

American Journal of Economics and Business Management

Vol. 9 Issue 10 | **pp.** 60-71 | **ISSN:** 2576-5973
Available online @ https://www.globalresearchnetwork.us/index.php/ajebm

Article

Improving Innovative and Organizational Mechanisms for Promoting National Heritage within Tourism Development: Mandate Fragmentation Thresholds, Coordination Distance, and the Conversion of Budget into Promotional Capability

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Abstract: Proposals to improve the organizational mechanisms of heritage promotion normally recommend consolidating the number of bodies that hold jurisdiction. This article measures whether the number of bodies is the variable that matters. On a panel of twenty heritage sites in Uzbekistan it separates three constructs: the concentration of budget relative to the promotional capability it purchases, the conversion of resources through administrative and promotional stages, and coordination distance, introduced here as the count of sequential approval steps between the site and the authority able to sanction a promotional action. Budget is distributed almost twice as unequally as capability, with Gini coefficients of 0.453 and 0.244; the five best funded sites hold 55.3 per cent of the money and 38.1 per cent of the capability. Coordination distance discriminates sharply and monotonically: sites one or two steps from the deciding authority reach a mean capability of 5.17 against 1.43 for sites four or five steps away, a ratio of 3.62, and decide in 57.5 days against 144.3. The count of bodies does not discriminate. In the latency equation the number of authorities carries 0.375 with a t statistic of 6.69 alone and collapses to 0.082 with a t statistic of 1.34 once chain length enters, while chain length takes 0.327 at 5.71. Budget and coordination distance both matter for capability, at 0.982 and minus 0.932 with t statistics of 7.27 and minus 7.15, and their ratio yields the article's operational result: removing one coordination step is equivalent to a 158 per cent budget increase. The finding refines veto player theory, which counts actors, by showing that on this panel the sequential length of the approval chain carries the effect and the headcount does not.

Keywords: heritage promotion, organizational mechanisms, coordination distance, veto points, administrative latency, promotional capability, Uzbekistan.

Citation: Kizi, G. M. S. Improving Innovative and Organizational Mechanisms for Promoting National Heritage within Tourism Development: Mandate Fragmentation Thresholds, Coordination Distance, and the Conversion of Budget into Promotional Capability. American Journal of Economics and Business Management 2026, 9(10), 60-71.

Received: 08th Jul 2026
Revised: 10th Aug 2026
Accepted: 07th Sep 2026
Published: 05th Oct 2026

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1. Introduction

Every review of heritage promotion in the region arrives at the same diagnosis and the same prescription. The diagnosis is that too many bodies hold authority over the same object: a national heritage agency, a tourism committee, a regional administration, a municipal department, in many cases a religious board, and in some a separate museum directorate. The prescription is consolidation, meaning a reduction in the number of those bodies.

The prescription may be correct, but it rests on an unexamined step. It assumes that the operative variable is how many authorities exist. There is an alternative, and it is not the same thing: what may matter is not the count of authorities but the length of the sequence a site manager must traverse to obtain a decision. Two bodies arranged in series impose a different burden from five bodies each of which can be approached directly. Consolidation reduces the count; it does not necessarily shorten the chain, and a reform that merges two agencies while leaving the approval sequence intact will show as success on the measured variable and change nothing on the operative one.

This article tests which of the two is doing the work. It uses a panel of twenty heritage sites in Uzbekistan and measures both: the number of bodies holding jurisdiction, and coordination distance, defined as the count of sequential approval steps between the site and the authority able to sanction a promotional action. Both are entered into the same specifications, on two outcomes, and the article reports which survives.

Three constructs organise the analysis. Resource concentration compares how unequally budget is distributed with how unequally the promotional capability it is meant to purchase is distributed; a divergence between the two locates the inefficiency at conversion rather than at allocation. Conversion efficiency is decomposed into an administrative component, the time required to obtain a decision, and a promotional component, the capability obtained per unit of budget. Coordination distance is the construct introduced here.

