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# Finding a mission in bureaucracies: How authentic leadership and red tape interact

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## Abstract

Finding a mission is important for employees to perform well in public service jobs. Research has demonstrated that leadership can facilitate mission valence among followers, but if and how leadership unfolds this effect in the presence of excessive bureaucracy (i.e., red tape) is unclear. This interaction is particularly interesting in the case of authentic leadership (i.e., a positive leadership style based on self-awareness, consistent behaviors, and transparent relations with followers), as red tape may either neutralize or enhance the association of authentic leadership with mission valence. We test these rivalry hypotheses in a sample from a two-wave survey among public employees in Germany. Results provide support for the neutralization hypothesis, as the relationship between authentic leadership and mission valence strengthens at lower levels of red tape. HR practitioners are thus challenged to reduce red tape and to make public organizations authentic places, where leaders can develop authenticity through self-awareness.

## Abstrakt

Eine Mission zu haben ist für Mitarbeiter:innen im öffentlichen Dienst wichtig, um gute Arbeitsleistungen zu erbringen. Bisherige Forschung hat gezeigt, dass Führung die Valenz einer Mission unter den Mitarbeiter:innen fördern kann. Es ist jedoch unklar, ob und wie Führung

diesen Effekt entfaltet, wenn die Bürokratie ein exzessives Ausmaß erreicht hat. Diese Wechselwirkung ist besonders interessant im Falle authentischer Führung (ein positiver Führungsstil, der auf Selbstbewusstheit, konsistentem Verhalten und transparenten Beziehungen zu den Mitarbeiter:innen beruht). Exzessive Bürokratie kann den Zusammenhang zwischen authentischer Führung und der Valenz der Mission entweder neutralisieren oder verstärken. Wir testen diese konkurrierenden Hypothesen anhand einer Stichprobe aus einer zweifeligen Umfrage unter Mitarbeiter:innen des öffentlichen Dienstes in Deutschland. Die Ergebnisse sprechen für die Neutralisierungshypothese, da sich der Zusammenhang zwischen authentischer Führung und der Valenz der Mission bei einem geringeren Maß an Bürokratie verstärkt. Personalverantwortliche sind daher gefordert, Bürokratie abzubauen und öffentliche Organisationen zu authentischen Orten zu machen, an denen Führungskräfte durch Selbsterkenntnis Authentizität entwickeln können.

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

A workforce in charge of the organizational mission is critical to the delivery of high-quality services for the good of society (Rainey & Steinbauer, 1999; Wright et al., 2012; Wright & Pandey, 2011). Public employees are in charge of the organization's purpose or social contribution when *mission valence* is in place, that is, when the mission is salient and perceived as attractive (Wright et al., 2012, 206). Previous scholarship has corroborated evidence that mission valence has positive consequences in terms of employee outcomes in public organizations. For example, mission valence has been shown to be positively related to beneficial outcomes such as employee performance (Caillier, 2014) and work impact (Desmidt & Prinzie, 2019) and to be negatively associated with detrimental outcomes such as emotional exhaustion (Bosak et al., 2021) and turnover intention (Caillier, 2016). Accordingly, public administration (PA) scholars and practitioners should have strong interest in the drivers of mission valence among public employees.

Leadership has been identified as such a driver of mission valence (Caillier, 2014, 2016; Wright et al., 2012). Aligning followers toward the accomplishment of a shared mission and mobilizing individual and collective efforts accordingly is almost the essence of leadership (Yukl & Gardner, 2020). However, leadership in the public sector has often been portrayed as operating under special limitations emerging from tight bureaucratic structures and procedures (Hesmert et al., 2021; Van Wart, 2013a). Most public bureaucracies are formal organizations of considerable size and complexity, often with steep hierarchies and a strong division of labor (Rainey, 2014). The density of rules and regulations is high and frequently exceeds the dimensions of what is functionally necessary, which culminates in red tape (Bozeman & Feeney, 2014; Madsen et al., 2022). Leadership scholars, however, are still intrigued by the interrelationships of leadership and red tape. On the one hand, red tape may neutralize the influence of leaders, as rules and procedures may serve as “substitutes for leadership” (Kerr & Jermier, 1978). On the other hand, red tape may enhance the salience and effectiveness of leadership, as it makes sense-giving by leaders all the more necessary.

These opposed tendencies may be particularly countervailing in the case of *authentic leadership*. Leaders are authentic when “they know who they are, what they believe and value, and [when] they act upon those values and beliefs while transparently interacting with others” (Avolio et al., 2004, 802). Leaders who are authentic role models will also be credible and trustworthy senders of mission-related messages. Authentic leaders “walk the talk” of the organizational mission and, through this consistency of talk and action, encourage followers to join the common purpose (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Such leader authenticity has received increasing attention in general leadership research (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Iszatt-White & Kempster, 2019; Neider & Schriesheim, 2011). PA scholarship, however, has only recently spent growing attention to authentic leadership (Adendorff et al., 2021; Ahmad et al., 2015; Farr-Wharton et al., 2021; Gelaidan et al., 2022; Hattke & Hattke, 2019).

The interaction between authentic leadership and red tape is especially interesting, and worth studying, in the public sector because authenticity and bureaucracy can be conceived of as inherently contradictory. The alienation of the individual from bureaucratic organizations has been a recurrent topic in PA and organizational sociology (Aiken & Hage, 1966; DeHart-Davis & Pandey, 2005; Lipsky, 1980). The alienating and dehumanizing forces of over-formalized organizations suggest two opposing perspectives on the interrelation of authentic leadership and red tape: On the one hand, red tape may set the stage on which authentic leaders can perform even better. The more organizations suffer from red tape, the more authentic leaders stand out and compensate for the looming lack of meaningfulness. This assumption may be referred to as *enhancement hypothesis* because it postulates that red tape will be an enhancer that strengthens the effect of authentic leadership on mission valence. On the other hand, red tape may weaken authentic leaders' impact on their followers and cover authenticity like a heavy veil. The more red tape is in place, the worse the fit of authentic leaders with rules and procedures that are detached from their mission, and the less room to unfold leaders' full impact on followers. We refer to this assumption as *neutralization hypothesis* because it postulates that red tape will be a neutralizer of authentic leaders' impact on followers' mission valence.

In the present study, we test these contrary theoretical assumptions empirically and ask: *How does authentic leadership relate to followers' mission valence in public organizations, and how is this relationship contingent on red tape?* To address these research questions, the study builds on a two-wave survey among public employees in the district offices of a German city state, with a balanced sample of  $n = 1013$  respondents. The results show a positive impact of authentic leadership on mission valence, suggesting that leaders with high levels of authenticity are substantially more likely to have followers who are attracted to, and convinced of, the organization's mission than the followers of less authentic leaders. This effect is indeed contingent on the organizational context, as it increases at lower levels of red tape. We find this moderation effect, although in different strengths, for two dimensions of red tape, that is, compliance burden and lack of functionality (van Loon et al., 2016).

