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**PSM, Organizational Politics, and Deviance for Promotion:  
An Empirical Study from China**

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## Abstract

The prevalence of deviance in organization is usually associated with organizational costs and corruptions (Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Alemann, 2004). Correspondingly, the corruption phenomenon associated with official promotion in China usually refers to certain deviant behaviors that are contrary to the public norms in practice, such as lobbying for official posts, buying and selling offices as well as vote buying and lobbying (Sun, 2008). However, there were few theoretical explanations as well as empirical studies to explore the antecedents of deviance for promotion.

According to the public service motivation (PSM) studies (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007; Vandenberghe, 2011), the public servants who have strong motives to contribute to the public interest would comply with the altruism norms which shapes their administrative behaviors. Consequently, it is expected that the public servants who have strong PSM should be motivated to unselfishly defend the public interest and unlikely to engage in negative deviant behaviors. Besides, the organizational politics scholars who considered that people are rational actors, suggest that organizational politics may reinforce employees' instrumental beliefs and enhance their tendencies towards careerism (Hsiung *et al.*, 2011), so the public servants with high perceptions of organizational politics (POP) might be fear about the unfair treatment, and then be involving in deviance for promotion. Both the PSM and the POP would make effects on the deviant behaviors theoretically, however, little is known about whether the public servants associated with strong PSM would involve in deviance for promotion in the situation of high POP.

The study focus on the relationship between local official's POP, PSM and the deviance for promotion in rural China. Based on the sample as well as some in-depth interviews of chief leaders from 77 township-level governments in a municipal in west China, the empirical evidence shows that POP was positively related to the deviance for promotion, however, there was no significant correlations between PSM and the deviance.

The findings indicate that within the highly political situation of local government, officials would tend to involve in deviance to get promoted, no matter how strong PSM they had. Therefore, official's deviance for promotion would be mainly attributed to the cadre management system as well as its' policy implementation in China. It implies that there might be the strong situation discussed by Mischel (1977), in which individuals tend to behave in very similar ways regardless of their individual differences, so that the incentives for opportunism and maneuvering on the part of individual officials were exacerbated.

## Introduction

During the Chinese reform in past decades, the transitional characteristics of the Party's personnel management regime has made officials pay more attention to promotion police, and many of them involved in deviance to get promotion in hierarchical organization (Zhou 2010). There were the negative impressions of officials for their shirking, sabotage and defrauding to public, which is assumed they seek to maximize utilities such as power and income (John P. Burns and Xiaoqi 2010). Officials have to compete with each other on their on-the-job performance and achievement to promote their careers, as well as to strengthen their social network ties with superior leaders and departments. The coping strategies toward the performance meritocracy system and the promotion mechanism have been discussed with Chinese scholars in-depth, such as Zhao (2006), Li (2006) and Chan & Gao (2009). However, few studies explored the official deviance in workplace from the perspective of organization theory in contemporary China.

The prevalence of deviance in organization is usually associated with organizational costs and corruptions (Sandra L. Robinson and Bennett 1995; Alemann 2004). Deviance is a key characteristic of corruption, because the individuals engaging in corrupt behaviors are always deviant from accepted rules, norms or public expectations. For example, it could be identified into different types of corruption by the large amount of deviant behaviors, such as police 'kickbacks' (when an officer receives things for referring business to others), 'shakedowns' (when an officer accepts a bribe in return for not following through a criminal violation), 'the fix' (undermining criminal investigations), and so on (Louise E. Porter and Warrender 2009). Any form of corruption is the misuse of power or authority at the expense of public interest, in which the police are deviant from their duties to serve the public selflessly.

Generally, official corruption in China as well as other developing countries was becoming more serious and pervasive in the light of observations by many social media (Xiaogang Deng, Lening Zhang et al. 2010). Corruption is always seen as an individual act ultimately, and there are three essential elements have to be present for an act to be deemed corrupt, including (1) the action of public officials involving the (ab)use of power or authority to a public office, (2) for private gain, and (3) violate prescribed norms of public office (Lu 2000). As Lu (2000) mentioned, the reform in China have generated a set of problems including growing deviant actions by government agencies, particularly in the process of official promotion upon the performance evaluation. To be specific, the corruption phenomenon associated with official promotion in China usually refers to certain deviant behaviors that are contrary to the public norms in practice, such as lobbying for official posts, buying and selling offices as well as vote buying and lobbying (Sun 2008).

