

***Rethinking and Expanding the Study of Administrative Rules:  
Report of the 2010 Red Tape Research Workshop***

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Note:

This document presents the views of the participants of a two day workshop discussing the future of red tape research. To the greatest extent possible, the authors have tried to accurately represent the consensus view that emerged. But as is in any discourse of a moderately large number of scholars, there will be claims that not all participants subscribe to, and aspects of the discussion that are not captured here.

## INTRODUCTION

While the topic of red tape is of long-standing interest to both scholars and the public, it is only in the last two decades that scholars have begun to develop empirical knowledge on this topic. Scholars working in this area recently convened a workshop to consider a research agenda for the next decade. The *2010 Red Tape Research Workshop: Rethinking and Expanding the Study of Administrative Rules* was hosted by the La Follette School of Public Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and supported by the University of Wisconsin Center for World Affairs and the Global Economy, Center for European Studies, and European Union Center of Excellence. The meeting included more than 20 researchers and PhD students from 14 universities and five countries (see appendix 1 for a full list of participants).

## GOALS

The aim of the meeting was to engage in an enthusiastic discussion about expanding and improving red tape research and to develop a promising future for collaboration. The red tape research community is a good example of how the sociology of science works, with researchers continually making small, informal steps toward better measures. The *2010 Red Tape Research Workshop* offers the first opportunity to try to aim at broader planning that can move the field forward in a more concerted effort. Participants reviewed the development of red tape theory and research, identifying gaps in the field, as well as possible avenues for future research and funding opportunities. This included considering ways to improve measures, data, and methods researchers use, and identifying a core list of central questions that would form a 10 year research agenda for the field. The meeting also sought to more formally establish networks of interested researchers that go beyond US and UK based scholars, or scholars who consciously identify themselves as red-tape researchers.

## DISCUSSION AND EMERGENT THEMES

Participants were asked to prepare brief presentations under the following themes:

- Session 1:** Red tape theory and empirical testing of theory
- Session 2:** Review of red tape measures
- Session 3:** Underexplored aspects of red tape
- Session 4:** What do we know? What don't we know?
- Session 5:** Future research development

The panels were loosely-structured to encourage a wide-ranging discussion, and five general themes emerged throughout the sessions: (1) the historical development of red tape, (2) how red tape is defined and conceptualized, (3) alternative measurement and methodological approaches, (4) key research questions, and (5) ensuring research relevance. In the following section, we summarize the discussions from the *Workshop* within these broad themes.

### *A Brief History of Red Tape*

The current wave of red tape research arose from the early 1990s, led by scholars such as Barry Bozeman, Stu Bretschneider and Hal Rainey. Bozeman and Rainey provided some historical background on the early development of the red tape concept. Herbert Kaufman's

1977 book, *Red Tape: Its Origins, Uses and Abuses* was an obvious reference point, but Bozeman noted that his colleague at Syracuse at the time, Dwight Waldo, had written an 1946 essay on the topic, suggesting that it was an important question that few had paid attention to. This observation remained largely accurate for almost a half-century.

The limited attention to the topic since Waldo's essay had limitations. Bozeman saw Kaufman's failure to distinguish between red tape and good rules as an obstacle for empirical work that sought to understand, explain and respond to the organizational pathology of red tape. The first empirical paper on red tape, by Bruce Buchanan (1975), was flawed because it essentially relied upon measures of formalization from sociology. In 1980 Bozeman began working with a Syracuse PhD student, Steve Loveless, who was interested in studying red tape. They found a dataset of convenience (Frank Andrews' cross national study of research organizations) which included measures of administrative delay, which would subsequently become a staple measure of red tape. The first National Administrative Study Project (NASP) that later emerged adapted many of the indicators from Andrews survey.

Rainey described his involvement in red tape research as emerging from his interest in understanding personnel constraints in the federal bureaucracy. Rainey developed items in his dissertation that reflect how personnel experience red tape. He and other scholars have used these items to consistently show higher perceived personnel red tape in public organizations relative to private counterparts.

Bozeman described the evolution of red tape research as an example of the idiosyncratic development of research, characterized by the four Ps: Participative, Public Domain, Projects, and Pollinating. He noted that most red tape research has come from participative projects where lots of people came together and developed an instrument and research agenda. None of these projects had been exclusively about red tape, but instead blended multiple research interests and some red tape items. These projects (many originating from various iterations of NASP), have been used by people from all over the world and remain in the public domain. And finally, these projects have resulted in the pollination of red tape research in public administration via mentoring of PhD students, bringing together faculty collaborators from multiple universities, and diffusing data and knowledge across the field. For example, students who worked on these projects did dissertations and then went to other institutions where they continued the work with their own students.