The expectation that coordination is costly comes from the economics of organization. Coase located the boundary of the firm in the cost of transacting [1], and Williamson developed the governance structures that arise to economise on those costs [2] before generalising them into a theory of economic institutions [3]. Applied to a public heritage estate, the relevant cost is not contracting with an outside party but obtaining internal agreement across bodies whose consent is required. Veto player theory is the closest formal treatment: it holds that the capacity for policy change falls as the number of actors whose agreement is necessary rises [4]. A set of veto players, however, has no order, whereas an approval process has one, and the joint-decision trap describes precisely the sequential case, in which decisions requiring agreement at several levels become locked into outcomes that no participant prefers but none can unilaterally leave [5].

The governance literature also cautions against equating multiplicity with pathology. Heritage administration resembles the task-specific type of multi-level governance [6], in which overlapping jurisdictions multiply without a fixed limit [7], which is why the count of bodies with jurisdiction over a single object is typically large. Polycentric arrangements can outperform consolidated ones when the boundaries of authority are clear [8] and conflict-resolution mechanisms are accessible [9], a point made early against the presumption that fragmentation is inherently inefficient [10]. Red tape has been defined as rules that impose compliance burden without advancing the objective they were created to serve [11] and distinguished from rules that are merely numerous [12], while administrative burden has been decomposed into learning, compliance and psychological costs [13]. The latency measure used here captures compliance cost in the unit a site manager actually experiences.

Tourism research frames the problem in similar terms. Typologies of tourism governance and their policy implications [14] and critical reviews of the field [15] establish the terrain; local governance models have been found to perform according to the clarity of decision rights rather than structure alone [16]; destination marketing organisations face persistent difficulty in acting when their mandate is shared [17]; and coordination capacity has been identified as the principal determinant of destination management organisation effectiveness [18]. Tourism innovation is predominantly organisational and process innovation whose adoption is governed by the institutional capacity of the adopting body rather than by the availability of the innovation [19], and the new public governance frame explains why capacity rather than availability binds [20]. The promotional capability

measure used here is composed of exactly such inexpensive process innovations. None of these strands, however, has separated the count of authorities from the length of the approval sequence and entered both into the same specification on a heritage panel, and that separation is the gap this article addresses.

The contribution is threefold. First, an empirical result that reverses the standard prescription: the count of bodies has no measurable effect once chain length is controlled, while chain length has a large one. Second, a refinement of the theory that underwrites the prescription. Veto player theory counts actors whose agreement is required, and predicts that policy change becomes harder as that count rises. This panel suggests the count is the wrong summary and that the sequential structure of the approval chain is what carries the effect. Third, an operational equivalence that makes the finding usable: on these estimates one fewer coordination step is worth the same as a 158 per cent budget increase.

Section 2 describes the panel and the measures. Section 3 reports and discusses the results. Section 4 concludes.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Panel and variables

The panel covers twenty heritage sites in Uzbekistan across the four principal heritage centres and the peripheral estate. Table 1 gives the variables.

Table 1. Variables and construction

Variable	Construction
Number of bodies	Count of authorities holding jurisdiction over the site for any decision type
Coordination distance	Count of sequential approval steps between the site management and the authority able to sanction a promotional action
Decision latency	Days from a submitted request for a promotional action to a decision
Promotional capability	Score from 0 to 6, one point each for an own website, content in two or more international languages, a virtual tour, online ticketing, an active social presence, and a media kit available to journalists
Operating budget	Annual operating budget, million UZS
International reach	Mentions of the site in non-domestic media
Visitors	Recorded annual visitors, thousands

Promotional capability is deliberately composed of items that are inexpensive and technically undemanding. None of the six requires capital works or specialist procurement. This makes the measure a test of institutional capacity rather than of resources, which is the distinction the article is about.

2.2 Coordination distance

Coordination distance counts steps, not bodies. A site whose director may authorise a promotional action alone scores 1. A site whose director must obtain the consent of one superior body scores 2. Each further body whose consent must be obtained before the next may consider the request adds a step. Bodies that may be approached in parallel do not add a step.

The distinction from the body count is the point of the construct. A site may fall under five authorities and still score 2 if four of them do not sit in the promotional approval path. A site may fall under three authorities and score 5 if each must clear the request before the next.

For group comparison the measure is collapsed into three levels: one or two steps, three steps, and four or five steps.

2.3 Conversion efficiency

Two coefficients are reported separately. Administrative conversion is decision latency, inverted in interpretation so that lower is better. Promotional conversion is capability points obtained per thousand million UZS of annual budget. Reporting them apart matters because a site can be quick and poorly resourced or slow and well resourced, and a combined efficiency index would treat the two as equivalent.

