Formal and informal control views in China, Japan, and the U.S.

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A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

Purpose: This study compared and contrasted the views of formal and informal crime control among college students from China, Japan, and the U.S., and examined the correlates behind the views.
Methods: Using the same questionnaire, this study collected data from 1,275 completed surveys in the three nations.
Results: The study revealed that both Chinese and Japanese respondents evaluated formal and informal control and their combination in crime control as more important than American counterparts did. The variable trust in police was a predictor of attitudes toward formal control and the mix of formal and informal control in all the three nations. Demographics in the U.S. were more important factors than in China and Japan in predicting the respondents' ranking of the importance of formal control and informal control and their combination in crime control.
Conclusions: This is the first empirically comparative study of the perceived importance of formal and informal mechanisms in crime prevention and control in China, Japan and the U.S. The study found both similarities and differences in the perceived importance and reasons behind them. More research is needed in the future.

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Introduction

While every nation needs social control, how it is implemented differs between nations. History, culture, political systems, and many other factors affect social control mechanisms. China, Japan, and the U.S. have similarities and differences. They have the three largest economies in the world, and all three economies are market-based. China is a developing country while Japan and the U.S. are developed nations. From a cultural perspective, China and Japan are representatives of Eastern culture, while the U.S. is a representative of Western culture. China and Japan are more group-oriented, while the U.S. is more individual-oriented. From a political perspective, both Japan and the U.S. are multiparty, democratic societies, while China is a one party-ruled socialist country. The Constitution is the foundation of social regulation and control in the U.S., a tradition that began when it became as an independent nation. Japan's Meiji Constitution, in contrast, was enacted in 1889, but it did not place the emperor and the government under the law until the Constitution of 1947 (Jiang, Lambert, Saito, & Hara, 2012; Shikita & Tsuchiya, 1990; Westermann & Burfeind, 1991). China's constitution was enacted even later than Japan's in 1982, and even today it is under the rules of the Chinese Communist Party rather than it being used to guide the rules of the Chinese Communist Party.

Although each nation has a constitution and a market-based economy, the use of social control is thought to differ between the nations. It is commonly believed that morality-based informal control plays a more important role in crime control in China and Japan than in the U.S. This belief, however, has not been fully tested. No published studies on the comparison of social control views of residents of these three countries could be found. This study was undertaken to fill this void.

The current study was needed because cross-national studies "help to reveal not only intriguing differences between countries and cultures, but also aspects of one's own country and culture that would be difficult or impossible to detect from domestic data alone" (Jowell, 1998, p. 168). Cross-national studies can also help narrow the gap between nations and build bridges so that information flows more freely (Cao & Cullen, 2001). Additionally, research on crime control views can help nations better respond to crime, since no country has a monopoly on dealing with crime effectively. From a practical perspective, information flow and mutual understanding of social and crime control among these three nations are becoming more and more important. In 2012, China and Japan were the second and fourth largest trade partners with the U.S., indicating these countries have frequent and deep economic interactions. There is no doubt that smooth information flow and mutual understanding can help reduce interaction costs. Besides significant economic exchanges among the three nations, cultural and social connections are closer than before. For example, China sent the most students - 194,029 - to the U.S. in the 2011–2012 academic year, up 23%

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from the previous year. At the same time, China received more than 14,000 students from the U.S., up 5.3% from the previous year. Japan was the seventh most popular place of origin for international students in the U.S. and fourteenth for receiving the U.S. students (Institute of International Education, 2013). There is also a growing exchange of students between Japan and China, with China being the second most popular nation of Japanese students, after the U.S. (Ford, 2010). There are also between 18,000 to 30,000 Chinese students each year studying in Japan (Askakure, 2013). Increasing cultural and social interactions can increase conflicts between people. Information flow and mutual understanding can reduce and ease the conflicts, as well as result in more effective crime control methods.

Using data collected from more than 1,200 college students from China, Japan and the U.S., this study aimed to (1) compare and contrast college students' views of formal and informal social and crime control in the three nations and (2) examine the correlates behind the views.

Informal control in China, Japan and the U.S.

China has a long tradition of using moral codes and exemplary behavior of authority figures to keep social order and prevent crime (Jiang, Lambert, & Wang, 2007; Rojek, 1996). This tradition has been attributed to the following statements by Confucius: "Lead the people with governmental measures and regulate them by law (*fa*) and punishment, and they will avoid wrongdoing but will have no sense of honor and shame. Lead them with virtue and regulate them by the rules of prosperity (*li*), and they will have a sense of shame, and, more, set themselves right" (as cited in Terrill, 2003, p. 603). "If a ruler is himself upright, his people will do their duty without orders; but if he himself be not upright, although he may order, they will not obey" (as cited by Liu et al., 1998, pp. 292–293). In the tradition of Confucianism, authority figures usually include parents, teachers and governmental officers.

Central to the morality-based control were the five Confucian relationships (Westermann & Burfeind, 1991): (1) ruler to ruled; (2) father to son; (3) husband to wife; (4) elder brother to younger brother; and (5) friend to friend. Among these five relationships, the father-son is the most important and fundamental one. In traditional China, a father was responsible for educating his son/children, disciplining the son/children with benevolence, and setting an example for his son/children. As stressed under Confucianism, the son/children should absolutely obey the father's authority and respect the father, which was a part of filial piety. The other four relationships were the extension of the father-son relationship. Confucius and his followers believed that if everyone fulfilled his or her duties and performed the role according to the five relationships, society would be stable, orderly, and harmonious.

