**Supplementary Material**

The supplementary material includes multivariate analyses of the correlation between education, other social-economic factors, and support for the death penalty.

To conduct the multivariate analysis, I use an ordinary least squares (“OLS”) regression model. When applied to binary outcome variable, it is also called the linear probability model (“LPM”). I test a linear probability model instead of a logistic model for its ease of interpretation of results. The probability I estimate here is not extreme – about 0.68, not close to 0 or 1, so a linear model provides similar results as a logistic model; or, in more technical terms, the log odds in our analysis are almost a linear function of the probability, so a linear model fits about as well as a logistic model. Because I do obtain similar results using the logistic model, the results are not reported here.

The dependent variable in the regression analysis is whether a respondent supports the death penalty or not. The independent variables include the factors reflecting individual values, utilitarian response to crime, and social group differences. I exclude income status from the regression because, because it is not significantly correlated with one’s attitude toward the death penalty, and the observations of income status are substantially fewer than other variables.[[1]](#footnote-1) I include county-level victimization rate to measure the prevalence of crime where one resides. I control for whether a respondent has personal victimization experience within the last two years, and GDP per capita in log form at the county level. I further include province fixed effects to rule out province idiosyncratic features, that is, to make sure that results will not be driven by the features of any particular province(s). The robust standard errors are clustered by counties, since two independent variables (victimization rate and GDP per capita) are at the county level.

Since we include some mutually correlated factors as independent variables, multicollinearity can be a potential problem (i.e., some independent variables can perfectly predict the other, rendering it unnecessary and even incorrect to include them all as explanatory factors). To account for this, I do diagnostics tests by calculating the variance inflation factors (“VIF”) for all variables in the regressions reported below. The largest VIF is from GDP per capital in log in model (4), which is 2.38; among the variables concerning hypothesis testing, the largest VIF is from county victimization rate in model (4), which is 1.48. These are considerably small VIF scores, suggesting that there is nearly no multicollinearity in our regressions.

Table A1 summarizes the regression results. The observations are 31,586 instead of 31,644, because the county ID of 32 observations, the province ID of 2 observations, and the GDP per capita of 44 observations were missing from the data. I enter the three groups of explanatory variables individually (models (1)-(3)), then include all the explanatory variables together in model (4). The coefficients of the explanatory variables are stable in all models, and the *p*-values are always below 5%. In other words, all coefficients are statistically significant.

Regarding the effect of education: People who receive college education and above are 2.5% more likely to favor the death penalty. Note that compared to the univariate test, which shows a 10.1% disparity (Table 2 in the main text), the effect of higher education is smaller here, after considering a range of explanatory variables that account for individual values, crime prevalence, media influence, and other social group differences.

The results also show the effect sizes of the explanatory variables. Take model (4), for example: authoritarianism – that is, being a party member – is associated with a 6.3% increase in support for the death penalty, holding other factors constant. Disobedience attitude is associated with a 3.8% decrease in support for the death penalty, and traditional Chinese culture (i.e., believing in ancestor worship) is associated with a 4.4% increase in support, *ceteris paribus*.

The mean of county victimization is 9.98 per hundred people within the previous two years (standard dev. = 4.78). A unit’s increase in county victimization (per hundred people) is correlated with a 0.4% increase in support for capital punishment, other factors constant; or, an increase of one standard deviation in county victimization rate is correlated with a 1.9% increase in support for the death penalty. This suggests that the association between crime prevalence and support for the death penalty is not only statistically but also substantially significant. Similarly, the average media exposure is 15.2 hours per week among the Chinese counties (standard dev. = 14.0). A ten-hour increase in media exposure is correlated with a 0.7% increase in support for capital punishment; or, a one standard deviation increase in media exposure is correlated with a 1.0% increase in support for the death penalty.

Regarding social group differences: men are about 1.1% more likely to favor the death penalty than women; people who have urban *hukou* are about 6.1% more likely.

In a test unreported here, I further use a propensity score matching method (using the nearest neighbor) to test whether higher education is correlated with support for the death penalty. The variables I use to match the treatment group (high education level) and the control group (low education level) include all of the other variables reported in Table A1 (i.e., individual values, crime prevalence, media exposure, other social group differences, and controls). Again, I find a statistically significant difference between the treatment and the control groups. The estimated effect size of higher education is 2.5%, suggesting that, for two groups of people who have similar characteristics and only exhibit difference in education level, the group that received college education or above was 2.5% more likely to support the death penalty.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table A1: Support for the Death Penalty and Its Correlates** | | | | |
| Dependent variable: | Favor the Death Penalty | | | |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Higher education |  |  | 0.044\*\*\* | 0.025\*\* |
|  |  |  | (0.012) | (0.012) |
| *Individual Value* |  |  |  |  |
| Authoritarianism (Party member) | 0.090\*\*\* |  |  | 0.063\*\*\* |
|  | (0.010) |  |  | (0.011) |
| Disobedience | -0.044\*\*\* |  |  | -0.038\*\*\* |
|  | (0.008) |  |  | (0.008) |
| Traditional culture | 0.044\*\* |  |  | 0.044\*\*\* |
|  | (0.017) |  |  | (0.016) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| *Utilitarian Response to Crime* |  |  |  |  |
| County victimization rate |  | 0.004\*\* |  | 0.004\*\* |
|  |  | (0.002) |  | (0.002) |
| Media exposure (10 hours) |  | 0.011\*\*\* |  | 0.007\*\*\* |
|  |  | (0.002) |  | (0.002) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| *Social Group Difference* |  |  |  |  |
| Male |  |  | 0.017\*\*\* | 0.011\*\* |
|  |  |  | (0.005) | (0.006) |
| Urban *hukou* |  |  | 0.074\*\*\* | 0.061\*\*\* |
|  |  |  | (0.012) | (0.011) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| *Controls* |  |  |  |  |
| Victimized experience | 0.031\*\*\* | 0.022\*\*\* | 0.030\*\*\* | 0.021\*\*\* |
|  | (0.009) | (0.008) | (0.009) | (0.008) |
| Ln county GDP per capita | 0.021\*\* | 0.015 | 0.012 | 0.004 |
|  | (0.010) | (0.009) | (0.010) | (0.009) |
| Province fixed effects | YES | YES | YES | YES |
| Constant | YES | YES | YES | YES |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 31,586 | 31,586 | 31,586 | 31,586 |
| R-squared | 0.019 | 0.016 | 0.019 | 0.024 |
| Notes: The regressions use the linear probability model. Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered by counties. \*\*\**p*<0.01, \*\**p*<0.05, \**p*<0.1. There are 31,586 observations instead of 31,644, because the county ID of 32 observations, the province ID of 2 observations, and the GDP per capita of 44 observations were missing from the data. | | | | |

1. Similar to income, neither does age have any statistically significant association with punitiveness. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)