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Work, well-being, and health

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Point of Departure I

- **Stress at work a major problem for well-being and health**
 - **CVD:** (Belkic et al., 2004, Siegrist, 2002)
 - **Precursors of CVD,**
 - **Various indicators of well-being** (Siegrist, 2002; Sonnentag & Frese, 2003)
 - **Back pain** (Nachemsen & Jonsson, 2000)
 - **General review:** Sonnentag & Frese (2003)

Point of Departure II

- **Work „as such“ is basically beneficial**
 - **Unemployment / Job Insecurity** (Murphy & Athanasou, (1999) / Klandermans & Van Vuuren (1999))
 - **Multiple roles** (Barnett & Hyde, 2001)

Topics

1. Research Traditions
 - Characteristics of Work that are relevant for Health and Well-being
 - Dominant Models
 - New Developments: Issues of Social Exchange
2. The Interplay between Work and Person
3. Stress as Offense to Self: Rationale and Findings

Topics

1. Research Traditions

➤ Characteristics of Work that are relevant for Health and Well-being

➤ Dominant Models

➤ New Developments: Issues of Social Exchange

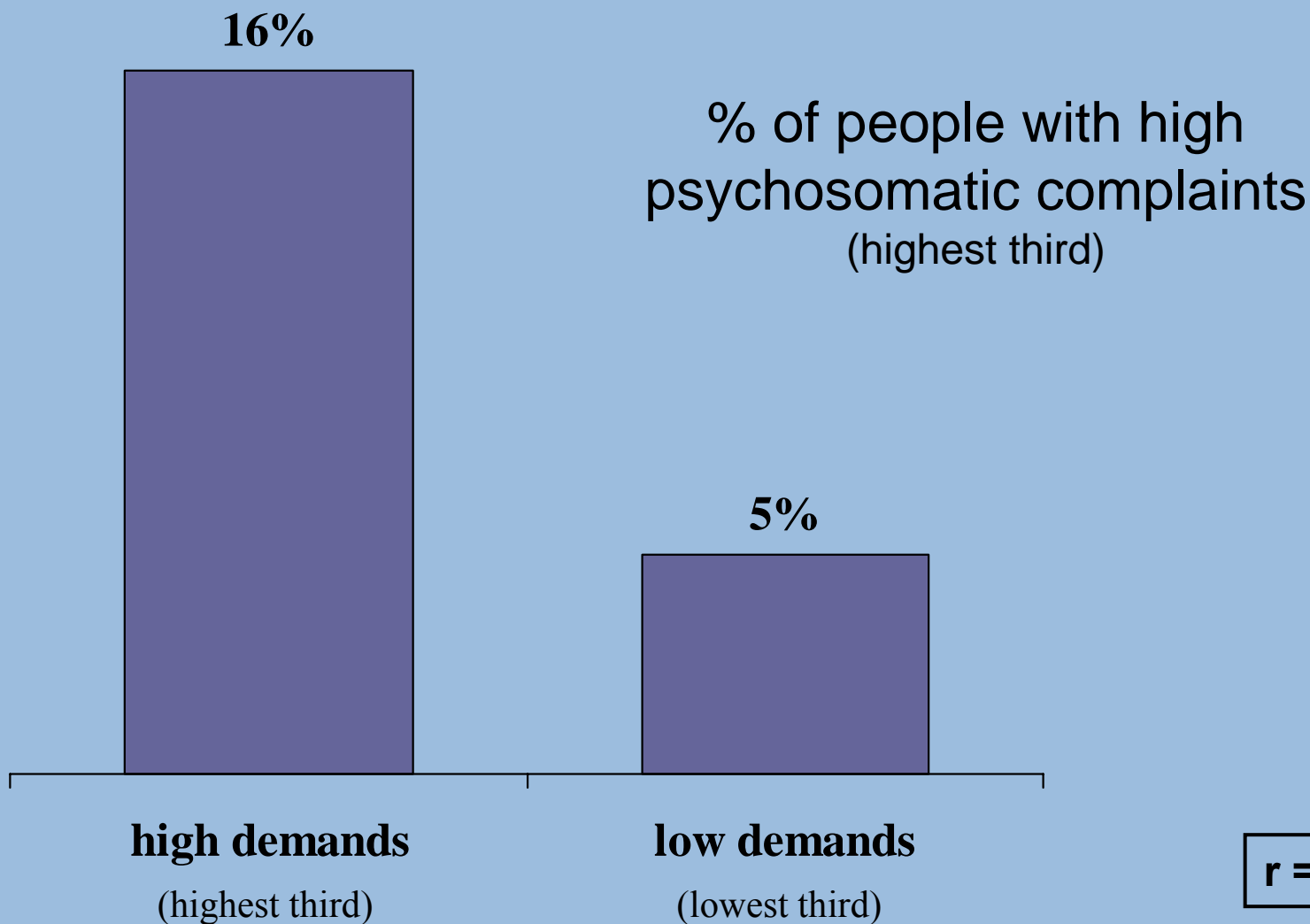
2. The Interplay between Work and Person

