How serious is a murder? Or a rape? Or, for that matter, a petty theft? Do such questions have any meaning? Would their answers have any utility?

Implicit judgments about the severity of crime abound in our daily interactions. Requiring the death penalty for certain crimes designates them as the most serious that can occur in this society. Crimes labeled felonies are considered more serious than those labeled misdemeanors. It seems that one year in prison sentences are more serious than those that receive a sentence of only a few years.

Still, the seriousness of a crime is by no means clear-cut or immutable. In 1976 the rape of an adult woman was changed from a capital to a corporal offense. The penalty for an offense in one State may be substantially different from the penalty for the same offense in another State. Even within one jurist, the disparity in the seriousness noted by different judges for the same offense has been repeatedly noted with concern by judicial justice scholars. Much of the impetus behind recent determinate and mandatory sentencing legislation has come from the wish to minimize sentencing disparities.

If we speak of crimes such as robbery or burglary, we are speaking of legal categories rather than specific crimes. Although all "robbers" possess the characteristic necessary to be legally classified as such, they vary in their particulars to an extraordinary degree. These variations, in all their complexity, seldom find their way into the penal code. They may or may not be taken into consideration by the sentencing judge. This wide range of possibilities within a given type further confounds the seriousness issue. Robbery, because it involves personal confrontation and involves or threat of force, is generally considered more serious than burglary. Yet many people would probably see the latter as

This bulletin presents, for the first time, the seriousness scores for the full set of offenses measured in the National Survey of Crime Severity (NSCS), conducted in 1977, as a supplement to the National Crime Survey. The NSCS was designed, developed, and conducted by the Center for Studies in Criminology and Criminal Law, Allentown School, University of Pennsylvania. It was directed by Dr. Martin A. Figlio.

A detailed report on the NSCS and its methodology is underway in preparation. It will be in two volumes and will be in more than 1,200 pages in length. In addition, the Institute will publish a series of special reports highlighting the severity scores of various population groups.

Steven H. Selininger
Director

The Severity of Crime

This bulletin presents, for the first time, the seriousness scores for the full set of offenses measured in the National Survey of Crime Severity (NSCS), conducted in 1977, as a supplement to the National Crime Survey. The NSCS was designed, developed, and conducted by the Center for Studies in Criminology and Criminal Law, Allentown School, University of Pennsylvania. It was directed by Dr. Martin A. Figlio.

A detailed report on the NSCS and its methodology is underway in preparation. It will be in two volumes and will be in more than 1,200 pages in length. In addition, the Institute will publish a series of special reports highlighting the severity scores of various population groups.

Steven H. Selininger
Director

The severity index represents an innovative way of looking at crime. It points toward priorities and muffins basic values. Two areas of crime about which the public is clearly concerned, drug trafficking and white-collar crime, are major program areas at the U.S. Department of Justice. More developmental work is needed before a feasible or serious index, but the prospects are exciting. One day, perhaps, seriousness score may be used routinely to investigate whether criminal career patterns involve crimes of an increasingly serious nature.

The two basic sources of information on the national crime rate are the FBI Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) and the National Crime Survey (NCS). In the UCR there are the UCR counts the total number of murders, rapes, burglaries, aggravated assault, burglaries, and thefts reported in the nation during the year. Through a survey of households across the Nation, the National Crime Survey obtains information on the total number of robberies, assaults, burglaries, and thefts committed during the year. Crime survey is conducted in 2000 geographical areas. Thieves in every U.S. city with a population of 50,000 or more. The UCR and the NCS cover different types of crimes and use different methods of data collection. The UCR data are collected by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the NCS data are collected by the National Center for Health Statistics. The UCR data are based on reports from law enforcement agencies, while the NCS data are based on surveys of households. The UCR data are collected on a monthly basis, while the NCS data are collected on an annual basis. The UCR data are also limited to crimes that are reported to law enforcement agencies, while the NCS data include crimes that are not reported to law enforcement agencies. The UCR data are also limited to crimes that are solved, while the NCS data include crimes that are not solved. The UCR data are also limited to crimes that are prosecuted, while the NCS data include crimes that are not prosecuted. The UCR data are also limited to crimes that are convicted, while the NCS data include crimes that are not convicted. The UCR data are also limited to crimes that are punished, while the NCS data include crimes that are not punished.
How do people rank the severity of crime?