What are the major insights that red tape research has generated? First, perceptions of red tape matter, and seem to affect loyalty, commitment, and satisfaction. Second, perceptions do not always align with objective measures of red tape. Third, there is a publicness factor to red tape and that red tape follows government. In addition to the finding that Rainey's and others have made about higher levels of red tape in the public sector relative to the private sector, the publicness factor also appears to continue to be relevant in an age of greater contracting-out. With more outsourcing red tape seems to be seeping from government to the private sector. Finally, the negative link between red tape and performance has not been clearly established, although red tape does delay outcomes and create negative perceptions among organization members.

### ***Definition and Conceptualization of Red Tape.***

*Workshop* attendees from outside of the field of public administration noted that they were unclear what was meant by the term "red tape". In particular, some questioned how useful a concept can be in structuring causal claims if it is defined by its outcomes. The workshop

reexamined the classic Bozeman definition of red tape as rules that serve no functional object or having no positive outcomes for an organization and its stakeholders. Bozeman saw this definition as useful in distinguishing nascent red tape research from the broader sociological study of rules, but acknowledged that it has resulted in an overly stringent conceptualization of red tape. There was a general consensus that while the classic definition provided a good anchor that supported initial empirical research, a more realistic definition is needed for better measurement strategies.

One problem with the classic definition is that it is difficult to find rules that had absolutely no functionality or no positive outcomes. Rules that provided some functionality but also disproportionate burdens would, in the classic definition, not be considered red tape. For example, many rules serve their purpose of limiting fraud in the claiming of public benefits also create significant barriers to access among legitimate claimants. When do the negative impacts of such a rule lead it to being classified as red tape?

One way to reconceptualize red tape is to consider it not as a binary item (a rule is clearly red tape or not), but as part of a continuum of rule effectiveness. The most ineffective rules are red tape. On the other end of the continuum are highly effective rules, what Leisha DeHart-Davis has characterized as “green tape.” Along this continuum, at what point does a rule become red tape?

Another way to conceptualize red tape is to go beyond a continuum, and to consider it in terms of multiple dimensions. The standard application of red tape has implied efficiency and effectiveness as the key dimensions determining red tape. But rules are relevant to other public administration values, such as transparency, accountability, equity, representation, and fairness. While red tape is sometime defended because it aims to support such non-efficiency values, rules can also undercut these values, and such rules should be considered red tape just as much as rules that slow efficient service. Many of the *Workshop* participants agreed that developing red tape as a multi-dimensional concept would enable researchers to broaden the study of red tape to consider other important values. There is much scholarship in public administration and policy studies that investigates questions of how policies and rules affect values such as equity, but this research is rarely described as red tape by authors, or considered to be part of the red tape canon of work.

Recognizing that red tape affects different values allows for the possibility that rules have differential effects on these values, and by extension, rules can have both positive and negative effects at the same time. While a rule might be classified as red tape along one dimension, it may be achieving positive outcomes on another.

The contingent nature of red tape also extends to the perspective of different actors. The same rule that is experienced as red tape for one group of actors may not be red tape for another. A research challenge that directly emerges is to identify and explain variation in perceptions of rules as red tape among different groups. Up to now, much of the research has focused on the perceptions of red tape by public managers, rarely considering the perspective of street-level bureaucrats or stakeholders/clients. It would also be useful to compare the perceptions of rules among those developing and those implementing rules.

### ***Measurement and Methods***

The discussion over definitions and concepts naturally led to a consideration of the operationalization of definitions via measures of red tape. There was a general consensus that the red tape research community, with limited resources, has done good work in the areas of

measurement and research development, relying primarily on self-reported assessments of red tape from managers, and using cross-sectional research designs. For example, the organizational red tape scale and Rainey's personnel measures have been repeated and tested in a number of different research settings, both single organizations, comparisons across states and organizations, and in local English government. These measures have propelled an impressive empirical literature, but gaps remain. Researchers suggested using better and more measures of red tape, and discussed a wide variety of potentially useful methods.