Conventional wisdom asserted that the deviance violated public expectation as well as damaging well-being for public, also it was the "bad" behaviors or conducts deviated from public norms (Ricky W. Griffin and Lopez 2005). As a particular case of official deviance, corruption is commonly seen as a conduct driven by specific extrinsic incentives or intrinsic motivations (Ting Gong and Wu 2012). In other words, the deviance for promotion derived from officials' self-interested motivation, which implies the decline of their pro-social or altruism motivations.

However, there were few theoretical explanations as well as empirical studies to explore the antecedents of deviance for promotion and examine its causes.

Correspondingly, there are different perspectives to explain deviance for promotion in the light of different assumption of man. With the assumption of altruism and pro-social motives by Public Service Motivation (PSM) theory (James L. Perry and Wise 1990), the deviance for promotion should be constrained, and with the assumption of rational and self-interested actors by Perceptions of Organizational Politics (POP) theory (Gerald R. Ferris and Kacmar 1992), individuals would be motivated to maximize their private interests by deviance for promotion. Whether the PSM or the POP might account for the official's deviance for promotion? To explore the answer, this study focus on the relationship between local official's POP, PSM and the deviance for promotion in Chinese context. Based on the sample as well as some in-depth interviews of chief leaders from 77 township-level governments in a municipal in west China, we use quantitative and qualitative analyses to illustrate the theoretical findings.

## **Theory and Hypotheses**

### **Corruption as Deviance for Promotion**

The deviance for promotion as Sun (2008) described, could be seen as specific forms of corruption because of officials' using power for personal career advancement by violating public norms inevitably. Corruption is seen by many as one of the main impediments of the development of an efficient government system (Bin Dong, Uwe Dulleck et al. 2012). As an omnipresent phenomenon, it means that the public interest might be damaged by any kinds of corrupt actions, which might vary in different social contexts and categories. There is no universal conceptualization of corruption but the corrupt actions always refers to exchange, violation of norms, abuse of power, absence of direct victims and secrecy (Tanja Rabl and Kühlmann 2008).

Generally, people usually feel puzzle why the corruption being tenacious after ever anti-corruption activities once again. Dealing with the cancer of corruption is a global issue, and the temporal persistence and geographical prevalence of corruption in the world have provoked a vast amount of research into its causes (Ting Gong and Wu 2012). It is found that not only the historical variables, cultural variables but also the institutional variables could be the antecedents of official corruption, among that the political institutions usually functioned significantly (Anne van Aaken, Lars P. Feld et al. 2010).

Besides, the growing research has focused on system-level and institutional explanations of corruption, however, only a limited number of studies have investigated the determinants of corruption at the individual level (Tavits 2010; Bin Dong, Uwe Dulleck et al. 2012). Meanwhile, there is only little research focusing on the person who acts corruptly (Tanja Rabl and Kühlmann 2008), and there were less empirical studies in Chinese context to provide observable information about corruption at local levels (Xuguang Song and Cheng 2011).

Though corruption is a difficult and tricky concept to define, it described the misuse of power for personal benefit (Mari-Liis Sööt and Rootalu 2012). In government context, the misuse of power is an obvious deviant phenomenon, especially when the power in office was used for personal benefit. From this perspective, corruption is certain deviant behavior which manifests itself in an abuse of a function in politics, society, or economy in favor of another person or institution (Tanja Rabl and Kühlmann 2008). In accordance with previous studies, corruption as deviant behavior points to a disturbance in the social relationships within a political system, and the famous definition made by Senturia (1931) that corruption is the misuse of public power for one's own personal profit, is essentially based upon the concept of corruption as deviant behavior (Alemann 2004).

From the behavioral perspective, deviance reflected on specific deviant behaviors are disapproved by conventional normative standards and that typically provoke attempts at social control if detected by authority figures (D. Wayne Osgood, Janet K. Wilson et al. 1996). Robinson & Bennett (1995) defined employee deviance as voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and in so doing threatens the well-being of an organization, its members, or both (Sandra L. Robinson and Bennett 1995). They defined deviance as the common pattern of all kinds of deviant behaviors in organization, so the deviance could reflect the shared attributes of deviant behaviors.

In usual context, when officials engage in deviant behavior for their promotion, they could behave either corruptly or not. The management literature suggests that employee deviance in general workplace can be associated with desirable as well as undesirable behavior (Warren 2003). However, the context of public administration is distinct from general workplace significantly. Public officials as the public employee have inflexible duties to serve the public and their power and authorities derived from the public should be used in the proper way. Once the officials misused the public power for racing specific office, they were involved in political corruption in which the public norms were violated. For instance, officials who had engaged in buying official positions from their political patronages reported by Chan & Gao (2008), is typically the deviance for promotion, in which they used the public financial resource to bribe their superior officials for their personal promotion or career advancement.