2.4 Estimation

Three ladders are estimated by ordinary least squares. The capability ladder regresses promotional capability on log budget, then adds coordination steps, then the number of bodies, then log decision latency. The latency ladder regresses log latency on the number of bodies and then adds steps; this is the specification that separates the two governance measures most directly, because both are entered as candidate explanations of the same administrative outcome. The reach ladder regresses log international reach on log visitors, then adds capability, then log budget.

The equivalence between a coordination step and a budget increase is computed from the capability specification as the exponential of the ratio of the step coefficient to the budget coefficient, which gives the budget multiplier that would offset one additional step.

Concentration is measured with the Herfindahl-Hirschman index [21], the Gini coefficient [22] and the top-five share. Group differences use the Welch statistic [23]. With twenty observations no causal interpretation is offered and the cautions applying to small samples hold throughout [24]. Intercorrelations among the governance measures are reported wherever they affect the reading of a specification, which they do in two of the four capability specifications.

2.5 Analysis and discussion of results

Money is more concentrated than the capability it buys

The twenty sites hold a combined annual operating budget of 25,690 million UZS. Table 2 reports the concentration of budget, of promotional capability and of international reach.

Table 2. Concentration of resources, capability and reach

Distribution	HHI	Gini	Top-five share
Operating budget	0.0866	0.4530	55.3%
Promotional capability	0.0592	0.2440	38.1%
International reach	0.0832	0.4381	53.4%

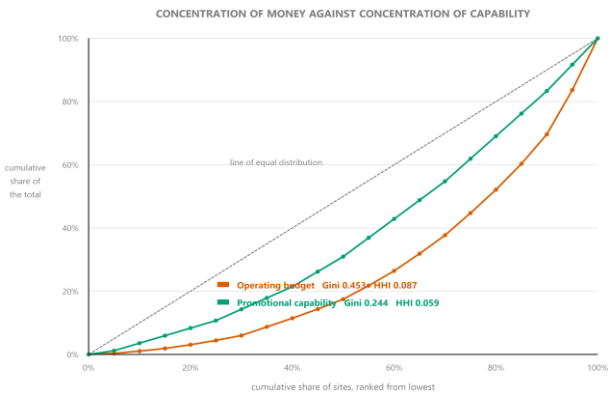


Figure 1. Lorenz curves for operating budget and promotional capability across the twenty sites. The horizontal axis gives the cumulative share of sites ranked from the lowest value, the vertical axis the cumulative share of the total.

Budget is distributed with a Gini of 0.453 and capability with a Gini of 0.244, so money is distributed almost twice as unequally as the capability it is intended to purchase. The five best funded sites hold 55.3 per cent of the budget and 38.1 per cent of the capability.

This ordering is the reverse of the pattern usually found in such comparisons, where an output is more concentrated than the input that produces it. Here the output is more evenly spread than the input, and the reason is that promotional capability is bounded at six points and is cheap to acquire. Several sites reach four or five points on very small budgets. The divergence therefore locates the problem: it is not that money is badly allocated across sites, but that at the well funded end additional money is not converting into additional capability.

International reach, by contrast, tracks budget closely, at a Gini of 0.438 against 0.453. Section 3.5 returns to why.

The panel

Table 3 reports the panel with both conversion coefficients.

Table 3. Heritage sites, governance measures and conversion

Site	Bodies	Steps	Latency, days	Capability	Budget, mln UZS	Reach	Capability per 1,000 mln
Registan ensemble	4	3	85	5	4,200	1,450	1.19
Itchan Kala	3	2	60	6	3,600	1,320	1.67
Ark of Bukhara	3	2	65	5	2,400	860	2.08
Gur-e-Amir	4	3	80	4	2,100	780	1.90
Shah-i-Zinda	4	3	90	4	1,900	690	2.11
Amir Timur Museum	2	2	45	5	1,800	620	2.78
Poi Kalyan	5	4	130	3	1,500	540	2.00
Savitsky Museum	1	1	30	6	1,400	720	4.29
Bibi-Khanym Mosque	4	4	120	2	1,200	310	1.67
Ulugh Beg Observatory	3	2	70	5	1,100	540	4.55
Ismail Samani Mausoleum	3	3	95	3	800	300	3.75
Kunya-Ark	3	2	75	4	750	290	5.33
Lyab-i Hauz	5	4	140	2	700	260	2.86
Juma Mosque of Khiva	3	3	90	4	700	340	5.71
Ak-Saray of Shakhrisabz	4	4	145	1	400	140	2.50
Afrasiab settlement	3	3	105	2	350	130	5.71

