MIT
POLITICAL SCIENCE

Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Political Science Department

Working Paper No. 2013-8

Ingroup Bias in Official Behavior: A National Field Experiment in China

Greg Distelhorst, University of Toronto
Yue Hou, MIT

Electronic copy available at: http://ssrn.com/abstract=2247644

Ingroup Bias in Official Behavior: A National Field Experiment in China*

Greg Distelhorst†

Yue Hou‡

May 2014

Forthcoming in *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*

Abstract

Do ingroup biases distort the behavior of public officials? Recent studies detect large ethnic biases in elite political behavior, but their case selection leaves open the possibility that bias obtains under relatively narrow historical and institutional conditions. We clarify these scope conditions by studying ingroup bias in the radically different political, historical, and ethnic environment of contemporary China. In a national field experiment, local officials were 33% less likely to provide assistance to citizens with ethnic Muslim names than to ethnically-unmarked peers. We find evidence consistent with the ingroup bias interpretation of this finding and detect little role for strategic incentives mediating this effect. This result demonstrates that neither legacies of institutionalized racism nor electoral politics are necessary to produce large ingroup biases in official behavior. It also suggests that ethnically motivated distortions to governance are more prevalent than previously documented.

*We thank the editors and the anonymous reviewers, as well as Chris Adolph, Jens Hainmueller, Chad Hazlett, F. Daniel Hidalgo, Daniel Mattingly, Gwyneth McClendon, Sara Newland, Molly Roberts, Ed Steinfeld, Lily Tsai, Yiqing Xu, and participants at the 2013 MPSA Annual Meeting, MIT, Stanford, UC-Berkeley, UC-San Diego, and Duke University for helpful feedback on previous versions. Special thanks to Dean Knox for sharing his data on the ethnicity of local officials. All remaining errors are our own.

†University of Toronto, Rotman School of Management. greg.distelhorst@rotman.utoronto.ca

‡MIT Department of Political Science. yuehou@mit.edu

Electronic copy available at: http://ssrn.com/abstract=2247644

To what extent does ingroup bias distort the behavior of public officials? Officials make decisions that are hugely consequential for the lives of citizens. They allocate resources, determine who receives timely access to public services, and decide which voices are represented in government. Typically these choices are made under the public expectation of impartiality; officials ought not favor members of their own ascriptive groups. At the same time, decades of psychological research document the tendency for humans to exhibit precisely this ingroup favoritism (Tajfel et al. 1971).

Recent studies find that this ingroup bias manifests in the political behavior of public officials (Butler and Broockman 2011; McClendon 2013; Broockman 2013). The distorting effects of bias documented by these studies are large; public officials from seven different ethnic groups are 25%-44% less likely to respond to appeals from ethnic outgroups (see Table 2). But how generalizable are these results? The settings of early research—the United States and South Africa—prompt concerns that the large biases they detect may be artifacts of case selection.

The first consideration involves legacies of institutionalized racism. Both the United States and South Africa have powerful legacies of institutionalized racial discrimination, abolished only in the face of national political movements. The institutionalization of racial exclusion may increase the salience of ethnic cleavages across society, particularly in political life. If individuals or their family members have experienced social and political exclusion as a result of their ethnic identities, these identities are likely to be more salient in political cognition and behavior. Increased salience of ethnic identity may exacerbate ingroup favoritism expressed in political behavior. The saliency of group identity can induce greater contributions to public goods and ingroup cooperation (Espinoza and Garza 1985; Eckel and Grossman 2005) and increase bias against outgroups (Shayo and Zussman 2011). Indeed, in both countries the ethnic divide between whites and non-whites continues to manifest strongly in political cognition and behavior (Dunning 2010; Piston 2010). The powerful

Electronic copy available at: http://ssrn.com/abstract=2247644

racial identifications produced by legacies of institutionalized racism in the United States and South Africa may exacerbate the expression of ingroup bias among political elites. If so, then our early impressions of the magnitude and prevalence of ethnic bias among public officials may be inflated by researchers' case selection.

A second case selection concern is these studies' exclusive focus on elected representatives. Institutions of electoral representation may activate stronger norms of reciprocity among members of the same ethnic group. Elected officials are in reciprocal relationships with potential voters, in which "representation" is exchanged for votes. Lab-in-the-field experimentation suggests that norms of reciprocity are stronger among coethnics in cooperative activities (Habyarimana et al. 2007). These norms of cooperation among ingroup members may help explain the favoritism that elected representative display toward coethnics even when statistical evidence (such as the high rate of support for the Democratic Party among U.S. blacks) appears to incentivize outgroup favoritism.[1]

This article brings the study of ingroup bias in official behavior to a radically different historical, institutional, and ethnic context. We implement a national field experiment on unelected local officials in contemporary China, a setting that lacks the institutionalized racism and electoral reciprocity that characterize sites of previous research. Randomizing the names of putative citizens to signal ethnic identity, we find that local officials are nonethelss 33% less likely to offer assistance to ethnic Muslims than to ethnically-unmarked peers. We subject this finding to additional analysis and rule out key strategic concerns as motivating the observed effect.

This study—to our knowledge the first national field experiment in the study of Chinese politics—demonstrates that neither legacies of institutionalized racism nor electoral

[1]Broockman (2013) demonstrates that elected representatives in the U.S. continue to exhibit ingroup favoritism even when constituents are ineligible to vote in relevant elections, indicating that any such expectations of reciprocity are irrational. However, the norms of reciprocity involved in electoral representation may still activate ingroup preferences, even irrational preferences.

Electronic copy available at: http://ssrn.com/abstract=2247644

politics are necessary conditions for the emergence of large biases in the behavior of political elites. This implies that the distortionary effects of ethnic bias on governance may be more widespread than previously understood.

1 Minority Governance and Official Incentives in China

We address the case selection concerns described above by studying local officials in contemporary China. One key difference from previous sites of research is China's modern history of ethnic policy, which lacks the forms of institutionalized racism found in the United States and South Africa. China is ethnically dominated by a single ethnic group—the Han—who represent 92% of the total population. Officially-recognized ethnic minorities, despite occupying a small percentage of the population, number over 110 million. Among them are 23 million ethnic Muslims, spanning 10 ethnic groups.[2] These groups are among China's most visible and restive minorities, including two large groups: the Uyghur (10.1 million people) and the Hui (10.6 million). Together they account for roughly 1.6% of China's total population and 18% of its minority population. Members of these groups may differ from the majority Han in their dress, diet, and religion. We study Chinese officials' interactions with these ethnically Muslim minorities.

The political significance of minority membership in China reflects its Communist origins. Since its founding in 1949, the People's Republic of China has pursued a modified Leninist approach to ethnic minority incorporation. Minority groups were delineated and provided concessions of regional autonomy, policy privileges, and preference in official promotions. Consequently, minority groups today enjoy benefits in important areas of social policy, including minority quotas and lower entrance score requirements in universities

[2]Ethnic demographics from People's Republic of China Sixth National Population Census, 2010, online at: `http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/pcsj/rkpc/6rp/indexch.htm`. The ten Muslim ethnic groups are the Hui, Uyghur, Kazakh, Dongxiang, Kyrgyz, Salar, Tajik, Uzbek, Bonan, and Tatar.

