

Appendixes I-VII for “Ready, willing *and able?* Bureaucratic capacity, slack resources and political control” in *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, by Thomas Elston and Yuxi Zhang

Appendix I: List of organizational acronyms

BIS	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
Cafcass	Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service
CC	Charities Commission
CMEC	Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission
CO	Cabinet Office
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DE_S	Defence Equipment and Support
DECC	Department of Energy and Climate Change
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DfE	Department for Education
DfID	Department for International Development
DfT	Department for Transport
DH	Department of Health
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EA	Environment Agency
EFA	Education Funding Agency
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FSA	Food Standards Agency
GEMA	Gas and Electricity Markets Authority
GPS	Government Procurement Service
HA	Highways Agency
HCA	Homes and Communities Agency
HEE	Health Education England
HMCTS	HM Courts and Tribunals Service
HMRC	HM Revenue and Customs
HMT	HM Treasury
HO	Home Office
JobCentre	JobCentre Plus
LAA	Legal Aid Agency
LSC	Legal Services Commission
MHRA	Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NDA	Nuclear Decommissioning Authority
NHS Com Board	NHS Commissioning Board
NOMS	National Offender Management Service

NS_I	National Savings and Investments
Ofcom	Office of Communications
OFT	Office of Fair Trading
Ofwat	Water Services Regulation Authority
ORR	Office of Rail Regulation
PHE	Public Health England
SFO	Serious Fraud Office
UKBA	UK Borders Agency
UKFI	UK Financial Investments
UKTI	UK Trade and Investment
YJB	Youth Justice Board

Appendix II: List of variables

1. Dependent variables

Dependent variable	Hypothesis	Description
Acceptance score	H1	Scale where government response “agree” is scored 3; “partly agree/ considering further/ noted/ welcomed” is scored 2; and “disagree” is scored 1. This variable is the department’s pooled score on all PAC requests received during the year.
Acceptance dummy	H1	Binary variable, where “1” denotes unconditional agreement, and “0” denotes otherwise
Timeline precision	H2	Scale where: “1” denotes no target implementation date; “2” is a conditional timeline, often subject to the passing of legislation; “3” is an imprecise timeline e.g., year or season-year; “4” is a precise timeline e.g., month-year; “5” is a very precise timeline, e.g., day-month-year; and “6” indicates the action was already completed by the time the government first responded to the PAC.

2. Independent variables

Independent variable	Description
Budgetary slack	(Second budgetary estimate – end-of-year outturn)/ first budgetary estimate. All data are from the year preceding that when the target organization receives the request.
Budgetary increase	Dummy variable, where “1” indicates an increase in administrative budget when comparing the current financial year to the previous one; “0” indicates otherwise.
Overhead slack	(Number of Grade 6/7 staff + number senior management staff)/ total FTE employees.
Worker-reported slack	(Percentage of employees agreeing to the statement “I have an acceptable workload” + percentage agreeing to “I achieve a good balance between my work life and my private life”)/2 (standardized).

3. Control variables

Control variable	Description
Organization headcount	Total FTE on annual census day
Collaboration requirement	Dummy variable where “1” indicates collaboration required during implementation; otherwise “0”.
Type of action	Categorical variable capturing the six types of actions involved in PAC requests, namely “analysis, research, data”, “clarify and disclose”, “guidance and control”, “internal management”, “contract management” and “not actionable”. See Appendix III and Elston and Zhang (2023)
Organization fixed effect	A group of 31 dummies to account for unobserved heterogeneity across departments
Calendar year fixed effect	A group of 6 dummies to account for unobserved heterogeneity across years