Site	Bodies	Steps	Latency, days	Capability	Budget, mln UZS	Reach	Capability per 1,000 mln
Kukeldash Madrasah	5	5	165	1	300	90	3.33
Chor Minor	4	4	135	1	220	110	4.55
Fayaz-Tepa	3	3	110	1	180	70	5.56
Sarmish-Say petroglyphs	4	5	175	0	90	45	0.00

Two comparisons in the table state the argument before estimation. The Savitsky Museum holds one authority, one step and a budget of 1,400 million, and reaches the maximum capability of six. The Registan ensemble holds four authorities, three steps and three times the budget at 4,200 million, and reaches five. Poi Kalyan and the Amir Timur Museum hold similar budgets at 1,500 and 1,800 million; the first sits four steps from its deciding authority and scores three, the second sits two steps away and scores five.

Coordination distance

The group means are 5.17 capability points and 57.5 days for sites one or two steps from the deciding authority, 3.29 and 93.6 for three steps, and 1.43 and 144.3 for four or five steps.

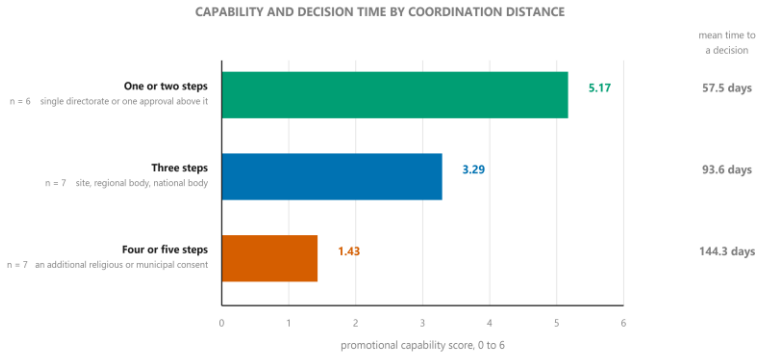


Figure 2. Promotional capability and mean decision latency by coordination distance group. Bars give mean capability; the figures on the right give mean days to a decision.

Both series are monotone across all three levels, which is more than the extremes comparison would establish. Capability falls by a factor of 3.62 from the nearest group to the furthest, and latency rises by a factor of 2.51. The Welch statistic for capability across the extremes is 7.79 on 10.9 degrees of freedom; between adjacent groups it is 3.11 on 9.5 and 2.91 on 10.8, so each step of the classification is separately significant rather than the result resting on the endpoints. For latency across the extremes it is minus 8.59 on 11.0.

Promotional conversion behaves differently and is reported here for completeness rather than because it supports the argument. Capability per thousand million of budget is 3.45, 3.70 and 2.41 across the three groups, which is not monotone. The middle group is the most efficient per unit of money. The reason is that the best resourced sites concentrate in the nearest group and the ratio penalises them for their budgets, which illustrates why a ratio measure of this kind cannot be used on its own to rank institutional arrangements.

Which governance measure carries the effect

Table 4 reports the capability ladder.

Table 4. Capability ladder, dependent variable promotional capability (n = 20)

	P1	P2	P3	P4
log operating budget	1.547 (0.213)	0.982 (0.135)	1.059 (0.187)	0.741 (0.248)
	t = 7.26	t = 7.27	t = 5.67	t = 2.99
Coordination steps		-0.932 (0.130)	-0.754 (0.322)	-0.537 (0.324)
		t = -7.15	t = -2.35	t = -1.65
Number of bodies			-0.172 (0.285)	0.317 (0.380)
			t = -0.61	t = 0.83
log decision latency				-1.991 (1.103)
				t = -1.80
R^2	0.745	0.936	0.938	0.949
Adjusted R^2	0.731	0.929	0.926	0.935

Standard errors in parentheses.

Budget matters and the article does not claim otherwise. Its coefficient is significant in every specification, at 1.547, 0.982, 1.059 and 0.741 with t statistics from 7.26 down to 2.99. Any account of these results that presents governance as a substitute for resources misreads them.