3. Stress as Offense to Self: Rationale and Findings

Aspects of work relevant for stress and health

- 1. Intrinsic quality of tasks**
Requirements: Complexity / Variety
Options: Control
- 2. Barriers to task fulfillment**
Overtaxing; Uncertainty (role stress), Efficiency of work organization
- 3. Physical conditions**
Environment; Musculoskeletal strain, work schedule
- 4. Social conditions**
Social stressors; Supervision; Social support;
Emotion Work
- 5. Organizational conditions**
Control & influence; Future: promotion / job security;
Company policy; Status & recognition;

Work demands and psychosomatic complaints



Topics

1. Research Traditions

- Characteristics of Work that are relevant for Health and Well-being
 - **Dominant Models**
 - New Developments: Issues of Social Exchange
- ## 2. The Interplay between Work and Person
- ## 3. Stress as Offense to Self: Rationale and Findings

Role Stress

Kahn et al. (1964)

- Conflict:** **Conflicting expectations**
- Ambiguity:** **Unclear expectations**
- Overload:** **Too much to do in too little time**

Kahn, R.L., Wolfe, D.M., Quinn, R.P., Snoek, J.D., & Rosenthal, R.A. (1964). *Organizational stress: Studies in role conflict and ambiguity*. New York: Wiley.

Kahn, R.L., & Byosiere, P. (1992). Stress in organizations. In M.D. Dunnette & L.M. Hough (eds.), *Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology* (Vol. 3, pp. 571-650). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Job Demands-Control Model

(Karasek, 1979)

High demands:

***Positive* if combined with *high control*
 (“Active Job”)**

***Negative* if combined with *low control*
 (“High Strain Job”)**

Karasek, R. A. (1979). Job demands, job decision latitude and mental strain: Implications for job redesign. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24, 385-408.

Karasek, R. A. & Theorell, T. (1990). *Healthy work. Stress, productivity, and the reconstruction of working life*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Theorell, T., & Karasek, R.A. (1996). Current issues relating to psychosocial job strain and cardiovascular disease research. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 1, 9-26.

Topics

1. Research Traditions

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3. Stress as Offense to Self: Rationale and Findings

Social exchange aspects of stress and health

Outcomes depend

- not only on stressors
- but also of a fair balance between input and output

- **Effort-Reward Imbalance** (e.g., Siegrist, 2002)
predicts CVD, Precursors of CVD, well-being
longitudinally
- **Inequity model** of burnout (e.g., Schaufeli, 2006)
predicts burnout longitudinally

Effort-Reward-Balance

Siegrist et al.

Effort

➤ **Extrinsic:**

Demands
Obligations

➤ **Intrinsic**

Own standards
Overcommitment

Rewards

➤ **Money**

➤ **Esteem**

➤ **Support**

➤ **Career opportunities**

Promotion

Job Security

Imbalance:

Prospective risk of CVD 2-4 times higher

Social exchange aspects of stress and health

Main question so far:
Is it bearable?

Additional question:
Is it worth bearing?