In most cases, the deviance for promotion refers to exchange, violation of norms, abuse of power, absence of direct victims or secrecy frequently, which was described as corrupt actions by Rabl & Kühlmann (2008). For example, Nye (1967) defined political corruption as the behavior which deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private-regarding, pecuniary or status gains, or violates rules against the exercises or certain types of private-regarding influence, such as bribery, nepotism and misappropriation. Meanwhile, scholars use the terms political corruption and official deviance interchangeably (Smith 2010). In this paper, deviance for promotion could also be understood in this way.

In accordance with Griffin & Lepoz (2005), there were few detailed discussions of why individual elected to pursue deviant behaviors (Ricky W. Griffin and Lopez 2005). Traditionally, deviance research has considered individual factors and situational factors both could be the antecedents of

deviance (Hui Liao, Aparna Joshi et al. 2004). Either the lack of motivation to conform to normative expectations of the organization, or the organizational environmental factors could lead to individual deviance. In addition, scholars proposed that corruption might be attributed to both the individual motivation and the structural reasons (Tavits 2005). Thereby, the deviance for promotion which is seemed as corruption could be explained from complementary perspectives.

The first perspective is based on PSM theory, which considered public servants would be motivated by PSM to obey the public norms and benefit the public interest. On the contrary, it is speculated that lack of PSM might lead officials to involvement in deviance. The alternative perspective by POP theory assumed individuals as rational actors would meet the collective action problem to reciprocate or collude with each other for self interest, for instance, to engage in deviant behaviors to get more opportunities of their promotion (Zhou 2010). These two theories are often perceived as presenting independent and competing theories of human behavior because they use different models of man.

### **PSM and Deviance for Promotion**

In general, individual's behavior could be derived from intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Motivation refers to the internal driver of people's behavior and the external incentive, which is a driving force to cause, keep and guide individuals involving in programs and activities. According to Ryan & Deci (2000)'s self-determination theory, people vary not only in level of motivation but also in the orientation of that motivation, which lead to a dichotomy of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. It means that individual's behavior could be attributed to intrinsic versus extrinsic reasons. Contrast to extrinsic motivation refer to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome, intrinsic motivation is defined as the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence (Richard M. Ryan and Deci 2000).

PSM can be seen as a specific form of intrinsic motivation (Crewson 1997; Houston 2000), which pertains to the inherent psychological satisfactions of working, such as finding the work interesting, and the challenge, intellectual stimulation, and variety offered by the work. Perry & Wise (1990) defined PSM as an individual's predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations, which is a particular form of altruism or pro-social motivation that is animated by specific dispositions and values arising from public institutions and missions (James L. Perry, Annie Hondeghem et al. 2010). For those individuals associated with high level of PSM, it is not only a job but also a career with special duties and public ethics to solve the public issues involving the whole community. In this sense, PSM refers in particular to the motivation of individuals engaging in public service.

PSM theory breaks course with self-interest as the basis of behavior, and provides a distinct perspective to analyze individual's altruistic or pro-social behavior in organization, such as public officials' being interest in engaging in 'meaningful public service' and 'helping others'. PSM is based on altruism defined as selfless concern for the welfare of others (Andersen 2009). The assumption of PSM in public domain challenged the traditional agency theory and motivation

theory that people were assumed as self-interested actors (Sanjay K. Pandey, Bradley E. Wright et al. 2008), and the PSM concept was used to explain altruistic and other pro-social behavior in public administration. It is also found that PSM is not the distinct phenomenon only in western countries but also in other different social context, such as in China, Korea, and the other non-American countries.

It is observed that little research has addressed questions regarding whether PSM affects behavior (Andersen 2009). Despite of that, the orientation of motives could be used to predict people's behaviors. Moynihan (2010) considered extrinsically oriented individuals are more likely to be self-interested and concerned with individual outcomes, whereas intrinsically oriented individuals are likely to confer benefits to the organization. He speculated that these extrinsically oriented individuals are more likely to resort to moral hazard if there is an incentive to exploit incomplete contracts (Moynihan 2010). Since agents are seldom included in the formation of the values that underlie the policies espoused by the principal, they often lack the intrinsic moral motivation to help the principal realize his aims (Göbel 2011). In other words, the agent who has high level PSM are less likely to manipulate their duties.