Coordination distance matters as much. Adding it in P2 raises R^2 from 0.745 to 0.936, an increase of 0.191 on a single variable, and its coefficient is minus 0.932 with a t statistic of minus 7.15. Each additional step in the approval sequence costs almost a full capability point.

The number of bodies contributes nothing. In P3 it carries minus 0.172 with a t statistic of minus 0.61, R^2 rises by 0.002, and the adjusted R^2 falls. Its entry weakens the step coefficient from minus 0.932 to minus 0.754, which is collinearity rather than evidence: the two measures correlate at 0.835. The latency equation in the next subsection resolves the direction of that collinearity, and it resolves it against the body count.

P4 requires a similar caution and it is stated rather than left implicit. Decision latency correlates with coordination steps at 0.944. The two are not independent measures but the same construct captured twice, once as structure and once as its consequence. P4 is therefore uninformative about either: its step coefficient of minus 0.537 and its latency coefficient of minus 1.991 are both insignificant not because neither matters but because the specification cannot allocate a shared effect between them. P4 is reported because omitting a specification that fails is not acceptable practice, not because it adds evidence.

Table 5 reports the latency and reach ladders.

Table 5. Latency and reach ladders (n = 20)

	L1	**L2**	**R1**	**R2**	**R3**
Dependent variable	log latency	log latency	log reach	log reach	log reach
Number of bodies	0.375 (0.056)	0.082 (0.061)			
	t = 6.69	t = 1.34			

	L1	L2	R1	R2	R3
Coordination steps		0.327 (0.057) t = 5.71			
log visitors			0.996 (0.158) t = 6.32	0.522 (0.075) t = 6.99	0.048 (0.088) t = 0.55
Promotional capability				0.350 (0.033) t = 10.48	0.150 (0.038) t = 3.99
log operating budget					0.681 (0.111) t = 6.13
R^2	0.713	0.902	0.689	0.958	0.988
Adjusted R^2	0.697	0.890	0.672	0.953	0.985

Standard errors in parentheses.

The latency ladder is the decisive test, because it puts both governance measures against the same outcome with nothing else in the equation. Taken alone the number of bodies looks powerful: 0.375 with a t statistic of 6.69, explaining 71.3 per cent of the variation in decision time. Entering chain length destroys it. The body count falls to 0.082 with a t statistic of 1.34, while chain length takes 0.327 at 5.71 and R^2 rises to 0.902.

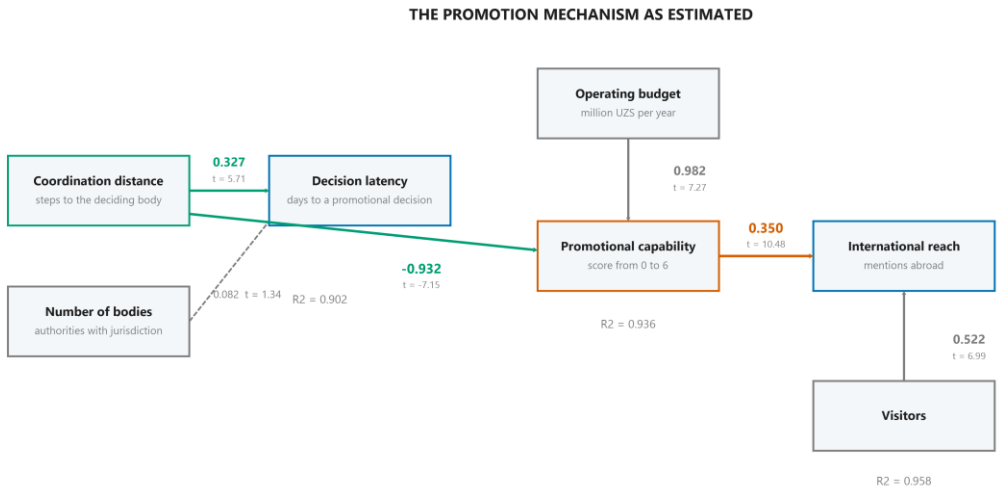


Figure 3. The promotion mechanism as estimated. Coefficients are from specifications L2, P2 and R2.

