-.024	.256	.248	.261	.243
35-55	.351	.324	.027	.348	.354	.336	.366
56+	.397	.400	.003	.396	.398	.403	.391
Gender							
Female	.517	.507	.010	.531	.503	.526	.509
Male	.482	.493	-.011	.468	.496	.473	.490
Other	.001	.001	.000	.001	.001	.001	.001
Geography (region)							
Capital Region	.329	.319	.010	.319	.339	.334	.324
Sjælland	.127	.144	-.017	.124	.129	.131	.122
Syddanmark	.193	.209	-.016	.200	.187	.190	.198
Midtjylland	.245	.227	.018	.245	.245	.246	.244
Nordjylland	.106	.101	.005	.112	.100	.099	.112

Note: Based on the 6012 observations from 2004 respondents included in the analysis.
Population data (for 18 years and above) is from Statistics Denmark's Statbank (FOLK1A 2023K1 for age, gender, and geography)

Appendix B Regression tables

Table B.1 Results H1 and H2

	Dependent variable:	
	Attitude index (1-7)	
	H1	H2
Remove	.031 *** (.044)	0.260 *** (.058)
Public employee		-.052 (.052)
Remove * public employee		.099 (.075)
Constant	4.021 *** (.031)	4.047 *** (0.042)
Observations	6,012	6,012
R ²	.012	.012
Adjusted R ²	.012	.012
F statistic	50.31 *** (df=1; 2003)	17.43 *** (df=3; 2003)
<i>Note:</i> †p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001 Respondent-clustered std. errors in parenthesis		

Table B.2 Results H3, H4, and H5

	Dependent variable:		
	Attitude index (1-7)		
	H3	H4	H5
Remove	.431 *** (.060)	.218 *** (.045)	.271 *** (.068)
Right wing	.239 *** (.063)		
Remove * Right wing	-.215 * (0.088)		
Policy experience		-.316 *** (.073)	
Remove * policy experience		.533 *** (.102)	
Publ. employment experience			-.034 (.063)
Remove * employment exp.			.070 (.089)
Constant	3.901 *** (.088)	4.077 *** (.032)	4.041 *** (.049)
Observations	5,823	6,012	5,988
R ²	.017	.018	.012
Adjusted R ²	.016	.017	.012
F statistic	24.400 *** (df=3; 1940)	24.120 ***	17.190 ***

Note:

†p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001
Respondent-clustered std. errors in parenthesis

Table B.3 Heterogenous analyses (z-transformed index score) (respondent clustered std errors in parentheses)

	Age		Gender		Education		Policy context		Program integrity	
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)	(j)
Add vs remove (ref: Add ADRs)										
Remove ADRs	0.161** (0.056)	0.172* (0.073)	0.318*** (0.045)	0.280*** (0.060)	0.429*** (0.080)	0.288** (0.104)	0.011 (0.038)	-0.010 (0.061)	0.317*** (0.048)	0.305*** (0.067)
Target group (ref: Citizens)										
Public employees		0.091 (0.065)		-0.089 ' (0.053)		-0.248** (0.094)		-0.014 (0.062)		-0.028 (0.061)
Age (ref: 18-34 years)										
35-55 years	-0.067 (0.054)	0.032 (0.072)								
56+ years	0.143** (0.051)	0.215** (0.069)								
Gender (ref: Man)										
Woman			-0.053 (0.044)	-0.104 ' (0.059)						
Education (ref: Long cycle tertiary)										
Primary/high school					0.039 (0.072)	-0.148 (0.094)				
Short/medium cycle tertiary					0.049 (0.071)	-0.049 (0.092)				
Policy area (ref: Busines subsidies)										
Unemployment benefits							-0.144*** (0.038)	-0.120 ' (0.061)		
Specialized social service							-0.155*** (0.039)	-0.142* (0.061)		
Program integrity dimension (ref: Abuse)										
Fraud									0.207*** (0.045)	0.138* (0.065)
Waste									0.067 (0.046)	0.152* (0.066)
Interactions										
Remove * publ. empl.		-0.012 (0.094)		0.073 (0.075)		0.275** (0.136)		0.039 (0.085)		0.022 (0.090)
Remove * 35-55 years	0.219** (0.079)	0.143 (0.103)								
Remove * 56+ years	-0.046 (0.075)	-0.090 (0.100)								
Remove * woman			-0.197** (0.062)	-0.191 ' (0.082)						
Remove * Primary/high school					-0.257** (0.099)	-0.018 (0.131)				
Remove * S/M cycle tertiary					-0.173 ' (0.098)	-0.134 (0.127)				
Remove * Unemployment benef.							0.229*** (0.056)	0.167 ' (0.087)		
Remove * Social service							0.393*** (0.054)	0.396*** (0.081)		
Remove * Fraud									-0.268*** (0.065)	-0.241** (0.092)
Remove * waste									-0.019 (0.065)	-0.121 (0.092)
Publ. empl. * 35-55 yrs		-0.191* (0.093)								
Publ. empl. * 56+ yrs		-0.145 ' (0.087)								
Publ. empl. * woman				0.099 (0.073)						
Publ. empl. * Primary/high school						0.370** (0.119)				
Publ. empl. * S/M cycle tertiary						0.188 ' (0.114)				