The followers of Confucius also believed that moral control is superior to legal control for several reasons. To a Confucian, a formal code means that people obey the law because they have to (Dutton, 1992; Troyer, 1989) but not necessarily they want to. The law is external to them. In contrast, moral rules are instilled by parents during early childhood and gradually internalized. Morality is established through role models, such as parents, teachers, governmental officials, heroes, and through persuasion; therefore, it is more likely to be regarded as an internal part of human character (Dutton, 1992; Jiang, Lambert, Wang, Saito, & Pilot, 2010). People follow moral codes because they voluntarily conform to them. In addition, moral codes are unwritten and passed on from generation to generation. They are much more flexible than written legal codes. Thus they can be interpreted to meet the needs of a particular situation (Terrill, 2003). Furthermore, morality-based informal control works from both the top down and the bottom up, so regular citizens can find and intervene at the first sign of possible trouble, thus "nipping crime in the bud" (Troyer, 1989). Finally, because of collective culture, group conformity and family "face" are extremely important to people in China. Sanctions on deviant behavior imposed by informal groups such as family, neighborhood, and peers have more effect than sanctions imposed by a legal authority.

The above beliefs, along with low levels of mobility, a strong family or clan system, and collectivism, have made it possible in China to depend on informal social/crime control to keep social order (Jiang et al., 2007). The informal social and crime control is usually provided by families, local communities, grassroots organizations, and intimate associates, along with support by local government and criminal justice agencies (Friday, Ren, Weitekamp, Kerner, & Taylor, 2005; Troyer, 1989; Wong, 2003). Despite the relatively recent trend toward formal control, informal social/crime control "remains evident" (Jiang et al., 2007) or "constitute[s] the basis of the social control systems" (Chen, 2004). For example, policing in today's China still emphasizes the mass line principle. As Luo Ruixing, a former Minister of Public Security, said in 1994, "Our public security work … [should] not … have matters monopolized by the professional state agencies. It is to be handled by the mass… The mass line principle … is to transform public security work [into] the work of the whole people (cited by Wong, 2003, p. 208). In community corrections, grassroots organizations such as residential committees and village committees play an essential role (Jiang, Xiang, et al., 2013).

Like China, Japan has a tradition of depending on informal mechanisms for its social and crime control. As early as the fourth century, the Japanese people adopted Confucianism and its core ideas for social and crime control (Reichel, 2002; Westermann & Burfeind, 1991). Confucianism and Buddhism were quickly integrated into the indigenous Japanese religion, Shinto, which similarly emphasized the importance of relationship between parents and their children. Although the traditional father to son relationship (as it existed in China) is not as rigid as it was in the past, strong sense of obligation for children to relate to their parents still exists in Japan today (Jiang, Lambert, et al., 2012).

Japan started to move toward the rule of law in the Meiji era (1868 – 1945). However, informal control was and is Japan's primary control mechanism. It has commonly observed that when disputes and other deviant problems occur, Japanese people usually seek solutions through informal mechanisms and consider formal and legal approaches as the last resort (Parker, 2001; Reichel, 2002; Terrill, 2003; Westermann & Burfeind, 1991).

The priority of using informal control is not only reflected in Japanese people's mentality but also in grassroots organizations. As early as in the Tokugawa era (1600–1868), five-family associations were developed to control their members' behavior, including mediating disputes among neighborhoods (Ames, 1981; Westermann & Burfeind, 1991). Other neighborhood associations such as *han* and *cho-kai* were also established for the same purpose (Bayley, 1991). A *han* was formed from 20 to 30 adjacent families and a *cho-kai* consisted of several *han*s. Today, for every police station jurisdiction in Japan, there usually is one crime-prevention association (Bayley, 1991). Members and leaders of the associations are volunteers. Besides local neighborhood crime prevention associations, there are also thousands of specialized crime prevention associations in schools and workplaces. Informal control also plays an important role in corrections. Volunteer probation officers in Japan are a very important component in the correctional system to help offenders reenter into free society (Jiang, Lambert, et al., 2012; Westermann & Burfeind, 1991).

Different from China and Japan, Americans except native Indians were immigrated to the U.S. from different nations. Early immigrants did not live together from generation to generation and share the same culture and moral rules as Chinese and Japanese did. Americans especially those who were immigrated from Europe greatly influenced by European philosophers. English philosopher Thomas Hobbes believed that human beings are motivated by egocentric desire; each person is the enemy of other people (Rojek, 2001). Many other great philosophers such as Karl Marx and Jean-Jacques Rousseau also observed a state of war of all against all during the Industrialization Revolution, although they did not assume this was a state of beginning

human nature. To these philosophers, in order to restore social order and stability, external constraints, such as social contracts, or laws are needed. In practice, although Americans used informal crime control methods such as a day watch and a night watch in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they have been more relied on law-based formal mechanisms to keep social order since the establishment of the U.S. For example, police in the U.S. have tried more or less to involve community in crime prevention and control in different periods of time. However, police are always considered a primary crime control mechanism. It is clear that if opinions are influenced by traditional values and practice, Chinese and Japanese citizens are more likely than Americans to favor informal social and crime control.

Formal control in China, Japan and the U.S.

Although China has a tradition of using informal control as their primary methods to keep social order and prevent crime, it started to move toward the rule of law in the last century. In 1911, when Qing Dynasty (which ruled from 1644 to 1912) was brought down, China started to move from informal social/crime control to the formal. However, because of civil war from 1911 to 1949 and Mao Zedong's class struggle movement, China[2] did not make significant changes toward law-based formal control. A turning point occurred in 1978 when China lunched its economic reform. Since then, China has sped up its movement toward the rule by law and the rule of law. According to Jiang et al. (2007), several important factors have led China to the movement.