A basic measurement issue is the reliance on self-reported indicators of red tape. We know that respondents perceive the same red tape differently and we know there is red tape in the real world, but we do not have a strong understanding of the relationships between perceptions and objective measures. There may not be truly objective measures of red tape, since any data type is accompanied by certain assumptions. But non-perceptual measures of red tape could be better explored, e.g. measuring the number of words in new administrative rules, the number of forms or pieces of information that citizens have to provide.

Another challenge is to measure stakeholder red tape. Red tape research has focused primarily on organizational actors, and as a result, standard indicators of stakeholder red tape do not exist (discussed in greater detail below).

Having a standardized red tape scale has a great deal of appeal. But some noted the difficulty of doing so if questions about red tape are asked of different populations, or in different policy areas. Most red tape research has asked about general impressions of rules, or red tape in certain areas, e.g., personnel or budget rules. It is unusual to focus on a particular rule. One disadvantage of this approach is that it limits our ability to understand how the specific content of rules are associated with red tape, and, more generally, to identify specific rules as being red tape. Existing research has also focused on organizational rules, and rather less on regulations and laws, although these different forms of rules are often connected.

Researchers might consider focusing completing studies whose goal is to develop and validate measures instead of doing generalizable surveys. Studies focused on developing measures are testing items, not the population, so using smaller and cheaper samples (such as internet sample) with lower response rates is feasible. The group also discussed using student samples to develop small measurement experiments. Access to student respondents at the different institutions of researchers involved might provide a mechanism by which the group could examine potential measures of experience with a specific service (such as student registration).

Researchers also discussed the need for testing the definition of red tape, for example randomizing the definition of red tape and see if people respond differently to the red tape items. When we ask people about red tape, they still might have different concepts of what we are asking. A Q sort approach would enable us to see how people describe concepts. We might also consider other ways of assessing the cost of red tape. Contingent pricing is one such approach: for example how much of a budget would the administrator be willing to give up in order to eliminate a particular rule or set of rules?

As with other areas of public administration research, the group discussed the need for developing longitudinal approaches to research. The development of panel data would allow for advanced modeling and more convincing tests of causal claims. The group also saw the value in qualitative analyses that could track the "natural history" of the development and implementation of a rule in particular policy areas through legislative, rulemaking and implementation processes. Case studies could also offer the ability to red tape research within a single organization, and

could combine both qualitative case narratives, as well quantitative methods, such as regression discontinuity design, which could track changes in agency outputs when procedures and regulations change.

More advanced modeling could provide a better understanding of causality. For example, structural equation modeling can help tease out causal relationships between multiple variables relevant to red tape, while hierarchical linear modeling is especially useful in understanding how red tape emerges at different levels of governance.

Experiments (both laboratory experiments and field experiments) would also offer an underutilized approach to red tape research. An additional method for conceptualizing rules might be in terms of a behavioral forecast. Researchers can go through the rule and stipulate the behaviors that would have to occur for the rule to work as originally envisioned.

### ***An Agenda for Red Tape Research***

Much time was dedicated to thinking about what the red tape enterprise can do. Some key research issues emerged, summarized in table 1.

*Insert table 1 here*

The Basics: What are the basic questions that red tape researchers should pursue? Many of these questions were posed at the beginning of the current era of red tape research, but have only been partially addressed.

How do we get red tape? Bozeman's theorizing on how rules become red tape has received relatively little empirical testing. Instead, research generally focuses on the consequences of red tape.

What are the impacts of red tape? As noted, there has been much research done here, especially from the perspective of managers. But we know relatively little about how these perceptions shape actual behavior. There is also much to do to incorporate the impacts of red tape on other groups, and in relation to different values and organizational performance (see below).

What are the responses to red tape? How do organizations, individual employees, and citizens respond to red tape? The range of responses can vary from over-compliance and goal-displacement to rule-avoidance and creation of alternative systems to active efforts to eliminate red tape.

What are the costs and benefits of responding to red tape?

What can we do to fix red tape and what does it cost?

An Organizational Focus: How does variation across organizations explain red tape? Some research using hierarchical linear modeling methods has shown that much of the variation in red tape is explained at an organizational level, i.e. the organization as a unit of analysis has a strong influence on the level of red tape individual's experience. This provides support for treating red tape should therefore be considered as an organizational problem, and the organization has a strong claim as the primary unit of analysis.