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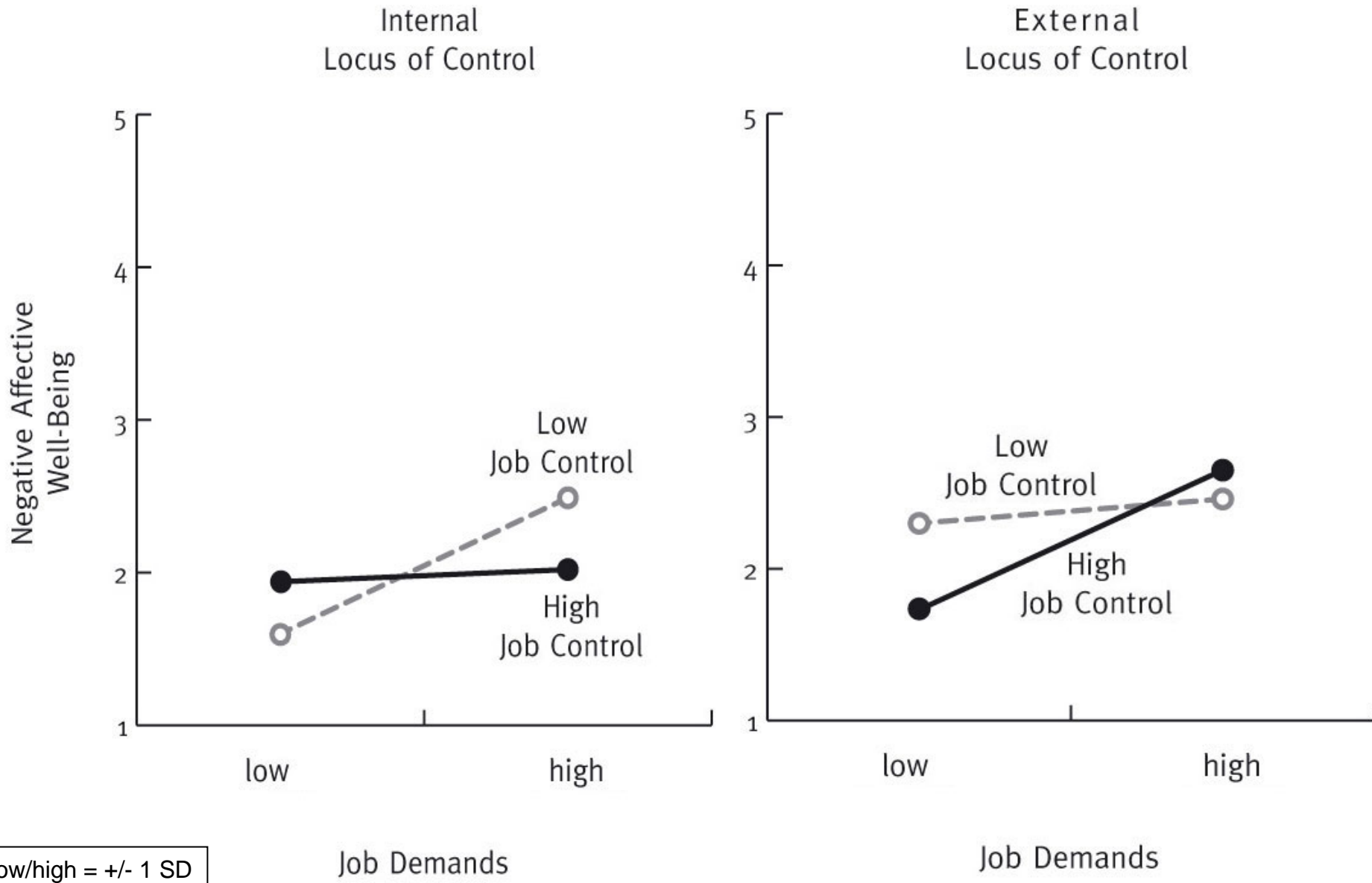
- ## 3. Stress as Offense to Self: Rationale and Findings

Resilient People

- **perceive their environment generally in a positive way**
- **are not hostile**
- **regard mistakes and failures as normal, not as a sign of incompetence**
- **hold the belief**
 - **that important things can be influenced (locus of control)**
 - **that they have the ability to exercise that influence (self-efficacy)**
- **are emotionally stable**
- **tend to cope in an active, problem-focused way**

Job Demands, Job control, and Locus of Control: Three-Way Interaction

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Low/high = +/- 1 SD

Prevention

Focus on
work characteristics /
work environment

Focus on
personal coping skills
(e.g., Stress Inoculation Training)