Pub. empl. * unemployment								-0.047 (0.087)		
Pub. empl * social service								-0.026 (0.087)		
Publ. employee * Fraud									0.140 (0.088)	
Publ employee * waste									-0.160' (0.086)	
Remove * employee * 35-55 yrs	0.142 (0.132)									
Remove * employee * 56+ yrs	0.087 (0.128)									
Remove * employee * woman					-0.006 (0.106)					
Rem. * employee * Prim/high school						-0.473** (0.170)				
Rem. * employee * S/M cycle tertiary						-0.066 (0.166)				
Rem. * employee * unempl. ben.							0.123 (0.124)			
Rem. * employee * social service							-0.004 (0.117)			
Remove * employee * fraud									-0.057 (0.128)	
Remove * employee * waste									0.198 (0.122)	
Constant	-0.142*** (0.037)	-0.186*** (0.049)	-0.080* (0.033)	-0.032 (0.0449)	-0.176** (0.059)	-0.048 (0.076)	-0.004 (0.031)	0.003 (0.046)	-0.201*** (0.033)	-0.187 (0.047)
Observations	6012	6012	6006	6006	4347	4347	6012	6012	6012	6012
R ²	0.018	0.019	0.020	0.021	0.021	0.025	0.020	0.020	0.017	0.019
Adjusted R ²	0.017	0.017	0.020	0.020	0.020	0.022	0.019	0.018	0.016	0.018
F-statistic	14.40	7.14	27.52	12.53	12.87	7.17	21.64	10.33	17.37	9.32