The study makes at least two interrelated contributions to the literature. First, the results expand on previous research on the boundary conditions of leadership in the public sector. Scholarship has repeatedly stressed that the structural context matters for the emergence and effectiveness of leadership (van der Hoek et al., 2021; van der Voet, 2014). As still few studies provide insights into these interactions, the scholarly and practical understanding of the conditions under which leadership is, or is not, associated with follower outcomes remains limited. This particularly applies to the interplay of leadership and red tape, which has been examined in only few studies with inconclusive findings (Hattke et al., 2018; Moynihan, 2012; van der Voet, 2016; Wright & Pandey, 2010). Second, we respond to Crosby and Bryson's (2018) call to “roam more freely through the disciplines” and to “draw on a wider range of leadership theories and approaches” than before. By being among the first studies of authentic leadership in the public sector, our research expands on the nomological network of leadership research in this field. Leadership scholarship has proven that authentic leadership yields beneficial follower outcomes in other settings, notably in the health care (Malila et al., 2018) and the business sector (Gardner et al., 2011). However, given the ambiguous relationship between authenticity and bureaucracy, the emergence and effectiveness of authentic leadership in the public sector are unclear. Although bureaucracy, even in excessive forms, is not unique to public sector organizations, perceived red tape differs between the sectors both in kind and strength (Bozeman et al., 1992; Pandey & Kingsley, 2000; Rainey et al., 1995).

## 2 | THEORY

### 2.1 | Authentic leadership and mission valence

Mission valence refers to the affective orientations of people toward an organization's mission and toward the outcomes that are achieved when the mission is accomplished (Rainey & Steinbauer, 1999; Wright, 2007; Wright & Pandey, 2010). It has been defined as “an employee's perceptions of the attractiveness or salience of an organization's purpose or social contribution” (Wright et al., 2012, 206). For example, mission valence is high when public employees at the frontline of a district office can tell clearly how the organization contributes to livable housing and social cohesion in the district, act consistently upon this mission in their daily work, feel rewarded when the mission is attained, and speak to others about it with enthusiasm. The more engaging, attractive, and worthwhile the organizational mission appears to members, the more beneficial attitudes they will show toward the organization and their job, and the more efforts they will mobilize in pursuit and accomplishment of the mission (Rainey & Steinbauer, 1999). Empirical research, although still sparse, tends to support this assumption (Caillier, 2015; Guerrero & Chenevert, 2020; Wright & Pandey, 2011). These findings raise the question of what the antecedents of mission valence are, such that public managers can use these levers to facilitate mission valence among employees.

Authentic leadership may be such a facilitator of mission valence in public organizations. Luthans and Avolio (2003, 243) define authentic leadership “as a process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organizational context, which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviors on the part of leaders and associates, fostering positive self-development.” This notion of authentic leadership reflects the conceptual roots in positive psychology and highlights the pivotal role of self-awareness for leaders to become authentic. This insight corresponds to the Greek aphorism “Know Thyself” (γινώθι σεαυτόν), which was an inscription in the Temple of Apollo at Delphi and is among the Delphic maxims, suggesting that self-inquiry and self-realization are crucial for mastering one's life (Parke & Wormell, 1956). However, self-awareness is a necessary but not the only condition for leaders to become authentic (Neider & Schriesheim, 2011). Authentic leaders have not only high levels of self-awareness but also abilities to self-regulate their behaviors and decisions accordingly, such that they are consistent with internalized values and resistant toward group, organizational, and societal pressures. The concept of authentic leadership also comprises relational aspects, as authentic leaders relate to followers in a transparent and balanced way. They are not only aware of their authentic self (i.e., their true thoughts and feelings), but also present it to others and share information openly. Authentic leaders also consider a broad array of different opinions and viewpoints before they make decisions, even if this information challenges their own deeply held positions.

The way how authentic leaders relate to their followers makes the concept of authentic leadership all the more interesting for public management research, as scholars have called for more relational approaches to leadership in the public sector (Crosby & Bryson, 2018; Ospina, 2017). While the significance of authentic leadership for public sector organizations has been acknowledged (Van Wart, 2013b), the body of available empirical research is still small. With rare exceptions (Adendorff et al., 2021; Gelaidan et al., 2022), research is limited to specific subfields of the public sector, such as the military (Hattke & Hattke, 2019), higher education (Ahmad et al., 2015), or the police (Farr-Wharton et al., 2021). This neglect is surprising, as authentic leaders “have a role to play in the greater society by tackling public policy issues and addressing organizational and societal problems” (Avolio et al., 2004, 802)—a role preferably played by public leaders. Among the reasons why authentic leadership deserves more attention from PA scholars and practitioners is its potential to facilitate followers' mission valence.

The notion of a goal-oriented, mission-driven leader is inherent to most, if not all, positive leadership concepts (Avolio & Mhatre, 2012), with varying degrees of how explicitly this aspect figures in the conceptualization. Authentic leadership is no exception here, as authentic leaders have frequently been portrayed as those following a mission and acting consistently and convincingly upon it. For example, Shamir and Eilam (2005, 397) suggest that authentic leaders “have a value-based cause or a mission they want to promote, and they engage in leadership in order to promote this cause or mission.” Glistrap et al. (2015) show that authentic leaders are expected to show congruence

between personal beliefs and the organizational mission, and to pursue this mission passionately both in their job roles and beyond. Indeed, Gardner et al. (2005, 353) propose that authentic leaders envision “a feared self who lets followers down by failing to live up to core organizational values, and thereby compromises the organization's mission” and act in a way that prevents this possible self from becoming reality. Authentic leadership is thus related to high levels of value congruence between leaders and the organization, with high self-awareness about this fit and self-regulatory behaviors to maintain it. Authentic leaders, hence, are those leaders who cannot lead their followers other than along the organizational mission because this mission resonates with their own calling.

The literature on authentic leadership has also been largely consistent that authentic leaders are effective in aligning followers with the organizational mission (Gardner et al., 2005). Authentic leadership, however, differs from other leadership concepts in terms of *how* leaders foster mission valence in followers (Avolio & Mhatre, 2012). While the concept of transformational leadership, for instance, puts emphasis on visionary communication, authentic leadership focuses more on the credibility of leaders as role models. Authentic leaders “walk the talk” and show attitudes and behaviors that are consistent with both the leader's personal beliefs and the organization's overall mission. For example, the leader of an environmental agency will be authentic when he or she tries to reduce his or her own carbon emissions both in professional (e.g., by using the train for business travels) and in private life (e.g., by heating with renewable energies), even if this means discomfort and additional costs. Followers will respond to this role modeling by increasingly identifying with the leader (Avolio et al., 2004) and developing themselves a deeper sense of the organizational mission. This process can be conceptualized as social learning (Bandura, 1971) in which followers' identification and commitment with the organizational mission gradually increase. In turn, they enter a self-reinforcing process of sharing the mission with the leader and other followers, experiencing growing group cohesion, and identifying even more with the common purpose. Hence, followers of authentic leaders are likely to show high engagement for the benefit of the group and the organization in an increasingly mission-based culture (Desmidt & Prinzie, 2019). We therefore assume that authentic leadership will translate into mission valence in followers. Our first hypothesis thus reads as follows:

**H1.** *Authentic leadership is positively related to followers' mission valence.*

## 2.2 | Red tape and mission valence

The mission valence in followers will not only unfold in personal relationships with leaders but will also depend on the broader organizational context. In public organizations, this context is often characterized by a level of bureaucracy that has proliferated beyond what is still required for the pursuit of organizational goals. Such red tape has been defined as “rules, regulations, and procedures that remain in force and entail a compliance burden for the organization but have no efficacy for the rules' functional object” (Bozeman, 1993, 283). A practical example of red tape would be a rule to store paper files even after digital copies have been saved and made electronically accessible to employees.

