

Comparative Criminology: **BURGLARY**

Ranking Regions/Countries as Most Likely for Burglary

In this section, we examine the findings and conclusions of various studies of burglary, which involves attempted or actual breaking and entering for the purpose of stealing goods, money, and so forth. What distinguishes burglary from larceny is that burglary, by definition, involves trespassing on property where the offender has no permission to enter, whereas larceny does not include trespassing (e.g., shoplifting). Furthermore, burglary can be distinguished from robbery, which by definition involves a threat of or actual violence in taking someone's possessions, whereas burglary does not involve violence, according to FBI and most other definitions.³³ The findings of recent studies regarding the prevalence of burglary across various regions and countries are enlightening in several ways.

The key measure of the prevalence of burglary in the world is the International Crime Victimization Survey (ICVS), a data-bank that collects and standardizes police reports from more than 70 countries around the world. This measure has been

conducted since 1987. It does have some weaknesses, but it is currently the best international measure of crime for such cross-national comparisons.

The ICVS has collected many years' worth of data on burglary. Van Dijk synthesized the ICVS data on burglary for the years 1996 to 2005.³⁴ As seen in Figure 5.3, the countries with by far the highest percentages of households victimized by burglary in urban areas were countries in Africa. Distant second and third highest ranking were, respectively, countries in the region of Latin America/the Caribbean and Oceania (the islands near Southeast Asia and Australia).

It is not too surprising that burglary tends to be more common in some of the most deprived areas of the world, such as Africa and various Latin American/Caribbean countries. After all, in extreme poverty, many individuals are driven to commit such crimes to survive. However, the results from the ICVS reveal that burglary happens quite a bit in all regions of the world, so burglary is alive and well throughout virtually all societies, such as the United States (see Figure 5.4).

FIGURE 5.3

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

