ZHEZHE DUAN, ZHENQING ZHENG, AND SHENGQIAO LIN

Service Motivation under Political Pressure

Exploring Chinese Local Cadres' Responsiveness

ABSTRACT

The county-township cadres in China have a pivotal role as intermediaries between the strong state apparatus and the general population, directly overseeing public services. In contrast to the conventional paradigms that take external political pressure to be paramount in shaping bureaucratic receptiveness, this study uses a bureaucratic subjectivity approach that amalgamates intrinsic service motivation with structuralized external pressures in the context of Chinese local government to provide a more systemic and nuanced explanation of the sources of Chinese cadres' responsiveness. Data are from an original quota-sampling survey of local cadres in 10 cities in China. We find that service motivation, together with mass media and top-down political pressure, shapes county-township responsiveness at both individual and organizational levels, and that service motivation transfers top-down political pressure to organizations' responsive activities.

KEYWORDS: Chinese cadre, bureaucratic responsiveness, service motivation, political pressure

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As of the end of 2021, within China's total 2,844 county-level jurisdictions, there were about 1.1 million Communist Party and government cadres at the deputy section level (副科级) and above but below the full division level (正处级). Excluding public positions in public schools, hospitals, and state-owned enterprises, this group of county-township cadres (*xian-xiang ganbu*, 县乡干部) constitutes the grass-roots segment of China's massive bureaucratic system. They serve as the pivotal link between the strong centralized state and the general population, directly overseeing general public services. Over the course of four decades of economic growth, China has expanded its public services and maintained social stability, which has been heavily reliant on the performance of these local cadres. For example, they had significant responsibilities in the large-scale targeted poverty-alleviation campaign conducted by the Chinese government from 2018 to 2021. Their diligence and dedication greatly aided social welfare development across various regions of China (Wu and Christensen 2021).

Thus, clarifying the responsiveness of this pivotal group to social demands will provide a significant avenue for making sense of local governance capacity and the resilient authoritarianism in today's China. Continuing the academic attention to Chinese cadres in international China studies and public administration studies of recent years (Liou and Tsai 2017; Meng, Pan, and Yang 2017; Mittelstaedt 2023; Rothstein 2015; Shambaugh 2023), this study explores how China's county-township cadres, under pervasive political pressure, can call on service motivation (the psychological orientation toward serving the common people and promoting the public interest) to respond to social demands.

Ensuring bureaucratic responsiveness is a fundamental concern in political science and government studies. Bureaucratic responsiveness, as a central part of governmental responsiveness, refers to the extent to which government officials adhere to social demands (Bryer 2009; Saltzstein 1992a). For decades, studies of governmental/bureaucratic responsiveness have highlighted the relevance of external political pressure in democracies, such as with respect to political accountability, decentralization, and civic actions against corruption (Dahl 1971; Saltzstein 1992b; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Most external pressures are taken to be either top-down (political systems) or bottom-up (social pressures) (Huber 2009; Lowande 2019; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). A weakness of this approach is that political-social pressures may not produce responsive bureaucracy when bureaucrats lack positive motivation or are trapped in competing ethics.

A vast literature indicates that modern states can respond to societal needs, whether or not they are liberal democracies. External political and social pressures

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shape bureaucratic responsiveness even in nondemocratic systems (Chen, Pan, and Xu 2016; Meng, Pan, and Yang 2017; Pepinsky, Pierskalla, and Sacks 2017). However, the gap between external pressure and bureaucratic responsiveness becomes a conspicuous conundrum in China: what could cause the bureaucracy to be responsive without democratic accountability? This is what we address in the present study. Recent studies have found that sometimes governmental bodies in China are not willing to respond to social requests: they may hesitate to respond publicly under perceived adversarial state–society relations, or people's self-professed political loyalty may obtain no return from the government (Chen, Pan, and Xu 2016; Meng, Pan, and Yang 2017). But we do not know enough about the sources of bureaucratic responsiveness from within the system to fill in the gap. In this paper, we build on a venerable theory of bureaucratic subjectivity that started with Robert Merton's research agenda (Bozeman 2000; Merton et al. 1952). Bureaucratic subjectivity is a critical piece of the puzzle for responsiveness studies, and we choose service motivation as the core proxy to test. Meanwhile, drawing on self-determination theory (SDT), we use bureaucratic responsibilities as the behavioral context in which to explore the relationship between intrinsic motivations of bureaucratic subjectivity and external political and social controls.

Making use of original survey data from local officials/cadres at the county and township levels in China, we examine how internal service motivation shapes bureaucratic responsiveness under external political pressure at both individual and organizational levels. Within the framework of the Chinese cadre management system, service motivation is supposed to interact with external pressures on local officials to produce bureaucratic responsiveness. That is, external pressure and internal motivations both affect the attitudes and behaviors of grass-roots cadres. Also, in situations involving competing hierarchical versus horizontal pressures, motivational factors may serve as "nudging" mechanisms to align top-down political pressure with intrinsic bureaucratic responsiveness at the individual level, which can be understood through the SDT theme of "motivation crowding."

PATHS TO BUREAUCRATIC RESPONSIVENESS

Strengths and Weaknesses of the External-Pressure Explanation

On the publicness principle, democratic accountability is a core institution that fosters bureaucratic responsiveness (Bozeman 2000). In both democratic and nondemocratic regimes, the accountability of ruling parties influences

the willingness and ability of government bureaucrats to respond to public demands, and thus the extent of their actual efforts (Wood 1989). Theoretically, a delegated-discretion problem exists in this process: a gap between the intentions of political principals and the actions of bureaucratic agents (Pepinsky, Pierskalla, and Sacks 2017). For instance, even if politicians aim to be responsive to the public, bureaucrats might only act in line with their own measurable targets due to inefficiency of political monitoring (Ding 2020; O'Brien and Li 1999). To achieve effective monitoring, conventional wisdom suggests two approaches: either top-down political control (Hedge and Scicchitano 1994) or public monitoring by external actors, such as mass media and social groups (Hupe and Hill 2007; May and Wood 2003). Following this line, recent studies have identified multiple strategies used in both democratic and nondemocratic contexts, including violent purges (Montagnes and Wolton 2019), political appointments (Lowande 2019), implementation of a "pressurized system" (Rong et al. 1998), promotion of transparency (Knott and Miller 2006), use of mass media (Hassid and Brass 2015), and engagement of international organizations or civil groups.

However, external pressure can provoke a backlash, which may manifest as bureaucratic red tape, shirking of duties, or inefficient administration (Kennedy 2015). Moreover, political "meddling" in the details of policy implementation might undermine bureaucratic discretion in response to public demand (Lipsky 1980). And there is evidence that greater autonomy positively correlates with greater productivity of civil servants, while monitoring systems undermine efficiency due to the multitasking problem, particularly in developing countries (Rasul and Rogger 2018).