Whereas the direct association between red tape and mission valence has, to the best of our knowledge, not been studied so far, inferences can be made from the relationship between red tape and goal clarity. A meta-analysis has demonstrated that red tape is negatively related to goal clarity (Blom et al., 2021). Unclear goals, in turn, will make it difficult for members to grasp the organizational mission and develop positive attitudes toward it. Beyond these empirical indications of a negative association between red tape and mission valence, the framework of Rainey and Steinbauer (1999) provides more conceptually driven arguments. The framework suggests that besides leadership, the availability of resources and the design of tasks will have an impact on employees' mission valence. Arguably, financial and human resources that are absorbed by red tape cannot be used for the pursuit of the actual organizational mission. Likewise, working hours that are spent on compliance with burdensome and unnecessary rules and regulations cannot be spent more productively and rewardingly on mission-related tasks. Red tape will thus deprioritize the organizational mission both resource- and task-wise, with potentially detrimental consequences for employees' mission valence. We conclude from this reasoning:

H2. *Red tape is negatively related to followers' mission valence.*

## 2.3 | The moderating effect of red tape

Given that the missions of public organizations, in the absence of more formalized goals of profitability, are heavily charged with public values, authentic leadership is a promising approach to align followers toward these values and engage them in pursuing the mission. However, it is unclear how authentic leadership interferes with the organizational context of public bureaucracies. As contextual factors are still blind spots in public management research (Meier et al., 2017), scholarship provides little insights into the conditions under which leadership does, or does not, unfold its impact on public employees. Rare studies show that organizational structure may indeed interfere with leadership behaviors and their impact on followers (Moon & Park, 2019; Wright & Pandey, 2010). There is, however, only limited knowledge about how leadership interferes with red tape.

Some previous studies consider red tape as an antecedent of leadership, with mixed results. For example, the studies by Wright and Pandey (2010) and Hattke et al. (2018) both focus on the impact of red tape in human resource (HR) management and policies on perceived leadership behaviors. While Wright and Pandey (2010) find no such impact of HR red tape on transformational leadership, Hattke et al. (2018) report a positive influence on controlling leadership and a negative influence on supportive leadership. In contrast, some other studies consider red tape as an outcome of leadership. Moynihan et al. (2012) find that transformational leadership has a negative overall effect on perceptions of HR red tape, a finding that has been confirmed by Campbell (2017) for red tape in general. However, van der Voet (2016) conceptualizes transformational leadership and red tape as independent of each other, both moderating the translation of change leadership into communication and participation in a change process. Given these mixed conceptualizations and findings, it is fair to conclude that the interaction of leadership and red tape is still an unsolved issue.

Substitutes for leadership theory may help addressing this issue (Dionne et al., 2005; Kerr & Jermier, 1978). The theory counters the often implicitly made assumption that leadership will exert influence on employees regardless of the organizational context in which it occurs. Besides individual and task characteristics, an array of organizational variables act as situational modifiers that may strengthen or weaken leaders' influence on followers, or may fully substitute for leadership. *Enhancers* are organizational characteristics that strengthen the impact of leader behaviors and follower outcomes (Howell et al., 1986). *Neutralizers* are those factors that create an "influence vacuum" (Kerr & Jermier, 1978, 395), thus weakening the influence of leaders on followers. Since its first formulation, substitutes for leadership theory have inspired a bunch of moderation analyses in leadership studies (Dionne et al., 2005; Howell et al., 1986). From the outset of this research, formalization and inflexibility of organizations have been considered potential neutralizers of leadership (Kerr & Jermier, 1978). However, subsequent scholarship has considered neither bureaucracy in excessive forms (i.e., red tape) nor its interaction with authentic leadership. Two lines of reasoning, with contrary empirical expectations, emerge here.

*The enhancement hypothesis.* The first line suggests that red tape is an enhancer of authentic leadership, thus facilitating the influence of authentic leaders on followers' mission valence. The core of this argument is that red tape creates a vacuum of meaning, rather than of influence, and that authentic leaders fill this vacuum. The alienation of individual members from formal organizations has been a recurrent topic in PA and organizational sociology (Aiken & Hage, 1966; DeHart-Davis & Pandey, 2005; Lipsky, 1980). Surprisingly, a meta-analysis of the antecedents and consequences of alienation finds that only rule observation and job codification, two specific aspects of formalization, are positive and significant predictors of alienated employees, while formalization and bureaucratization in general are not significantly related to alienation (Chiaburu et al., 2014). A possible explanation is that bureaucracy is Janus-faced, with both enabling and coercive aspects (Adler & Borys, 1996). Red tape, however, is a negative exaggeration of formalization and bureaucratization (Bozeman, 1993; Bozeman & Feeney, 2014), allowing for the conclusion that it will foster employees' alienation from public organizations and provoke associated feelings of meaninglessness, powerlessness, and needlessness. A study by DeHart-Davis and Pandey (2005) tends to support this assumption. They show that

organizational and personnel red tape have a positive impact on public managers' alienation, whereas formalization has no such impact, or is even negatively related to alienation.

The enhancement hypothesis suggests that the alienating effect of red tape creates a receptive climate for authentic leadership. In the presence of red tape, organizational rules and regulations provide little meaning because they do not contribute functionally to the accomplishment of the organization's goals and mission (Bozeman, 1993; Bozeman & Feeney, 2014), thus making the organization itself inauthentic. Given that meaningful work addresses the basic human needs of competence and belonging (Ryan & Deci, 2000), employees' attention will be directed to other sources of meaning. Authentic leaders provide such meaning and fill the gap left by red tape. It is hence precisely the contrasting backdrop of an inauthentic organization that is likely to give even more exposure to authentic leaders and to facilitate their leadership. Authentic leaders bring the human factor back into organizations that otherwise have dehumanizing effects on members. The enhancement hypothesis thus reads as follows:

**H3a.** *Red tape moderates the positive relationship between authentic leadership and followers' mission valence, such that this relationship is stronger at higher levels of red tape.*

*The neutralization hypothesis.* The second and contrasting line of reasoning suggests that red tape is a neutralizer of authentic leadership, thus undermining the influence of authentic leaders on followers' mission valence. At the core of this argument is the "leader–organization fit," which is—although not in all aspects—low for authentic leaders in organizations suffering from red tape. In turn, the inconsistency between leadership style and organizational context will make followers less receptive toward the leader's influence. In a fruitful strand of research, organizational scholarship has focused on the fit of people with their environment and its attitudinal and behavioral implications (Kristof, 1996; van Vianen, 2018). A little noticed and therefore understudied variation in this stream is the perceived person–organization fit of leaders and its consequences for follower outcomes (Short, 2015). Related research suggests that the fit of leaders with the organizational culture predicts leadership potential and effectiveness (Burns et al., 2013). A possible explanation for these beneficial outcomes is that high levels of leader–organization fit will be associated with little cognitive dissonance on the part of followers and facilitate attributions of consistency and credibility to the leader. In contrast, leaders with a poor fit are likely to be less credible and trustworthy, and their perceived alienation from the organization may spill-over to followers. In turn, followers' mission valence will decrease.