The first was the end of enduring and damaging class struggles. A series of class struggle movements relied not on law but on Mao Zedong's ideology. These movements made almost everyone feel unsafe and resulted in deteriorated material life. Mental and material damages caused by class struggles led the Chinese to desire societal stability and rule by law (Jiang et al., 2007; Rojek, 1996). The second factor is China's focus on the development of economy, education, and technology. In order to do so, China opened its door to the world. As an external force, international interaction and cooperation pushed China to establish laws. The third factor is rising crime in reforming China. Chinese economic reform and development is accompanied by more mobility, decreased informal control and its rapid rise in crime, which led to the demand for more formal control including rule by law and professionalism in criminal justice. The fourth factor is corruption. One of the important components for effective informal control is exemplary behavior of authority figures. An unexpected result of China's economic reform is that many governmental officials have committed economic crime (Lu & Gunnison, 2003), which, in turn, has decreased leaders' traditional role of serving as moral model. The declined leaders' moral function made informal and moral control less effective than before, which, in turn, led to an increased demand for law. The fifth factor listed by Jiang et al. (2007) is growing individualism. In reforming China, the younger generation become more independent and more self-centered (Rojek, 2001). The traditional absolute authority of father over children and the superior status of group welfare over individual interests (Ren, 1997) are changing. When the family as the bedrock of the Chinese society loses its function, society's demand for legal control is a logical result.

Statistical data indicate that China has indeed moved toward formal social and crime control in terms of the number of laws and criminal justice organizations. In 1977, China had only three departments of law recruiting students. By the end of 2008, this number jumped to 615 (He, 2009). Since law was formally revived in 1979, China has enacted 229 laws (He, 2009) and had established a comprehensive legal system. According to China's Economic Census 2004[3], from 1949 to 1977, China established 3,461 courts but most of them did not function normally at the end of 1976. Starting in 1978, China began to restore the functions of courts and establish new courts. From 1978 to 2004, 2,203 courts were newly founded, resulting in a total of 5,664 courts in 2004. From 1949 to 1977, 985 procuratorates (i.e., state organ that oversees

prosecution) were established. Like courts, the vast majority of them did not function normally by the end of 1976. Starting in 1978, these procuratorates were gradually restored. From 1978 to 2004, 2,762 procuratorates were newly founded. Law firms have a similar situation as courts and procuratorates. At the end of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), law firms had almost ceased to exist. From 1978 to 2004, 7,771 law firms were founded. By the mid-2000s, China had approximately 300,000 judges, 140,000 lawyers, 210,000 procurators, and 1.8 million police officers (Leheny & Liu, 2010).

Besides these "hard" evidence of legal development, Chinese citizens are increasingly encouraged and requested by the government to learn about the law, abide by the law, and rely on the law to assert their rights and interests (Gallagher, 2006; Jiang, Wu, & Wang, 2013). People's legal consciousness, accordingly, has changed to a certain degree. Lawsuit is no longer considered by many people as shameful or intimidating. In 1978, the people's courts handled slightly over 300,000 civil lawsuits. This number jumped to approximately 6.1 million in 2010, a more than 20-time increase within 32 years (China Statistical Yearbook, 2011). Even in remote rural areas where informal social networks may remain strong, formal institutions have started to show importance in settling conflicts (Ross, 1990). Empirical research has revealed that the Chinese public today is more willing to engage the law, in various ways, to address different kinds of grievances (Diamant, 2005; Gallagher, 2005, 2006; Thireau & Hua, 2005).

Relative to China, Japan started its movement toward formal and legal control earlier. A turning point in Japan was the change from the Tokugawa period (1603 to 1868) to the Meiji era (1868 to 1945), which marked the transition from feudalism to capitalism and the movement from informal control to formal and legal control. Under the Tokugawa regime, there was some effort to base the practice of law on a unified code, however, little written law was produced (Henderson, 1968a, 1968b; Westermann & Burfeind, 1991). As a response to the internal demand of capitalism and external pressure from the West, the Meiji regime opened Japan to the Western societies. Japan borrowed legal systems first from France and then Germany. The Meiji Constitution was enacted in 1889. The constitution separated powers and guaranteed the rights of individual citizens but did not place the emperor and the government under the law (Westermann & Burfeind, 1991). In 1947, the revised Constitution made it clear that the government is under the control of law and political reform should be made by the people (Shikita & Tsuchiya, 1990; Westermann & Burfeind, 1991).

In addition, Japan's legal development was accompanied by its formalization and professionalism of the criminal justice system. Before the Meiji period, informal control was the main approach used to deal with crime. During the Meiji era, Japanese were sent to Europe to learn legal and policing systems. In 1871, Japan formed its first professional police department in Tokyo. Two years later, the Home Ministry was established. The Japanese police system then was centralized, and organizational structures and procedures were standardized. After World War II, the Japanese police became more independent from official government control (Westermann & Burfeind, 1991). Similarly, correctional systems in Japan have become more formalized since the Meiji era. For example, the Penal Code of 1908 and other legal codes in corrections were adopted. After World War II, a juvenile justice system was also created (Reichel, 2002; Shikita & Tsuchiya, 1990; Terrill, 2003).

As note before, the U.S. has a tradition to depend on formal control mechanisms to keep social order and fight crime. Since the founding of the U.S., the Constitution has always been the foundation of social and crime control. Although the criminal justice system in both China and Japan may feature "benevolent paternalism" in which the state has substantial discretion in both collecting and using information about the offense and the offender (Foote, 1992), the U.S. features due process in which every criminal justice participant must strictly follow. The number of people working in the criminal justice system also indicates that the U.S. is more reliant on formal control system than China

and Japan. For every 100,000 people, the U.S. had 257 police officers, 236 lawyers, and 20 judges in 2010, while in China these numbers were 120 police officers (in 2006), 13 lawyers (in 2010), and 16 judges (in 2002), and in Japan these numbers were 182 police officers (in 2002), 23 lawyers (in 2010), and 3 judges (in 2010).[4] Accordingly, this study hypothesized that the U.S. respondents evaluated formal control higher than the Chinese and Japanese counterparts.