Meanwhile, decentralization and outsourcing enable civil servants to respond to the public with more discretion (Balla 2000). Such an administrative transformation implies that political control is costly, especially in a large territory. Compared with elected politicians, local government officials have informational advantages in terms of location, knowledge, and skills to address localized social demands. However, the weaknesses of external political-social pressures do not imply that we can solely rely on idealistic bureaucratic autonomy, which may lead to moral hazards and undermine substantive responsiveness. Neither external pressure nor internal autonomy can fully solve the principal–agent problem.

Given that nondemocratic systems can exhibit bureaucratic responsiveness no less than democracies, what are the key driving factors? Diverging from

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the prevailing external-pressure approach, we incorporate the bureaucrat's service motivation for a more comprehensive and nuanced explanation of the sources of bureaucratic responsiveness, with a focus on local party-government cadres in China.

From Intrinsic Motivation to Bureaucratic Responsiveness

Apart from external pressure, another approach to understanding the sources of responsiveness is bureaucratic subjectivity. Two prominent sociologists, Robert Merton and Victor Thompson, introduced a theoretical agenda regarding the bureaucratic personality, focusing on personal characteristics that make bureaucrats prefer elaborate rules and regulations and comply with Weberian rationality (Thompson 1961). This venerable approach has inspired many scholars to explore how bureaucrats' personalities influence their adherence to rules and discretionary implementation (Bozeman 2000; Sutter 1999). For instance, motivational factors in the dynamics of bureaucratic psychology have been identified, such as public service motivation (PSM) (Perry, Hondeghem, and Wise 2010), representative identity (Dolan and Rosenbloom 2003), and benevolence (Schwartz 2006). Scholars have increasingly realized that these motivational types characterize common personalities with prosocial values (Perry 2018; Schwartz 2006). Recent studies also refer to more subtle psychological processes to explain the efficacy of bureaucratic personalities. For example, bureaucrats' prosocial values or personalities influence their behaviors by shaping incentive schemes or nudging job efforts (Belle and Cantarelli 2015).

This line of research on bureaucratic subjectivity supports our theory that service motivation plays a significant role in bureaucrats' responsiveness, irrespective of external pressures. In this paper, we define service motivation as a psychological orientation toward serving the common people and promoting the public interest. Traditional Confucian values urge public office holders to earn legitimacy by "caring for the common people." Contemporary socialist ideology in China emphasizes collectivism and a people-centered ethos. For the Chinese cadres, service motivation has both cultural and ideological sources, and they are frequently encouraged to strengthen their connections with the public to uphold the ruling party's political legitimacy.

In our survey questionnaire, we use three new questions that reflect both Confucian ethics and the socialist ethos to assess the internal

motivation toward public service orientation. Factor analysis points to a common factor in the three questions, which in this paper we call service motivation.

Prosocial or altruistic motivations are considered foundational value orientations of human groups. Starting with Hal Rainey's early study "in search of the service ethic" (1982), public managers have been seen as striving toward "prosocial behaviors" more than private managers do. Some prosocial traits, like commitment to the public interest, have been identified as core ingredients of PSM, necessary for public administration and providing executive discretion for street-level bureaucrats as well (Perry and Wise 1990). However, the classic four-dimensional PSM construct, consisting of attraction to public policy, commitment to the public interest, compassion, and self-sacrifice, is an amalgam of behavioral motives and cultural values. Recently, scholars have pointed out that the meanings and scaling of each of these dimensions differ across cultures and languages, prompting concerns about using PSM as a basis for comparisons between countries (Vandenabeele and Van de Walle 2008). For example, attraction to public policy is measured differently in Korea than in the US, and the component weight of compassion was insignificant and negative in a study of Korean firefighters' PSM (Kim 2011).

Among these PSM dimensions, commitment to the public interest is worth discussing further in the Chinese context because its measurement closely aligns with our interest in service motivation among bureaucrats. Commitment to the public interest is generally viewed as a generalized dimension with less ideological color and more civic spirit across nations, which suggests potential comparability across cultural contexts (Chen, Hsieh, and Chen 2014). In any case, per traditional Confucian ethics, government officials should perform their duties in line with the basic principle of "caring for the common people" and find self-fulfillment in serving the common people (Chen and Hsieh 2017; Kim 2011). They ought to uphold core values such as social harmony, group primacy, and delivery of public goods, which are experiential social ethics rather than transcendental religious beliefs (Van der Wal and Yang 2015). Additionally, the ruling party in China has been advocating a socialist ethos that calls for serving "the people" and maintaining affinity with "the mass" since the revolution (Wasserstrom 2018). However, whether commitment to the public interest impacts bureaucratic responsiveness in nondemocratic systems remains an open question. In

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the Chinese context, this paper proposes that PSM has a pronounced effect on bureaucratic responsiveness, apart from external pressure, and that it may adapt external pressures to make public organizations responsive.

Pressure, Motivation, and Responsiveness in China: Paradoxes and Hypotheses

In this research, we contribute to the ongoing discussion of the "Chinese paradox": the gap between the Weberian model of bureaucracy and the Chinese cadre system (Rothstein 2015). This research delves into the inner tensions arising from the political pressures on and the bureaucratic motivations of Chinese local cadres, using survey data for empirical analysis. In the Weberian model of rational bureaucracy, impartial, rule-of-law-based governance is fundamental for effective administration, and civil servants are expected to prioritize laws and professional standards over loyalty to any political party. In contrast, China's fundamental organizational mode of public administration can be described as "only the Party manages cadres." This system conspicuously deviates from the Weberian neutrality principle (Heberer and Gödel 2011; Pieke 2009). The paradox has been sharpened as China achieved such remarkable economic and social development in recent decades despite operating under the cadre management system (Liou and Tsai 2017).

Chinese cadre management is characterized by both the missionary ethos and strong political-social controls, complicating the motivational structure of local cadres and their responsive behaviors: political and social pressures are extrinsic motivations, which interact with intrinsic motivation. Thus we turn to the SDT approach to better explain this interaction. SDT helps us explore intrinsic motivation and consider whether the introduction of external control affects individuals' intrinsic motivations and autonomy (Deci 1971).

One prominent proposition in this regard is that once intrinsic autonomous motivations and extrinsic m coexist, "motivation crowding" may arise (Frey and Jegen 2001). This study will discuss whether the service motivation of local officials, derived from China's cultural values and socialist ethos, is influenced by top-down political pressures. Also, SDT scholarship divides extrinsic motivations into identified regulation, introjected regulation, and external regulation (Ryan and Deci 2000). In government–society relations, identified regulation can be understood as officials taking specific actions due to their identification of a certain social utility (Bozeman and Feeney 2011),

and social pressures can be seen as stimulants that generate identified regulation related to social legitimacy. It is from this perspective of government–society relations that we discuss the relationship between social pressures and service motivation in the following quantitative analysis.