(Clothey 2005; Wang 2007; Gladney 1998) as well as accommodations in family planning, poverty alleviation, and even criminal justice (He 2005; Gladney 1998; Sautman 2010). Empirically, minority status has been linked to career advancement in the China Communist Party (Shih, Adolph and Liu 2012) and preference in state sector hiring (Zang 2011).

China's minority policies depart from the legacies of institutionalized political exclusion found in South Africa and the United States. However, social discrimination against minority groups is evident, particularly toward the Muslims minorities that we study. Ethnographic studies suggest that Muslims are generally viewed as exotic and less educated (Gladney 2004, p.262) and quote Han respondents describing Uyghur Muslims as unreasonable, primitive, and criminal (Cliff 2012; Kaltman 2007, Chapter 3). These stereotypes are accompanied by evidence of bias in the labor market and law enforcement. A study of wages in western China attributed the private-sector earnings gap between Han and ethnic Muslims to beliefs that the minorities are more "lazy" and "savage" than Han (Zang 2011, p. 146-7), and a variety of minorities in Beijing also report perceptions of job discrimination (Hasmath 2009). Urban police crackdowns have targeted Muslim enclaves for petty crime, and some ethnic Muslims believe themselves to be unfairly targeted by law enforcement (Kaltman 2007; Sullivan 2013).

We investigate whether these biases distort the behavior of China's *unelected* officials, a second departure from previous research. Millions[3] of local officials in China are the key actors in delivering social services, regulating economic activity, and overseeing local policy implementation, and they enjoy considerable discretion in these activities (Birney 2014). Unlike elected representatives, these officials are recruited through processes controlled by the Communist Party and government bureaucracies (Burns and Xiaoqi 2010). Their daily tasks, bonuses, and prospects for promotion are governed by bureaucratic superiors; there-

[3]The precise count of officials in China is under debate in part because Chinese bureaucracies often employ more than their allocated number of official posts; estimates of public employees for 1998 ranged from 33.7 to 40.5 million (Ang 2012).

fore their dealings with the public do not involve the same kind of reciprocity as electoral representation.

The absence of electoral reciprocity does not mean that authoritarian officials have no incentive to be responsive to citizens. Nondemocratic states have significant informational needs that arise from the absence of elections (Lorentzen 2013*b*). Institutions that allow citizens to contact officials with questions and complaints help fill this informational gap (Luehrmann 2003), so long as the institutions remain minimally responsive to citizen needs (Dimitrov 2013). Thus, in place of electoral reciprocity are a variety of official mandates for local governments to be transparent and responsive to citizens. In 2008, a national reform ordered local governments to disclose government information in response to citizen requests (Horsley 2007), and the contacting channel utilized by our experiment originated with a national initiative for local governments to develop websites that serve public needs (Hartford 2005).

The local officials tasked with implementing responsive institutions in China are evaluated against quantitative performance targets that may create additional incentives to demonstrate responsiveness to citizens. These targets typically focus on fostering economic development, implementing birth control policies, and maintaining social stability (Edin 2003; Liu and Tao 2007; Chan and Gao 2008; Lv and Landry Forthcoming). The social stability (*weiwen*) imperative has played an increasingly important role in the evaluation of China's local officials, with a single breakdown in public order capable of ruining official careers (Chen 2013). This creates additional incentives for China's local officials to address citizen questions and complaints in order to reduce public discontent with government. This combination of the social stability imperative with recent episodes of high-visibility unrest among ethnic minorities may create incentives for Chinese officials to exhibit *pro-minority* bias in responsiveness, an idea we explore more fully after introducing our main empirical

findings.[4]

In summary, the legacies of institutionalized discrimination and electoral reciprocity that distinguish previous settings of research are absent from contemporary China. The emphasis placed on social stability in official performance evaluations may even incentivize official favoritism towards restive minority groups. Nonetheless, biased attitudes and behavior are observed in society. Below we describe a field experiment to investigate whether these ingroup biases still distort official responsiveness to citizens under these institutional and historical conditions.

2 The Experiment

To study bias among political elites in China, we requested assistance from local government offices and randomly manipulated the presence of ethnically-informative requester names, similar to the design of Butler and Broockman (2011). Contacting government agencies is a common form of citizen political participation in China for the purposes of lodging complaints, resolving disputes, and accessing government services (O'Brien and Li 1995; Shi 1997; Michelson 2007). With the diffusion of internet access in China, many local governments have established websites that allow citizens to contact the office of the mayor, a service commonly referred to as the Mayor's Mailbox (Hartford 2005). Individuals are invited to directly address the mayor in their queries, and the government agency replies via the website, email, or phone call. Our study uses this request channel to ask for China's Minimum Livelihood Guarantee (*dibao*), a program administered by local governments that provides cash transfers to low-income households (Solinger and Hu 2012). Citizens seeking

[4]Tsai (2007) identifies another important source of elite incentives to assist citizens in China; the moral standing that local civil society can confer upon public servants. However, this mechanism was identified in rural villages with a mean size of 1200 inhabitants, whereas we study bureaucrats in prefectures that average 4 million inhabitants. Citizens in our research setting have at best limited ability to confer moral standing to high-performing bureaucrats.

to enroll need to identify the relevant government agencies, contact them, and provide evidence that they qualify for a means-tested cash transfer, placing relatively high informational demands on low-income households.

Local government offices in our study received the following electronic communication from a putative constituent:

> Respected leader:
>
> I have been unable to find stable work for a long time, and my economic situation is not good. Do I have the opportunity to apply for the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee? What conditions would I need to satisfy to receive the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee?
>
> With gratitude for leaders' care,
>
> [*Ethnically-unmarked name* / *Ethnic Muslim name*][5]

The message was intended both to request information and to signal the low economic status of the requester. As we are primarily interested in understanding how minority status affects official behavior, we sought to ensure that signaling minority identity did not additionally alter perceptions of the citizen's economic well-being or social class (Fryer and Levitt 2004). The letter offers a clear signal that the requester is of low economic status,

[5] Although Chinese names can signal membership in Muslim minority groups, they cannot signal membership in the majority Han group. As China's population is 92% Han Chinese (2010 Census) an ethnically-unmarked name is likely in most localities to be interpreted as belonging to a Han requester. See Appendix A for details.

which is also pertinent to their request for income assistance. We designed this request to be simple and minimally burdensome to the officials who received it. Each office received one message, and the requested policy information was straightforward. The unremarkable nature of the request itself and the lack of attention drawn to it also means that this study does not foreclose the possibility of future researchers using similar channels to study government responsiveness in China.