The mixture of formal and informal control in China, Japan and the U.S.

In traditional China, governmental officials were considered "parental officers." A governmental official was expected to enforce rules and law. As a fatherly figure, he was supposed to be "flexible, imprecise, associated with support or offer of care, and immersed in human relations" (Shaw, 1996, p. 229). This tradition implied that social control was an art of management and was the combination between formal and informal control. Huang's archival research of the Qing Dynasty's approach to disputes over land, debt, inheritance and marriage revealed that most of the minor matters were resolved by local community or kin mediation. When disputes could not be resolved by this means, courts got involved. The liaison between court and the societal mediation was the *xiangbao* (   ), an unsalaried quasi-official recommended by the local community and confirmed by the state. The magistrate heavily relied on the *xiangbao*'s work for his comments and decisions on dispute cases and preferred to use informal and semiformal processes to resolve them. When these means failed, he had to use a formal court procedure to adjudicate a dispute (Huang, 2008). In fact, the mixture of formal and informal control continues to exist in contemporary China (Chen, 2004; Huang, 2008; Jiang, Wang, & Lambert, 2010; Troyer, 1989). The blending of the two forms of control includes but is not limited to *tiaojie* or mediation (Xiong, 1999; Zhang et al., 1996) and *banjiao* or help and education (Xiong, 1999; Zhang et al., 1996) that are implemented by grassroots organizations such as residents committee or village committee, community policing (Wong, 2003; Wu, Jiang, & Lambert, 2011) and community corrections (Jiang, Xiang, et al., 2013).

Similar to China, Japan also has a long tradition of using a mixture of formal and informal mechanisms to keep social order (Jiang, Lambert, et al., 2012). In policing, students of Japan observed the close cooperation between residents and police in crime prevention and crime control (Ames, 1981; Bayley, 1976, 1991; Parker, 2001). For example, *Koban*, a basic unit of crime control in urban Japan, was created in the Meiji era. It not only gathers information from the local community but also provides information to the community. Officers in *koban* are required to visit each local household twice a year. They routinely consult with business and homeowners in the local community about crime and safety (Bayley, 1991). On the other hand, local residents and other people seek assistance from *koban*.

The close cooperation between criminal justice agency and citizens also exists in corrections in Japan. For example, the Voluntary Probation Officer (VPO) usually serves as a link between offender and the criminal justice system (Foote, 1992). The VPO's help starts at the outset of an inmate's incarceration. Before an inmate's return to the community, a VPO usually visits the inmate's home to check the conditions for his or her return. When it is needed, a VPO also seeks to improve the conditions to prepare for the inmate's release. During an offender' probation or parole time, VPOs often assist the person to find a job or place to live.

In crime prevention and control, the U.S. has an uneven experience. In its early stage, American police sought an intimate relationship with the community. Police officers usually lived in their community and participated as many as activities with the local residents. They fought crime and served the community in various ways. The police had substantial discretion in dealing with deviant and criminal behavior. Due to police brutality, corruption, and other problems, a professionalism in policing movement started in the U.S. during the 1920s and 1930s. During the process, American police began to consider themselves as crime fighters

and became less interested in traditional services to the community. They were "impartial law enforcers who related to citizens in professionally neutral and distant terms" (Kelling & Moore, 1991, p. 12). The police professionalism led to some unexpected results such as police at war with the community they served, especially at big cities. The police experienced a negative image in public relations, community relations, and human relations. In the efforts to change the negative image and increase effectiveness in preventing and fighting crime, American police began community policing in the 1970s and 1980s. Community policing became a new policing philosophy as well as strategy. Under community policing, the police increase community involvement and service.

The integration of formal and informal control is not limited to law enforcement agencies in the U.S. In fact, residents also strive to work with the police to prevent crime. For example, Neighborhood Watch is a nation-wide cooperation program between community and the police. It is used to share community information including information on deviance and crime and increase collective surveillance of the neighborhoods so that fear of crime and the opportunity of crime are reduced (Rosenbaum, 1987). Federal government also supports the blending of formal and informal crime through providing funding to support community policing and community crime prevention programs such as Neighborhood Watch.

In sum, like China and Japan, the U.S. tries to integrate formal control and informal control mechanisms to prevent and control crime. However, due to different culture backgrounds and policing traditions, community policing in the U.S. is a device by which "citizens assist the police", while in China and Japan it is more seen as a method by which "police provide back-up services for citizens" (Bracey, 1984 cited by Wong, 2001, p. 186). Although neighborhood watch groups or similar community organizations do exist in China, Japan, and the U.S., resident participation can be quite different. For example, in China and Japan, when citizens say that crime is a social problem in their community, "They are saying that the social groups – not an abstract 'society' but a village, neighborhood or work group – is both responsible for and a victim of crime. The conclusion they reach is that the social group has the right and duty to intervene in behavior that might lead to crime" (Bracey, 1984 cited by Chen, 2004, pp. 525–526). In the U.S., residents in most high-crime neighborhoods do not participate (Rosenbaum, 1987).

Correlates of the views of crime control and research expectations

Drawing on the literature of crime control and discussion above, this study expected that students in China and Japan had higher levels of ranking of the importance of informal control and the mix of formal and informal control but had lower levels of ranking of the importance of formal control than their American counterparts.

The police were developed to prevent and fight crime. Thus, they are supposed to be and should be a powerful force to deter and control crime. Thus, the logical expectation was that higher levels of trust in police lead to higher levels of the perceived importance or effectiveness of the police in crime control. Furthermore, as the police are part of formal control, this study expected that trust in police would be positively related to the evaluation of the importance of formal control.