Service Motivation and Overall Responsiveness

With respect to comparative typologies, cadre organization in China resembles the classic "missionary model." It relies neither on steering by the "rule of law" nor on economic incentives. Instead, this organizational approach is based on an ideological commitment to specific policy doctrines (Rothstein 2015). In the context of China's unitary state system and political centralization, the missionary-type cadre management system has dual implications. First, top-down political pressure ensures the widespread implementation of policy doctrines, compelling local cadres/officials to address public needs in alignment with the ruling party's need for public support. Second, the deeply rooted ideological commitment may foster local cadres' motivation to serve, given the influences of both traditional Confucianism and socialist ideology. However, it is crucial to verify these theoretical typologies through empirical examination in real-world contexts.

Chinese academics call Chinese bureaucracy a "pressure system" (压力型体制), underlining the significance of top-down pressure in shaping cadre management in local bureaucracy. The theory portrays a top-down task assignment system that puts pressure on local cadres while assessing their performance on quantitative indicators (Rong et al. 1998). On this theory, external pressure is likely to get local cadres to cater to their superiors (hierarchical responsiveness) more than to social needs (horizontal responsiveness). But even if we acknowledge the effectiveness of the "pressure system," explaining recent variations in bureaucratic responsiveness and the shifts between hierarchical and horizontal responsiveness in numerous local governments remains challenging. What factors influence local cadres to prioritize prosocial responsibility in the midst of the competition between hierarchical and horizontal responsiveness? The literature on bureaucratic subjectivity and the dimensions of PSM points to a new perspective: like a "power adaptor," bureaucratic service motivation can channel external pressures toward prosocial responsibility.

In recent times, the Chinese cadre management system has put more emphasis on the original ideological objectives of the ruling party: to "serve the people"

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and to "revive the Chinese nation." This shift reflects a political intention, increasingly evident in today's China, to amalgamate the modern socialist ethos with traditional Confucian ethics. For instance, the resurgence of the "mass line" leadership method in the Xi Jinping era is meant to instill internal service motivation among cadres, fostering proactive responses to public needs. To some extent, this has resulted in the emergence of populist authoritarianism.

To recap, recent populist campaigns in China, drawing inspiration from Confucian ethics and the socialist ethos, have shaped a substantial cadre cohort exhibiting viable motivations for public service. Within the framework of missionary-style cadre management, ideologically driven service motivation is likely to interact with external political pressure on local officials, fostering some degree of bureaucratic responsiveness. And in situations involving competition between hierarchical and horizontal responses, personal motivational factors may serve as "nudging" mechanisms to align top-down political pressures with intrinsic bureaucratic responsiveness at the individual level, which can be understood through the SDT theme of "motivation crowding" (Frey and Jegen 2001). Consequently, we propose a trio of initial hypotheses:

H1: Service motivation significantly influences overall bureaucratic responsiveness, regardless of top-down political pressure.

H1a: Service motivation significantly influences bureaucratic responsiveness at the individual level, independent of top-down political pressure.

H1b: Service motivation significantly influences bureaucratic responsiveness at the organizational level, irrespective of top-down political pressure.

Service Motivation and Social Pressure

Over the past decade, mainstream media and social media have played a significant role in controlling local officials in China. Social accidents and incidents reported in newspapers or posted on the internet now exert substantial pressure on local officials, compelling them to face public scrutiny and be held accountable. This implies that upper-level governments generally demand that lower-level governments take responsibility for their jurisdictions rather than shifting blame to their superiors. Two noteworthy cases occurred shortly before our survey. On May 27, 2018, a mass protest by middle school teachers became a violent conflict with local police in Lu'An

City, Anhui Province. The teachers had been deprived of their salaries for an extended period and had experienced violence in response to their petitions. As the video depicting police misconduct gained traction on social media, state-owned media outlets, including China Central Television and the *Guangming Daily*, published commentaries decrying the irresponsibility of local governments. The mounting media pressure prompted the local government to establish investigation teams to address police misconduct and rectify the issue of teachers' salary arrears.

Evidently, local officials are frequently blamed for negative news due to social pressure from mass media. This partly explains why local officials demonstrate service motivation in responding to social needs within an authoritarian system. According to the SDT literature, social pressures, usually associated with certain social legitimacy, will arouse motivations for social responsiveness in the sense of identified regulation, prompting officials to take specific actions due to certain social utility (Bozeman and Feeney 2011). Thus it is plausible that service motivation and social pressures have a joint impact on bureaucratic responsiveness:

H2: Service motivation and social pressures will collaboratively influence bureaucratic responsiveness at both individual and organizational levels.

Service Motivation and Organizational Responsive Activities

The ruling Communist Party of China has been revitalizing the bureaucratic work style within local governments by disciplining local cadres in accordance with the party's platform. Since June 2013, the party's Central Commission of Discipline Inspection has taken decisive actions to address the "four misconducts" (四风)—formalism, bureaucratism, hedonism, and extravagance—which are thought to be associated with irresponsibility in the party-state system, with particular attention to local cadres below the county level. In August 2020, the commission reported that grass-roots cadres accounted for 94% of all Chinese officials who had received various punishments related to irresponsibility in the previous month. The party has effectively molded motivational factors to encourage public service among local cadres by implementing the cadre responsibility system over the years. And in June 2016, the party revised the interim provisions for executing the accountability system for cadres, leading to the promulgation of a new accountability

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regulation within the party. This move established a strict disciplining and controlling regime within the party-state system.

Per the updated regulation of September 2019, local cadres will be held accountable for a range of serious events related to violation of the party's mission statement of service to the people. The system aims to hold cadres responsible for grave industrial accidents, public security events, or any other accidents/events that cause significant loss or adverse impact. Back in April 2015 the party's central organizational department had launched a disciplining campaign to address local cadres' inaction by reinforcing the theme of "three stricts and three steadies" (三严三实). This initiative is intended to prevent local cadres from disregarding public demand. In essence, the party aims to enhance government performance through cadre discipline.

All of these political narratives and campaigns emphasize the importance of responsive activities by government organizations, with the stated aim of listening and responding to public opinion. When organizational objectives are aligned with individual motivations, officials are more incentivized to engage in the government's process of responding to public opinion. In such a context, responding to public appeals not only provides a sense of self-actualization for cadres but also connects their efforts with the overarching objectives of their respective units. The compatibility of incentives between the individual and the organization enables officials to manifest their personal motivations through organizational behaviors, including participating in and organizing more activities that respond to public appeals.