After randomizing assignment to either the Muslim or ethnically-unmarked names, messages were submitted to 258 political jurisdictions which collectively govern over one billion people. Details on our sample and randomization are presented in Appendix B. We checked for replies after four weeks to record whether local agencies provided helpful information about the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee. A majority of the replies were posted on the government websites, and were available either publicly or by using login information provided during the submission process. A minority of responses were sent to the email addresses used to submit the request. Any replies attempted by phone could not be collected, as we provided out-of-service phone numbers. We coded a binary disclosure indicator according to whether local governments provided at least one of five categories of relevant information in response to our fictitious citizens.[6]

3 Results

Officials' disclosure rate fell by 14.9 percentage points when contacted with the Muslim minority alias (Table 1). As disclosure for the ethnically-unmarked alias was 44.6%, this represents a decline in the probability of disclosure of 33%. This estimate of the treatment effect is robust to alternative time cutoffs for government response and the inclusion of local

[6]These five indicators are whether the government disclosed: (i) the name of the government agency to contact for income assistance; (ii) conditions for accessing this the Minimum Livelihood Guaranee; (iii) procedures for approval; (iv) contact information of the government agency; (v) compensation level. Appendix Table C2 presents descriptive data on government response rates and quality of response.

covariate controls in OLS regression (Appendix Tables C4 and C5).

Table 1: Ethnic identity and government disclosure

	Unmarked alias	Muslim alias	Difference
Disclosure rate (%)	44.6	29.7	-14.9
	(4.4)	(4.1)	(6.0)
95% CI upper	53.3	37.7	-3.2
95% CI lower	36.0	21.7	-26.7
Obs.	130	128	

Notes. Estimated mean disclosure rates across control and treatment groups. Disclosure measured four weeks after requesting information from China's prefectural governments in July and August 2012. Standard errors (in parentheses) and 95% confidence intervals reported below. Two-sided t-test (unequal variance) p-value = .013. Wilcoxon rank-sum test p-value = .013.

The magnitude of the estimated effect in localities with non-Muslim mayors (now excluding the 12 prefectures with ethnically Muslim mayors from our sample) is quite comparable to ingroup biases detected in similar contacting field experiments in South Africa and the United States (Table 2). We find no evidence that the absence of legacies of institutionalized racism, nondemocratic government, or China's distinctive ethnic policies counteract the phenomenon of ingroup ethnic bias expressed in official behavior.[7]

We detect some evidence that the officials exerted less effort when they responded to the Muslim alias as well. Among prefectures that disclosed information, the mean reply length for the control group was 510 characters, compared to 258 for the Muslim alias. However, the effect is imprecisely estimated, with a p-value of 0.08 (two-sided t-test, unequal variances).

We also find regional variation in the treatment effect consistent with the ingroup bias

[7]The response rate of Chinese officials is also comparable to those of elected representatives in democracies (Table 2). It is intriguing that unelected officials in an authoritarian regime respond to their constituents as often as democratically-elected representatives, but this finding is not the focus of our study.

Table 2: Ingroup bias among political elites in South Africa, China and the United States

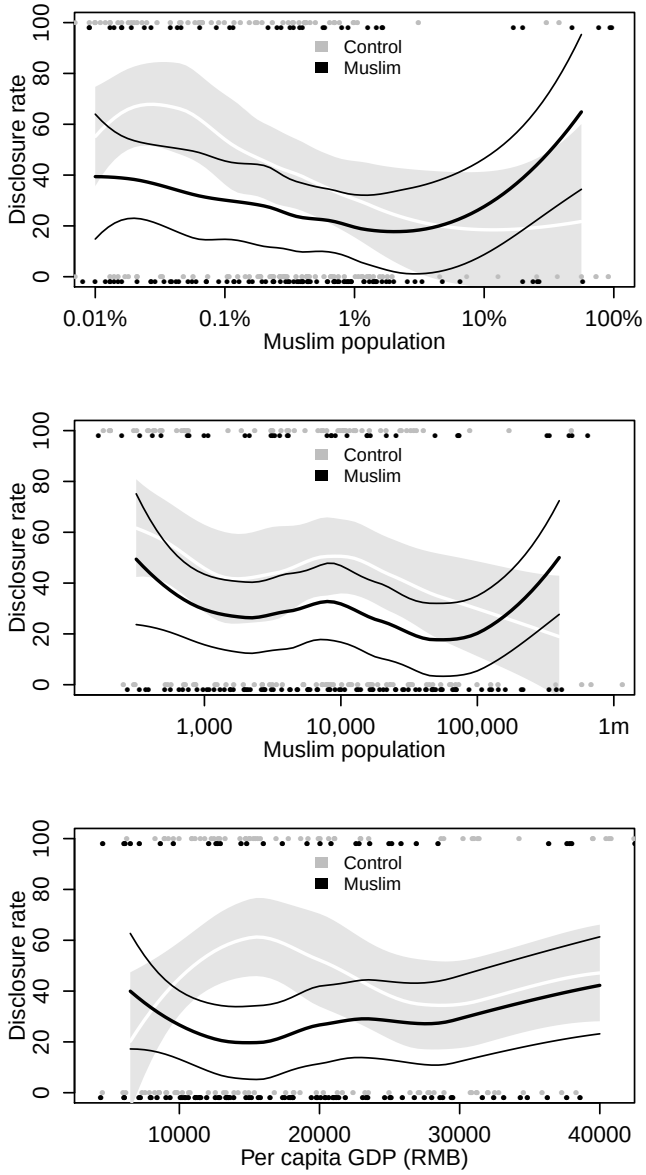
Country	Elite group	Response rates by ethnicity (%) Ingroup	Outgroup	diff.	pval	Change in probability of response (%)
South Africa	Xhosa councillors	19.4	10.9	-8.5	0.03	-43.8
China	**Non-Muslim mayors**	44.5	27.8	-16.7	0.01	**-37.5**
South Africa	Zulu councillors	14.6	9.5	-5.1	0.03	-34.9
United States	Af-Am state legislators	41.9	29.1	-12.8	0.15	-30.5
South Africa	English councillors	49.4	35.8	-13.6	0.04	-27.5
South Africa	Afrikaaner councillors	40.9	29.7	-11.2	0.04	-27.4
United States	White state legislators	61.2	45.9	-15.3	0.07	-25.0

Notes. Reports the results from three elite-contacting experiments that use names to manipulate the apparent ethnic/racial identity of citizens contacting political elites. South Africa results from McClendon (2013); United States results from Butler and Broockman (2011).

interpretation of this finding. Disclosure rates by local Muslim population are presented in first two plots of Figure 1. They show a bias against the Muslim alias for most prefectures, but response rates trend upward after roughly 3% local Muslim population or 50,000 Muslim individuals. As the proportion of minority officials varies with the local population share of minority groups (Newland 2013), these high-Muslim localities are the regions in which officials receiving our messages are most likely to be ethnic Muslims. At the highest concentrations of Muslim population, we detect an imprecisely estimated *pro-Muslim* bias, although data sparsity is a concern for this subgroup. (Figure 1)

One alternative to our account of ingroup bias is that, in certain regions, minority names may appear unusual and trigger increased scrutiny by officials handling the requests. If the unfamiliar name led to additional investigations of the minority requester, such as attempting to verify the accompanying phone number or address, officials would have more opportunity to learn that the supplied phone numbers and street addresses were fictional. In this account, the lower disclosure rates for the minority alias might be an artifact of our use of fictional phone numbers and addresses. If the minority alias was subjected to greater scrutiny, we would expect local governments' messages to mention inaccurate contact

Figure 1: Disclosure rates by local Muslim population and economic development



Notes. Locally-weighted polynominal regression fits (loess) for government disclosure rates responding to control (gray) and Muslim (black) requesters. Thick lines indicate the estimated response rate, with bands showing the 95% confidence interval. The vertical distance between the thick black line and thick white line represents the estimated treatment effect at that level of the running variable. Dots on the top (disclosed) and bottom (did not disclose) show the individual observations that form the basis for the loess estimation. Note the log scaling for the first two plots.

information more often for the Muslim alias. However, 11.5% of the local governments noted problems with the contact information for the unmarked alias, compared to 11.7% for the Muslim alias (t-test p-value = .964).[8] We find no evidence that additional scrutiny applied to the minority alias produced the different levels of responsiveness observed between control and treatment groups.