Appendix III: Examples PAC requests

Category	Department/ agency	PAC request
Analysis, research, data	Department of Health	<p>“The Department should develop a neurological dataset covering resources, services and outcomes, which should include linking existing health and social care data using the patient’s NHS number. Key indicators from the dataset, including emergency admissions and readmissions for neurological conditions, should be included in the NHS and Adult Social Care Outcomes Frameworks with appropriate targets for reduction.”</p> <p>(Source: <i>Services for people with neurological conditions</i>, 72nd Report of 2010-2012 session)</p>
Clarify and disclose	HM Treasury	<p>“The Committee expects the complete and transparent disclosure of information on project status, including the current delivery confidence rating, with immediate effect, and will expect to receive annual updates on the performance of projects in the Authority’s portfolio.”</p> <p>(Source: <i>Assurance for major projects</i>, 14th Report of 2012-13 session)</p>
Guidance and control	Cabinet Office	<p>“The Cabinet Office should mandate that telephone lines serving vulnerable and low-income groups should never be charged above the geographic rate and ensure that 03 numbers are available for all government telephone lines within 6 to 12 months, prioritizing any which predominantly serve vulnerable and low-income groups.”</p> <p>(Source: <i>Charges for customer telephone lines</i>, 27th Report of 2013-2014 session)</p>
Internal management	HM Revenue and Customs	<p>“The Department should make succession plans for the replacement of senior staff well in advance of their departure dates, particularly when such dates are plainly known in advance due to fixed term contract arrangements.”</p> <p>(Source: <i>HMRC 2009-10 Accounts</i>, 18th Report of 2010-2012 session)</p>
Contract management	Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport	<p>“The department should insist on a higher standard of cost transparency before contracting. Where contracts are not yet signed for the current Program, the department should secure BT’s agreement to improve cost transparency, for example by omitting</p>

		<p>the non-disclosure agreement between local authorities.”</p> <p>(Source: <i>Rural broadband program</i>, 24th Report of 2013-2014 session)</p>
Not actionable	HM Treasury	<p>“The Treasury was part of a monumental collective failure to understand how the pre-crisis boom could lead to a banking crisis. The Treasury did not have sufficient capacity or the skills to understand and respond to the crisis when it began. It recognizes that it took too long to realize that the crisis was systemic and too long, five months, to determine that a private sector buyer for the whole bank could not be found, even with Treasury underwriting. The delay in deciding what to do with the bank made a loss on the intervention difficult to avoid.”</p> <p>(Source: “<i>The creation and sale of Northern Rock PLC</i>”, 18th Report of 2012-2013 session)</p>

Appendix IV: Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics					
Statistic	N	Mean	St.Dev.	Min	Max
Acceptance dummy	1,313	0.73	0.44	0	1
Budgetary slack	1,313	0.13	0.17	-0.15	1.00
Budgetary increase	1,313	0.43	0.50	0	1
Overhead slack	1,313	-0.71	0.17	-0.99	-0.43
Worker-reported slack	1,313	0.08	0.25	-1.00	0.76
Organization headcount	1,313	-0.67	0.53	-1.00	1.00
Collaboration requirement	1,313	0.08	0.28	0	1
Analysis research data type	1,313	0.27	0.44	0	1
Clarify disclose type	1,313	0.27	0.44	0	1
Contract management type	1,313	0.05	0.21	0	1
Guidance control type	1,313	0.25	0.44	0	1
Internal management type	1,313	0.11	0.32	0	1
Not actionable type	1,313	0.05	0.22	0	1
Control_2010	1,313	0.01	0.12	0	1
Control_2011	1,313	0.24	0.43	0	1
Control_2012	1,313	0.18	0.38	0	1
Control_2013	1,313	0.21	0.41	0	1
Control_2014	1,313	0.22	0.41	0	1
Control_2015	1,313	0.14	0.35	0	1
BIS	1,313	0.03	0.16	0	1
CC	1,313	0.01	0.07	0	1
CMEC	1,313	0.01	0.07	0	1
CO	1,313	0.10	0.30	0	1
CPS	1,313	0.002	0.05	0	1
DCLG	1,313	0.05	0.23	0	1
DCMS	1,313	0.01	0.11	0	1
DECC	1,313	0.02	0.13	0	1
Defra	1,313	0.01	0.08	0	1
DfE	1,313	0.06	0.25	0	1
DfID	1,313	0.04	0.18	0	1
DfT	1,313	0.06	0.24	0	1
DH	1,313	0.10	0.31	0	1
DWP	1,313	0.08	0.28	0	1
EFA	1,313	0.01	0.07	0	1
FCO	1,313	0.003	0.06	0	1
GEMA	1,313	0.003	0.06	0	1
HA	1,313	0.01	0.08	0	1
HMCTS	1,313	0.001	0.03	0	1
HMRC	1,313	0.09	0.28	0	1
HMT	1,313	0.14	0.35	0	1
HO	1,313	0.03	0.18	0	1
MoD	1,313	0.07	0.26	0	1
MoJ	1,313	0.04	0.19	0	1
NOMS	1,313	0.01	0.09	0	1
NS_I	1,313	0.002	0.04	0	1
OFT	1,313	0.005	0.07	0	1
ORR	1,313	0.01	0.07	0	1
PHE	1,313	0.005	0.07	0	1
SFO	1,313	0.002	0.04	0	1
UKBA	1,313	0.01	0.09	0	1
Acceptance Score	100	2.62	0.38	1	3
Timeline Precision	1,313	3.16	2.00	1	6
Implementation completion.	1,770	0.42	0.49	0	1