To advance scholarly research, this article focuses on individual-level service motivation and experienced pressures. However, within the realm of practical public administration, governmental responsiveness is typically realized through organization-level responses. The translation of individual responses into organizational ones necessitates traversing complex and ambiguous intermediary stages involving political systems, administrative environments, organizational structures, and more. Here it's imperative to differentiate between individual and organizational responsiveness, and this warrants empirical analysis of their interrelations. Thus, we hypothesize:

H3: Government officials with greater service motivation will have a greater tendency to attend to organizational responsive activities.

SURVEY AND VARIABLES

We conducted an original survey, interviewing local officials in 10 counties and municipal districts from July 2018 to July 2019. These districts and counties (see Table A1 in the appendix) were carefully chosen from the four main geo-economic regions of China (southern, eastern, central inland, and northern) to ensure geographic and economic representation. Half of these districts/counties are categorized as downtown areas, including Longhua (in Haikou City), Nanshan (Shenzhen City), Wuzhong (Suzhou City), Donghu (Nanchang City), and Yungang (Datong City), while the other half are rural–urban fringe areas: An'xi (of Quanzhou City), Xiaoshan (Hangzhou City), Jiangning (Nanjing City), Hongshan (Wuhan City), and Dongli (Tianjin City). Thus we have the same number of samples in these two categories.

After the selection of counties/districts, the survey was carried out among sub-district/county and township officials using either hard-copy or electronic questionnaires. Care was taken to ensure a reasonable quota sampling in terms of gender, age, and office position types. Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire independently. The gatekeepers of this survey, who facilitated access to these officials, are alumni of the authors, and their role was limited to obtaining a non-interference policy from local governmental bodies specifically for this survey, without any other intervention or influence. Thus this survey is a rare cross-province study of Chinese local officials/cadres, given the well-known difficulty of random sampling arising from organizational inaccessibility in the Chinese political arena.

Table 1 shows the main descriptive analyses.

Each surveyed district/county received 110 questionnaires. The return rates ranged from 73% to 85%. In total, 856 valid questionnaires were obtained from local officials. Of the respondents, 53% work for township governments, while 47% work for district or county governments. The few invalid questionnaires resulted mainly from missing values for demographic variables rather than refusal to answer any particular question. And our nonresponse rate was slightly lower than that observed in two prominent national surveys in mainland China, the Asian Barometer Survey and the World Values Survey, both of which are jointly coordinated and conducted by the authors of this paper. Consequently, there is a reduced concern regarding systematic bias attributable to nonresponses (Ratigan and Rabin 2020).

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TABLE 1. Descriptive Statistics of Samples

Categorical variables	*Descriptive*	*Proportion*
Gender	Male	55.10%
	Female	44.90%
Age (years)	Under 30	41.47%
	31–50	46.85%
	51+	11.68%
Education level	Junior college or less	11.94%
	College	65.20%
	Above college	22.77%
Office position type	General administration	58.55%
	Professional/technical	12.36%
	Law enforcement	26.39%
	Other	2.70%
Position level (rank)	Section member	64.48%
	Unit chief	11.97%
	Deputy section chief / township level	11.97%
	Section chief / township level	6.56%
	Deputy county/division chief level or above	5.02%
Division level	Street/township	52.56%
	County/district	47.34%
Promotion experience	Yes	33.59%
	No	66.41%
Continuous variables	*Range*	*Average (S.D.)*
Economic status	1–10	5.12 (1.84)
Morality	1–5	3.42 (0.5)
Cultural conservatism	1–5	3.64 (0.97)
Service motivation	1–5	3.79 (0.78)
Overall bureaucratic responsiveness	1–5	3.84 (0.68)
Bureaucratic responsiveness, individual level	1–5	3.84 (0.73)

(continued)

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TABLE 1. *(continued)*

Continuous variables	*Range*	*Average (S.D.)*
Bureaucratic responsiveness, organizational level	1–5	3.80 (0.71)
Organizational responsive activities	1–5	3.08 (1.2)
Political pressure, general superior departments	1–5	3.49 (1.30)
Political pressure, direct department head	1–5	3.69 (1.24)
Social pressure, mass media	1–5	3.54 (1.27)
Social pressure, petitioners	1–5	3.63 (1.22)
Social pressure, social groups	1–5	3.54 (1.21)

Dependent and Independent Variables

Our key variables are *bureaucratic responsiveness* as the main dependent variable and *service motivation* as the variable of interest. Both are measured using the mean of agreement with multiple statements on five-point scales (where 5 represents the strongest agreement), as shown in Table 2. *Bureaucratic responsiveness* uses four statements adapted from Liao's (2018) study to measure the overall level of bureaucratic willingness and ability to respond. *Service motivation* uses three statements adapted from similar uses by Yang and Callahan (2007) to measure the bureaucratic motivational structure: the intentions and incentives that drive prosocial responsibility. The average values of the two key variables were 3.79 and 3.84, respectively, out of 5. Cronbach's alpha was 0.71 and 0.85, respectively.

Although most respondents report being responsive, 20–36% say they are unsure or admit that they may not listen to the masses' demands (Table 2). Also, the descriptive statistics show that only 12–17% chose the most responsive options. These variations suggest that the answers are not too biased by social desirability and that officials are vary in both service motivation and responsiveness. Local cadres who are party members, have military experience, or have more education tend to report more service motivation.

The question we use to measure external pressures is, "How much pressure does [this actor] put on civil servants to respond to public demands in their actual work?" We ask this about five kinds of actors: general superior departments, direct department head, mass media, petitioners, and social groups (Table 3). External pressure being a reflective construct, this study focuses on

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TABLE 2. Measurements of Dependent Variables and Factor Analysis

Variable	*Items*	*Strongly disagree*	*Disagree*	*Not sure*	*Agree*	*Strongly agree*	*Factor 1*	*Factor 2*
Service motivation	1. I chose to enter the public sector for the opportunity to serve the public interest.	19 (2.45%)	66 (8.51%)	132 (17.01%)	463 (59.66%)	96 (12.37%)	0.041	0.615
	2. [Reverse coding] Sometimes the public sector over-emphasizes serving the mass.			260 (33.59%)	442 (57.11%)	72 (9.3%)	0.038	0.603
	3. I look forward to seeing the public sector serving the mass better and more.	11 (1.42%)	26 (3.26%)	117 (15.12%)	491 (63.44%)	129 (16.67%)	0.032	0.712
Bureaucratic responsiveness	1. The office where I work values whether the mass is satisfied with our performance.	18 (2.11%)	74 (8.68%)	117 (13.72%)	506 (59.32%)	138 (16.18%)	0.677	−0.115
	2. I listen proactively to the mass's demands and complaints.	16 (1.88%)	45 (5.28%)	145 (17%)	505 (59.2%)	142 (16.65%)	0.776	−0.085
	3. The office where I work has impeccable mechanisms to deal with public complaints.	11 (1.29%)	52 (6.1%)	148 (17.37%)	511 (59.98%)	130 (15.26%)	0.638	−0.119
	4. I treat every citizen seriously as part of my duty.	15 (1.77%)	47 (5.54%)	127 (14.96%)	520 (61.25%)	140 (16.49%)	0.705	−0.129