3.1 Social Stability and Responsiveness

As discussed above, China's local officials are under great pressure to maintain social stability and avert episodes of public unrest (Chen 2013). Responding to citizens grievances and requests is one way to address discontent and reduce the threat of trouble-making. Under this logic, citizens who are perceived to pose greater threats to social stability should experience greater government responsiveness, as officials prioritize addressing their concerns over other members of the public.

Ethnic issues are not the primary source of social instability in China, but periodic ethnic conflict is a feature of China's social landscape, and violent episodes involving Uyghur Muslims have gained prominence in recent years. In July 2009, ethnic riots in Urumqi led to roughly 200 deaths and over 1000 arrests by the police. In 2011, violence in Hotan and Kashgar led to four death sentences for Muslim participants,[9] and additional fatal clashes between Uyghurs and authorities have been reported through 2012 and 2013.[10] These episodes

[8]Please see appendix Table C3 for more detail. If we apply the same test to only the prefectures that actually replied to requests, the difference between treatment and control remains statistically insignificant. We cannot exclude the possibility that officials both applied greater scrutiny to the Muslim alias and then opted to not respond to those messages in greater proportion than for the unmarked alias. However, that decision not to respond represents another form of bias against the Muslim requester.

[9]Andrew Jacobs. "China Sentences 4 Uyghurs to Death Over Unrest." *The New York Times*. Sep. 16, 2011.

[10]Edward Wong. "Deadly Clashes Erupt in Western China." *The New York Times*. Mar. 1, 2012. Peter Ford. "Fight over snack in China lights up blogosphere; Controversy over how police handled a fight between ethnic minority snack vendors and a Han Chinese costumer went viral in China, highlighting discontent with 'leniency' for minorities." *The Christian Science Monitor* Dec. 4, 2012. Chris Buckley. "China Calls Clash in Tense Region a Ṕerrorist Attack'' *The New York Times*. Jun. 27, 2013.

of unrest have elicited wide media coverage in China and commanded public attention. If officials consider disgruntled Uyghurs more likely to disrupt social order, they may attempt to placate these individuals by prioritizing their requests and exhibiting greater responsiveness. Such behavior would constitute *pro-minority* strategic discrimination. In fact, it is not difficult to find opinions among Han Chinese that restive minorities enjoy this sort of preferential treatment from authorities.

Our main effect refutes claims that ethnic Muslims generally enjoy increased responsiveness from government agencies. However, we also tested whether official responsiveness varied with the perceived threat of local Muslim population to social stability. As illustrated in Figure 1, we found higher responsiveness to Muslims in high-Muslim regions of China. This is consistent with the social stability hypothesis. However, in these regions the combination of high concentrations of minority officials (Newland 2013) and elevated ethnic conflict make it impossible to disentangle the effects of ingroup favoritism (now between ethnically Muslim authorities and citizens) from strategic incentives to placate restive minority populations.

To address this, we conducted additional analyses to determine whether social stability concerns moderated official responsiveness to Muslims. First, we examined effect heterogeneity by Muslim population in only localities with less than 10% Muslim population. In these localities we are unlikely to see any effects of Muslim ingroup bias, as the bureaucrats managing the Mayor's Mailbox are unlikely to be Muslim. The main effect remains robust, and we detect no effect for the interaction between local Muslim population and the experimental treatment (Table 3, columns 2 and 3). Next, we created an original dataset of Muslim-related ethnic conflict in China.[11] Outside of Xinjiang, which we treated as an entire province afflicted by Muslim-related ethnic conflict, we recorded episodes of Muslim-related

[11]We gathered reports of Muslim unrest in China from the LexisNexis English news archive, the annual Report to the U.S. Congress on International Religious Freedom, the Hong Kong-based Information Center for Human Rights and Democracy, and the Uyghur issues website `http://www.uighurbiz.net`.

Table 3: Heterogeneous treatment effects, Muslim population and history of ethnic conflict

	$< 10\%$ Muslim pop. only			All prefs
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treatment	-18.8	-22.0	-19.0	-15.6
	(5.7)	(6.1)	(5.8)	(5.9)
Treatment * Muslim pop. (%)		5.8		
		(4.5)		
Muslim pop. (%)		-10.4		
		(4.1)		
Treatment * Muslim pop. (thousand)			0.1	
			(0.2)	
Muslim pop. (thousand)			-0.3	
			(0.2)	
Treatment * Ethnic conflict				-5.1
				(18.5)
Ethnic conflict				-15.6
				(16.0)
General covars	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ethnic covars	✓	✓	✓	✓
Replies covars	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	236	236	236	255

Notes. OLS estimates of the heterogeneous treatment effects. Outcome is local government response to requests for help (binary). Columns (2) and (3) interact the treatment with local Muslim population, operationalized as both percent Muslim and the total Muslim population in thousands. By limiting our sample to prefectures of under 10% Muslim population, we bound the probability that the official responding to our messages was herself an ethnic Muslim. Column (4) interacts local record of Muslim-related ethnic conflict (a binary indicator) with the treatment. Robust standard errors clustered by province in parentheses. For the list of general, ethnic, and replies covariates see Table B1.

conflict in 37 prefectures over the last 25 years. Although news sources undoubtedly underreport total episodes of ethnic conflict, we use these data with the assumption that prefectures with publicized episodes of ethnic unrest, on average, exhibit higher levels of ethnic conflict than those with no reported episodes. We coded a binary indicator of Muslim-related ethnic conflict at the prefecture level and interacted this indicator with our treatment.

Local episodes of Muslim unrest should increase the probability that officials perceive Muslim citizens as threats to social stability. If these strategic considerations play a role in responsiveness, we expect to observe greater responsiveness to Muslims in the high-conflict regions. However, we find no significant difference in responsiveness to Muslims between localities with and without histories of Muslim-related conflict (Table 3, column 4). The point estimate is negative, consistent with the claim that the threat of outgroup violence activates greater ingroup bias (Shayo and Zussman 2011), but the estimate is highly imprecise. We find no evidence that strategic considerations surrounding social stability mediate official responsiveness to Muslims.