Moreover, intrinsic belief in the value of public sector work may minimize self-interested behavior (Moynihan 2010). Bozeman (2007) has defined individual public values as 'the content-specific preferences of individuals concerning, on the one hand, the rights, obligations, and benefits to which citizens are entitled and, on the other hand, the obligations expected of citizens and their designated representatives' (Rainey 2009), so the officials with high level of PSM should be accountable for the public due to the public value. Besides, conformity to organizational norms is likely a clear instance of the endogenous nature of individual preferences. Usually, actors construct beliefs and behaviors based on what is appropriate in light of their environment and the norms of behavior of those around them (Donald P. Moynihan and Pandey 2007). In sum, PSM might be useful to constraint or regularize official's behavior.

With the assumption of altruism and pro-social motives, it seems if public servants have the strong drive to serve the people in an altruism way, they ought to avoid self-serving or unethical behaviors associated with corruptions or deviance. PSM refers to the commitment to public interest and behave in the altruism way, which means that individuals with higher PSM cherish higher commitment to the public interest. In western cultural context, in the case of conflict between the public interest and individual interest, individuals with higher PSM tend to sacrifice individual interest in order to realize public interest (Perry 1996; Vandenabeele 2008). These actions are the opposite of corruption, which could also be defined in terms of a conflict between private and public regarding motivation, and corruption is that private regarding motivation prevails by increasing private gain at public expense (Warren 2004). It is speculated according to PSM theory that if individuals are associated with high PSM, they will be less possible to engage in deviance because of put their self-interests upon the public interests. This logic suggests the following hypotheses:

H1: PSM will be negatively associated with the deviance for promotion.

## POP and Deviance for Promotion

Particularly, the opportunity for an individual to engage in a specific deviant behavior is constrained in a workplace setting (Hui Liao, Aparna Joshi et al. 2004). On the contrary to the assumption of PSM theory, the advocates of POP theory considered that individuals may have different feasibilities or opportunities to behave deviant due to the various kinds of constraints in workplace, and then they driven by economic rationality would like to engage in those behaviors with maximizing utility and minimizing cost.

Organizational politics is a key characteristic of the workplace setting, which might trigger the individual behavior ultimately. Organizational politics refers to the complex mixture of power, influence, and interest-seeking behaviors that may dominate individuals' activities in the workplace, which may lead to high levels of perceived injustice and unfairness (Hsin-Hua Hsiung, Chia-Wu Lin et al. 2011). Valle & Witt (2001) considered organizational politics as actions that (a) are inconsistent with accepted organizational norms, (b) are designed to promote self-interest, and (c) are taken without regard for, and even at the expense of organizational goals (Matthew Valle and Witt 2001). These definitions both stressed the assumption of rational and self-interested actors, and the self-interest might be prior to public interest.

Ferris *et al.* (1989) suggested that organizational politics is best conceptualized as a subjective state, which is named perceptions of organizational politics. While organizational politics are manifested in many objective and observable tactics, scholars have suggested that employees' subjective perception and interpretation of these political tactics are more important and meaningful than the actual political tactics *per se* (Gerald R. Ferris and Kacmar 1992). Subsequently, researchers have examined POP and their adverse effects on workers. Generally, most of studies focused on the individual outcomes of POP in workplace, such as absenteeism, turnover intentions, anxiety, stress, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job performance, and organizational citizenship(Hsin-Hua Hsiung, Chia-Wu Lin et al. 2011). However, it is not found any study explored the relationship between POP and the deviance for promotion.

Over the past two decades, researchers of organizational politics have studied political behavior primarily in the forms of specific influence tactics or the combination of such tactics (Yongmei Liu, Jun Liu et al. 2010). In government context, deviance for promotion is always accompanied with specific influence tactics such as ingratiation, self-presentation and defamation when officials competed for posts. These influence tactics exists in the process of bribery, nepotism and misappropriation, which listed by Smith (2010), all could be generalized to deviance for promotion.

These deviant behaviors are aimed at building, maintaining, and using reciprocal relationships that possess the (potential) benefit to help individuals to get ahead of others in promotion even at the costs of public interest. Following the POP perspective, the deviant behavior is political in nature. The empirical findings on Chinese sample showed that political behaviors of individuals who had high level of political skill, were positively associated with career growth potential rated by their supervisors (Yongmei Liu, Jun Liu et al. 2010). It means that those individuals' opportunities of

promotion would be higher than the others. As a result, individuals will engage in deviant behaviors to get more opportunities of their promotion.