In addition, trust in police can affect the evaluation of police performance. First, people's observation and impressions of something are likely to be selective. When residents believe that police are trustworthy, it is more likely for them to select those observations of police officers' behavior that are consistent with their belief and form their impressions of policing. Second, when residents believe that police are trustworthy, they are more likely to cooperate with police in their local activities and obey the law (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler & Huo, 2002), resulting in a lower crime rate and more positive evaluations of policing. As noted above, as the police are part of formal control, the logical expectation in this study was that trust in police would lead to higher levels of ranking of formal control.

In the West, scholars have suggested that how police treat residents affects the residents' evaluations of the police (Reisig & Parks, 2000; Tyler, 2001; Tyler & Huo, 2002; Wu, Sun, & Triplett, 2009; also see Hawdon, 2008, for more references). Fair treatment leads to more positive evaluation of the police (Tyler, 2001; Tyler & Huo, 2002). Drawing on the literature, this study expected that fair treatment by police would lead to a positive evaluation of formal control and the mix of formal and informal control.

Mobility is another predictor of the evaluation of social control mechanisms. Scholars suggested that high residential mobility can lead to a breakdown of interpersonal relationships and decrease group relatedness (Jiang, Lambert, et al., 2012). Since social ties, social cohesion, and trust all take time to develop, they are more likely to be negatively associated with people's frequency of relocation (Warner, 2003). As the "willingness of local residents to intervene for the common good depends in large part on conditions of mutual trust and solidarity among neighbors" (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997, p. 919), high residential mobility is viewed as a predictor of low levels of informal social control. Thus, this study hypothesized that residential mobility and the evaluation of effectiveness of informal control would be negatively related.

Generally speaking, rural areas and small towns are more traditional, personal, and cohesive than large urban areas. Less urbanized areas are more likely to use and believe in informal control in maintaining community order. Compared to people from large urban areas, people from rural areas or small towns were more likely to rank the effectiveness of informal control higher and the effectiveness of formal control lower in China (Jiang et al., 2007), and had a higher confidence in police (Cao & Stack, 2005). Thus, this study expected that size of the town would be negatively related to the evaluation of informal control.

Since residents hold the police and other criminal justice agencies accountable for crime control, a real crime problem or a perceived crime problem can lead them to doubt the ability of the police and other criminal justice agencies to control crime effectively (Dai & Johnson, 2009; Reisig & Parks, 2000; Schuck, Rosenbaum, & Hawkins, 2008; Wu et al., 2009). Accordingly, it was hypothesized that perceived crime problems would be associated with low levels of the evaluation of formal control.

Two demographic variables, age and gender, are often used as control variables in the examination of crime control reviews. They were also controlled for in this study. The general finding regarding the age effect in the West is that older citizens tended to hold more favorable attitudes toward the police than their younger counterparts (Hurst & Frank, 2000; Weitzer & Tuch, 2002). Opinion-based studies reveal mixed results about the age-opinion connection in Japan. For example, Jiang, Lambert, et al. (2012) found that older students were more likely to believe in the deterrence value of formal control while age did not affect college students' reviews of the deterrence value of informal control. With regard to death penalty views, age was usually not a significant predictor in China and Japan (Jiang, Lambert, et al., 2010; Jiang, Pilot, & Saito, 2010; Schmidt, 2002). Similarly, gender was not a significant predictor of Japanese perceptions of police (Cao, Stack, & Sun, 1998) and death penalty views (Jiang, Lambert, et al., 2010; Jiang, Wang, et al., 2010; Schmidt, 2002); however, age and gender are often found to be related to attitudes toward crime and crime control in the U.S. (Hawdon, 2008; Reisig & Parks, 2000; Wu et al., 2009) Thus, it was hypothesized that the both age and gender would not be predictors of the evaluation of the effectiveness of formal and informal control in China and Japan but would be predictors in the U.S.

Data and measurement

Data

The original questionnaire was developed in English. Collaborators in China and Japan studied in the U.S. and understand English well. Working with their U.S. collaborators, they translated the questionnaire from English to Chinese and Japanese, respectively. They also organized the surveys in their own country.

The Chinese data used in this study were collected from students in 2005 at a comprehensive university in Wuhan, which had an enrollment of approximately 48,000. The respondents were selected in the following steps. First, twenty six on-campus student dormitories were selected based on the residents' gender, major, and class standing. Next, based on systematic sampling with an interval of four, rooms from the sampled dormitories were selected. One person was selected from each sampled room. The first person in the room who agreed to fill out the questionnaire was selected as a respondent. The interviewers told all the respondents that the survey was anonymous; their participation was voluntary; and they should independently answer the questions. In addition, the trained interviewers were asked to help the participants to complete the questionnaires when needed. Overall, 524 completed surveys were collected.

A purposive sampling method was used to select respondents in 2005 at a university of approximately 18,000 students in Sendai, Japan. The survey organizer in Japan administered the questionnaire survey in undergraduate courses. Like China, the purpose, anonymity, and importance of the survey in Japan were explained to the participants. The participants were instructed to stop answering questions if they did not want to continue at any time during the survey. The organizer helped the participants to complete the surveys when help was needed. Approximately 300 questionnaires were distributed; a total of 267 students returned the completed questionnaires.

A purposive sampling method was also used in the U.S. to collect the data used in this study. The data were collected in 2005 from a public university located in the Midwest with enrollment slightly below 20,000. Undergraduate students in 15 courses were surveyed during their class time. Like Japan, the survey organizers were available when the students needed help to complete the surveys. A total of 484 students in the U.S. successfully completed surveys, with a completion rate of more than 95 percent. A grand total of 1,275 completed surveys from the three nations were used in this study.