Leader–organization fit, as any person–environment fit, is a multifaceted phenomenon (Kristof, 1996). Following our reasoning above, the fit of the leader's mission with the organizational mission is a source of authenticity perceptions and attributions among followers (Gardner et al., 2005; Glistrap et al., 2015; Shamir & Eilam, 2005). However, red tape decouples rules and procedures from the organizational mission and apparently makes bureaucracy a value in itself. In this case, the goals and values of the leader may still have large zones of congruence with the values-based mission of a public organization, but at the same time, the fit to the bureaucratic structure of the organization is low. Figuratively speaking, an authentic leader in an excessively bureaucratic organization is a "fish out of water." He or she may still be true to the personal and organizational mission, but is nonetheless not perceived as being in the right place. Membership in another (e.g., nonprofit) organization with the same mission but less red tape may be more instrumental to live up to the mission. Somewhat paradoxical, excessive bureaucracy makes authentic leadership itself inauthentic, as it no longer corresponds to the organizational setting in which it occurs. This results in decreasing levels of perceived structural fit between the leader and the organization, particularly in day-to-day operations in which rules and procedures are salient and leaders and followers frequently interact. This dimension of leader–organization misfit creates precisely the vacuum of influence that substitutes for leadership theory predicts for neutralizers (Dionne et al., 2005; Kerr & Jermier, 1978). Accordingly, the alternative hypothesis is:

**H3b.** *Red tape moderates the positive relationship between authentic leadership and followers' mission valence, such that this relationship is weaker at higher levels of red tape.*



## 3 | METHOD

### 3.1 | Research design

We use a cross-sectional survey design with two waves of data collection. The first wave was conducted in October and November 2017 and the second wave from April to June 2018. The two-wave approach was used to separate the measurement of the independent variables (first wave) from the measurement of the moderator and dependent variable (second wave) and therefore reduce common method bias (CMB; George & Pandey, 2017; Jakobsen & Jensen, 2015). Additionally, the usual remedies in questionnaire design (such as clear instructions, high confidentiality, unambiguous wording, etc.) were applied. Furthermore, the main interest of this study is the interaction between authentic leadership and red tape. As Siemsen et al. (2010) demonstrate both mathematically and empirically, interaction effects cannot be artifacts of CMB.

Data was collected in the district offices of a German city state. Comparable to local governments, district offices are responsible for almost all administrative services that are directly delivered to residents and businesses. District offices are governed by the city's ministries but have their own political bodies (district councils) and other forms of citizen participation. A paper-based, two-wave survey among all employees working in the seven districts was conducted. The response rate was 31.0% in the first wave ( $n = 2291$ ) and 22.6% in the second wave ( $n = 1726$ ). The balanced sample of both waves comprised 1013 respondents, who provided complete answers in both waves and did not change their supervisor in the meantime. Table 1 shows the sample characteristics.

### 3.2 | Measures

Table 2 provides an overview of the measures, all of which were extensively applied and validated in previous research (for all survey items, see Table A1). All measures show good to excellent reliability (Table A1). The overall measurement model shows good fit with the data ( $CFI = 0.945$ ,  $TLI = 0.936$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.053$ ,  $SMRA = 0.037$ ) and no issues with convergent and discriminant validity.

*Authentic leadership* is a second-order construct with four first-order factors (i.e., balanced processing, internalized moral perspective, relational transparency, self-awareness; Neider & Schriesheim, 2011). Consistent with the theoretical conceptualization, the second-order solution showed best model fit, such that we used authentic leadership on the aggregate rather than dimensional level. The measure is based on how followers perceive their direct superordinate's leadership behavior and therefore avoids leaders' biased self-assessments of leadership (Vogel & Kroll, 2019). Authentic leadership was measured in the first wave.

*Red tape* is a first-order construct with two factors (i.e., compliance burden, lack of functionality; van Loon et al., 2016). The model fit was best for a first-order model with two factors, such that the two dimensions of red tape entered our analyses separately. Again, this is consistent with the literature (van Loon et al., 2016).

*Mission valence* is a global, single-factor measure (Wright & Pandey, 2011). Both mission valence and red tape were measured in the second wave.

Several socio-demographic variables were measured for control purposes. Mission valence may interfere with *gender*, as men and women may internalize the mission of public organizations to different extents. Mission valence may also be contingent on *age* and *tenure*. The longer people work in public service, the more socialized into the organizational mission they should be, and the older people are, the more they are driven by motives beyond self-interest. Furthermore, it was controlled for *pay group*, as staff at higher hierarchical levels should be more exposed to, and in charge of, the organization's overall mission than staff at lower levels with less responsibility and oversight. Pay group is also a good proxy for the educational level because the entrance into the associated careers is largely predetermined by the level of education. It was also controlled for the duration of the *leadership relation* between leader and follower because the quality of such relations evolves over time. The frequency of *leader contact* may also affect the mission valence. How well leaders perform their task of giving

**TABLE 1** Sample characteristics

	<i>n</i>	%
Total	1013	100.00
Gender		
Male	337	33.27
Female	668	65.94
n/a	8	0.79
Age		
≤25	19	1.88
26–35	163	16.09
36–45	189	18.66
46–55	348	34.35
>55	294	29.02
Tenure		
<5 years	295	29.12
5–<10 years	193	19.05
10–<15 years	128	12.64
15–<20 years	64	6.32
20–<25 years	69	6.81
25–<30 years	109	10.76
≥30 years	155	15.30
Pay group		
E1–E4/A2–A4 (lower service)	5	0.49
E5–E8/A5–A9 (intermediate service)	253	24.98
E9–E12/A9–A13 (upper intermediate service)	621	61.30
E13–E15/A13–A16 (higher service)	124	12.24
Non-tariff/B1–B11 (top management)	10	0.99
Duration of leadership relation		
<6 months	8	0.79
6–<12 months	74	7.31
1–<3 years	390	38.50
3–<5 years	185	18.26
≥5 years	356	35.14
Duration of contact with leader per week		
<2 h	340	33.56
2–<5 h	334	32.97
5–<10 h	150	14.81
10–<15 h	50	4.94
≥15 h	139	13.72

sense about the organization's mission may be contingent on how they interact and communicate with their followers. Finally, dummy variables for the district offices were included. These control variables have been measured in the second wave.

**TABLE 2** Measurements

Construct	Source	Subdimension	Sample item <sup>a</sup>	Wave
Authentic leadership	Neider and Schriesheim (2011)		<i>My leader ...</i>	1
		Self-awareness	<i>... shows that he/she understands his/her strengths and weaknesses.</i>	
		Relational transparency	<i>... clearly states what he/she means.</i>	
		Internalized moral perspective	<i>... uses his/her core beliefs to make decisions.</i>	
		Balanced processing	<i>... asks for ideas that challenge his/her core beliefs.</i>	
Red tape	van Loon et al. (2016)		<i>The rules with which I have to comply in my core activities ...</i>	2
		Lack of functionality	<i>... contribute to the goal of my job activities. (reverse)</i>	
		Compliance burden	<i>... take a lot of time to comply with.</i>	
Mission valence	Wright and Pandey (2011)		<i>I believe that the priorities of this organization are quite important.</i>	2

<sup>a</sup>Please see Table A1 for the full list of items in English and German language.

## 4 | RESULTS

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics for all study variables. In addition to the results of the CFA, the low bivariate correlations of the independent variables indicate that the constructs do not share much variance and that discriminant validity is thus not an issue. The same applies to multicollinearity, as no score in variance inflation tests exceeded 1.56.

Table 4 shows the results of OLS regressions. To account for the nested structure of our data, with team mates evaluating the same leader, we used clustered standard errors. Before estimating the regression models, the continuous variables were mean-centered for better interpretability of the interaction effects and to avoid multicollinearity of both interaction and main effects. The variables of interest enter the model stepwise. H1 states that authentic leadership is positively related to followers' mission valence. Consistent across all model specifications, the association between authentic leadership and mission valence is indeed positive and significant (Model VI:  $b = 0.143$ ,  $SE = 0.031$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), which provides strong support for H1.