High potential
but
Difficult to implement
(Changing a whole social system)

Effectiveness well
documented
(esp. for cognitive-behavioral
interventions)

**Most promising:
Combination of structural and personal intervention**

Topics

1. Research Traditions

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3. **Stress as Offense to Self: Rationale and Findings**

Stress as Offense to Self (SOS) Point of Departure

High self-esteem
in the sense of

- **a positive evaluation of oneself**
and
- **a positive evaluation by others**

is a fundamental need

Stress as Offense to Self (SOS)

Self-evaluation:

Failure / Wrongdoing
+
Internal Attribution

***Stress through
INsufficiency (SIN)***

Disrespect:

Legitimacy of
Acts
Stressors
Task Demands

***Stress As
Disrespect (SAD)***

Stress as Disrespect (SAD)

- **Legitimacy of Acts**

Violating rules of social conduct.

*Examples: Unfair feedback, ridicule, accusations
Depreciation*

- **Legitimacy of Stressors**

Attributed to others' intention or negligence
→ perception as avoidable.

*Example: Breakdown of machinery because the
company does not invest enough*

- **Legitimacy of Tasks**

Task assignments perceived as „unreasonable“
(violating one's „core identity“) or unnecessary

Example: „non-nursing activities“

Stress as Offense to Self (SOS) Implications

*Stress through INsufficiency
(SIN)*

***Experiences of
Success / Failure
should be related to
well-being / strain***

Stress As Disrespect (SAD)

- 1. Social stressors should be especially potent***
- 2. Social support should be a stressor if it does not communicate appreciation and empathy***
- 3. Illegitimate Tasks should be a source of stress***
- 4. Stressors that are perceived as illegitimate should have an especially strong impact***

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Success and Well-Being I: Situational Analyses

Self-evaluation

Stress through INSufficiency (SIN)

Daily uplifts in terms of

- experiencing success
- reaching a goal
- accomplishing something (aggregated over 2 days)

Correlate with

- Job satisfaction $r = .20^*$
- Disengagement $r = -.21^*$
- Positive Outlook on Life $r = .26^*$

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Social stressors should be especially potent

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Meta-Analysis: Effects of Social Stressors

Stress As Disrespect (SAD)