This is the article's central result. The apparent effect of having many authorities is an artefact of the correlation between having many authorities and having a long approval chain. Where the two diverge, the chain carries the effect and the count does not. A jurisdiction that is crowded but flat behaves differently from one that is sparse but sequential, and only the second is costly.

What capability delivers

The reach ladder places promotional capability in the outcome chain. Visitors alone explain 68.9 per cent of international reach at an elasticity of 0.996. Adding capability raises R^2 to 0.958, with capability at 0.350 and a t statistic of 10.48 and visitors falling to 0.522.

Capability therefore has a substantial association with reach that is independent of how many people visit.

R3 adds budget and must be read carefully. Budget enters at 0.681 with a t statistic of 6.13, capability halves to 0.150 though it remains significant at 3.99, and visitors collapse to 0.048 with a t statistic of 0.55. Budget and visitors correlate at 0.876, so the collapse of the visitor coefficient is collinearity and should not be read as evidence that visitor numbers are irrelevant to reach. What can be said is narrower: capability retains an independent association with reach even against budget, at 0.150, and this is the specification least favourable to it.

The equivalence and the counterfactual

The two significant coefficients in P2 are commensurable, and dividing them yields the practical result. Offsetting one additional coordination step requires multiplying the budget by the exponential of 0.932 divided by 0.982, which is 2.58.

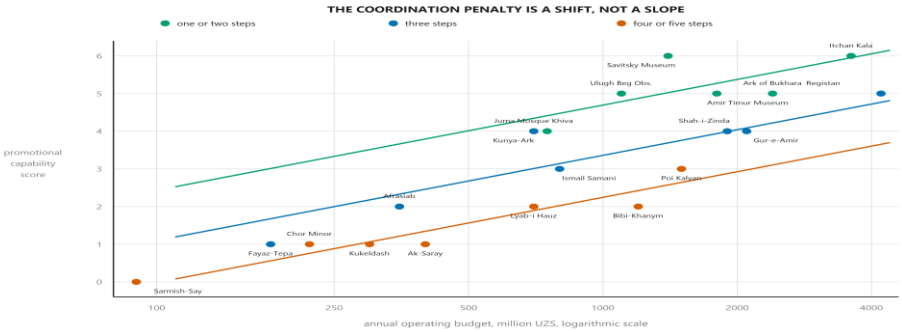


Figure 4. Promotional capability against operating budget on a logarithmic scale, with sites coloured by coordination distance group. The three fitted lines share the slope estimated in P2 and differ only in level.

One fewer coordination step is worth as much as a 158 per cent budget increase. The figure shows why the statement is legitimate: the three groups lie on parallel lines rather than on lines of different slope, so coordination distance shifts the whole budget-capability relation rather than changing the return to money. This is what makes the two effects exchangeable at a fixed rate.

Table 6 applies the estimate as a counterfactual.

Table 6. Capability if every site were brought to two coordination steps

Site	Steps now	Capability now	Capability after	Change
Sarmish-Say petroglyphs	5	0	2.8	+2.8
Kukeldash Madrasah	5	1	3.8	+2.8
Poi Kalyan	4	3	4.9	+1.9
Bibi-Khanym Mosque	4	2	3.9	+1.9
Lyab-i Hauz	4	2	3.9	+1.9
Chor Minor	4	1	2.9	+1.9
Ak-Saray of Shakhrisabz	4	1	2.9	+1.9
Registan ensemble	3	5	5.9	+0.9
Gur-e-Amir	3	4	4.9	+0.9

Site	Steps now	Capability now	Capability after	Change
Shah-i-Zinda	3	4	4.9	+0.9
Ismail Samani Mausoleum	3	3	3.9	+0.9
Juma Mosque of Khiva	3	4	4.9	+0.9
Afrasiab settlement	3	2	2.9	+0.9
Fayaz-Tepa	3	1	1.9	+0.9

Six sites already sit at two steps or fewer and are unchanged. The panel mean capability would rise from 3.20 to 4.27, an increase of 33.5 per cent, at no change in budget.

The counterfactual is an extrapolation from a cross-sectional coefficient and should be read as an order of magnitude rather than a forecast. Its value is comparative: it establishes that the governance margin is large enough to be worth acting on relative to the budget margin, which is the question a ministry actually faces.