Moreover, deviance for promotion could be seemed as the unanticipated consequences for public sector workforce in terms of perceptions of organizational justice. These perceptions consider the promotion police, how they are implemented, and the interpersonal treatment received during implementation (Steven L. Blader and Tyler 2003). When officials feel less fairness in promotion as well as daily work settings, they'd like to change either the situation or their behavioral modes by formal or informal ways. Meanwhile, perceptions of organizational justice would be a substitute of POP with negative relationship (Martha C. Andrews and Kacmar 2001). Officials who perceived higher level of organizational politics might feel less procedural justice, fairness and equity in their work environment. As a result, officials who feel they have been treated unfairly for political reasons would like to engage in unfair competition via political behaviors which benefit themselves at the cost of organizational or public interests.

One important catalyst of deviance for promotion might be official's careerism. Careerism is associated with self-interest and instrumentality beliefs about achieving the goal of career advancement, and the careerists have the propensity to pursue career advancement through non-performance-based means. Individuals with high careerist orientation to pursue their personal career growth paths would tend to pursue their goals through means, such as image management or manipulation of interpersonal behavior (Hsin-Hua Hsiung, Chia-Wu Lin et al. 2011). It is likely that some people have a strong desire to pursue career advancement in a political work environment. However, the organizational politics may undermine the fair competition for promotion, and then make the individuals engaging in deviance both to securing the position and to wielding power effectively. Thus, we propose the following hypotheses:

H2: POP will be positively associated with the deviance for promotion.

## **Data and Methods**

The empirical basis for this inquiry is a sample of township-level leaders who have been selected into the reserve cadre system to study in municipal Party school. The following sections describe our sample and data resource, variables, and analytical methods.

### **Sample and Data Resource**

We collect our data from Chinese local government, and focus our attention on local officials in charge of their organizations or sectors. It is difficult to obtain representative samples to depict the whole status of Chinese local government due to its diverse coverage and lack of entrance, yet the correlations of variables could be inferred from them without sacrificing the validity (Manion 1994). Thus, most studies concerning Chinese local governments so far inevitably have been case studies.

We collect our data from a recent survey of local government officials in Western China. We

administrated questionnaires to registered part-time students in the M Municipal Party School (MMPS) of S Province in west China<sup>2</sup>. They are all public officials and civil servants employed by the M Municipal Government. As the grass-root government leader, they have to compete with each other to get promotion due to the scarce post. Firstly, we selected 12 officials who were the ‘insider’ and might tell us frankly recommend by our conjunct friends in native. Their answers are anonymous and used to measure the key variables of our study.

The Party school system is the official organ of Chinese Party and government cadre training, and it is appropriate for researchers to survey local cadres in China (Shambaugh 2008). The MMPS trains the municipal government cadres by round every year. The students could be seen as a representative sample from the population of local cadres. Total 77 validated questionnaires were collected, accounting for 71.30% of the questionnaires sent.

### **Measurement of Variables**

Most variables are operationalized by standard scales developed and validated by previous studies. Because all the scales are originally in English, we did the translation and back-translation procedures to ensure the equivalence and validity of our measurements. One author first translated the original scales into Chinese versions, and the other author then translated them back into English versions. The translated versions were compared with the original versions, and their differences were identified and correlated. Questionnaire developed in the light of literature review, as well as depth-interviews to several local officials to polish the wording of the scales.

A five-point scoring format was used ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), to measure the latent variables, and then it was coding into 1 to 5. The reliability of the questionnaire is tested, and all scales passed the ordinal standards. The common method bias and social desirability bias are not severe, as our test following standard procedures results in non significant bias.

Deviance for Promotion is measured via a single item which was primary used for measure officials’ aspiration of advancement. This item is borrowed from Tharenou & Terry (1998) and tried to capture the willingness of individual’s move upward. However, we modified it to measure the intention of deviant behavior against the promotion in the light of depth-interviews to township-level officials, which would reflect the likelihood of officials’ involvement in political corruption. The item is “you will try to get promotion by all means”. In local context, ‘by all means’ is a vague and meaningful expression that usually refers to all kinds of deviant behavior described by scholars. Due to the sensitivity of corruption as deviance for promotion, local officials would avoid to answer the any question on this topic extremely. Actually, it is extremely difficult to find ‘hard data’ to measure the extent of corruption (Xuguang Song and Cheng 2011), to question vicariously and carefully is essential for our survey.