Descriptive statistics are calculated based on model (8), except for “Acceptance Score” -- based on model (4), and “Implementation completion” -- based on model (16).

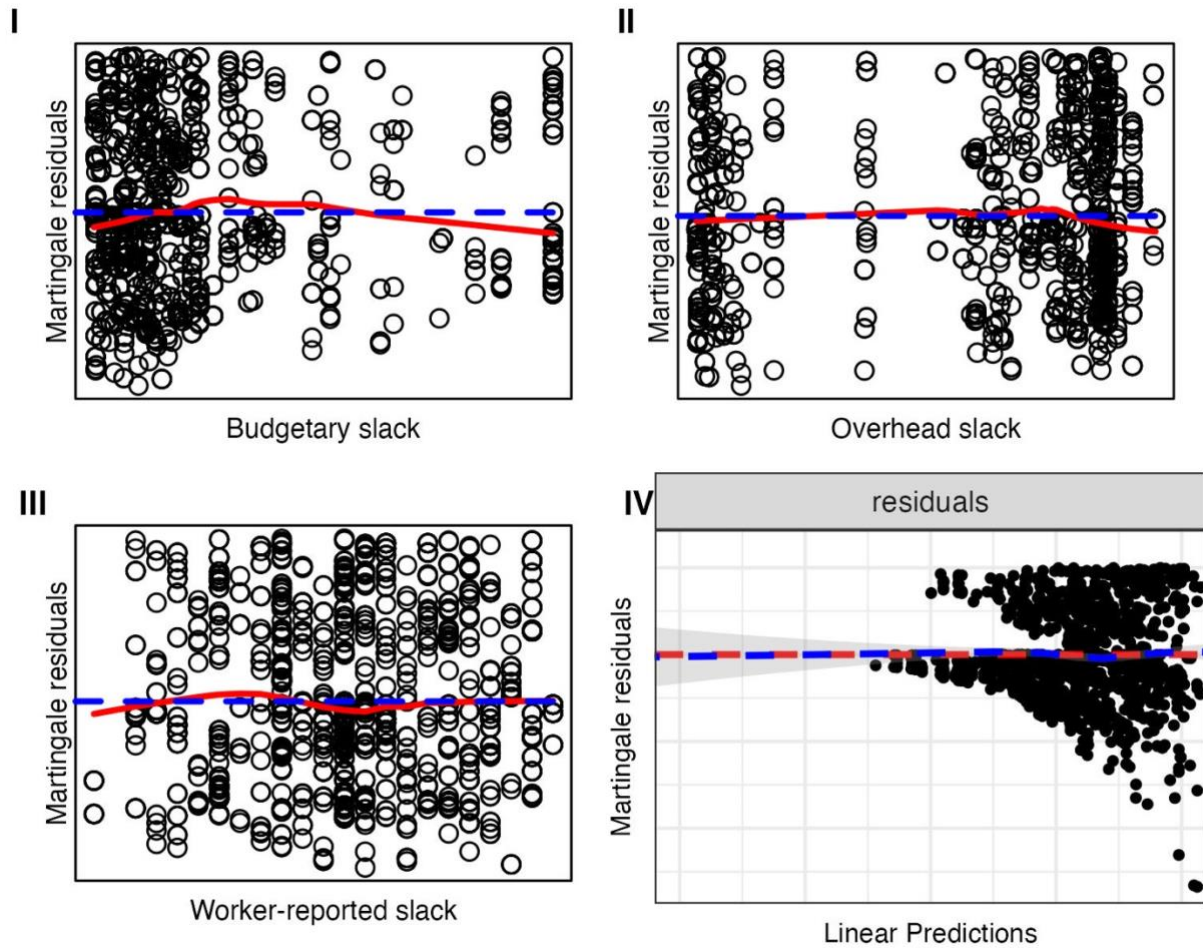
Appendix V: Robustness check for H1

Table A. Robustness Check of Hypothesis 1 Main Results Using Poisson Pseudo Maximum Likelihood (PPML) for Nonlinear Relationships

	Dependent Variable		
	Acceptance Dummy		
	Estimate	Standard Error	P-value
Budgetary slack	0.35	0.12	0.00
Budgetary increase	0.17	0.07	0.02
Overhead slack	-1.38	0.83	0.10
Worker-reported slack	0.44	0.10	0.00
Organization headcount	-0.51	0.51	0.32
Collaboration requirement	0.04	0.05	0.43
Analysis, research and data	0.11	0.06	0.06
Clarify and disclose	0.11	0.07	0.11
Guidance and control	0.14	0.05	0.00
Internal management	0.16	0.09	0.06
Not actionable	-0.20	0.17	0.22
Organization Fixed-effect		Yes	
Year Fixed-effect		Yes	
SE clustered by		Organization	
Observations		1,313	