4 Discussion

This study demonstrates that neither legacies of institutionalized discrimination nor political incentives surrounding democratic representation are necessary conditions for large ingroup biases to distort official behavior. The troubling implication of this finding is that ethnically-motivated distortions to governance may be more widespread than previously understood. Whereas few countries have the extreme legacies of racial oppression found in the United States and South Africa, many more exhibit the kind of outgroup stereotyping observed for Muslim minorities in China. Our findings suggest that this broader set of countries may exhibit similarly high levels of ingroup bias in public administration.

A similar logic holds for our finding of large biases in the behavior of unelected

officials. Although the elected representatives targeted by previous research are of great theoretical and substantive importance, unelected officials are more numerous and responsible for implementing a wide range of government policies. Unelected street-level bureaucrats enforce regulations, provide access to government services, and are in many ways the public face of government (Lipsky 2010). Citizens rely upon unelected officials for a wide range of services and goods. In the United States, unelected public employees decide applications for a variety of social benefits, adjudicate legal proceedings, and police our neighborhoods. Where these agents exercise discretion, ingroup biases may distort important elements of service provision.

By documenting ingroup bias in the behavior of this new set of political actors, this study contributes to a growing empirical regularity in the study of human behavior. Individuals express ingroup biases in behavior even when making relatively consequential decisions. In addition to the studies of elected representatives cited above, scholars document ingroup bias in the labor market (Bertrand and Mullainaithan 2004), housing market (Yinger 1995), car sales (Ayres and Siegelman 1995), criminal sentencing (Alesina and Ferrara 2011; Everett and Wojtkiewicz 2002), judicial review (Sen 2012), and even NBA officiating (Price and Wolfers 2010). Bias in public service is particularly troubling because the equality of persons before the state is an important normative goal of democratic governance (Rothstein and Teorell 2008).

Our findings highlight a second emerging regularity in the study of ingroup biases; it is difficult to explain these biases in terms of strategic behavior. A longstanding debate about ethnoracial bias pits intrinsic, taste-based motivations against rational, statistical ones (Becker 1971). It is impossible to exclude all strategic interpretations for human behavior, but our study and others fail to explain observed bias with the commonly understood incentives of political officials. We detected little role for social stability incentives in official biases in China, and Butler and Broockman (2011) find that despite the strong signal of

Democratic partisanship carried by black identity in the United States, white Democratic state legislators exhibited bias against black individuals. Broockman (2013) extended this work to show that black legislators help black citizens even when these citizens are not constituents. Recent work in other subfields also fails to explain ingroup-outgroup political cognition with the tools of economic rationality; Hainmueller and Hiscox (2010) find in a nationwide survey on immigration attitudes in the United States that, "economic self-interest, at least as currently theorized, does not explain voter attitudes toward immigration."

The prevalence of ingroup bias and its insensitivity to strategic incentives present obstacles to democratic equality, but the regularity of these findings represents progress for generalized theories of human political behavior. The durability of ingroup bias across diverse cultures, ethnicities, and political regimes offers a specific example of universal regularity in human political behavior. From the perspective of public policy, social scientific investigation may have a constructive role to play in the reduction of elite biases. In the wake of media coverage of a study revealing racial bias in NBA officiating, Pope, Price and Wolfers (2013) find that bias disappeared from referees' subsequent behavior.

The limitations of our study point to areas of future research on ingroup bias. Field experimental investigation of ingroup biases, including this study, have to date examined relatively low-stakes transactions with officials, such as requests for information. Future work could helpfully address the extent to which ingroup biases distort higher-stakes transactions, with attention to the varying levels of official discretion present in different types of decisions. Open questions also remain about how different types of outgroups affect the magnitude of bias. How salient must ethnic cleavages be before they distort official behavior? Social psychology research has shown that even highly artificial, thin groupings can induce behavioral biases in the laboratory (Tajfel et al. 1971), but it remains to be clarified which real-world groups induce distortions to consequential political behavior.

This study has additional implications for China's ethnic policy and authoritarian

politics more broadly. We offer a mixed picture of how China's minorities fare in transactions with government officials. On the one hand, where Muslims are most numerous we find they receive equal or perhaps slightly preferential treatment (Figure 1). Given the skepticism with which many scholars view minority governance in China, this result is surprising and supports regime claims that government in high-minority regions is responsive, in certain domains, to local needs. On the other hand, we detect a high degree of official bias against Muslims where they are in the minority, offering quantitative support for the ethnographic and journalistic reports of discrimination faced by Muslims, particularly Uyghurs, in urban China. Eradicating behavioral biases is an uncertain project, but simply raising awareness among officials tasked with responding to citizen complaints may mitigate the bias we observed (Pope, Price and Wolfers 2013).

In the field of authoritarian politics, our results shed new light on the importance of participatory institutions to nondemocratic state-society relations. Recent scholarship highlights the role of institutions—legislatures (Gandhi 2008; Truex Forthcoming), political parties (Gandhi 2008), the media (Egorov, Guriev and Sonin 2009; Lorentzen 2013*a*; Distelhorst 2013), and deliberative platforms (He and Warren 2011)—in nondemocratic rule. We contribute by examining an institution of authoritarian contacting and find that China's local governments exhibited relatively high levels of responsiveness to citizens of low socioeconomic status. The official response rate to a generic Chinese male name was 44%, quite comparable to that of the elected councillors and representatives contacted in South Africa and the United States (Table 2). The comparison is not wholly apt, as the elected officials in previous studies had fewer resources than China's prefectural governments do, but even so our finding adds to the growing list of authoritarian institution that are more than democratic window-dressing. China's online channels for contacting officials often delivers relevant information in a timely manner.

Highlighting the responsiveness of authoritarian officials to citizen requests opens up

new research questions in authoritarian politics. Is government responsiveness to the public driven by resources, developmental imperatives, or the need to maintain social stability? Which citizen grievances receive the speediest and most effortful responses? Is authoritarian constituent service also sensitive to jurisdictional considerations (Loewen and MacKenzie 2013)? These questions can be addressed using similar techniques to those we employ here. Authoritarian regimes generally offer sparser and less accurate public data on government activities, and media coverage of the government is also distorted by politically-motivated censorship. Field experimentation involving government agencies provides an opportunity to generate original data on governance in these difficult-to-study settings. Given our finding that their contacting channels function comparably to those of elected representatives in mature democracies, perhaps China's local governments have less to fear from transparency than they think.

References

Alesina, Alberto and Eliana Ferrara. 2011. "A Test of Racial Bias in Capital Sentencing." *National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper Series* 16981.

Ang, Yuen Yuen. 2012. "Counting Cadres: A Comparative View of the Size of China's Public Employment." *The China Quarterly* 211(1):676–696.

Ayres, Ian and Peter Siegelman. 1995. "Race and Gender Discrimination in Bargaining for a New Car." *The American Economic Review* pp. 304–321.

Becker, Gary. 1971. *The Economics of Discrimination*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bertrand, Marianne and Sendhil Mullainaithan. 2004. "Are Emily and Greg More Employable Than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination." *The American Economic Review* 94(4):991–1013.

Birney, Mayling. 2014. "Decentralization and Veiled Corruption under China's "Rule of Mandates"." *World Development* 53:55–67.