PSM is measured via four dimensions and 14 items. The common approach to the measurement of intrinsic motivation is the use of self-reports of interest and enjoyment of the activity *per se*

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<sup>2</sup> The name is concealed for protecting relevant persons’ privacy and identity.

(Richard M. Ryan and Deci 2000), and we used a modified version based on the scale developed by Perry (1996). Due to the factor analysis and reliability analysis, 7 items remain for reflecting two dimensions as Commitment to Public Interest and Self-sacrifice, and the other items were deleted. The items included: “Serving other citizens would give me a good feeling even if no one paid me for it”, “Making a difference in society means more to me than personal achievements”, “I am prepared to make enormous sacrifices for the good of society”, “I would prefer seeing public officials do what is best for the whole community even if it harmed my interests”, “Meaningful public service is very important to me”, “I unselfishly contribute to my community”, “I consider public service my civic duty”. The Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  for PSM is 0.850, and the average score of all items is used to gauge PSM.

POP is measured by a six-item scale taken from Kacmar & Carlson (1997). Due to the factor analysis and reliability analysis, 3 items remain for reflecting the perceived implementation of the promotion police, and the other items were deleted. The items included: “When it comes to promotion decisions, policies are irrelevant”, “Promotions around here are not valued much because how they are determined is so political”, “The promotion policies have nothing to do with how promotions about you are determined”. The Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  for PSM is 0.743, and the average score of all items is used to gauge POP.

The personal demographics and organizational demographics are also controlled in the model. We neglected the gender and the politics status as control variables regardless of the data is uneven distributed. Age is classified into tow categories ( $<45$ ,  $\geq 45$ ), and they were coded into 0 and 1. Time in job is classified into below three years as 0 and the others as 1. Education is classified into two categories where who has get degree in university or college was coded as 0 and who has studied in party school as 1. Organizational type is also classified into two categories. The governments of town, village or district were coded as 0, and the others bureaus or institutions in township-level were coded as 1.

## **Methods of Analysis**

The cross-sectional ordinal least square (OLS) regression analysis is applied to test the hypotheses. The multivariate regression analysis could test the hypotheses when controlling other variables. We finish the data processing by spss 16.0 version.

## **Results**

### **Descriptive Statistics and Correlations**

The descriptive statistics as well as the correlations of variables are reported in TABLE I. The sample officials reported a high level of PSM, and the scores are consistent with the mean. Besides, the POP is at the moderate level, and there might be more divergence between the answers. Actually, it is found that there were considerable activities as organizational politics, to influence the respondents’ perceptions of the implementation of promotion policy. For instance, one of our interviewees suggested that there was obvious gap between the performance

measurement and promotion, and local officials' promotion depended on their guanxi in the government network.

It is reported the deviance for promotion was not very high in general, which is keeping with findings in interviews. One of our interviewees, LHM, who has been appointed as the Party Secretary of township for twice and has worked at 8 township-level governments successively, considered that there was so limited posts for their promotion that he was not very hopeful. In M Municipal, the Party Secretary and the Administrative Chief of township-level institutions had the chance to upgrade the level of their retirement benefits if they had been the Party Secretary over 8 years or the Administrative Chief over 10 years. According to the policy, the benefit of maintaining the status quo as a Party Secretary is no less than the cost of struggling for promotion through competition, even through corruption to bribe the superiors. Therefore the advancement aspiration of many local officials became less significant than before to some extent.

In TABLE I, standardized Coefficients ( $\beta$ ) are reported outside the parentheses and t are in the parentheses. Constants are not reported to save space.

**TABLE I. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations**

	Min	Max	Mean	SD	POP	PSM	Deviance	Gender	Age	Politics	Education
POP	2.00	5.00	3.1558	.78096							
PSM	2.71	5.00	4.0519	.45407	.278***						
Deviance	.00	1.00	.5065	.50324	-.072	-.085					
Age	.00	1.00	.5325	.50222	-.099	.076	.254**				
Education	.00	3.16	.5661	.58067	-.054	.065	.248**	.168*			
Time	.00	1.00	.5974	.49364	-.177*	.181*	.057	.189**	.052		
Org. Type	2.00	5.00	3.1558	.78096	-.157*	-.085	.069	.461***	-.026	.023	
N	77										

\*\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.1 level (2-tailed).

It shows that POP is positively correlated with Deviance for promotion, and the correlation between the two variables is moderate in organization studies. However, the correlation between PSM and Deviance for promotion is not significant. In addition, PSM is not correlated with POP significantly.