Note: 0 < *** p < 0.001 < ** p < 0.01 < * p < 0.05 < ' p < 0.1

Figure B.1 Visualisation of table B.3, heterogeneous analyses

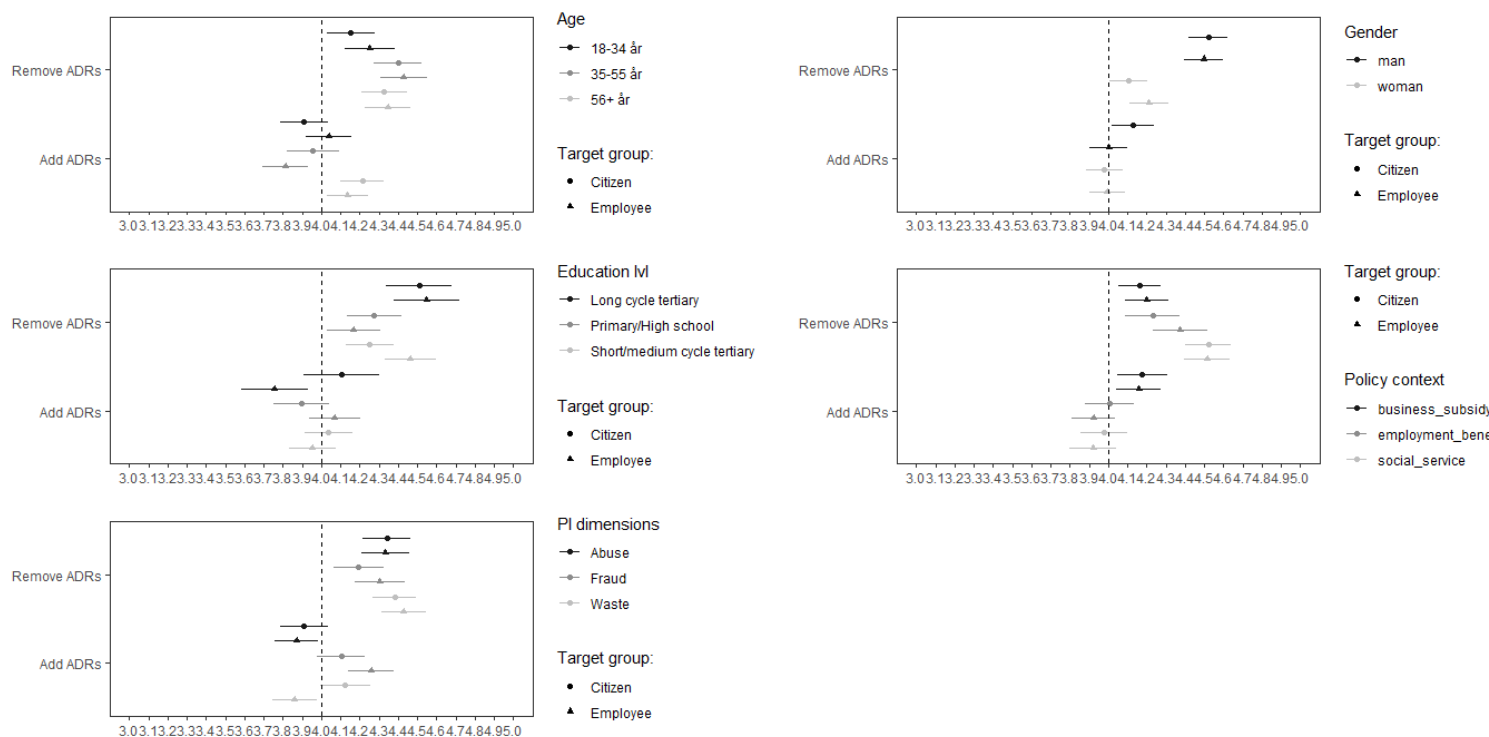


Table B.4 Exploratory analyses (z-transformed index score) (respondent clustered std errors in parentheses)

	Ideology		Policy context exp.		Public employment exp.	
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
Add vs remove (ref: Add ADRs)						
Remove ADRs	0.306*** (0.043)	0.315*** (0.055)	0.155*** (0.032)	0.105* (0.044)	0.192*** (0.048)	0.195** (0.065)
Target group (ref: Citizens)						
Public employees		0.019 (0.052)		-0.050 (0.040)		-0.006 (0.056)
Ideology (ref: Left wing)						
Right wing	0.170*** (0.046)	0.240*** (0.060)				
Policy context experience (ref: No personal experience)						
Experience with policy context			-0.225*** (0.052)	-0.267*** (0.079)		
Public employment experience (ref: No experience with public employment)						
Experience with public employment					-0.024 (0.045)	0.001 (0.060)
Interactions						
Remove * public employees		-0.018 (0.072)		0.099 ' (0.058)		-0.005 (0.082)
Remove * right wing	-0.153* (0.063)	-0.264** (0.084)				
Remove * policy context exp			0.379*** (0.072)	0.467*** (0.110)		
Remove * public employment exp					0.050 (0.063)	-0.008 (0.084)
Public employees * right wing		0.134 ' (0.074)				
Public employees * policy context exp				0.083 (0.104)		
Public employees * public employment exp						-0.048 (0.075)
Remove * Public employees * right wing		0.217* (0.108)				
Remove * Public employees * policy context				-0.175 (0.148)		
Remove * Public employees * public employment experience						0.114 (0.108)
Constant	-0.193*** (0.030)	-0.202*** (0.041)	-0.069** (0.023)	-0.043 ' (0.030)	-0.094** (0.034)	-0.091 (0.045)
Observations	5823	5823	6012	6012	5988	5988
R ²	0.017	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.012	0.013
Adjusted R ²	0.016	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.012	0.012
F-statistic	24.40	11.48	24.12	10.70	17.19	7.67

Note: 0 < *** p < 0.001 < ** p < 0.01 < * p < 0.05 < ' p < 0.1

Appendix C Survey Items and index construction

C.1: Outcome measure (in original Danish):

På baggrund af denne information: I hvilken grad er du enig med følgende udsagn?