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TABLE 3. Measurements of External Pressure

Variable	*How much pressure does [this actor] put on civil servants to respond to public demands in their actual work?*	*Extremely stress-free*	*Stress-free*	*Not sure*	*Stressful*	*Extremely stressful*
Type of actor	1. General superior departments	59 (7.75%)	165 (21.68%)	82 (10.78%)	253 (33.25%)	202 (26.54%)
	2. Direct department head	37 (4.86%)	150 (19.71%)	69 (9.07%)	254 (33.38%)	251 (32.98%)
	3. Mass media	52 (6.84%)	147 (19.34%)	110 (14.47%)	239 (31.45%)	212 (27.89%)
	4. Petitioners	36 (4.73%)	149 (19.58%)	89 (11.70%)	269 (35.35%)	218 (28.65%)
	5. Social groups	50 (6.57%)	140 (18.40%)	89 (11.70%)	306 (40.21%)	176 (23.13%)

the pressure exerted by five different types of actors. Each type individually represents an influence on bureaucratic responsiveness.

Control Variables

The models include controls for a set of socioeconomic characteristics. First, demographic variables such as gender and age are controlled for. Second, the models account for education, which can influence individual willingness and behavior to serve the public. Third, two indicators are used to control for socioeconomic status. Social status is measured by administrative level, from staff member (科员) to county/division chief level (县处级). Among respondents, 66% hold positions below the section chief/township level (乡镇科级), while 11% have an assistant role at the county/division chief level or equivalent (副县处级). Economic status is assessed on a 10-point scale based on local relative family income. Fourth, organizational factors are considered, including the moral leadership of the department head, office position, promotions, and the administrative level of the respondent's department. To account for any potential effects of professional training, the length of time working in the public sector is also controlled for. Descriptive statistics are given in Table 1.

RESULTS

Main Findings: Impact of Service Motivation at Multiple Levels

Table 4 presents the findings of baseline regressions regarding the impact of bureaucrats' service motivation on overall bureaucratic responsiveness.

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TABLE 4. Service Motivation and Overall Bureaucratic Responsiveness

Dependent variable: Overall bureaucratic responsiveness						
	(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(4)*	*(5)*	*(6)*
External pressures						
General superior departments	0.022*	0.025	0.024	0.023	0.017	0.013
Direct department head	0.019**	–0.002	–0.004	–0.005	0.019	0.015
Mass media	–0.059***	–0.060***	–0.059***	–0.059***	–0.043**	-0.045**
Petitioners	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	–0.011	-0.009
Social groups	0.023	0.021	0.021	0.022	0.019	0.020
Service motivation		**0.382*** **	**0.378*** **	**0.371*** **	**0.290*** **	**0.265*** **
Demographics						
Gender (0 = male)			–0.001	–0.003	–0.014	-0.020
Education			0.030	0.025	0.048	0.042
Age			–0.007**	–0.006**	–0.002	-0.003
Types of office position (0 = comprehensive administration)						
Professional service			–0.087	–0.081	–0.054	-0.084
Regulatory executives			–0.057	–0.052	–0.005	-0.006
Others			0.034	0.062	0.219	0.225
Socioeconomic status						
Position level				0.004	0.003	-0.010
Economic status locally				0.035***	0.032***	0.035***
Organizational factors						
Division head's moral leadership					0.267***	0.275***
Promotion experience					0.140***	0.146***
Division level					–0.005	-0.006
Cultural factors: self-protection						–0.120***
Fixed effect (district/county)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	3.779***	2.403***	2.589***	2.468***	1.415***	1.935***
N	856	856	856	856	856	856
Adjusted R^2	0.056**	0.132***	0.140***	0.149***	0.278***	0.299***

***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$.

Top-down political pressure from general superior departments and direct department heads has a significant impact (Model 1). Of the multiple social pressures, only mass media has a pronounced (negative) effect. Thus, external pressures, including the "pressured system," do have a significant effect on bureaucratic responsiveness at local levels. However, with the inclusion of our

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variable of interest, service motivation, in the subsequent models, the impact of general superior departments disappears and that of direct department heads becomes less significant, while the impact of mass media remains significant. Furthermore, as more control variables are added to the models, the significant effect of service motivation and mass media persist, reinforcing local officials' sense of responsibility to the public. All adjusted *R*-squared values remain solid, affirming the reliability of the models. Thus H1 is well supported, which also suggests that "motivation crowding" occurs when local cadres with strong service motivation meet top-down pressure in the Chinese political/bureaucratic system.

The interaction of service motivation and social pressures on the responsiveness of local cadres is consistently significant (Table 5, models 1–5). Service motivation, along with mass media, drives individual bureaucratic responsiveness, suggesting that individual motivation plays a crucial role in adapting external social pressures to bureaucratic responsiveness. To some extent, the results reflect the process of "identified regulation" described in the SDT literature, which holds that civil servants willingly accept social requests due to certain social utility.

To consider the separate impact of service motivation at different levels, we divide overall bureaucratic responsiveness into two indicators: individual responsiveness and perceived organizational responsiveness. The indicator for individual responsiveness uses questions 2 and 4 from the bureaucratic responsiveness module in Table 2, while that for perceived organizational responsiveness uses questions 1 and 3. The results are presented in Tables 6 and 7. While either political or social pressure alone has some impact on bureaucratic responsiveness at the individual level, service motivation has a stronger effect (Table 6, models 2–6).

In Table 7, we replace individual responsiveness with perceived organizational responsiveness (bureaucratic responsiveness at the organizational level) as the dependent variable. The results are consistent with those in Tables 4 and 5: local governmental bodies whose officials have greater service motivation exhibit greater organizational responsiveness, irrespective of external pressures or additional control factors.

To recap, based on the findings shown in Tables 4, 5, 6, and 7, the first set of hypotheses (H1, H1a, and H1b) is well supported empirically. H2 is also confirmed. These findings also support a couple of arguments in SDT research. First, "motivation crowding" is seen in Table 4, suggesting that when local cadres with strong service motivation meet top-down pressure, service motivation prevails and offsets the impact of external pressure.