How does red tape evolve within organizations? Longitudinal case studies of organizations could usefully identify the process by which rules become red tape, to what effect, and how organizations respond. This can help to address the basic questions raised above.

How does red tape affect organizational/program performance? Red tape is assumed to be negatively associated with performance, and some preliminary research supports this hypothesis. But the relationship is still tentative, and evidence from English local government suggests that it depends upon how performance is defined. For example, in some cases, red tape may have a positive effect on some aspects of performance, such as equity. Providing better evidence of the link between red tape and performance requires more rigorous tests, and a willingness to identify the different dimensions of performance.

How does red tape interact with other organizational factors, such as culture, and leadership? Other research has shown that organizational factors (culture or strategic stance) interact with red tape to affect how red tape impacts performance.

A Stakeholder Focus: Who is affected by red tape? Is red tape applied equally? Red tape can affect different stakeholders in different ways, depending on the nature of the rule, and also on the population affected. This suggests studying how stakeholders in particular policy areas, especially clients, are impacted by rules. It also raises the potential for connecting red tape research to equity concerns. Welfare state research has shown that comparable policies that serve different populations are often structured quite differently.

Is red tape deliberately created? Some stakeholder groups have different abilities to influence policy. It therefore makes sense that they are also able to better prevent the application of excessive administrative rules upon themselves. Elected officials may deliberately seek to impose red tape on programs, not just to achieve functional goals, but also to limit access to the program. Stakeholders with weaker political standing will be less able to resist the imposition of red tape. Understanding these dynamics requires closer study of the legislative and rulemaking processes, and raises the possibility of connecting red tape literature with studies of the policy process.

Do different groups of citizens have different capacities to overcome administrative rules? As citizens face red tape in implementation, they may have varying abilities to overcome rules. For example, some studies show that better educated and higher income clients are more capable of negotiating access to welfare benefits. There are again clear implications for equity. A clear research goal is to understand what capacities make citizens better able to manage red tape.

A Policy Focus: Red tape research can connect to policy studies by examining how red tape affects particular functions in different ways. For example, the definition and impact of red tape in crisis management and health care is likely to work quite differently.

Studying red tape within policy domains (e.g. health care, transportation, oil spills, airport security, welfare, natural disasters) has a number of benefits. One advantage is that policy domains are more salient for funders or the public than more abstract discussions of red tape. Policy domains also give the opportunity to study the ways in which changes in technology might help to make rules obsolete or evolve into red tape. There were a number of examples discussed about the ways in which laws and rules are made to protect people, but also produce a lot of red tape (e.g. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA), Institutional Review Board requirements for social science researchers).

By studying red tape within particular policy domains, researchers will have the opportunity to test hypotheses about red tape creation, stakeholder red tape, red tape as a form of over-compliance, and the implementation of red tape by different levels of organizational actors.

For example, if we wish to study over-compliance with external rules, it is helpful to understand the contexts of particular policy areas. We might expect that in the area of health-care, fear of litigation might result in excess compliance, but in another policy area, such as job training or policing, an excess application of the rules might be driven by the attitude of the street-level bureaucrat toward the citizen. Another example: if we wish to study how red tape occurs during policy formation, implementation, and regulation, discussed above, we need to study particular rules and particular policies.

A Comparative Focus: Almost all red tape research has been in a US or UK setting. Participants saw the value of doing research in other settings, and called for research networks that span multiple countries. They also recognized that some such research already occurs on rules and regulations, though generally not using the moniker of red tape. In a number of countries, such as the Netherlands, there are explicit governmental efforts to reduce red tape, creating research opportunities to study these initiatives. The current trend toward fiscal restraint has created political pressure to reduce red tape, while the fiscal meltdown has raised questions about appropriate levels of regulation. These potentially competing trends are informed very much by political pressures and do not draw from research, but there is a potential audience for such research.

In addition, truly comparative cross-national research offers some unique possibilities and audiences. Organizations such as the World Bank, OECD and International Monetary Fund are interested in red tape reduction, and research that can generate empirical insight to support their efforts will serve an important function. Some of these organizations, such as the World Bank, already collects comparative data relevant to red tape.

A comparative approach can connect red tape research to policy diffusion research. Why different countries adopt rules can help to explain the role of different isomorphic factors (mimetic, normative and coercive) in fostering red tape. Since policy diffusion research does little to characterize whether adopted policies are positive or not, red tape scholarship could provide a specific contribution by explaining the adoption of ineffective rules.