Broockman, David E. 2013. "Black Politicians Are More Intrinsically Motivated to Advance Blacks' Interests: A Field Experiment Manipulating Political Incentives." *American Journal of Political Science* .

Burns, John P and Wang Xiaoqi. 2010. "Civil Service Reform in China: Impacts on Civil Servants' Behaviour." *The China Quarterly* 201(1):58–78.

Butler, Daniel M. and David Broockman. 2011. "Do Politicians Racially Discriminate Against Constituents? A Field Experiment on State Legislators." *American Journal of Political Science* 55(3):463–477.

Chan, Hon and Jie Gao. 2008. "Performance Measurement in Chinese Local Governments." *Chinese Law & Government* 41:1–126.

Chen, Xi. 2013. "The Rising Cost of Stability." *Journal of Democracy* 24(1):57–64.

Cliff, Thomas. 2012. "The Partnership of Stability in Xinjiang: State–Society Interactions Following the July 2009 Unrest*." *China Journal* (68):79–105.

Clothey, Rebecca. 2005. "China's Policies for Minority Nationalities in Higher Education: Negotiating National Values and Ethnic Identities." *Comparative Education Review* 49(3):389–409.

Dimitrov, Martin K. 2013. "What the Party Wanted to Know: Citizen Complaints as a "Barometer of Public Opinion" in Communist Bulgaria." *East European Politics & Societies* .

Distelhorst, Gregory. 2013. "Publicity-Driven Accountability in China." *Doctoral Dissertation, MIT Department of Political Science* .

Dunning, Thad. 2010. "The Politics of Language, Race, and Class: Experimental Evidence from South Africa." *Working Paper, Department of Political Science, Yale University* .

Eckel, Catherine C and Philip J Grossman. 2005. "Managing Diversity by Creating Team Identity." *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 58(3):371–392.

Edin, Maria. 2003. "State Capacity and Local Agent Control in China: CCP Cadre Management from a Township Perspective." *The China Quarterly* 173(1):35–52.

Egorov, Georgy, Sergei Guriev and Konstantin Sonin. 2009. "Why Resource-poor Dictators

Allow Freer Media: A Theory and Evidence from Panel Data." *American Political Science Review* 103(4):645.

Espinoza, Julio A and Raymond T Garza. 1985. "Social Group Salience and Interethnic Cooperation." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 21(4):380–392.

Everett, Ronald and Roger Wojtkiewicz. 2002. "Difference, Disparity, and Race/Ethnic Bias in Federal Sentencing." *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 18(2):189–211.

Fryer, Roland and Steven Levitt. 2004. "The Causes and Consequences of Distinctively Black Names." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 119(3):767–805.

Gandhi, Jennifer. 2008. *Political Institutions Under Dictatorship*. Cambridge University Press New York.

Gladney, Dru. 1998. *Ethnic Identity in China: The Making of a Muslim Minority Nationality*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Gladney, Dru. 2004. *Dislocating China: Muslims, Minorities, and Other Subaltern Subjects*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Habyarimana, James, Macartan Humphreys, Daniel N Posner and Jeremy M Weinstein. 2007. "Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision?" *American Political Science Review* 101(04):709–725.

Hainmueller, Jens and Michael J Hiscox. 2010. "Attitudes Toward Highly Skilled and Low-Skilled Immigration: Evidence from a Survey Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 104(1):61–84.

Hartford, Kathleen. 2005. "Dear Mayor Online Communications with Local Governments in Hangzhou and Nanjing." *China Information* 19(2):217–260.

Hasmath, Reza. 2009. Developing Minority Nationalities in Contemporary Urban China. In *China in an Era of Transition: Understanding Contemporary State and Society Actors*, ed. Reza Hasmath and Jennifer Hsu. New York: Palgrave Macmillan pp. 45–60.

He, Baogang. 2005. Minority Rights with Chinese Characteristics. In *Multiculturalism in Asia*, ed. Will Kymlicka and Baogang He. Oxford University Press pp. 56–79.

He, Baogang and Mark E Warren. 2011. "Authoritarian Deliberation: The Deliberative Turn in Chinese Political Development." *Perspectives on politics* 9(2):269–289.

Horsley, J. 2007. Towards a More Open China? In *The Right to Know: Transparency for an Open World*, ed. A. Florini. Columbia Univ Pr pp. 54–91.

Kaltman, Blaine. 2007. *Under the Heel of the Dragon: Islam, Racism, Crime, and the Uighur in China*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.

Lipsky, Michael. 2010. *Street-level Bureaucracy*. Russell Sage Foundation.

Liu, Mingxing and Ran Tao. 2007. Local Governance, Policy Mandates and Fiscal Reform in China. In *Paying for Progress in China: Public finance, human welfare and changing patterns of inequality*, ed. Vivienne Shue and Christine Wong. Greenwich, CT.: Routledge.

Loewen, Peter and Michael MacKenzie. 2013. "Service Representation in a Federal System: A Field Experiment." *Working paper* .

Lorentzen, Peter. 2013*a*. "China's Strategic Censorship." *American Journal of Political Science* .

Lorentzen, Peter L. 2013*b*. "Regularizing Rioting: Permitting Public Protest in an Author-

itarian Regime." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 8(2):127–158.

Lü, X. and P. Landry. Forthcoming. "Show Me the Money: Interjurisdiction Political Competition and Fiscal Extraction in China." *American Political Science Review* .

Luehrmann, L.M. 2003. "Facing Citizen Complaints in China, 1951-1996." *Asian Survey* 43(5):845–866.

McClendon, Gwyneth. 2013. "Race, Responsiveness and Electoral Strategy: A Field Experiment with South African Politicians." *Working paper* .

Michelson, Ethan. 2007. "Climbing the Dispute Pagoda: Grievances and Appeals to the Official Justice System in Rural China." *American Sociological Review* 72(3):459–485.

Newland, Sara. 2013. "Local Governance in Multiethnic China." *Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation* .

O'Brien, Kevin and Lianjiang Li. 1995. "The politics of lodging complaints in rural China." *The China Quarterly* 143:756–783.

Piston, Spencer. 2010. "How Explicit Racial Prejudice Hurt Obama in the 2008 Election." *Political Behavior* 32(4):431–451.

Pope, D., J. Price and J. Wolfers. 2013. "Awareness Reduces Racial Bias." *National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper Series* 19765.

Price, Joseph and Justin Wolfers. 2010. "Racial Discrimination Among NBA Referees." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 125(4):1859–1887.

Rothstein, Bo and Jan Teorell. 2008. "What Is Quality of Government? A Theory of Impartial Government Institutions." *Governance* 21(2):165–190.

Sautman, Barry. 2010. "Scaling Back Minority Rights: The Debate about China's Ethnic Policies." *Stan. J. Int'l L.* 46:51.

Sen, Maya. 2012. "Is Justice Really Blind? Race and Appellate Review in U.S. Courts." *Presented at Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association* .

Shayo, Moses and Asaf Zussman. 2011. "Judicial Ingroup Bias in the Shadow of Terrorism." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 126(3):1447–1484.

Shi, Tianjian. 1997. *Political Participation in Beijing*. Harvard Univ Pr.

