

Comparative Criminology: **TERRORISM**

Quality of Rule of Law and Perceived Cost of Terrorism

Gupta⁸⁷ and Schmid⁸⁸ examined whether there was a link between the rule of law in a country and the prevalence of terrorist incidents. Their research revealed a negative association between these two factors. For instance, Gupta's research demonstrated that a lack of civil and political rights (i.e., the rule of law is weak) was related to terrorist incidents. Schmid's research also demonstrated a link between his index of terrorism and whether countries observed human rights or engaged in some form of state repression. Citing these works, Van Dijk replicated these studies by using the index of costs of terrorism for business as an indicator of terrorism; he used the World Bank index as an indicator of the rule of law.⁸⁹ Figure 15.3 illustrates the results of these analyses. A low score on the rule of law indicates high quality; a high score on the cost of terrorism indicates high prevalence of terrorist incidents. This figure reveals that terrorism incidents are more common, or thought to be more common, in those countries where the rule of law is weak. Interestingly, there were some countries that were considered "outliers"—specifically, the United

States and Israel. Van Dijk concluded that this was due to these countries being susceptible to international terrorism.

Further analyses noted a weak association between police performance and terrorism. Specifically, in those countries that ranked high on the Police Performance Index (i.e., practiced better policing), terrorist incidents are considered less of a threat. Van Dijk noted that terrorist "threats seem to be facilitated by institutional failures to maintain the rule of law, including through democratic and effective policing."⁹⁰

THINK ABOUT IT:

1. Why do you think terrorist threats seem to be enhanced when there are institutional failures to maintain the rule of law?
2. Why do you think the United States is considered an "outlier?"
3. How would you explain that countries high on the Police Performance Index consider terrorist incidents less of a threat?

FIGURE 15.3

Quality of Perceived Cost of Terrorism per Country



Sources: World Economic Forum. (2003). *The global competitiveness report 2002–2003*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press; Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A., & Mastruzzi, M. (2004). *Governance matters, III: Governance indicators for 1996–2002*. Policy Research Working Paper 3106. Washington, DC: World Bank; see www.worldbank.org/wbi/governance/govdata and the rule of law index (WBI).