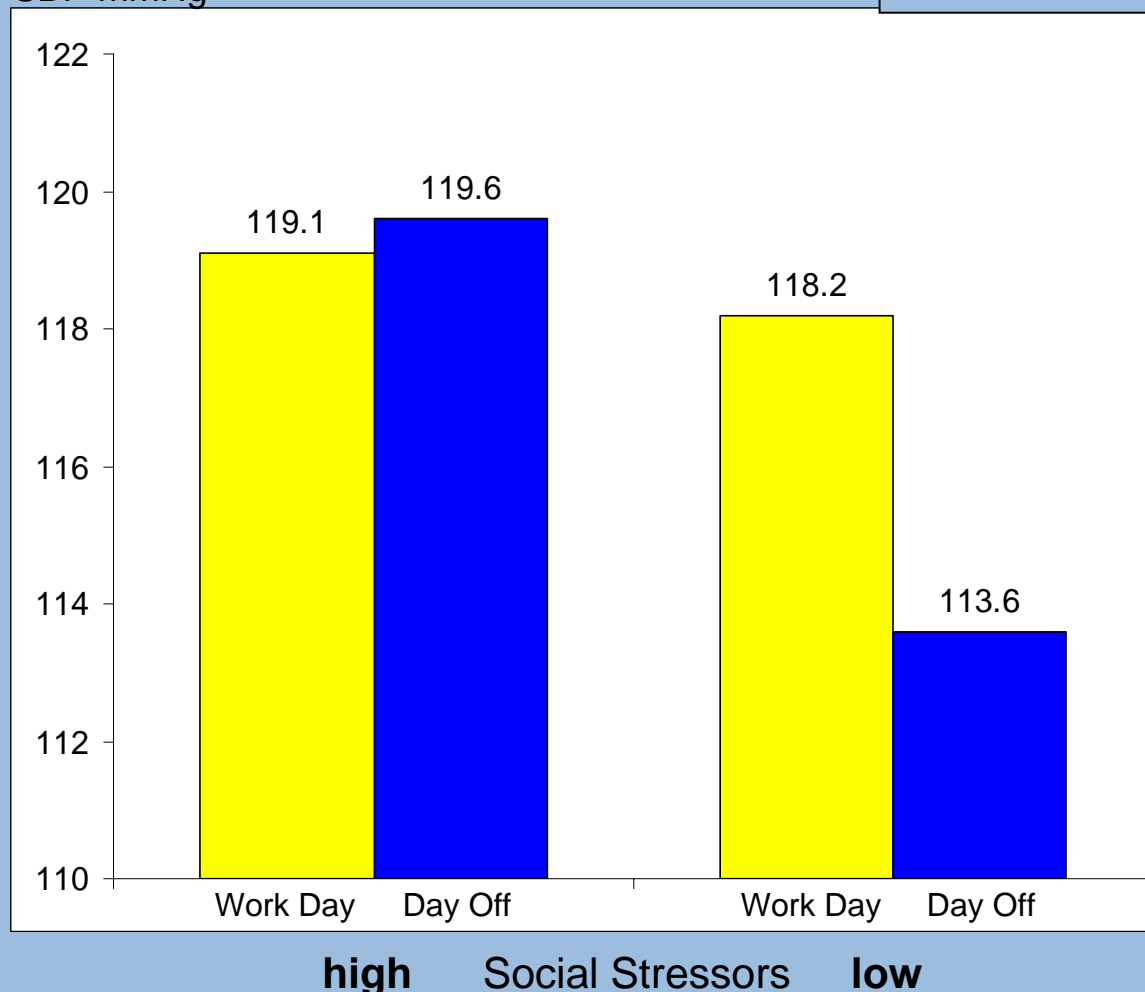
	k	n	r	beta	Controlling for: Job control, Social Support, Task-stressors, Neuroticism
Irritation	5	927	.30***	.16***	
Inability to Switch off	6	1328	.26***	.19***	
Job satisfaction	6	1294	-.40***	-.27***	
Resigned attitude	6	1320	.43***	.30***	
Emotional Exhaustion	5	934	.38***	.19***	
Depersonalization	5	935	.28***	.17**	
Psy. Complaints	6	1332	.29***	.12***	

Note. k = Number of studies, n = Total sample size, r = Weighted mean correlation

Social stressors and SBP-Recovery

Multilevel-analysis; 240 BP-readings, evening, 40 men

SBP mmHg

Stress As Disrespect (SAD)

**Interaction social stressors x day:
 $p < .05$**

controlled for task-related stressors (observer rating), job control, age, bmi, nicotine, alcohol, caffeine, number of critical life events, stressful events at work and at home, and wave

„Dysfunctional Social Support“ Items

How many people are in your work environment who do help you in difficult situation, but...

- ... combine this with reproaches
- ... support you reluctantly
- ... expect infinite thankfulness
- ... do not support in a way that is matter-of-factly
- ... do so with a reproachful tone or gaze
- ... indicate that you should have dealt with the problem yourself

Scale values:

$$\alpha = .93$$

$$AM = 1.78 \quad SD = .94$$

Response from (1) very few to (7) very many

Correlations:

