

Comparative Criminology: **LARCENY-THEFT**

Ranking Countries by Rate of Larceny-Theft

The FBI considers larceny a major Index crime in the United States. However, according to Van Dijk,⁸¹ there is likely no suitable, or comparable, equivalent to larceny in the various world statistics. The closest equivalent presented is for pickpocketing, which is somewhat similar in that there is no threat of violence, which would then make the crime robbery.

The best and most recent data are drawn from the International Crime Survey (years 1996–2005), which is basically broken into different continental regions. As Figure 11.2 shows, Africa leads the world in pickpocketing rates, with Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean tying for a close second. Eastern Europe had the fourth highest rate. All these regions were shown to be quite high in terms of pickpocketing. This should not come as much of a surprise, given that these same regions (or countries within these regions) tend to have the highest scores regarding robbery and/or burglary.

It makes sense that countries or regions that have high rates on one type of property crime (such as burglary) will also have high rates for other forms of property crime, such as pickpocketing and larceny.

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think that countries or regions that have high rates of one type of property crime would also have high rates for other types of property crimes?
2. What other types of information would you like to consider crimes, or include, in understanding the link between countries or regions that have high rates of one type of property crime would also have high rates for other types of property (e.g., medium income, unemployment)?

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Sign warning tourists of pickpockets

FIGURE 11.2

Percentages of the Public in Urban Areas Victimized by Pickpocketing During the Past 12 Months, by World Region