Dependent variable

This study had four dependent variables that were constructed from factor analysis. The first dependent variable was called *formal control* and was formed from four questions (Questions 1 to 4 in Table 1). The variable covered the deterrence power of policing, courts, incarceration, and legal sanctions in general. Principal component analysis indicated that the *formal control* factor explained 44% of the variance in the items. Based on principal component analysis, there were two factors for the next four questions (Questions 5 to 8 in Table 1), which formed the next two dependent variables. The variable *shame/public humiliation* included the deterrence power from personal feelings – shaming and the fear of public humiliation. This variable (or factor) explained 76% of the variance in the items. The next variable, *informal control*, covered the deterrence power from neighborhoods or neighborhood watches. This variable (or factor) explained 79% of the variance in the items. The last dependent variable was called *mix*, which was formed from the last four questions (Questions 9 to 12) in Table 1. This variable measured respondents' feeling on the importance or effectiveness of co-operation between police and community in crime control. The variable (or factor) explained 49% of the variance in the items.

Independent variables

Based on the literature review and availability of the data, seven independent variables were included in the regression analysis of the perceptions of the impact of different forms of control on deterrence of committing crimes: *equal treatment*, *trust in police*, perception of the *crime problem*, *mobility*, *town size*, *age*, and *gender*. As the police's treatment of residents (*equal treatment*) is not directly related to the

Table 1
Views of formal and informal social and crime control in three nations

Question/Variable	Mean			ANOVA (sig.)	Tukey HSD (sig.)		
	China	Japan	US		China-Japan	China-US	Japan-US
Formal control (Cronbach's alpha = .57)	**.24**	**.30**	**-.42**	**.000**	**.601**	**.000**	**.000**
1. Police patrol is a powerful deterrent to crime	3.52	3.78	3.11	.000	.000	.000	.000
2. Punishment by neutral strangers such as police and judges is not a powerful deterrent to crime (reverse coded)	3.25	3.69	3.15	.000	.000	.116	.000
3. Incarceration is a powerful deterrent to crime	3.50	3.15	3.42	.000	.000	.302	.000
4. Legal sanctions are a powerful deterrent to crime	3.93	3.73	3.11	.000	.002	.000	.000
Shame/public humiliation (Cronbach's alpha = .76)	**-.03**	**.33**	**-.15**	**.000**	**.000**	**.154**	**.000**
5. Personal shame over violating the law is a powerful deterrent to crime	3.40	3.81	3.30	.000	.000	.258	.000
6. The fear of public humiliation is a powerful deterrent to crime	3.37	3.59	3.27	.000	.007	.211	.000
Informal control (Cronbach's alpha = .56)	**.03**	**.52**	**-.32**	**.000**	**.000**	**.000**	**.000**
7. Neighborhood or community watches are a powerful deterrent to crime	3.73	3.96	3.34	.000	.001	.000	.000
8. Volunteer surveillance of residential neighborhoods by residents deter crime	3.50	3.96	3.39	.000	.000	.090	.000
Mix (Cronbach's alpha = .65)	**.12**	**.38**	**-.33**	**.000**	**.001**	**.000**	**.000**
9. Cooperation between the police and the community is important to prevent crime	4.38	4.41	4.16	.000	.240	.000	.000
10. In order to prevent crime, there must be a partnership between the community and the police	4.01	4.22	3.84	.000	.001	.001	.000
11. Police working with neighborhoods or communities are an effective deterrent to crime	3.92	4.25	3.61	.000	.000	.000	.000
12. The flow of information from citizens to police about crime and criminals increases police effectiveness at crime prevention	4.00	3.85	3.70	.000	.018	.000	.026

Note: sig. stands for significance level.

evaluation of informal control, it was not included in the models for *shame/public humiliation* and *informal control mechanism*.

Respondents' agreement with this statement was used to measure the variable *equal treatment*: "Police generally treat everyone the same in my community". There were five answer categories for the statement: strongly disagree (=1), disagree (=2), uncertain (=3), agree (=4) and strongly agree (=5). These five categories were also used for the statements that composed the next two variables. *Trust in police* was constructed using the responses from three statements: 1). "Police know what is best for my community"; 2). "People in the community should always support the police"; and 3). "I trust the police". These three statements shared one factor that explained 64% of the variance in the items. *Crime problem* was measured by the statement of "My country has a great deal of crime" and was answered using a five-point Likert scale ranging strongly disagree to strongly agree. *Mobility* was measured by this question: "Altogether, how many times has your family moved since you were born?" *Town size* was measured by the question of "In terms of the place you lived the longest as a child, how large was the area in terms of population?" The following ten response choices were provided: over 1 million (=10), 500,000 to 1 million (=9), 250,000 to 499,999 (=8), 100,000 to 249,999 (=7), 50,000 to 99,999 (=6), 25,000 to 49,999 (=5), 10,000 to 24,999 (=4), 5,000 to 9,999 (=3), 1,000 to 4,999 (=2), and under 1,000 (=1). *Age* was measured in continuous years, and *gender* (male = 1) was measured by a simple question asking the respondent his/her gender.

Findings

Table 1 presents the views of the importance of four forms of control in crime prevention and crime control from respondents in China, Japan and the U.S. ANOVA tests show that the three nations differed in the mean views of all the four forms of control: formal control, shame/public humiliation, informal control and the mix of formal and informal control. Tukey HSD tests were used to further investigate which pair of nations differed in the mean views of the four forms of control. According to Table 1, China and Japan did not differ from each other but both had higher mean views of the importance of formal mechanisms in crime control than the U.S. With regard to whether shame and public humiliation is a powerful deterrent to crime, college students from Japan were more likely to agree than their counterparts in China and the U.S. All the three nations differed from each other in their views of whether informal control is a powerful deterrent to crime, with Japan having the highest mean score and the U.S. having the lowest. Finally,

all the three nations differed from each other in the views of whether the combination between formal and informal control is important to prevent crime. Again, Japan had the highest mean views while the U.S. has the lowest.