TABLE 5. Results of the Interaction of Service Motivation and Social Pressures

Dependent variable: Overall bureaucratic responsiveness						
	(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(4)*	*(5)*	*(6)*
External pressures × Service motivation						
General superior departments × Service motivation	0.01*	0.01	0.009	0.008	0.007	0.013
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.042)
Direct department head × Service motivation	0.011*	0.011*	0.01	0.01*	0.009	0.113***
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.043)
Mass media × Service motivation	–0.012**	–0.014**	–0.014**	–0.011*	–0.012**	0.02
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.041)
Petitioners × Service motivation	0.006	0.006	0.006	–0.001	–0.0003	–0.108**
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.051)
Social groups × Service motivation	0.011	0.012*	0.013*	0.011	0.011*	0.027
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.051)
Demographics						
Gender (0 = male)		0.016	0.011	–0.025	–0.027	–0.018
		(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.044)	(0.043)	(0.042)
Education		0.038	0.034	0.073**	0.062*	0.056
		(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.036)	(0.036)
Age		–0.006*	–0.005	0.001	0	–0.001
		(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Types of office position (0 = comprehensive administration)						
Professional service		–0.116	–0.107	–0.067	–0.101	–0.104
		(0.071)	(0.072)	(0.068)	(0.067)	(0.066)
Regulatory executives		–0.06	–0.056	0.002	–0.001	–0.012
		(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.063)	(0.062)	(0.06)
Others		–0.036	–0.004	0.109	0.132	0.156
		(0.135)	(0.135)	(0.151)	(0.148)	(0.146)
Socioeconomic status						
Position level			–0.016	–0.003	–0.006	–0.007
			(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.013)
Economic status locally			0.035***	0.032**	0.028**	0.027**
			(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Organizational factors						
Division head's moral leadership				0.338***	0.326***	0.298***
				(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)
Promotion experience				0.014**	0.011	0.003
				(0.102)	(0.033)	(0.012)
Division level				–0.002	–0.001	–0.004
				(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.018)

(continued)

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TABLE 5. *(continued)*

Dependent variable: Overall bureaucratic responsiveness						
	(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(4)*	*(5)*	*(6)*
Cultural factors: self-protection					−0.141***	−0.126***
					(0.026)	(0.026)
External pressures						
General superior departments						−0.029
						(0.16)
Direct department head						−0.422**
						(0.166)
Mass media						−0.13
						(0.16)
Petitioners						0.413**
						(0.198)
Social groups						−0.077
						(0.194)
Service motivation						0.012
						(0.154)
Fixed effect (district/county)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	3.489***	3.597***	3.457***	2.045***	2.561***	2.809***
	(0.083)	(0.204)	(0.208)	(0.257)	(0.27)	(0.623)
Observations	856	823	823	748	748	748
Adjusted R^2	0.061***	0.060***	0.067***	0.231***	0.260***	0.287***

***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$; standard errors in parentheses.

Second, the results shown in Table 5 suggest that perceived social utility arises from social pressure to promote the process of identified regulation, a mixed motivation that can drive responsiveness.

Organizational Responsive Activities

To more effectively gauge bureaucratic responsiveness to public demand, we introduce a novel behavioral indicator, *organizational responsive activities*, derived from the frequency of government activities that openly respond to public demands. It is calculated as the mean of responses (on a 1–5 scale) to the question, "How often does your office engage in the following activities? (1) Publicize government affairs on the official websites; (2) Reply to netizens on Weibo; (3) Hold public consultation meetings; (4) Publicly respond to public complaints." Notably, in China, the

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TABLE 6. Service Motivation and Individual Responsiveness

Dependent variable: Individual responsiveness						
	(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(4)*	*(5)*	*(6)*
External pressures						
General superior departments	–0.015	–0.009	–0.007	–0.007	–0.015	–0.019
Direct department head	0.058**	–0.025	0.018	0.002	0.016	0.017
Mass media	–0.085***	–0.085***	–0.101***	–0.102***	–0.096***	–0.093***
Petitioners	0.023	0.022	0.016	0.013	0.018	0.019
Social groups	0.028	0.024	0.055	0.066*	0.056*	0.052
Service motivation		**0.453*** **	**0.457*** **	**0.425*** **	**0.289*** **	**0.252*** **
Demographics						
Gender (0 = male)			–0.001	–0.023	–0.005	–0.018
Education level			–0.006	–0.049	–0.004	–0.005
Age			–0.007*	–0.013***	–0.007	–0.007
Types of office position (0 = comprehensive administration)						
Professional service			–0.133	0.124	–0.081	–0.112
Regulatory executives			–0.007	0.039	0.099	0.093
Others			0.058	–0.009	–0.220	0.283
Socioeconomic status						
Position level				0.006	0.006	0.004
Economic status locally				0.037*	0.030**	0.026*
Organizational factors						
Division head's moral leadership					0.321***	0.312***
Promotion experience					0.014	0.007
Division level					–0.017	–0.014
Cultural factors: self-protection						–0.136***
Fixed effect (district/county)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	3.836***	2.239***	2.486***	2.787***	2.031***	2.586***
N	856	856	856	856	856	856
Adjusted R^2	0.027**	0.125***	0.132***	0.141***	0.258***	0.28***

***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$.

functional restructuring of governmental bodies starting in 2013 mandated that all local governmental organs publicly disclose their duties and responsibilities online. Furthermore, numerous online forums, such as the Renmin Forum, are recently being used by many local governments to address complaints from local residents.

TABLE 7. Service Motivation and Organizational Responsiveness

Dependent variable: Organizational responsiveness						
	(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(4)*	*(5)*	*(6)*
External pressures						
General superior departments	−0.014	−0.007	−0.007	−0.008	−0.015	−0.018
Direct department head	0.029**	−0.001	−0.001	−0.019	−0.009	0.008
Mass media	−0.040*	−0.041*	−0.063**	−0.071**	−0.058**	−0.056**
Petitioners	0.043	0.041	0.038	0.046	0.047	0.047
Social groups	−0.024	−0.024	0.002	0.012	0.002	0.001
Service motivation		**0.380*** **	**0.380*** **	**0.354*** **	**0.215*** **	**0.196*** **
Demographics						
Gender (0 = male)			0.017	−0.003	−0.027	0.019
Education level			0.012	−0.044	0.007	0.006
Age			−0.006*	−0.011***	−0.006	−0.006
Types of office position (0 = comprehensive administration)						
Professional service			−0.157**	−0.167**	−0.130*	−0.148*
Regulatory executives			0.014	0.053	0.116	0.113
Others			−0.054	−0.198	−0.083	−0.049
Socioeconomic status						
Position level				−0.015	0.019	−0.020
Economic status locally				0.049***	0.038***	0.035**
Organizational factors						
Division head's moral leadership					0.321***	0.315***
Promotion experience					0.036	0.032
Division level					−0.027	−0.026
Cultural factors: self-protection						−0.075***
Fixed effect (district/county)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	3.847***	2.501***	2.656***	2.946***	2.329***	2.634***
N	856	856	856	856	856	856
Adjusted R^2	0.019**	0.108***	0.101***	0.129***	0.257***	0.263***