### Regression Analysis

The regression analysis results are reported in TABLE II. Constants are not reported to save space. The model passed the collinearity statistics test. PSM and POP are entered together with all control variables. On one hand, the results of the model support the first hypothesis that POP will be positively associated with the deviance for promotion. Consistent with the hypothesis H1, the empirical evidence predicted that officials' POP will affect their deviance for promotion ( $\beta=0.36$ ,

p<0.01), which means the likelihood of officials to engage in deviant behaviors under the highly political environment in organization would increase.

**TABLE II. Regression Results**

Variables		Deviance for Promotion			VIF
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
Independent Variables	POP	.346	.125	.313***	1.072
	PSM	-.011	.222	-.006	1.141
Control Variables	Age	-.020	.227	-.012	1.456
	Education	-.108	.197	-.063	1.097
	Time	-.332	.167	-.225*	1.072
	Org. Type	-.212	.220	-.121	1.316
$R^2$				0.151	
adj. $R^2$				0.079	
F value				2.103*	
N				77	

\*\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.1 level (2-tailed).

On the other hand, the results did not support the second hypothesis that PSM will be negatively associated with the deviance for promotion. Due to the correlations in TABLE I, it is expected the official's PSM did not have any effect on the other variables. On the other hand, there is no significant correlation between PSM and POP according to TABLE I. It implies that no evidence shows there is certain and specific relationship between the intrinsic motivation and extrinsic incentive. Therefore, the assumption that higher PSM will lead to less deviance for promotion should be scrutinized.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The goal of this study was to examine Whether the PSM or the POP might account for the official's deviance for promotion. Firstly, based on the different model of man, we proposed complementary perspectives to explain the deviance for promotion which is seemed as corruption. According to the public service motivation (PSM) studies (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007; Vandenberg, 2011), the public servants who have strong motives to contribute to the public interest would comply with the altruism norms which shapes their administrative behaviors. Consequently, it is expected that the public servants who have strong PSM should be motivated to unselfishly defend the public interest and unlikely to engage in negative deviant behaviors. Besides, the organizational politics scholars who considered that people are rational actors, suggest that organizational politics may reinforce employees' instrumental beliefs and enhance

their tendencies towards careerism (Hsiung *et al.*, 2011), so the public servants with high perceptions of organizational politics (POP) might be fear about the unfair treatment, and then be involving in deviance for promotion. Hence, different hypotheses were raised to examine the theoretical perspectives.

However, the empirical findings partially support the hypotheses and pose new issues in organization studies. From Ferris *et al.* (1989) to now, the previous organization studies propose that POP has both the positive and the negative effects and consequences on work outcomes, and the empirical findings on the relationships between POP and some consequences has been equivocal (Brian K. Miller, Matthew A. Rutherford *et al.* 2008). Our empirical work enriched the research and provided an explanation of why there is positive relationship between POP and deviance for promotion. The incentives relied on organizational politics, such as concerns with competition and other's evaluation, would lead officials to engage in unfair competition and maximize self-interest even violating the public norm and behaving deviant. Thus, the cadre recruitment system always falls into the *dilemma of adverse selection*, which is similar to the description by Sun (2008) that aspiring candidates are motivated to pay more attention to building connections, finding patrons and catering to the idiosyncrasies of key superiors rather than improving performance (Sun 2008).

Following the theoretic perspective of POP, individuals in every organization are related to each other by sets of transactions, which bind the actors to one another in a series of expectations and obligations and build up reciprocal ties, so that the transaction would provide a private channel for people to get what they need with the help of other people in their social network(Zhan 2012). For instance, many officials' power derives from managing information flows and access to the superior leaders who could decide subordinates' promotion or not, if certain crucial information regarding business opportunities or political promotion is only available to "insiders", the people who include such insiders in their networks can benefit from accessing such information(Zhan 2012). As a reciprocal feedback, the officials as vested interest groups should perform loyally to their political benefactors. Given that reason, many researchers argued that old-comrade networks and the newly privileged managerial class have used networking in an exploitative and corrupt way (Karklins 2002).