3. Discussion

The results support a conclusion that runs against the standard prescription without supporting the opposite extreme.

The standard prescription targets the number of bodies. On this panel that variable does nothing once chain length is present, and the appearance that it does something in L1 is an artefact of the correlation between the two. A consolidation reform that merged agencies while preserving the approval sequence would be predicted, on these estimates, to change neither latency nor capability. This is not an argument that fragmentation is harmless; it is an argument that the count is the wrong measure of it, which is consistent with the polycentric governance literature's caution against reading multiplicity as pathology.

The refinement to veto player theory is the theoretical content. Tsebelis summarises an institutional configuration by the number of actors whose agreement is required. That summary discards the order in which agreement must be obtained. Where the two are correlated, as they usually are, the distinction is invisible. This panel contains enough cases where they diverge for the distinction to be estimated, and the sequential structure carries the effect. Scharpf's joint-decision trap describes the mechanism: each stage in a sequence can delay without deciding, and delay compounds along the chain in a way that parallel consultation does not.

The practical consequence follows from the parallel lines in Figure 4. Because coordination distance shifts the level of the budget-capability relation rather than its slope, the two instruments are exchangeable, and the exchange rate is 2.58. A ministry choosing between shortening an approval chain and increasing a site's budget by 158 per cent should be indifferent on these estimates, and since the first is close to costless the choice is not difficult.

The concentration result adds where the money is going. Budget is nearly twice as unequally distributed as capability. At the well funded end, additional money is not producing additional capability, which is what a bounded and inexpensive capability measure would show if the constraint were institutional rather than financial. The Registan ensemble converts 1.19 capability points per thousand million and the Juma Mosque of Khiva converts 5.71.

Four limitations bear on how strongly this can be stated.

The coordination distance and latency measures were coded by the authors from administrative practice rather than taken from an official series. A misclassification

correlated with a site's general capability would manufacture part of the result. An independent coding by a party blind to the capability data would settle it.

The direction is not identified. A site with capable management may have negotiated a shorter approval chain, rather than a short chain having produced capable management. Nothing cross-sectional distinguishes the two, and no causal claim is made.

Two of the four capability specifications are affected by collinearity, at 0.835 between steps and bodies and 0.944 between steps and latency, and the reach ladder by 0.876 between budget and visitors. These are reported at the point of each specification rather than collected in a footnote, because in each case they change what the specification can be said to show.

Finally, twenty sites in one country is a small and particular panel. The correlation between body count and chain length is itself a feature of Uzbek administrative practice, and in a system where crowded jurisdictions are habitually flat the two measures might separate differently.

4. Conclusion

This article examined the organizational mechanisms of national heritage promotion on a panel of twenty Uzbek heritage sites and found that the length of the approval chain, not the number of authorities, governs promotional performance. Budget is distributed almost twice as unequally as the capability it purchases, with Gini coefficients of 0.453 and 0.244, so the inefficiency lies in conversion rather than allocation; coordination distance discriminates monotonically, with capability falling from 5.17 to 1.43 and decision latency rising from 57.5 to 144.3 days between the nearest and the furthest groups; and the apparent effect of the body count on latency, 0.375 with a t statistic of 6.69, collapses to 0.082 with a t statistic of 1.34 once chain length, at 0.327 with a t statistic of 5.71, is controlled. Budget and coordination distance both shape capability, at 0.982 and minus 0.932, and because coordination distance shifts the level rather than the slope of the budget-capability relation, removing one coordination step is equivalent to a 158 per cent budget increase, while bringing every site to two steps would raise mean capability from 3.20 to 4.27 at unchanged budgets. These results refine veto player theory by showing that the sequence of consents rather than the headcount of actors carries the effect, and they imply that reform should target the approval sequence rather than the organisational chart: site directors should be granted direct authority over inexpensive promotional instruments such as an own website, multilingual content, a virtual tour, online ticketing, social media presence and a media kit; coordination distance and decision latency should be recorded as routine administrative indicators; the seven sites at four or five steps should be prioritised, since they account for the entire lower tail of the capability distribution; and heritage budgets should not be reduced, because budget remains significant in every specification. Given the cross-sectional design, the small single-country panel and the author-coded governance measures, the findings are associative rather than causal, and an independent blind coding of the governance measures combined with longitudinal data is the natural next step for confirming them.

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