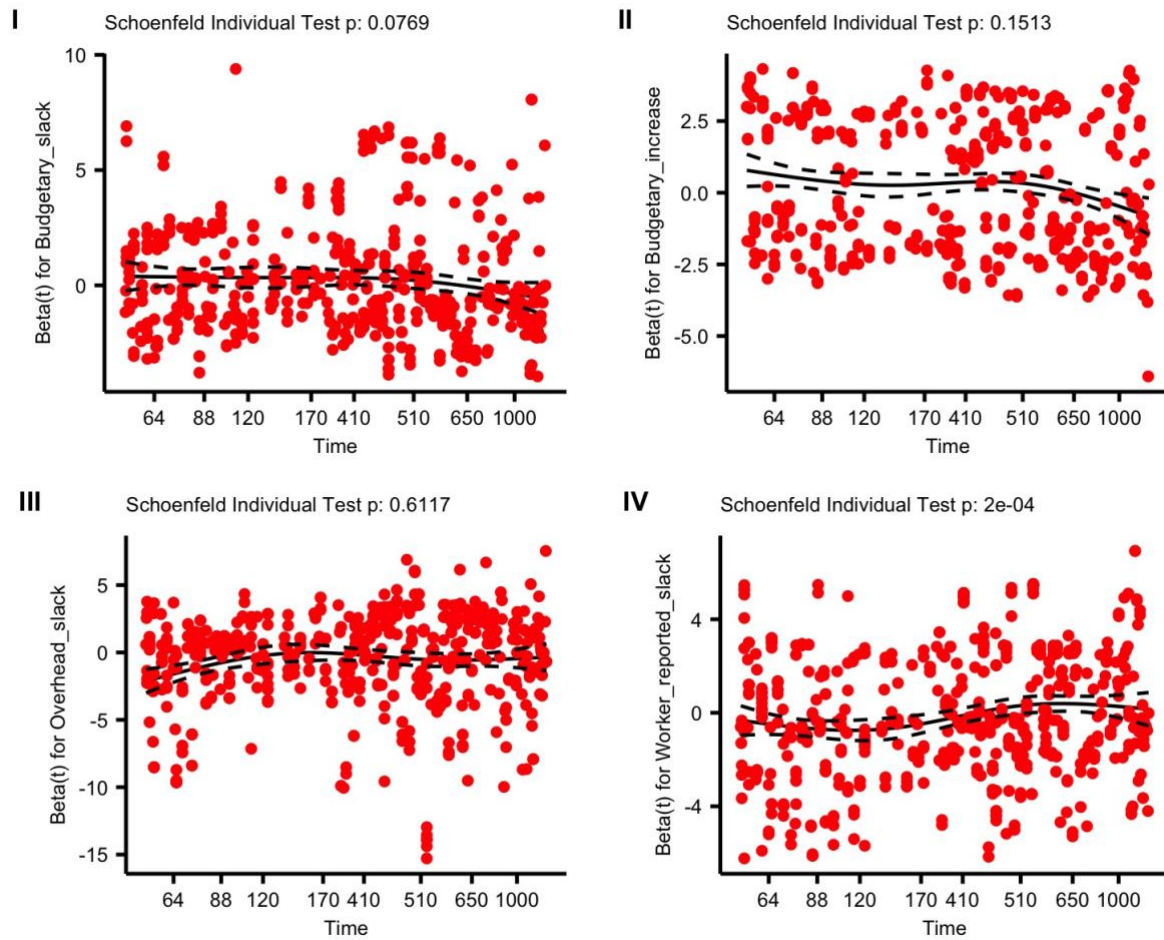
Appendix VI: Assumptions tests for H3

Figure A. Martingale residual plots with a lowess smooth line for the linearity assumption test.



For each numeric slack variable (Panel I-III) and the full model (Panel IV), the fitted line with a lowess function (in red-solid line) is not obviously deviant from the linear baseline (in blue-dashed line). Hence, the linearity assumption of the Cox proportional hazards model is not a major concern.

Figure B. Schoenfeld residual plot for slack variables for the proportional hazards assumption tests



Drawing on Schoenfeld tests for Model (17), p-values for all independent variables were insignificant ($p > 0.05$), except for worker-reported slack, indicating no correlation between the transformed survival time and the scaled Schoenfeld residuals for most covariates. To address the violation of the proportional hazards assumption for worker-reported slack, we stratified this variable in Model (18) (see also footnote 14).

Appendix VII: Factors explaining the PAC’s inclination to make requests

To understand the factors affecting the PAC’s decision to issue requests, we construct a pseudo-balanced panel dataset that captures the total number of recommendations received by all 49 organizations between 2010 and 2015. We include all four slack variables, as well as measures of organizational characteristics, such as headcount, legal status (Ministerial Department or Arm’s Length Body), and the political party affiliation of the organization’s political leader (Conservative or Liberal Democrat). We also include variables capturing the number of times organizations previously