Table 2 presents estimated regression coefficients of the views of the importance of formal control in crime control in China, Japan, and the U.S. There were two significant predictors of the views in China: *crime problem* and *trust in police*. When students from China felt their country had a serious crime problem, they were more likely to believe that formal control such as policing and incarceration is a powerful deterrent to crime. Students' trust in police increased their perception of the importance of formal mechanisms in crime control. Relative to China, Japan had more correlates of the views of the importance of formal control. *Age, mobility, town size,* and *trust in police* were positively related to the formal control views among Japanese participants. In the U.S., four variables, including two demographic variables, *gender* (male = 1) and *age* were positively related to the views. The other two significant correlates were *equal treatment* and *trust in police*. Put together, *trust in police* was the predictor of the outcome for all the three nations. But each country had different predictors for the dependent variable as well.

Correlates of the views of the importance of shame and public humiliation in crime prevention are shown in Table 3. Among Chinese students, those who had higher levels of *trust in police* were more likely to believe that personal shame and public humiliation is important to prevent crime. Among the U.S. participants, those who had more family moves were less likely to think that shame and humiliation were powerful deterrents to crime. None of the independent variables had a significant association with the dependent variable for Japanese students.

Table 4 presents findings for the views of informal mechanisms in crime prevention and control in China, Japan and the U.S. In China,

Table 2
OLS regression of the views of formal control in three nations by the independent variables

Variable	China		Japan		US	
	beta	SE	beta	SE	Beta	SE
Gender	.108	.084	-.248	.135	.231*	.092
Age	.027	.027	.106*	.043	.021*	.009
Mobility	-.032	.022	.066*	.030	-.013	.014
Town Size	-.013	.013	.080**	.030	-.011	.023
Equal Treatment	-.038	.039	-.015	.081	.125**	.045
Crime Problem	.093*	.042	.071	.067	.079	.056
Trust in Police	.245***	.053	.161*	.073	.238***	.043

Note: SE stands for the standard error of the slope.
* p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .01, ***p ≤ .001.

Table 3

OLS regression of the views of shame/public humiliation in three nations by the independent variables

	China		Japan		US	
Variable	beta	SE	bate	SE	bate	SE
Gender	-.022	.089	-.032	.006	-.079	.104
Age	-.006	.029	.018	.006	.027	.010
Mobility	-.015	.025	.009	.002	-.146**	.016
Town Size	-.092	.014	-.038	.002	.052	.026
Crime Problem	.034	.045	.045	.061	-.041	.064
Trust in Police	.110*	.053	.091	.059	.078	.044

Note: SE stands for the standard error of the slope.
* p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .01.

perception of crime prevalence in the country led to higher levels of perceived importance of informal control in crime prevention. Table 4 also shows that the higher levels of *trust in police* led to higher levels of the perceived importance of the dependent variable. In Japan, perception of crime prevalence was also positively related to the views of the importance of informal mechanisms in crime control. In the U.S., only *age* was positively related to the dependent variable.

The last table, Table 5, presents estimated regression coefficients of the views of the importance of the mix of formal and informal control in crime control in China, Japan, and the U.S. Only one variable was statistically significant in China. That is, students who had higher levels of *trust in police* were more likely to consider the mix of formal and informal control important in crime prevention and control. Japan had two significant predictors of the views. First, perceived crime prevalence was positively related to the perceived importance of the combination of formal and informal control. Second, *trust in police* led to higher levels of evaluation of the mix. The U.S. had two significant predictors as well. Both *age* and *trust in police* were positively related to the perceived importance of the mix of formal and informal control. Overall, all the three nations had the variable *trust in police* as a significant predictor of the outcome.

Discussion and Conclusion

Several issues deserve further discussion. First, Japanese students ranked the importance of all the four forms of control higher than their American counterparts and ranked most of the four forms of control higher than their Chinese counterparts. Additionally, Chinese students ranked the importance of formal, informal, and the mix of both higher than their American counterparts. Due to their long tradition depending on informal control in China and Japan, it is not surprising to see that citizens in these two nations were more likely to rank its importance higher than their counterparts in the U.S. The puzzle is that respondents from China and Japan also ranked the importance of formal control higher than their American counterparts. One possible reason for this finding is that Chinese and Japanese students did not consider formal and informal control as a dichotomy. In fact, the dichotomous thinking of formal and informal control or punishment and rehabilitation of offenders is not true in China and Japan (Jiang, Lambert, et al.,

Table 4

OLS regression of the views of informal control in three nations by the independent variables

	China		Japan		US	
Variable	beta	SE	beta	SE	beta	SE
Gender	.019	.085	-.134	.006	-.023	.095
Age	-.010	.028	.155	.007	.146**	.009
Mobility	-.007	.024	-.047	.003	.034	.015
Town Size	.029	.013	-.062	.002	-.023	.024
Crime Problem	.153**	.042	.138*	.064	-.050	.059
Trust in Police	.224***	.050	.110	.062	.057	.040

Note: SE stands for the standard error of the slope.
* p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .01, ***p ≤ .001.

Table 5

OLS regression of the views of the mix of formal and informal controls in three nations by the independent variables

	China		Japan		US	
Variable	beta	SE	beta	SE	beta	SE
Gender	-.063	.088	-.028	.142	-.173	.091
Age	-.034	.028	.039	.045	.037***	.009
Mobility	.022	.023	-.052	.032	-.016	.014
Town Size	.001	.013	.012	.031	-.020	.022
Equal Treatment	.037	.041	-.068	.085	-.070	.044
Crime Problem	.023	.044	.167*	.071	-.021	.056
Trust in Police	.169**	.057	.368***	.076	.175***	.042

Note: SE stands for the standard error of the slope.
**p ≤ .01, ***p ≤ .001.