H2 suggests that red tape is negatively related to mission valence. We test this hypothesis separately for the two first-order factors of red tape (i.e., lack of functionality and compliance burden; van Loon et al., 2016). Aggregating the red tape items in a single variable would not only violate common model fit thresholds, but the resulting model would also explain significantly less variance than a model with two red tape factors (Vuong test for non-nested models:  $z = -2.795$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ). The results for the two-factor solution show a strong and negative association between lack of functionality and mission valence (Model V:  $b = -0.253$ ,  $SE = 0.030$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), whereas no such association exists for compliance burden (Model V:  $b = -0.018$ ,  $SE = 0.024$ ,  $p = 0.462$ ). Accordingly, H2 finds only partial support.

TABLE 3 Mean, standard deviation, and correlations of study variables (*n* = 1013)

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 Mission valence	3.90	0.79	1	5	1									
2 Authentic leadership	3.41	0.83	1	5	0.21	1								
3 Lack of functionality	2.42	0.83	1	5	−0.29	−0.23	1							
4 Compliance burden	3.26	0.97	1	5	−0.09	−0.11	0.16	1						
5 Gender ( <i>d</i> ; 1 = female)	0.66	<i>n/a</i>	0	1	0.00	−0.01	−0.04	−0.03	1					
6 Age ( <i>d</i> ; 1 = >45 years)	0.63	<i>n/a</i>	0	1	0.00	−0.15	−0.05	−0.06	0.00	1				
7 Tenure ( <i>d</i> ; 1 = ≥10 years)	0.52	<i>n/a</i>	0	1	−0.08	−0.13	−0.02	0.00	−0.02	0.51	1			
8 Pay group ( <i>d</i> ; 1 = high or non-tariff)	0.13	<i>n/a</i>	0	1	0.17	0.09	0.03	−0.05	−0.11	0.10	−0.01	1		
9 Leader relation ( <i>d</i> ; 1 = ≥3 years)	0.53	<i>n/a</i>	0	1	0.02	−0.08	0.01	−0.01	−0.02	0.27	0.35	0.07	1	
10 Leader contact ( <i>d</i> ; 1 = ≥10 h per week)	0.19	<i>n/a</i>	0	1	−0.07	0.12	−0.03	−0.04	0.04	0.02	0.05	−0.10	0.02	1

**TABLE 4** OLS regression results for mission valence

	I	II	III	IV	V	IV
Hypotheses						
Authentic leadership	0.138*** (0.032)	0.140*** (0.031)	0.198*** (0.032)	0.203*** (0.031)	0.136*** (0.032)	0.143*** (0.031)
Red tape						
Lack of functionality	-0.256*** (0.030)	-0.263*** (0.029)			-0.253*** (0.030)	-0.260*** (0.029)
Compliance burden			-0.046 (0.025)	-0.041 (0.025)	-0.018 (0.024)	-0.012 (0.024)
Authentic leadership × lack of functionality		-0.078* (0.034)				-0.066* (0.033)
Authentic leadership × compliance burden				-0.093** (0.029)		-0.087** (0.030)
Controls						
Gender ( <i>d</i> ; 1 = female)	0.020 (0.050)	0.024 (0.049)	0.033 (0.051)	0.040 (0.051)	0.019 (0.050)	0.029 (0.049)
Age ( <i>d</i> ; 1 = >45 years)	0.053 (0.057)	0.050 (0.057)	0.085 (0.0601)	0.088 (0.059)	0.050 (0.0567)	0.052 (0.057)
Tenure ( <i>d</i> ; 1 = ≥10 years)	-0.152** (0.055)	-0.154** (0.055)	-0.142* (0.058)	-0.140* (0.058)	-0.151** (0.0565)	-0.151** (0.055)
Pay group ( <i>d</i> ; 1 = high or non-tariff)	0.340*** (0.066)	0.358*** (0.067)	0.296*** (0.067)	0.299*** (0.066)	0.338*** (0.066)	0.356*** (0.066)
Leader relation ( <i>d</i> ; 1 = ≥3 years)	0.075 (0.066)	0.077 (0.052)	0.070 (0.053)	0.067 (0.053)	0.075 (0.052)	0.074 (0.051)
Leader contact ( <i>d</i> ; 1 = ≥10 h per week)	-0.155* (0.061)	-0.153* (0.061)	-0.162** (0.062)	-0.154* (0.062)	-0.157** (0.060)	-0.147* (0.060)
District office controls ( <i>d</i> )	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Intercept	3.775*** (0.070)	3.762*** (0.069)	3.769*** (0.072)	3.749*** (0.071)	3.779*** (0.070)	3.749*** (0.068)
<i>n</i>	1013	1013	1013	1013	1013	1013
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.155	0.160	0.092	0.101	0.156	0.169
<i>F</i> -statistic	13.77***	13.96***	8.20***	9.15***	12.87***	14.57***

Note: Clustered standard errors in parentheses, *d* = dummy.

\**p* < 0.05. \*\**p* < 0.01. \*\*\**p* < 0.001.

H3a and H3b are rival hypotheses about the interaction of authentic leadership and red tape. While H3a is the enhancement hypothesis, stating that red tape will enhance the effect of authentic leadership on mission valence, H3b is the neutralization hypothesis, predicting that red tape will be a neutralizer of this effect. Model II shows the results for lack of functionality and Model IV for compliance burden; Model VI is the full model including both factors and their interactions with authentic leadership. The findings suggest a negative interaction for both lack of functionality ( $b = -0.066$ ,  $SE = 0.033$ ,  $p = 0.048$ ) and compliance burden ( $b = -0.087$ ,  $SE = 0.030$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ). The difference between the two coefficients is not significant ( $F [1507] = 0.18$ ,  $p = 0.671$ ). Figure 1 illustrates these