Furthermore, the positive effect of POP on deviance for promotion reveals the nature of political behaviors in workplace. Due to the dramaturgical politics theory, people in organization are performers to manage the impressions of targeted audiences and the organizational initiatives are 'stage-managed'. Accordingly, scholars used 'organization as theatre' metaphor to describe the organizational members' behaviors and performance (Biehl-Missal 2011). The local officials' power will also gain or lose in this theatre dramatically. In order to obtain or maintain the power associated with the post, officials have to make a good impression to the key superiors, which is ever been considered as '*good actors*' rather than '*good soldiers*' (Bolino 1999). It made sense that the local officials as skilled performers could operate the brokering power well to benefit themselves (Hsing 2006). Thus, the deviance for promotion, as well as the other form of corruption, might be rooted in systemic features of the regimes, norms and institutions.

Both the PSM and the POP would make effects on the deviant behaviors theoretically. Fallaciously, the empirical findings didn't support the hypothesis H2. However, we need more studies to check the proposition. It means that when the high level of official's POP exists, PSM are out of action on deviance for their promotion comparatively.

Although the hypothetical relationship between PSM and deviance for promotion has not been support by the empirical evidence, it could be interpreted through the perspective of strong situation. Strong situations are those contexts in which there are uniform expectations to guide behavior, in which individuals tend to behave in very similar ways, regardless of their individual differences (Chad H. Van Iddekinge, Lynn A. McFarland et al. 2007). As Mischel (1977) pointed out, the characteristics of a situation can have a strong (or weak) effect on individuals' choices and behaviors. There might be the strong situation of township-level government in rural China, in which they will engage in deviant behavior for winning the post they want whether the official's PSM is either high or low. Within this situation, the assumption that the officials who maintain high PSM would commitment to public interest and be willing to self-sacrifice, so as to diminish the deviance associated with corruptions, should be reflection more in detail.

It is better to understand the situation from a systematic perspective. In China, the CCP has made significant steps toward making cadre appointment and promotion processes competitive, predictable, and institutionalized and established a meritocratic system based on performance merit to promote accountability since the reform (Lan Xue and Liou 2012). Under the *nomenklatura* system, upper-level governments exercise authority over the appointments of party cadres and government officials at their subordinate levels due to their performance, which is called 'upward accountability' (Chien 2010). It also provides an 'up-or-out' mechanism to motive local officials seeking career advancement that the officials would be dismissal or transfer to other posts over their terms. Moreover, under the so-called *Target-based Responsibility System*, local officials had to perform their duties in a competent and efficient manner to win the yardstick competition for limited positions (Hongbin Li and Zhou 2005).

Apparently, it seems that the political promotion mechanism succeed and operate well in practice. However, previous research on local government found that lots of public officials with no prospect of promotion mock the assessment system as unfair and useless, simply a matter of 'going through the motions' (*zou guochang*). Many reported that there are only two criteria for a glowing assessment: 'obedience' (*ting hua*) to one's superiors and having an influential 'backstage' (*houtai*) patron to back officials' promotion (Smith 2009).

Access to higher positions depends on steady promotion and real or manipulated performance evaluation results, and therefore upon cultivation of patrons (Yan Sun and Johnston 2009), so it might not avoid the shady hiring practices that misuse the power to make job appointments. Briefly, the reforms of cadre recruitment system have in many ways exacerbated incentives for opportunism and maneuvering on the part of individual officials (Sun 2008). It was said that China's centralized and noncompetitive structures tend to produce joint-monopoly corruption, especially in less developed and rural regions (Chien 2010), so that the deviant behaviors is inevitable regardless of whether the PSM of the official is high or not.

The previous studies shows that, little is known about whether the public servants associated with strong PSM would involve in deviance for promotion in the situation of high POP. Our findings indicate that within the highly political situation of local government, officials would tend to involve in deviance to get promoted, no matter how strong PSM they had. Therefore, official's deviance for promotion would be mainly attributed to the cadre management system as well as its' policy implementation in China. It implies that there might be the strong situation discussed by Mischel (1977), in which individuals tend to behave in very similar ways regardless of their individual differences, so that the incentives for opportunism and maneuvering on the part of individual officials were exacerbated.

The paper reported the empirical study of the relationship between POP, PSM and deviance for promotion in west China. Future research could replicate the findings reported in the paper in other contexts, such as referring to the officials in east and middle areas. Multiple informants and multi-source design could be employed to improve the validity of the studies, as well as an objective measure of deviance for promotion may be beneficial for the verification of the theoretical hypotheses. Moreover, a longitudinal research design can be employed to examine the causality of the linkage. The hope is that this study can provide scholars and practitioners some theoretical and practical guideposts for more refined empirical POP and PSM theory as well as for better control of individual's deviance for promotion in organization.

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