	Helt uenig 1	2	3	Hverken/ eller 4	5	6	Helt enig 7
Det er en god idé at gennemføre reformen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reformen er et skridt i den forkert retning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reformens fordele er langt større end ulemperne	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note: The order of questions is randomized. One item is reversed.
The index was constructed by taking mean of the three items.

C.2: Attention check (in original Danish):

Tænk på det sidste scenarie, som du netop blev præsenteret for (dvs. på forrige survey-side).

Reformen vedrørte hvilket offentligt serviceområde?

- ☐ Beskæftigelsesområdet
- ☐ Det specialiserede socialområde
- ☐ Erhvervsstøtteområdet
- ☐ Husker ikke

Reformen indebærer hvilken ændring?

- ☐ Indføre visse regler, procedurer og dokumentationskrav
- ☐ Fjerne visse regler, procedurer og dokumentationskrav
- ☐ Husker ikke

Reformen indebærer en ændring i visse regler, procedurer og dokumentationskrav for hvem?

- ☐ Borgere
- ☐ Offentligt ansatte
- ☐ Husker ikke

C.3: Background questions (in original Danish):

Vi vil nu bede dig svare på tre baggrundsspørgsmål om dig selv:

Har du været offentligt ansat i løbet af dit arbejdsliv?

- ☐ Nej, aldrig
- ☐ Ja, i en kortere periode
- ☐ Ja, i en betydelig del af mit arbejdsliv
- ☐ Ja, i hele mit arbejdsliv
- ☐ Ved ikke

Har du som borger været i kontakt med det offentlige på et af følgende områder? (sæt gerne X ved flere)

- ☐ Beskæftigelsesområdet
- ☐ Det specialiserede socialområde
- ☐ Erhvervsstøtteområdet
- ☐ Ved ikke
- ☐ Ingen af ovenstående

Hvad er din højest gennemførte eller igangværende uddannelse?

- ☐ Grundskole
- ☐ Ungdomsuddannelse (gymnasial uddannelse, EUD eller tilsvarende)
- ☐ Kort videregående uddannelse (erhvervsakademiuddannelse eller tilsvarende)
- ☐ Mellemlang videregående uddannelse (bachelor, professionsbachelor eller tilsvarende)
- ☐ Lang videregående uddannelse (kandidatuddannelse eller højere)
- ☐ Andet
- ☐ Ved ikke

I politik tales der ofte om en økonomisk venstre-højre skala.

Venstreorienteret står for, at det offentlige skal sikre, at der bliver sørget for alle. Højreorienteret står for, at det enkelte menneske skal have mere ansvar for sig selv.

Hvor vil du placere dig selv og partierne på denne skala, hvor 0 er mest venstreorienteret, og 10 er mest højreorienteret?

Venstre-orienteret										Højre-orienteret	Ved ikke
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix D Vignettes

Example vignette 1 (original Danish):

SCENARIO 1

Forestil dig, at man har planer om at gennemføre en administrativ reform på **beskæftigelsesområdet**, der omfatter bl.a. tildelingen af kontanthjælp, førtidspension, dagpenge og efterløn.

Reformen indebærer at **indføre** visse regler, procedurer og dokumentationskrav for **offentligt ansatte** på området. Reformen har til formål at **undgå svindel**, herunder sikre at borgere afholdes adgang til en offentlig ydelse, som de ikke er berettigede til.

Gennemførslen af reformen indebærer dog også, at **det administrative arbejde bliver tungere**, så det bliver mere besværligt for offentligt ansatte at komme igennem den administrative proces i deres sager.

Example vignette 1 (translation):

SCENARIO 1

Imagine that there are plans to implement an administrative reform of the **employment policy sector**, which includes e.g., allocation of unemployment benefits and early retirement rights.

The reform involves **introducing** certain rules, procedures, and documentation requirements for **public employees** in this field. The purpose of the reform is to **prevent fraud**, ensuring that citizens are denied access to a public benefit they are not entitled to.

However, the implementation of the reform also means that **the administrative workload becomes heavier**, making it more cumbersome for public employees to navigate through the administrative process in their cases.