Studying the implementation of rules, particularly the same rules, across different settings also provides the potential to understand how local contexts and norms shape red tape. Implementation of European Union rules across Europe, donor-imposed policies in developing countries, and even cross-state implementation of federal rules in the United States provide comparative research opportunities.

Developing country contexts also provide interesting research opportunities. In some cases, failure of economic development is blamed upon the red tape that businesses face. The costs of rule adherence may be so high that informal solutions such as rule avoidance or bribery follow. The formal rules become of secondary importance to informal practices pursued by citizens and businesses. This raises the question of what is the tipping point of when the cost of rule-avoidance is viewed as lower than the cost of rule-adherence. Matthew Andrews pointed out that it is not just the costs of rule adherence that are a part of red tape in poorer nations, but also the inherent uncertainty of the application of the rules. Uncertainty could be conceptualized as a distinct contributor to the perception of a rule as red tape. In this context, there is perhaps no greater potential in exploring how red tape fosters informality and corruption, and no greater need for simple, predictable, effective rules that map on to local customs and needs. Corruption, as an outcome of organizational processes including red tape, would be a valuable topic to

understand the consequences of red tape in a comparative context and build upon a wider political science literature.

### *Towards Relevance*

The current era of research on red tape that emerged from the work of scholars such as Bozeman, Rainey and Bretschneider was explicit in having a bias towards reducing red tape. Indeed, a central difference between the Bozeman and Kaufman definitions of red tape was the bias toward action in the former, and Bozeman proposed that managers actively undertake red tape audits to pursue red tape. However, workshop participants questioned the degree to which red tape research has actually influenced practice, and called for ways to make such research more relevant. They also noted that while there has been a large growth of publications on red tape research in public administration journals, there has been scant red tape research outside of our field, or in other countries.

Sanjay Pandey proposed two important questions that the research community should ask itself: (1) What can the red tape research enterprise do? and (2) How can the value of this research be communicated?

On the first question, is red tape research dealing with topics that have clearly important practical relevance? For example, how does the study of bureaucratic red tape improve our understanding of organizations, projects in developing countries, and the equitable and fair implementation of law? What useful empirically-based prescriptions could we provide to bureaucratic reformers?

Certainly, there are frequently public commissions that promise to battle red tape, but such efforts seem to draw more from reactive assumptions about government rather than actual red tape research. There is little clinical research in this area, but it is important to researchers' relationships with the public. For practical and policy-making purposes, developing a method for red tape audits in policy-making process or in an organization would be useful.

It was observed that spread of red tape research might be adversely affected by the fact that it centers on a relatively negative conceptualization of public action. This raises the hackles of scholars who are wary of reinforcing critical popular perceptions of government. By contrast, Public Service Motivation represents a more positive concept, and generally portrays public officials in a more positive light. But, as David Weimer noted, social scientists make the world better by focusing attention on phenomena that do not work well, and trying to offer more positive alternatives. This is a strong justification for continued attention to red tape.

On the question of communication, a variety of alternatives exist. The obvious ones are to do more and better research, based on better definitions, measures and data, and addressing obviously important questions. If we are to expect scholars outside of public administration to pay attention to red tape research, then it is necessary to publish in their journals, a goal most likely to be achieved by including non-public administration scholars in red-tape research networks.

Perhaps more challenging is finding ways to write about red tape research in more accessible ways (à la Malcolm Gladwell, Richard Feynman, or Paul Krugman). One of the virtues of red tape is that it enjoys a basic level of recognition among the public (at least in the United States) relative to other public administration concepts. This gives scholars a recognizable brand and a chance to gain public attention. But for such work to be succeed, it will likely need to link red tape research to relevant policies that citizens and media care about – for example, how citizens experience the tax process, or deal with new health care regulations.

More broadly, finding ways to relate red tape to other significant research areas/theories, can broaden its appeal. This document has identified ways to link red tape to studies of administrative values (e.g. equity), policy diffusion, the policymaking process, specific policy areas, organizational theory, contracting-out, and comparative research. We might also consider looking at how the red tape research effort can relate to contingency theory.

## **CONCLUSION: NEXT STEPS**

The workshop closed with a discussion of future outcomes. The organizing committee had envisioned an appropriate outcome to be a research agenda. The first draft of this agenda is described here. Attendees agreed that this agenda would be most likely achieved and modified via a coherent, open and loosely coordinated community of red tape researchers. Below we outline some of the ideas and proposals that the group hopes to advance in the coming years. We discuss them here as short-term and long-term goals.