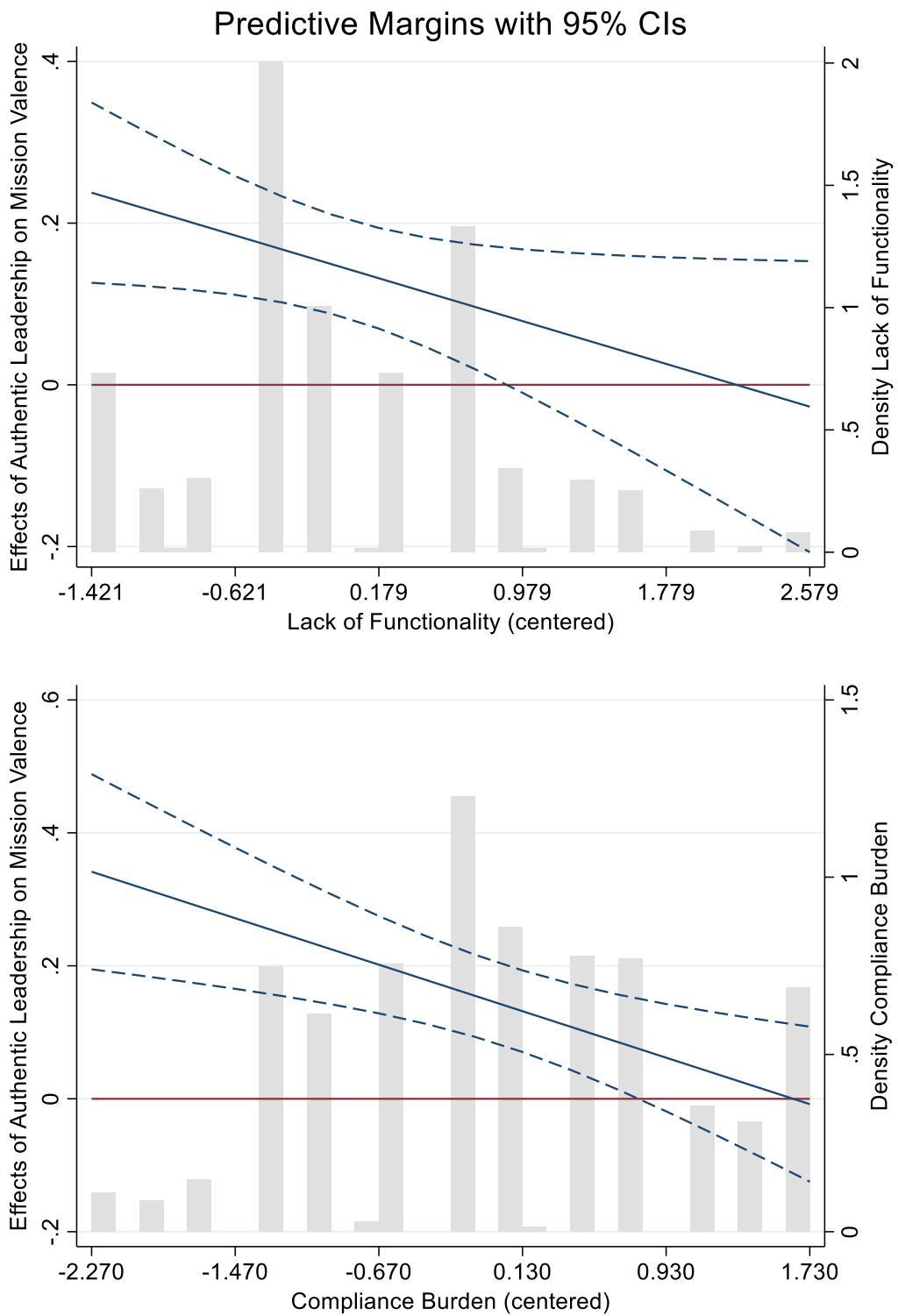
interaction effects. The neutralization hypothesis (i.e., H3b) thus finds univocal support, suggesting that the relationship between authentic leadership and mission valence is substantially weakened at the presence of red tape. Accordingly, the enhancement hypothesis (H3a) finds no support. It should be noted that lack of functionality is strongly and negatively related to mission valence, with an effect size almost twice as large as the opposite relationship of authentic leadership with mission valence ( $b = -0.260$ ,  $SE = 0.029$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

Among the control variables, tenure appears as a correlate of mission valence, with employees working for 10 years or longer in public service showing significantly lower levels of mission valence ( $b = -0.151$ ,  $SE = 0.055$ ,  $p = 0.007$ ). Pay group is positively and significantly related to mission valence, as employees in the higher service or non-pay scale employees report substantially higher levels of mission valence ( $b = 0.356$ ,  $SE = 0.066$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Surprisingly, the more frequently employees interact with their leader, the lower the mission valence they report. This is suggested by the negative and significant effect of the indicator for employees with 10 or more hours of weekly contact with their leader ( $b = -0.147$ ,  $SE = 0.060$ ,  $p = 0.015$ ).

## 5 | DISCUSSION

The delivery of public services depends upon employees who commit to and help implementing the mission of public organizations for the good of society (Rainey & Steinbauer, 1999; Wright, 2007; Wright & Pandey, 2011). Leadership can be a crucial factor in increasing mission valence among public employees (Caillier, 2016; Pasha et al., 2017; Wright et al., 2012). The current study has shifted attention to authentic leadership and thus responds to recent calls for expanding the conceptual space of public leadership research and experimenting with approaches that have not yet figured high on the research agenda (Crosby & Bryson, 2018). Red tape, however, may either limit or facilitate the emergence and effectiveness of authentic leadership in the public sector.

The results support the notion that authentic leadership has the potential to increase mission valence among followers. Authenticity is thus a further lever through which leaders in the public sector can align followers with the organizational mission (Wright et al., 2012); a finding with practical implications that we discuss below. In more theoretical terms, the results echo and reinforce recent calls for more relational approaches to public leadership (Crosby & Bryson, 2018; Ospina, 2017) and join other studies in adding authentic leadership to this nomological network (Adendorff et al., 2021; Farr-Wharton et al., 2021; Gelaidan et al., 2022). The question of how leader–follower relations unfold in authentic leadership, however, requires deeper elaborations, preferably in process studies. Authentic leadership has been conceptualized as a holistic construct whose subdimensions are thoroughly intertwined (Neider & Schriesheim, 2011). Defining authentic leadership decidedly as a process (Luthans & Avolio, 2003) suggests that the dimensions of authentic leadership will not develop simultaneously and independently but are likely to depend and build on each other. Common to most scholarship on authentic leadership is the assumption that self-awareness is a kind of ‘root dimension’ without which the other dimensions are unlikely to develop sustainably (Gardner et al., 2011; Iszatt-White & Kempster, 2019; Neider & Schriesheim, 2011). However, self-awareness is first and foremost an inner state of a leader, and as such, it will not release the social learning processes that we have theorized above as a linking mechanism between authentic leadership and mission valence. Only when leaders combine self-awareness with an internalized moral perspective (Neider & Schriesheim, 2011), they will enact their ‘true self’ and exhibit visible behaviors toward followers, turning into role models in the pursuit of the organizational mission. This role modeling will be all the more successful the better the quality of the leader–follower relation is, and these relational aspects of authentic leadership figure most prominently in the remaining dimensions of authentic leadership (i.e., balanced processing and relational transparency; Neider & Schriesheim, 2011). These considerations suggest that the self-reinforcing process through which authentic leadership develops and influences followers’ mission valence needs clarification beyond what our study could provide. In particular, future research may figure out which stages along this process are crucial ‘tipping points’ after which followers’ mission valence is substantially affected.



**FIGURE 1** Interaction effects between authentic leadership and red tape [Color figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](http://wileyonlinelibrary.com)]

In contrast to authentic leadership, red tape is detrimental to employees' mission valence. However, our results confirm a strong and negative association of red tape with mission valence only for lack of functionality, whereas no such direct effect occurs for compliance burden. This finding adds more nuance to previous scholarship, as it demonstrates that red tape may not have negative employee outcomes per se (Blom et al., 2021; George et al., 2021). Employees show significantly lower mission valence only if they perceive bureaucratic rules as not functionally contributing to the accomplishment of organizational goals. This finding is largely in line with previous scholarship on the demotivating effects of red tape on public employees (Blom et al., 2021; Bozeman & Feeney, 2014). It is also consistent with Merton's (1940) early notion of a "bureaucratic personality," according to which bureaucrats may lose sight of the organizational mission and turn the adherence to rules into an end-in-itself. The organizational mission is even more likely to be forgotten when employees cannot see how it is embodied in the rules that they follow and implement in their daily work. In contrast, when rules keep being attached to the mission and are hence perceived as meaningful, they do not diminish mission valence even if they are burdensome.