Social Support $r = -.43$

Social Stressors: $r = .61$

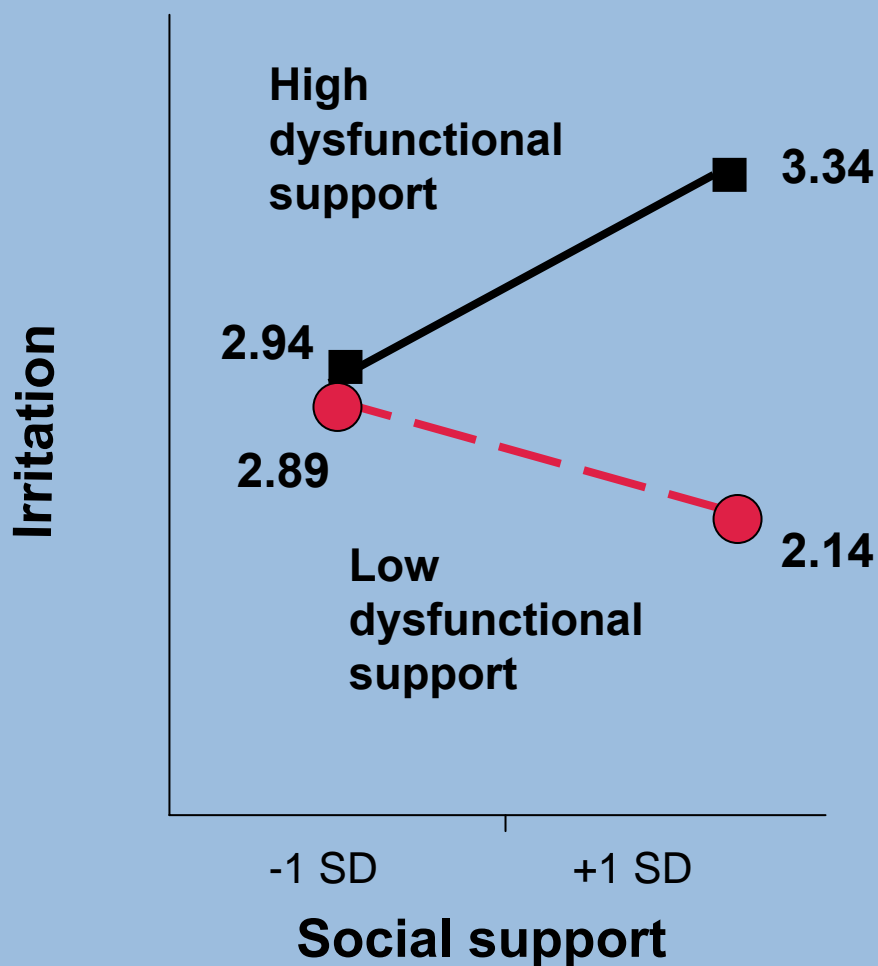
Well-being: $|r|$ between .28 and .52

Explains variance over and above other stressors resources in many cases

Undermining of social support by dysfunctional support

Dependent Variable: „Irritation“

Stress As Disrespect (SAD)



Controlling for
Task-related stressors
Social stressors

Bern Illegitimate Task Scale (BITS)

never (1) to frequently (5)

Unnecessary Tasks

Stress As Disrespect (SAD)

Do you have to carry out tasks where you keep wondering if ...

- (1) ... they have to be done at all?
- (2) ... they make sense at all?
- (3) ... they would not have to be done (or could be done with less effort), if things would be organized differently?
- (4) ... they would not have to be done (or could be done with less effort), if other people would make less mistakes?
- (5) ... they just exist because some people simply demand it this way?

Unreasonable Tasks

Do you have to carry out tasks of which you believe ...

- (6) ... they should be done by someone else?
- (7) ... they are asking more than can be expected from you?
- (8) ... they put you into an awkward position?
- (9) ... it is unfair that you have to deal with them?

$\alpha = .79 - .90$ in several studies

Predicting Resentment

Regression model I:

Stress As Disrespect (SAD)

	<i>Resentment</i>	
	ΔR^2	β
Illegitimate tasks	.30***	.55***

Predicting Resentment

Regression model I:

Stress As Disrespect (SAD)

	<i>Resentment</i>	
	ΔR^2	β
Age / Sex	.02	
Illegitimate tasks	.29***	.54***

Predicting Resentment

Regression model II:

Stress As Disrespect (SAD)

	<i>Resentment</i>	
	ΔR^2	β
Age / Sex Task Stressors	.16***	
Illegitimate tasks	.17***	.47***

Predicting Resentment

Regression model III:

Stress As Disrespect (SAD)

	<i>Resentment</i>	
	ΔR^2	β
Age / Sex Task Stressors Social Stressors	.30***	
Illegitimate tasks	.11***	.40***

Predicting Resentment

Regression model IV:

Stress As Disrespect (SAD)

	<i>Resentment</i>	
	ΔR^2	β
Age / Sex Task Stressors Social Stressors <i>Effort-Reward Imbalance</i>	.44***	
Illegitimate tasks	.05**	.28***

Illegitimate Tasks as a predictor of strain

Regression analyses

Control-variables: Task-related stressors / Social stressors /
Effort-Reward-Imbalance / Decision Latitude /
Age / sex

Dependent variables:	Study 1	Study 2
Irritation	+	*
Resentments towards Organ.	*	**
Job Satisfaction	*	+
Emotional Exhaustion	*	+
Disengagement	*	n.s.