***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$.

Table 8 displays the impact of service motivation on organizational responsive activities. Here we see that local governmental bodies whose cadres have greater service motivation are more inclined to engage in responsive activities. This is because local cadres are the core agents through which such bodies respond to social needs. Variations in cadres' motivation will affect the

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TABLE 8. Service Motivation and Organizational Responsive Activities

Dependent variable: Organizational responsive activities						
	(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(4)*	*(5)*	*(6)*
External pressures						
General superior departments	−0.068*	−0.056	−0.030	−0.025	−0.038	−0.041
Direct department head	−0.039**	−0.073**	−0.096*	−0.128*	−0.098*	−0.097*
Mass media	−0.104**	−0.105**	−0.113**	−0.127***	−0.111**	−0.109**
Petitioners	−0.019	−0.027	−0.097	−0.047	−0.052	−0.052
Social groups	0.060	0.060	0.097	0.102	0.087	0.086
Service motivation		**0.455*** **	**0.449*** **	**0.414*** **	**0.260*** **	**0.241*** **
Demographics						
Gender (0 = male)			0.037	0.017	0.016	0.010
Education level			−0.046**	−0.100	−0.033	−0.034
Age			−0.027***	−0.030***	−0.021***	−0.021***
Types of office position (0 = comprehensive administration)						
Professional service			−0.045	−0.003	0.074	0.057*
Regulatory executives			−0.242**	−0.239*	−0.156	0.159
Others			0.119	−0.234	0.059	0.092
Socioeconomic status						
Position level				0.003	0.007	0.006
Economic status locally				0.013	0.007	0.004
Organizational factors						
Division head's moral leadership					0.366***	0.362***
Promotion experience					−0.080	−0.083
Division level					0.014	0.015
Cultural factors: self-protection						−0.072***
Fixed effect (district/county)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	3.693***	2.081***	3.151***	3.633***	2.216***	2.511***
N	856	856	856	856	856	856
Adjusted R^2	0.075**	0.109***	0.122***	0.134***	0.185***	0.186***

***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$.

performance of the bodies they work for. This finding is consistent with what we have observed in local poverty-alleviation scenarios: the cadres with a stronger service culture are better able to take measures to actively promote poverty alleviation and rural development. This is also consistent with the results shown in Tables 4, 5, 6, and 7. Thus we see strong support for H3. Moreover, given the

objectively measurable attributes of organizational responsive activities, the consistent results shown in Table 8 serve as a robustness check for the earlier regression models that relied on subjective responsiveness indicators.

To address potential endogeneity arising from unobserved confounders or reverse causality, we use an instrumental variable. This is a binary indicator of whether one's office position involves direct interaction with the public. Of our respondents, 55% said yes to this question. It is widely recognized that the positions of Chinese local officials are primarily determined by organizational arrangements made in service of party-led personnel mobility, rather than being the outcome of self-selection (Gore 2019). The "street bureaucrat" theory says that bureaucrats who often have face-to-face contact with the public are more likely than other bureaucrats to consider personal emotions, ethical needs, and moral obligations, and this change in values will influence their responsive behavior (De Graaf, Huberts, and Smulders 2016). That is, the presence or absence of direct public service in one's job will not impact bureaucratic responsiveness directly; instead, it can only manifest as responsiveness through bureaucrats' personal attributes, such as their level of service motivation.

Table A2 in the appendix shows the results of this test. The first two columns indicate that direct service to the public significantly increases officials' service motivation in the first stage and individual responsiveness in the second stage. Subsequent columns assess the impact on organizational responsiveness and organizational responsive activities. They consistently indicate that direct service to the public enhances bureaucratic responsiveness through the mediation of service motivation. Hausman and Wald tests support the necessity and utility of the instrumental strategy in the estimation process. In summary, the outcomes of these instrumental variable regressions are consistent with the previous findings, reinforcing the link between service motivation and bureaucratic responsiveness.

CONCLUSIONS

In contrast to the prevalent external-pressure approach, this paper focuses on bureaucratic subjectivity, particularly bureaucrats' service motivation, to present a more integral and nuanced explanation of the sources of bureaucratic responsiveness in local government in China. Service motivation traces its roots to the ancient Confucian culture of China and is regarded as a significant indicator of moral character in public servants. In the contemporary context, China's socialist ideology also promotes service motivation. To empirically examine this

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phenomenon, we draw on public service motivation theory and modify it to refer to service motivation as a commitment to the public interest.

The empirical findings strongly indicate that external political and social pressures are not the exclusive, nor the most effective, drivers of bureaucratic responsiveness. Instead, service motivation, in conjunction with mass media, significantly influences bureaucratic responsiveness at both individual and organizational levels. Notably, service motivation acts as a bridging mechanism, aligning hierarchical political pressures with horizontal responsiveness. Service motivation also plays a pivotal role in stimulating responsive activities by local governmental bodies. By illuminating the substantial impact of service motivation on responsiveness, this study bridges the gap between external pressures and bureaucratic autonomy. To address endogeneity concerns, we use instrumental variable regressions to establish the causal direction from service motivation to responsiveness. In doing so, we surmount the primary limitations in prevailing pressure structures, wherein political-social pressures may not automatically and directly generate a responsive bureaucracy. These findings provide a crucial piece of the puzzle for scholarly investigations into the origins of bureaucratic responsiveness.

In conclusion, this research sheds light on a new paradigm for understanding bureaucratic responsiveness in the context of local government in China, highlighting the significance of service motivation as a potent driver of responsiveness. By transcending traditional external-pressure theories, our study offers fresh insights into the intricate dynamics shaping bureaucratic behavior and furthers the understanding of governance mechanisms in contemporary China. The integration of service motivation into the scholarly discourse paves the way for future investigations and enriches the understanding of public administration and governance. Our empirical findings are also consistent with some arguments of SDT research.

We acknowledge that this study has certain limitations. It is essential to recognize the fluctuating nature of political and social pressures, which can significantly influence bureaucratic personalities and behaviors. Moreover, we do not hastily conclude that bureaucratic subjectivity prevails over structural or organizational dimensions. Rather, we propose that a more comprehensive and nuanced explanation can be derived from the contextualized interactions between motivational dimensions and pressure structures. Indeed, there is ample scope for further research, with every reason to anticipate that bureaucratic responsiveness is a result of the combined influence of both bureaucratic

subjectivity and external pressures. In the future, we could consider allowing civil servants to anonymously provide questionnaire data at off-site locations, or use an experimental approach to assess the actual behavior of civil servants, to measure bureaucratic responsiveness. We also suggest that ideological construction plays a significant role in the responsiveness of grass-roots cadres. It would be valuable to explore how ideological construction shapes external pressures and the effectiveness of service motivation incentives. But we did not include ideological measurement items in this round of the survey. Further studies may conduct in-depth research on this issue.