2012; Lu & Miethe, 2001). As both China and Japan have long used formal and informal mechanisms in crime prevention and control and emphasized on the integration of the two forms of control, this non-dichotomous thinking of crime control methods is a logical result. Another explanation for the difference between the U.S. and China or Japan is that the American respondents' lower ranking of the importance of formal and informal control might be due to a cynicism brought on by the higher level of crime in the United States. For example, when crime is high for a long time, it might suggest that the means to control crime are not important, as well as the current methods are not working (Jiang, Lambert, et al., 2012; Lu & Miethe, 2001).

Second, demographics were more significant in predicting the crime control views in the U.S. than that in China and Japan. Among Chinese participants, none of the demographic variables were significant predictors of any of the social control dependent variables. *Age* was the only demographic predictor of the formal control in Japan. Demographic variables appeared five times as significant predictors of formal control, informal control, and their combination in the U.S. These findings are not a surprise. In fact, findings from the Chinese data are consistent with other attitude-related findings in which demographics are generally not predictors of crime related views in China (Jiang, Sun, & Wang, 2012; Jiang & Wang, 2008). Findings from the Japanese data are also consistent those from other crime related attitude studies in Japan (Jiang, Lambert, et al., 2010; Jiang, Pilot, et al., 2010).

Different cultural backgrounds might explain why demographics were not important predictors of the crime control views. Both China and Japan are collectivist societies, whereas the U.S. is an individualist one. In the United States, individualism is not only accepted but even encouraged (Chang, 1999; Matsui, 1995). Diversity between groups in terms of gender, age, religion, and race are often highlighted and positively evaluated. Conversely, Chinese and Japanese societies emphasize collectivism and conformity where the group is more important than the individual (Chen, 2004; Yamagishi, Cook, & Watabe, 1998). In collectivist cultures, different values and opinions to various degrees exist among people but they are not highlighted and not recommended. Governmental agencies, the media, and society in general are more likely to stress shared values, common goals, and harmony among groups. This cultural trait could lead to likelihood that there would be fewer gender and age differences.

This study has implications for policy makers. For respondents in China and Japan, both formal and informal crime controls are important. Thus, decision makers in these two countries should continue their current practice. The key is how to integrate two forms of crime control. More research and practical experiments are needed to find the best combination of formal and informal crime control. Although the role of informal crime control in the U.S. is not as important as in China and Japan, with the recognition of the limited effectiveness of formal means in controlling crime, the U.S. has developed a growing interest in informal crime control over the past few decades (Rosenbaum, 1988; Silver & Miller, 2004), such as community policing, neighborhood watch (Rosenbaum, 1987, 1988; Wong, 2001), community corrections,

reentry programs or citizen circles (Rhine, Mathews, Sampson, & Daley, 2003), and community courts (The Center for Court Innovation, 2008). According to the findings from this study, students' ranking of the importance of formal and informal crime control was not as high as their counterparts' in China and Japan. Decision makers in the U.S. might need to work harder than their counterparts in China and Japan to obtain citizens' support for integrating formal and informal mechanisms in crime prevention and control.

Findings from this study should be read with caution. As with many studies, the current one had limitations. First, non-random sampling was used to recruit college students for surveys in China, Japan, and the U.S.; therefore, results from this study cannot be statistically generalized to either the college students or the public in general in these three nations. Future research should determine if the results can be replicated among students at other colleges in the three nations. Furthermore, studies using random sampling of citizens in the general population are needed to see if the results are similar in the general society. Second, the current study was a cross-sectional study. Thus, relationships between the independent and dependent variable in the models are correlational but not causal. Future longitudinal studies will be needed to empirically demonstrate causality. Third, some independent variables (e.g., *equal treatment* and *crime problem*) were measured by a single question. Their content validity can be improved by a multiple question index. Likewise, several variables had low Cronbach's alpha values, even though the factor analysis results supported the creation of these variables. Future research should explore if using different items to measure these latent variables would increase their alpha values. Moreover, researchers should explore the development of more detailed measures of formal and informal social control measures. Fourth and finally, the data used in this study were from self-report surveys; therefore, the commonly recognized problems for self-reported data might have existed in the data used in this analysis.

Nonetheless, this is the first comparative study of the perceived importance and effectiveness of formal and informal mechanisms in crime prevention and control in China, Japan and the U.S. Findings from this study have made contributions to the field of attitudes toward formal and informal control and comparative research in criminology and criminal justice. The study revealed that both Chinese and Japanese respondents evaluated the importance of formal and informal control and their combination in crime control higher than American counterparts. Some correlates of the evaluation were the same while the other was different in the three nations. For example, the variable *trust in police* was a predictor of attitudes toward formal control and the mix of formal and informal control in all the three nations. Demographics in the U.S. were more important factors than in China and Japan in predicting the respondents' ranking of the importance of formal and informal control and their combination in crime control.

Notes

1. Shanhe Jiang, Eric Lambert and Jianhong Liu contributed equally to this work and are co-first authors.
2. If it is not noted, China refers to Mainland China after 1949.
3. Data from Economic Census 2004 were downloaded from the China Data Center at the University of Michigan. Thanks to Dr. Shuming Bao for permission to use the data.
4. These rates were computed based on various sources. The U.S. numbers were based on data from Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor (2013). The Chinese numbers were based on data from Xinhua News Agency (2007) for police officers, China Statistical Yearbook (2011) for lawyers, and The United Nations (2013) for judges. The Japanese numbers were computed based on data from The United Nations (2013), for police officers and Ramseyer and Rasmusen (2013) for lawyers and judges.

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