Shih, Victor, Chris Adolph and Mingxing Liu. 2012. "Getting Ahead in the Communist Party: Explaining the Advancement of Central Committee Members in China." *American Political Science Review* 106(1):166–187.

Solinger, Dorothy and Yiyang Hu. 2012. "Welfare, Wealth and Poverty in Urban China: The Dibao and Its Differential Disbursement." *The China Quarterly* 211(1):741–764.

Sullivan, Chris. 2013. "Structural Violence and Strategies of Resistance in the Uyghur-Chinese Marketplace." *Presented at Multi-disciplinary Interrogations of State and Society in China, University of California, Berkeley* .

Tajfel, Henri, Michael G Billig, Robert P Bundy and Claude Flament. 1971. "Social Categorization and Intergroup Behaviour." *European journal of social psychology* 1(2):149–178.

Truex, Rory. Forthcoming. "The Returns to Office in a "Rubber Stamp" Parliament." *American Political Science Review* .

Tsai, L.L. 2007. *Accountability without democracy: solidary groups and public goods provision in rural China*. Cambridge University Press.

Wang, Tiezhi. 2007. "Preferential Policies for Ethnic Minority Students in China's College/university Admission." *Asian Ethnicity* 8(2):149–163.

Wushouer, Gulizhaer. 2005. "Historical Features of Uyghur Personal Names (Weiwuer Zu Renming de Lishi Tedian)." *Minority Languages of China (Minzu Yuwen)* 3.

Yinger, John. 1995. *Closed Doors, Opportunities Lost: The Continuing Costs of Housing Discrimination*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Zang, Xiaowei. 2011. "Uyghur-Han Earnings Differentials in Ürümchi." *The China Journal* pp. 141–155.

Appendix A: Names and ethnicity in China

The experiment compares government responsiveness to letters from a name signaling membership in a Muslim minority group (treatment) to an ethnically-unmarked name (control). Similar experiments have used names that signal membership in the majority ethnic group (Butler and Broockman 2011; Bertrand and Mullainaithan 2004; McClendon 2013). Unfortunately Chinese names do not permit for unambiguously signalling Han ethnicity to the exclusion of all other ethnic groups. Instead, we use an ethnically-unmarked name in our control scenario; for examples see the left-hand column of Table A1. The name used was highly common. China's most popular social networking website, Renren, listed over five thousand users with this full name.[12] As China's population was 92% Han Chinese in 2010, an ethnically unmarked name is likely in most localities to be interpreted as belonging to a Han requester.[13]

Table A1: Example unmarked and Muslim names

Unmarked names	Muslim names
Li Jun De	Ba La Ti (Barat)
Zhang Chao Yang	Re He Man (Rahman)
Wang Zhi Hong	Ai Er Ken (Erkin)

Notes. Examples of ethnically unmarked and Muslim-identifying names in Chinese, similar to those used in the experiment. They are displayed first as romanizations (pinyin) of Chinese characters, highlighting that each name consists of three characters corresponding to three spoken syllables. Common English transliterations of the Muslim names are included in parentheses. We do not disclose the actual names used in the study to protect the privacy of official responses to our requests, which were occasionally published to government webpages.

The experiment uses an Arabic-root name to signal Muslim minority identity. Examples of such names are given in right-hand column of Table A1. Our treatment name was also quite common; over three thousand Renren users were registered under the treatment name.[14] Both the Muslim and unmarked names consist of three Chinese characters which correspond to three spoken syllables. Both are also strong signals of male gender; among registered Renren users 95% of the unmarked name and 97% of Muslim name were male.[15] If the officials receiving our requests searched the internet for the treatment name (a reasonable

[12]Searched Renren.com on Oct. 6, 2012. The total number of registered users is about 200 million.

[13]People's Republic of China Sixth National Population Census, 2010, online at: `http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/pcsj/rkpc/6rp/indexch.htm`.

[14]Searched Renren.com on Oct. 6, 2012.

[15]Searched Renren.com on Oct. 6, 2012.

expectation given that they were responding to an online message), they would find images of a member of the Uyghur Muslim ethnic group. In contrast, searching for our unmarked name returned images of several non-minority individuals.[16]

How prevalent are distinctive names among China's 23 million Muslims? China recognizes ten ethnically Muslim minority groups, but the largest are the Uyghur and Hui, with roughly ten million people each. The Uyghur commonly take distinctive names that derive from Arabic, Persian, or the Uyghur language (Wushouer 2005), whereas Hui tend to have fewer distinguishing features from the majority population. The distribution of names observed among minority delegates to China's legislature affirms this difference. Among the 97 delegates from Muslim ethnic groups in the 2013 National People's Congress, all 25 Uyghurs and a majority of delegates from the eight smaller Muslim ethnicities had distinctive names. However, Hui delegates' names did not evidently draw upon Arabic or other non-Chinese languages. The findings of our experiment are therefore most relevant to Uyghurs and other Chinese Muslims that take distinctive names.

Table A2: Ethnic names in China's legislature

		NPC delegates	
Ethnic group	Population	Total	Muslim names
Hui	10.6 m	60	0
Uyghur	10.1 m	25	25
Other Muslim (8)	2.5 m	12	9

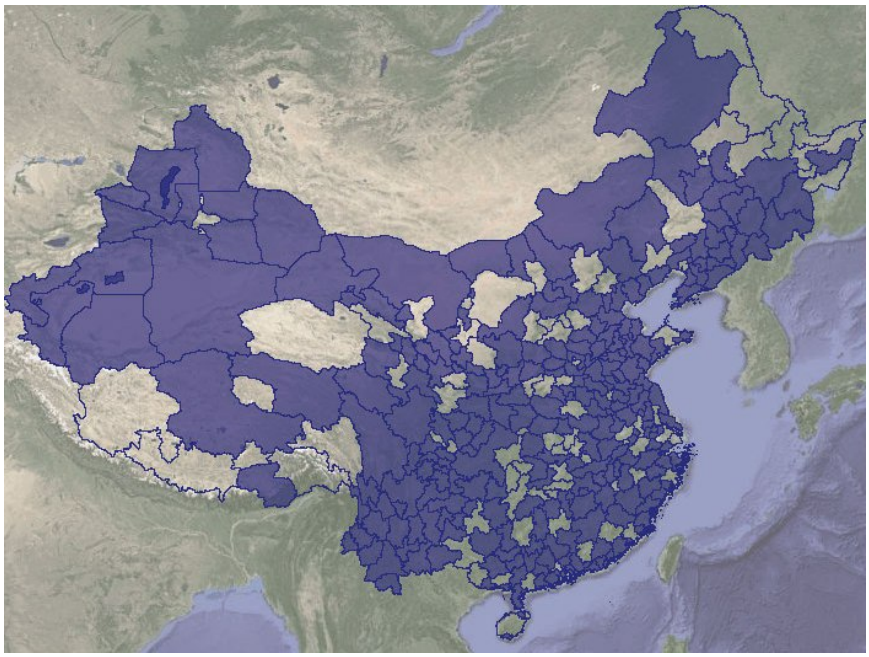
Notes. Names are marked ethnically-Muslim if they derive from a non-Chinese language such as Arabic, Persian, or Uyghur. Population data come from the 2010 Census. The list of 2013 National People's Congress delegates was accessed Dec 26, 2013 at `http://politics.people.com.cn/n/2013/0227/c1001-20621484.html`.