**Short-Term Outcomes:** One of the primary outcomes of the workshop is this summary of the discussions and ideas, which serves as a basis for the group members to move forward, but is also accessible to any interested scholars.

The workshop was invitation-only in order to try to create a critical mass of like-minded scholars. But there was general agreement on the desirability of welcoming other scholars, including those outside of public administration, or who do not consider themselves to be red-tape scholars. The group agreed that we should continue to network and collaborate in an open, public environment. Thus, we agreed that a website would be the best way to connect workshop attendees to one another and to the public. The website is: <http://www.redtaperesearch.org/>. This website will serve as a venue for (1) a consortium for connecting red tape researchers to the public and (2) providing content and information to researchers, students, and the public. The group envisions that content will include a bibliographic database (published on red tape and rules research), contacts and links to researchers and profiles of their current work, working papers (posted by members of red tape community), survey instruments and data descriptions, models and conceptual diagrams, small articles and essays, and publicly available datasets.

Other short-term goals of the group include preparing panels on red tape research and theory for the 2011 IRSPM conference in Dublin and the 2011 PMRA conference in Syracuse; developing a mailing list for the group; publishing in more international venues and non-US journals; appearing on panels at European conferences and; and collectively developing and testing red tape measures.

**Longer Term Outcomes:** Longer-term outcomes include website outreach to the public and research communities. The group discussed the desire to seed ideas for red tape and rules research among senior faculty in other countries (e.g. develop a wider network through the website) and developing an online network for research, sharing data and measures, connecting with researchers in other fields, practitioners, foundations, governments, and students and future researchers. The group also discussed the need for a second meeting to be held in 2012 in Europe, with Antwerp as a proposed venue. This meeting would center on research proposals and papers dedicated to theory development, conceptualization, and measurement development, with the goal of preparing an edited volume or research handbook.

## Appendix 1: Attendees and affiliations

Matt Andrews: Harvard University  
George Boyne: Cardiff University  
Barry Bozeman: University of Georgia  
Gene Brewer: University of Georgia  
David Coursey: Arizona State University  
Randall Davis: University of Kansas  
Mary K. Feeney, University of Illinois-Chicago  
Gjalt de Jong: University of Groningen  
Leisha DeHart-Davis: University of Kansas  
Wesley Kaufman: University of Antwerp  
Donald P. Moynihan: University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Sanjay Pandey: Rutgers University - Newark  
Hal Rainey: University of Georgia  
Jessica Terman: Florida State University  
Richard M. Walker: University of Hong Kong  
David Weimer: University of Wisconsin - Madison  
Arjen van Witteloostuijn: University of Antwerp  
Brad Wright: University of North Carolina - Charlotte  
Susan Yackee: University of Wisconsin - Madison

Table 1: A Red Tape Research Agenda

**How do we redefine and reconceptualize red tape?**

Offer definition that is: less stringent than classic Bozeman definition; allows that functional rules may still exert unjustified costs; fits red-tape on a continuum of rule effectiveness/ineffectiveness; reflects the multi-dimensional nature of red tape effects on different administrative values and different actors.

**How do we better measure red tape?**

Expand beyond traditional survey-based measures of managerial perceptions of general levels of red tape to: examine specific rules and non-perceptual measures; develop stakeholder measures; utilize alternative methodologies to develop and test alternative measures of red tape.

**Basic research questions**

How do we get red tape?  
What are the impacts of red tape?  
What are the responses to red tape?  
What are the costs and benefits of responding to red tape?  
What can we do to fix red tape?

**An organizational focus**

How does variation across organizations explain red tape?  
How does red tape evolve within organizations?  
How does red tape affect organizational/program performance?  
How does red tape interact with other organizational factors, such as culture, and leadership?

**A stakeholder focus**

Who is affected by red tape?  
Is red tape applied equally?  
Is red tape deliberately created?  
Do different groups of citizens have different capacities to overcome administrative rules?

**A policy focus:**

How does red tape emerge in different policy areas?

**A comparative focus**

Why do different governments adopt rules that lead to red tape?  
How does the implementation of rules in different settings foster or avoid red tape?  
What is the relationship between red tape, rule-avoidance, and corruption?