The opposing associations that authentic leadership and red tape have with mission valence make it all the more interesting how both interact. The findings provide clear support for the neutralization hypothesis, suggesting that red tape partly neutralizes the impact of authentic leadership on followers' mission valence. Put differently, red tape limits the potential of authentic leaders to capitalize on their authenticity. However, while this moderating effect applies to both dimensions of red tape, it is substantially weaker for lack of functionality than for compliance burden. We suggest that while in general, the neutralization effect is the dominant force, it may to some (yet not to full) extent be counter-balanced by the enhancement effect. Following our reasoning above, lack of functionality is likely to facilitate feelings of meaninglessness and alienation more than compliance burden. Although this kind of red tape is still a structural limitation for authentic leadership, it leaves a larger stage for authentic leaders to compensate for the loss of meaning and mission than compliance burden. In the latter case, such compensation is not necessarily required because burdensome rules can still be meaningful with regard to the organizational mission.

The findings help to better grasp the relationship between leadership and red tape (Campbell, 2017; Hattke et al., 2018; Moynihan et al., 2012; van der Voet, 2016). Building on substitutes for leadership theory, this study proposes to consider red tape as part of the structural context of leadership, which may either enhance or neutralize the influence of leaders. Both our theoretical framework and the empirical results suggest that leadership is not merely a function of people but also of structures, and that both should be considered in concert when it comes to explain and predict leadership effects. This overall implication broadly resonates with and contributes to recent attempts to bring organizational context back into PA scholarship in general (Meier et al., 2017) and research on public leadership more specifically (Moon & Park, 2019). Still more consideration of organizational structures as boundary condition of leadership is necessary in order to prevent scholarship on public leadership from overgeneralizations of findings across different structural contexts in the public sector (Lim & Moon, 2020; Wright & Pandey, 2010).

## 5.1 | Practical implications

The results suggest adding authenticity to the list of relevant assessment criteria for current and prospect leaders. This is not only suggested by the direct association of authentic leadership with mission valence, but also from a possible alternative model with flipped roles of red tape and authentic leadership: Authentic leaders could help buffering the detrimental consequences of red tape on mission valence (see Figure A1 for a visualization of these interaction effects). HR managers in the public sector are thus challenged to develop and apply aptitude tests that account for a candidate's potential to develop high levels of self-awareness about his or her values and to act upon these values. Additionally, practical measures to increase leader authenticity are worth considering in leadership development programs. Many public sector organizations already use 360-degree leadership assessments and provide leaders with information about how others perceive them (Ingraham & Getha-Taylor, 2004). The literature provides strong evidence that other reflective practices, such as supervision, meditation, diaries, prayers, and art-based interventions,



also have positive effects on authenticity (Reave, 2005; Romanowska et al., 2014). The process of becoming self-aware and, in turn, authentic may be further supported by the design of special assignments in the courses and curricula of MPA and MPP programs (Rubens et al., 2018). However, when public managers consider these practices, they should know that there may be “too much of a good thing” because too frequent introspection can invite unproductive negative thoughts and result in lower levels of job satisfaction and well-being (Eurich, 2018).

On the contrary, there is never too little of the bad thing called red tape. As this study establishes red tape as a neutralizer of authentic leadership, an implication for practitioners who want to unlock the potential of authentic leaders is to neutralize this neutralizer. While there is not a shortage of good reasons to fight red tape, this study adds another one and highlights that leadership development in the public sector should not only focus on leaders but also on the structures and processes in which they lead. Designing this setting such that it enhances, rather than neutralizes, the impact of authentic leaders is recommended. Freeing public organizations from red tape and making them authentic places (Freeman & Auster, 2015) is a step forward in this direction.

## 5.2 | Limitations

As any research, the present study has some limitations that provide opportunities for further research. First, the study is subject to the common limitations of cross-sectional survey research, which means, we cannot establish causal relationships and cannot exclude reversed causality. While we are confident that the observed relationships are causal, further research has to validate this assumption. Additionally, the study may be prone to social desirability. While we undertook considerable efforts to ensure participants' anonymity and see no high risk that participants felt the need to inflate their responses on how they perceive their organization's mission and processes as well as their supervisor's behavior, we cannot fully exclude the possibility that participants responded in a socially desirable way.

Second, while the two-wave survey design and the focus on moderation effects dispel concerns for CMB, the fact remains that data was gathered from a single source (i.e., followers). As Dionne et al. (2002) demonstrate, moderation effects may disappear once data for the predictor, moderator, and criterion variable are collected from different sources. Accordingly, future research is invited to assess the robustness of the current findings with data collected from multiple sources. Since mission valence and perceived red tape are inherently difficult to measure from different sources, the leader's behavior would be more suitable for this approach. However, multi-source assessments of leadership behavior pose their own methodological challenges (Vogel & Kroll, 2019).

Third, the empirical study was carried out in Germany, an administrative system with a particularly strong continental European “*Rechtsstaat*” tradition, reflected in a high density of legal rules and regulations. It is unclear how administrative traditions and cultures translate into employees' perceptions of, and responses to, red tape. Recent meta-analyses suggest that there are no such differences in employee outcomes between the Germanic and the Anglo-American administrative tradition (Blom et al., 2021; George et al., 2021). Nevertheless, further research in different administrative systems and at different baseline levels of red tape is encouraged.

Fourth, we admit that perceptual measures are inherently limited when red tape is conceptualized as a structural feature which exists independently of human perceptions (Pandey, 2021). While no objective measures of red tape were available for this study, future research may employ such measurements.

## 6 | CONCLUSION

More research on authentic leadership in the public sector is long overdue. Authentic leadership has been considered a “root construct” that may incorporate other leadership approaches (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Iszatt-White & Kempster, 2019). Indeed, several important aspects of public leadership, which have recently been discussed, can be reframed in terms of authentic leadership. As Ricucci (2020) highlights, among the

characteristics of effective public leaders for the 21st century is the ability to understand and regulate their own emotions. Arguably, this ability is built into the self-awareness dimension of authentic leadership. Another stream in public leadership research champions relational approaches to leadership, touching upon issues of relational transparency between leaders and followers (Crosby & Bryson, 2018; Ospina, 2017). PA scholarship has also paid increasing attention to ethical leadership (Hassan et al., 2014), an approach that is more likely to emerge and to be effective from an internalized moral perspective of leaders. This study has demonstrated that such leader behaviors are interrelated and, when culminating in authentic leadership, align followers effectively with the mission of public organizations.

It remains an open question, however, whether public organizations provide a setting in which authentic leadership is able to flourish. This study has provided evidence that red tape neutralizes, rather than enhances, the influence of authentic leaders on their followers. While not all public organizations suffer from red tape, it is fair to say that red tape is still a widespread and persistent phenomenon in the public sector, particularly when compared with the private sector (Pandey & Kingsley, 2000; Rainey et al., 1995). It can thus be argued—but it remains to be demonstrated—that public organizations provide a less supportive context for leaders' authenticity to emerge and to unfold its full impact on followers. Making public bureaucracies more authentic places, where both leaders and followers can be true to themselves, is therefore a challenge for both leadership development and organizational design.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interests.