[16]Image searches conducted using Baidu.com, China's most popular internet search engine, October 2012.

Appendix B: Sample and treatment assignment

We assessed 336 prefectural governments in China[17] for eligibility for inclusion in the study. We identified 299 eligible localities that offered online contacting channels and did not require letter-writers to provide their identification card numbers.[18] We randomly allocated 150 localities to the treatment group (message from Muslim name) and 149 to the control group (ethnically unmarked name) without stratification. We experienced attrition of 22 treated and 19 control localities due to non-functioning online interfaces and invalid email addresses. The 258 contacted political jurisdictions govern over one billion people (Figure B1). Pretreatment covariate balance for contacted localities in treatment and control groups is reported in Table B1.

Figure B1: Chinese prefectures included in field experiment



Notes. 258 Chinese prefectures contacted in the field experiment shaded blue. Satellite imagery ©2013 NASA, Terrametrics, accessed using Google Maps API.

[17]This includes the four province-level cities of Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, and Tianjin, which are technically one administrative level above ordinary prefectures.

[18]We found 57 local variants of online channels for contacting local government, including Government Mailbox, Ask-About-Government Web, Mayor's Hotline, Write to the Mayor, and Leaders' Window. The most common name for this institution was Mayor's Mailbox (65%).

Table B1: Balance table for submitted requests

	Muslim alias	Unmarked alias	T pval	KS pval
General				
Area (sq km)	26,089	29,635	.59	.83
Population (million)	3.93	4.05	.76	.37
GDP (billion RMB)	94.9	111.2	.30	.98
per capita GDP (RMB)	27,202	28,702	.70	.74
Primary GDP (%)	15	16	.70	.75
Secondary GDP (%)	49	47	.20	.44
Tertiary GDP (%)	36	37	.15	.43
Govt revenue (billion RMB)	6.06	7.92	.20	.77
Govt spending (billion RMB)	12.41	14.66	.22	.80
Imports (million USD)	1,221	2,758	.13	.33
Exports (million USD)	1,676	4,144	.09	.39
FDI (million USD)	332	480	.22	.78
Ethnicity				
Muslim (%)	4.5	3.3	.48	.21
Han (%)	84.4	86.8	.43	.91
History of Muslim conflict (%)	14.8	16.2	.77	
Posted replies to citizen requests, June 2012				
>10 replies (%)	47	46	.91	
1-10 replies (%)	20	23	.59	
No replies (%)	33	31	.73	
Obs.	128	130		

Notes. Means of pretreatment covariates for prefectures in the treatment (Muslim alias) and control (Unmarked alias) groups. Right-hand columns report p-values for two-sided t-tests and the univariate bootstrap Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests, which tests for differences in distributions of non-dichotomous variables. Posted replies to citizen requests were recorded by the researchers during visits to government webpages. Ethnic data are from the 2000 China Census, and all other data are from *China Statistical Yearbook for Regional Economy 2010* (China Statistics Press). The F-test for regressing treatment status on all listed covariates gives a p-value of 0.698.

Appendix C: Supplementary tables

Table C1: Contacted and unreachable prefectures

	Contacted	Unreachable	T pval
General			
Area (sq km)	27,876	29,605	.80
Population (million)	3.99	3.57	.24
GDP (billion RMB)	103.1	134.5	.27
per capita GDP (RMB)	27,958	31,095	.42
Primary GDP (%)	16	15	.59
Secondary GDP (%)	48	46	.39
Tertiary GDP (%)	37	39	.10
Govt revenue (billion RMB)	7.0	12.5	.20
Govt spending (billion RMB)	13.5	18.9	.27
Imports (million USD)	1,996	6,244	.16
Exports (million USD)	2,919	5,691	.27
FDI (million USD)	406	633	.26
Ethnicity			
Muslim (%)	3.9	2.1	.12
Han (%)	85.6	83.1	.50
History of Muslim conflict (%)	16	14	.76
Posted replies to citizen requests, June 2012			
>10 replies (%)	47	24	.00
1-10 replies (%)	22	21	.82
No replies (%)	32	55	.00
Obs.	258	78	

Notes. Covariate means for prefectures contacted in the field experiment compared with uncontacted prefectures. Right-hand column reports p-values for two-sided t-test. Ethnic data come from 2000 Census, all other economic and demographic data from 2010 statistical yearbooks. Posted replies in the Mayor's Mailbox were recorded by the researchers in July 2012.

Table C2: Government response rates and quality of response (N=258)

	Percent
Disclosed any relevant information	43.0%
Disclosed...	
name of government agency	38.8%
standards for support	28.3%
procedures for approval	20.2%
contact information	11.6%
compensation level	2.7%
Mean score for disclosures (max. 5)	2.36
Replied, no disclosure	7.4%
No reply	49.6%

Table C3: Government response noted inaccurate contact information

	Unmarked	Muslim	Difference
Noted inaccurate info (%)	11.5	11.7	0.2
	(2.8)	(2.9)	(4.0)
95% CI upper	17.1	17.4	7.7
95% CI lower	6.0	6.1	-8.1
Obs.	130	128	

Notes. Outcome is whether contacted agency responded that requester's phone or address was inaccurate. For all requests, phone numbers and street addresses were designed to be plausible but inaccurate. Standard errors (in parentheses) and 95% confidence intervals reported below. Two-sided t-test (unequal variance) p-value = .964.

Table C4: Ethnicity and government disclosure, alternative time cutoffs

	Unmarked	Muslim	Difference	p-value
Disclosure (%) after:				
1 week	30.0	18.0	-12.0	.02
2 weeks	38.4	22.7	-15.8	.01
3 weeks	41.5	28.1	-13.4	.02
4 weeks*	44.6	29.7	-14.9	.01
5 weeks	44.6	31.3	-13.4	.03
6 weeks	46.9	35.2	-11.8	.06
...				
24 weeks	49.2	36.7	-12.5	.04

Notes. Comparing mean disclosure rates for control and treatment groups at 7, 14, 21, 28, 35, and 42 days after requesting information from China's prefectural governments in July and August 2012. Our standard specification of the dependent variable uses a four-week cutoff. Rightmost column reports p-values for two-sided t-tests (unequal variance).

Table C5: Ethnicity and government disclosure, regression estimates

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Muslim	-14.9	-14.6	-16.1	-16.3	-15.8
	(6.0)	(6.2)	(6.3)	(5.9)	(6.2)
General covars		✓	✓	✓	✓
Ethnic covars			✓	✓	✓
Replies covars				✓	✓
Province FE					✓
Obs.	258	258	255	255	255

Notes. OLS estimates for effect of muslim alias on government disclosure (robust standard errors in parentheses). The dependent variable is government disclosure four weeks after the request was made. General, ethnic, and replies covariates match the variables listed in Table B1. Three prefectures did not report ethnic data, which is why these observations are missing in estimates (3), (4) and (5).