Stress as Offense to Self (SOS) Implications

Stress through INsufficiency (SIN)

*Experiences of
Success / Failure
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well-being / strain*

Stress As Disrespect (SAD)

- 1. Social stressors should be especially potent*
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Stressors that are perceived as illegitimate should have an especially strong impact

Legitimacy of Stressful Situations

Stress As Disrespect (SAD)

Multilevel-analysis

Dependent variable: Situational well-being

Person-Variables	Task-related stressors / Social stressors / Effort-Reward-Imbalance / Decision latitude / Bern Illegitimate Tasks Scale (BITS) Age / sex
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Situational variables:

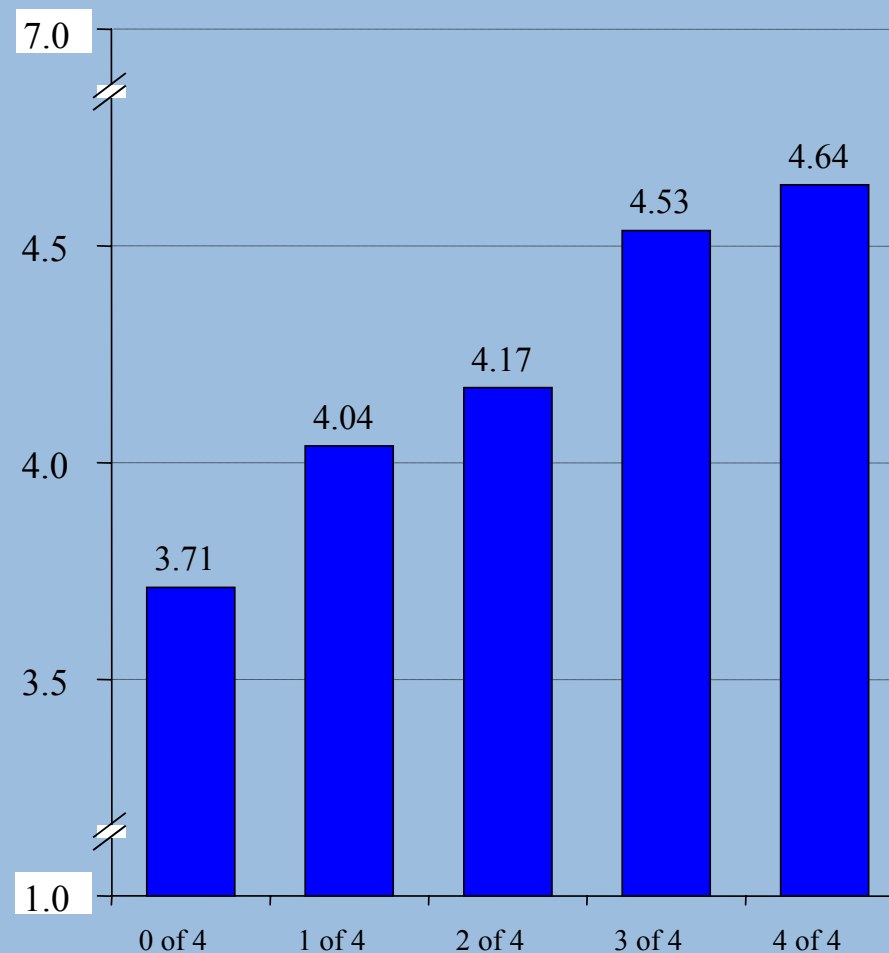
Stressfulness ***

Illegitimacy ***

Appreciation and Job Satisfaction: Cumulative Effects

N = 423, 4 measurements between 1997 and 2002

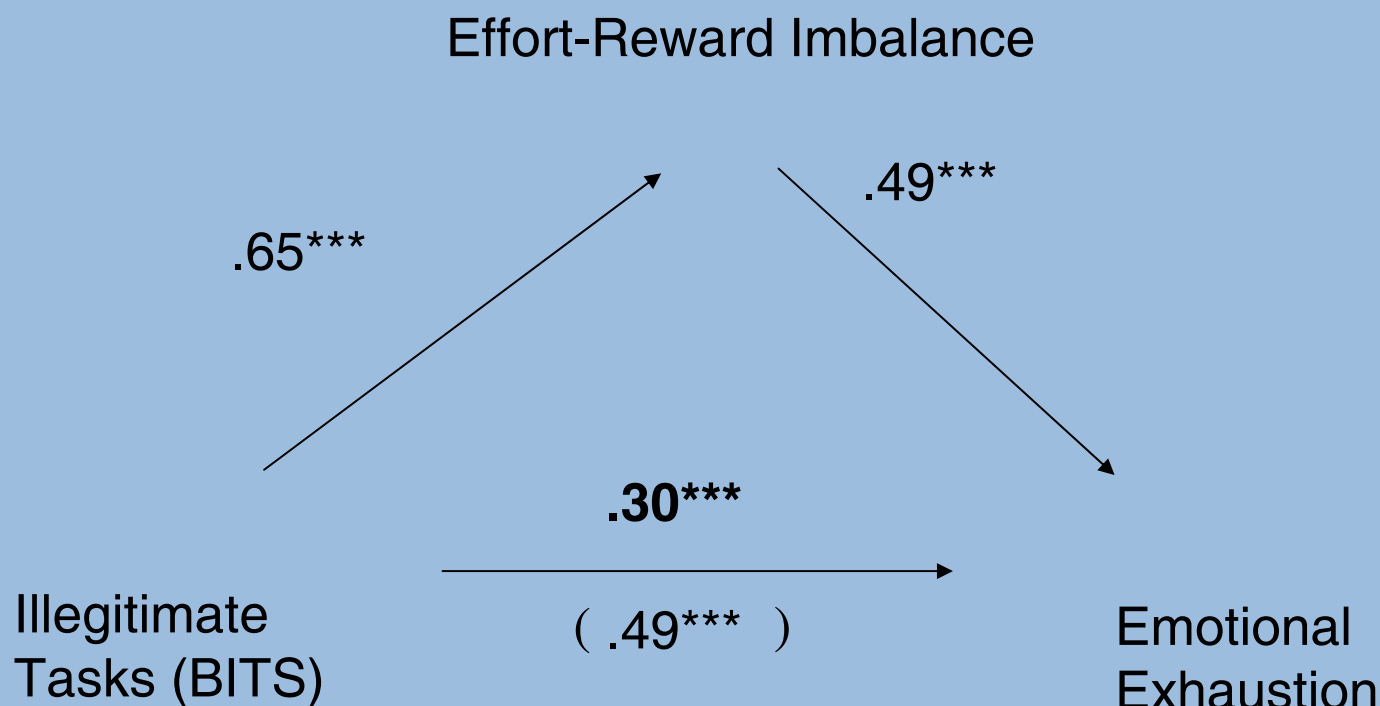
**Job Satisfaction
last year
(Mean)**



**Controlling for
Job satisfaction t1,
Region, sex, occupation**

No. of measurements with high appreciation (Median split)

Illegitimate Tasks – Well-Being: Effort-Reward Imbalance as a Mediator



Note: Coefficient in bracket / bold = without / with control for Effort-Reward Imbalance.

Summary of Findings

Stress through INsufficiency (SIN)

Experiences of **success** at work are associated with well-being

Stress As Disrespect (SAD)

Social stressors at work are especially potent

Dysfunctional Social Support is associated with strain

Perceived **Illegitimacy of Tasks** is a source of stress

Perceived **Illegitimacy of Stressors** increases their association with immediate strain reactions

Perceived **Appreciation** predicts well-being longitudinally

Conclusion

- Stress at work is an important factor that can impair health and well-being
- Prevention should focus on both work characteristics and on personal coping skills
- Classical models should be extended to focus more on the social meaning of stressors / resources

Conclusion

It does seem worthwhile
to investigate stress at work
from the perspective of

„Stress as Offense to Self “

***Stress is to a considerable degree
a matter
of Human Dignity***

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Thank you!