## OPEN RESEARCH BADGES



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## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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## APPENDIX A

Table A1

TABLE A1 Survey items

English items		German items	
Authentic leadership (Neider & Schriesheim, 2011) (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.93)			
My direct leader ...		Meine direkte Führungskraft ...	
Self-awareness			
1	... describes accurately the way that others view his/her abilities.	...	... weiß genau, wie andere ihre bzw. seine Fähigkeiten sehen.
2	... shows that he/she understands his/her strengths and weaknesses.	...	... zeigt, dass sie bzw. er sich ihrer bzw. seiner Stärken und Schwächen bewusst ist.
3	... is clearly aware of the impact he/she has on others.	...	... ist sich ihrer bzw. seiner Wirkung auf andere bewusst.
Relational transparency			
4	... clearly states what he/she means.	...	... sagt genau, was sie bzw. er meint.
5	... openly shares information with others.	...	... teilt Informationen offen mit anderen.
6	... expresses his/her ideas and thoughts clearly to others.	...	... äußert ihre bzw. seine Ideen und Gedanken offen gegenüber anderen.
Internalized moral perspective			
7	... shows consistency between his/her beliefs and actions.	...	... ist konsistent in ihren bzw. seinen Überzeugungen und Handlungen.
8	... uses his/her core beliefs to make decisions.	...	... trifft Entscheidungen auf Basis ihrer bzw. seiner grundsätzlichen Überzeugungen.
9	... resists pressures on him/her to do things contrary to his/her beliefs.	...	... widersteht dem Druck, entgegen ihrer bzw. seiner Überzeugungen zu handeln.
10	... is guided in his/her actions by internal moral standards.	...	... wird von moralischen Standards geleitet.
Balanced processing			
11	... asks for ideas that challenge his/her core beliefs.	...	... fragt nach Ideen, die ihre bzw. seine eigenen Überzeugungen in Frage stellen.
12	... carefully listens to alternative perspectives before reaching a conclusion.	...	... hört sich alternative Perspektiven genau an, bevor sie bzw. er eine Schlussfolgerung zieht.
13	... objectively analyzes relevant data before making a decision.	...	... analysiert relevante Daten, bevor sie bzw. er eine Entscheidung trifft.
14	... encourages others to voice opposing points of view.	...	... ermutigt uns, auch abweichende Meinungen offen zu äußern.
Red tape (van Loon et al., 2016)			
The rules with which I have to comply in my work ...		Die Regeln, nach denen ich mich bei meiner Arbeit richten muss ...	
Lack of functionality (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.90)			
15	... have a clear function for my job activities. (r)	...	... haben eine klare Funktion für meine Arbeit. (r)
16	... contribute to the goal of my job activities. (r)	...	... tragen zum Ziel meiner Arbeit bei. (r)
17	... help me do my job well. (r)	...	... helfen mir, meinen Job gut zu erledigen. (r)

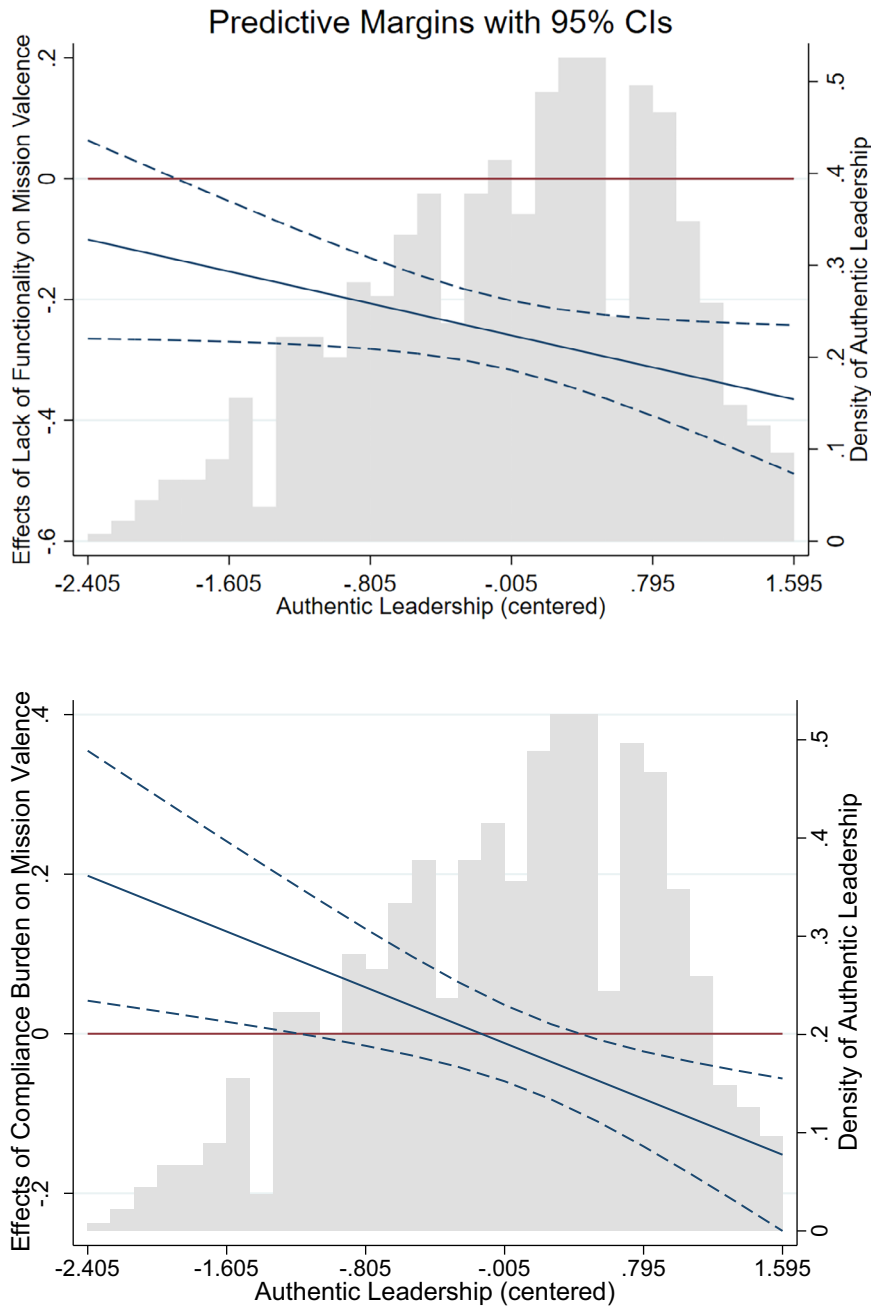
(Continues)

**TABLE A1** (Continued)

English items		German items
<i>Compliance burden</i> (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.87)		
18	... cause much pressure at work.	... verursachen viel Druck bei der Arbeit.
19	... take a lot of time to comply with.	... nehmen viel Zeit in Anspruch, um sie zu befolgen.
20	... cause much delay.	... führen oft zu Verzögerungen.
<b>Mission valence</b> (Wright & Pandey, 2011) (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.86)		
21	This organization provides valuable public service.	Mein Bezirksamt stellt wertvolle öffentliche Dienste bereit.
22	I believe that the priorities of this organization are quite important.	Ich glaube, dass die Schwerpunkte meines Bezirksamts ziemlich wichtig sind.
23	The work of this organization is very significant in the broader scheme of things.	Im größeren Zusammenhang betrachtet ist die Arbeit meines Bezirksamts sehr wichtig.
24	For me, the mission of this organization is exciting.	Für mich ist die Mission meines Bezirksamts reizvoll.

*Note:* All variables have been measured using five-point Likert scales (1 = do not agree at all, 5 = fully agree).

Figure A1



**FIGURE A1** Interaction effects between authentic leadership and red tape. The diagrams show the same interaction effects as Figure 1 but with reversed roles of authentic leadership and red tape. [Color figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](http://wileyonlinelibrary.com)]