responded “agree” or “partly agree” (past year departmental commitment), the total number of PAC requests received in the previous year (past year number of recommendations received), and the dummy variable past year subject to NAO report, which reflects the impact of precursor NAO reports.

We then fit a Poisson Pseudo Maximum Likelihood (PPML) model. As the regression table indicates, the presence of a precursor NAO report is a strong predictor of receiving a PAC request, consistent with the institutional setup described in Section 4. Conversely, being an Arm’s Length Body is associated with receiving *fewer* PAC requests, perhaps indicating that the committee focuses mostly on the core civil service, or directs its recommendations about these “quangos” to the departmental staff responsible for overseeing and “sponsoring” them. Finally, of our four measures of slack, only the dummy variable administrative budgetary increase is a significant predictor of PAC attention.

Table B. PAC Request Decisions and Organizational Characteristics: PPML Regression with Pseudo-Balanced Panel Data (2010–2015)

	Dependent Variable		
	Total Number of PAC Recommendations Received		
	Estimate	Standard Error	P-value
Budgetary slack	-1.38	0.86	0.11
Budgetary increase	0.23	0.11	0.03
Overhead slack	0.93	0.83	0.26
Worker-reported slack	0.40	0.25	0.12
Organization headcount	0.45	0.32	0.16
Past year dept. commitment	0.71	1.71	0.68
Past year No. of Rec. received	0.49	1.33	0.71
Past year subject to NAO report	1.18	0.31	0.00
Arm’s Length Body	-0.78	0.33	0.02
Liberal Democrats	-0.17	0.29	0.56
Constant	3.09	0.94	0.00
SE clustered by	Departmental Family		
Observations	109		