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APPENDIX

TABLE A1. Geographic Outline of the Survey

Region	*District/county*	*Population (10,000)*	*Land area (sq. km)*	*GDP per capita (USD)*	*Questionnaires released*	*Questionnaires returned*	*Response rate*
Southern China	Longhua District, Haikou City	233	3,146	10,411	110	91	83%
	Nanshan District, Shenzhen City	1,344	1,997	29,045	110	94	85%
	An'xi County, Quanzhou City	874	11,0145	16,497	110	84	76%
Eastern China	Xiaoshan District, Hangzhou City	1,036	16,854	21,510	110	88	80%
	Wuzhong District, Suzhou City	1,075	8,657	25,939	110	91	83%
	Jiangning District, Nanjing City	851	6,587	23,912	110	80	73%
Central China	Hongshan District, Wuhan City	1,108	8,569	21,223	110	81	74%
	Donghu District, Nanchang City	555	7,402	14,628	110	83	75%
Northern China	Dongli District, Tianjin City	1,562	11,966	13,091	110	82	75%
	Yungang District, Datong City	346	14,176	5,521	110	82	75%
	Total				1,100	856	78%

NOTE: Population, land area, and GDP per capita are as of 2019.

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TABLE A2. Instrumental Variable Regressions

	Individual responsiveness		*Organizational responsiveness*		*Overall responsiveness*		*Organizational responsive activities*	
	First stage	*Second stage*	*First stage*	*Second stage*	*First stage*	*Second stage*	*First stage*	*Second stage*
Service motivation		0.254**		0.337**		0.259**		0.273**
Instrumental variables Directly serving the people (0 = no)	0.022**		0.026**		0.022**		0.028**	
External pressures								
General superior departments	−0.025	−0.105	−0.026	−0.112	−0.025	−0.080	−0.027	−0.1
Direct department head	0.067***	−0.105**	0.066***	0.202	0.067***	0.197	0.067***	0.027
Mass media	0.017	−0.105**	0.017	0.007	0.018	−0.025	0.018	−0.034
Petitioners	−0.005	−0.027	−0.007	0.017	−0.005	−0.005	−0.008	−0.093
Social groups	−0.009	0.060	−0.007	−0.026	−0.009	0.025	−0.007	0.052
Demographics								
Gender (0 = male)	0.003	0.004	0.004	0.053	0.003	0.019	0.006	0.047
Education level	0.099***	0.269	0.102***	0.31	0.099***	0.243	0.102***	0.185
Age	0.005**	−0.007**	0.005**	−0.008**	0.005**	−0.008**	0.005**	−0.005**
Types of office position (0 = comprehensive administration)								
Professional service	−0.094	−0.389	−0.095	−0.435	−0.093	−0.359	−0.093	−0.172
Regulatory executives	0.03	0.191	0.029	0.209	0.031	0.16	0.031	−0.134
Others	−0.277*	−0.572	−0.277*	−0.924	−0.276*	−0.614	−0.275*	−0.558
Socioeconomic status								
Position level	0.004	0.014	0.004	−0.008	0.003	0.007	0.004	0.005
Economic status locally	0.01	0.058**	0.011	0.069**	0.011	0.056**	0.011	0.024**

(continued)

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TABLE A2. *(continued)*

	Individual responsiveness		*Organizational responsiveness*		*Overall responsiveness*		*Organizational responsive activities*	
	First stage	*Second stage*	*First stage*	*Second stage*	*First stage*	*Second stage*	*First stage*	*Second stage*
Organizational factors								
Moral leadership	0.161***	0.82	0.163***	0.844	0.16***	0.786	0.163	0.714
Promotion experience	0.001	–0.016	0.001	–0.06	0.002	0.003	–0.001	0.01
Division level	0.005	0.01	0.006	–0.003	0.006	0.013	0.006	0043
Cultural factors	–0.086***	–0.41	–0.086	–0.349	–0.084***	–0.372	–0.876***	–0.241
Fixed effect (district/ county)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Constant	2.723***	2.81***	2.718***	1.055**	2.733***	2.151***	2.72***	2.704***
N	856	856	856	856	856	856	856	856
R^2		0.835**		0.825**		0.858***		0.813***
Hausman test	3.53*		4.44**		3.55*		4.63**	
Weak identification test	Cragg-Donald Wald *F* = 16.38; Stock-Yogo weak ID test (10%) = 9.08		Cragg-Donald Wald *F* = 15.33; Stock-Yogo weak ID test (10%) = 9.08		Cragg-Donald Wald *F* = 16.35; Stock-Yogo weak ID test (10%) = 9.08		Cragg-Donald Wald *F* = 15.66; Stock-Yogo weak ID test (10%) = 9.08	

***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$.

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TABLE A3. External Pressures and Responsiveness

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
External pressures	0.013	–0.006	–0.009	–0.01	0.0004	–0.003
	(0.026)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.024)	(0.024)
Service motivation		0.382***	0.377***	.0371***	0.275***	0.246***
		(0.044)	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)
Demographics						
Gender (0 = male)			0.006	0.003	–0.032	–0.034
			(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.043)	(0.042)
Education			0.026	0.023	0.058	0.05
			(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.035)
Age			–0.007**	–0.006*	0	–0.001
			(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Types of office position (0 = comprehensive administration)						
Professional service			–0.081	–0.075	–0.039	–0.07
			(0.069)	(0.07)	(0.067)	(0.066)
Regulatory executives			–0.062	–0.057	–0.005	–0.005
			(0.062)	(0.063)	(0.061)	(0.06)
Others			0.047	0.074	0.184	0.192
			(0.131)	(0.131)	(0.144)	(0.142)
Socioeconomic status						
Position level				–0.017	–0.003	–0.006
				(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Economic status locally				0.031**	0.031**	0.028**
				(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Organizational factors						
Division head's moral leadership					0.306***	0.299***
					(0.028)	(0.027)
Promotion experience					0.142**	0.137**
					(0.055)	(0.054)
Division level					–0.004	–0.002
					(0.019)	(0.018)
Cultural factors: self-protection						–0.129***
						(0.026)
Fixed effect (district/county)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	3.792***	2.412***	2.606***	2.5***	1.4***	1.93***
	(0.096)	(0.185)	(0.255)	(0.257)	(0.284)	(0.299)
Observations	856	856	823	823	750	750
R^2	0.046**	0.123**	0.128***	0.137***	0.276***	0.3***

***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$; standard errors in parentheses.

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