Severity score and offense:

1.4-1 person plants a bomb in a public building. The bomb explodes and 20 people are killed.
2.2-1 man foolishly waves a .45 caliber automatic. He accidentally fires it, killing his wife.
3.1-1 person plants a bomb in a public building. The bomb explodes and one person is killed.
4.6-1 person accidentally sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage.
5.8-1 person accidentally sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage.
6.4-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage.
7.5-1 person (intentionally) sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
8.3-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
9.0-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
10.1-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
11.1-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
12.2-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
13.5-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
14.4-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
16.0-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
17.5-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
19.0-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
20.4-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
22.9-1 parent beats a child. The victim is injured and requires medical treatment.
24.5-1 child causes a traffic accident.
26.0-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
28.6-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
30.8-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
33.0-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
36.3-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
39.7-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
42.6-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
47.3-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
52.8-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
59.3-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
65.7-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
72.9-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
81.6-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
91.8-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
102.0-1 person deliberately sets fire to a building causing $100,000 worth of damage. The victim requires medical treatment.
3.2-A person threatens to harm a victim unless the victim gives him money. The victim gives him $10 and is not harmed.
3.3-A person attempts to rob a victim but runs away when a police car approaches.
3.4-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $10.
3.5-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $20.
3.6-A person attempts to rob a victim but runs away when a police car approaches.
3.7-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $30.
3.8-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $40.
3.9-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $50.
4.0-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $100.
4.1-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $1,000.
4.2-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $10,000.
4.3-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $100,000.
4.4-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $1,000,000.
4.5-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $10,000,000.
4.6-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $100,000,000.
4.7-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $1,000,000,000.
4.8-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $10,000,000,000.
4.9-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $100,000,000,000.
4.10-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $1,000,000,000,000.
5.0-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $10,000.
5.1-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $100.
5.2-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $1,000.
5.3-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $10,000.
5.4-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $100,000.
5.5-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $1,000,000.
5.6-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $10,000,000.
5.7-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $100,000,000.
5.8-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $1,000,000,000.
5.9-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $10,000,000,000.
6.0-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $100,000,000,000.
6.1-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $1,000,000,000,000.
6.2-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $1,000.
6.3-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $10,000.
6.4-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $100,000.
6.5-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $1,000,000.
6.6-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $10,000,000.
6.7-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $100,000,000.
6.8-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $1,000,000,000.
6.9-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $10,000,000,000.
7.0-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $100,000,000,000.
7.1-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $1,000,000,000,000.
8.0-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $10,000,000,000,000.
8.1-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $100,000,000,000,000.
9.0-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $1,000,000,000,000,000.
9.1-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $10,000,000,000,000,000.
10.0-A person breaks into a building and steals property worth $100,000,000,000,000,000.
Crime against persons

Issues in criminal justice data are

National Postage copies (301/251·5500),

Collar crime and drug dealing quite
differences appear, however, when the

In general, people tend to agree about

The relationship of the victim to the

technical standards for

several data tables,

The National Survey of Crime Severity

The persons interviewed were all 18

to their overall scoring

Violent crimes:

interest in criminal justice:

the 6-month period beginning in July 1977. A total of

serving prison for more than

If you name and address are different from the label, please fill them in:

Name:

Title:

Interest in criminal justice:

Bulletin of the National Crime Survey:

Bulletin is published as a supplement to the National Crime Survey every 6 months. Beginning in 1977, the National Crime Survey included a survey of

Jail inmates 1982

Jail inmates

Bureau of Justice Statistics

Bulletin of the National Crime Survey:

If the name and address on the mailing label below are correct, check here

Agency's confidence in the results of the

interest in criminal justice:

Bulletin of the National Crime Survey:

Bulletin of the National Crime Survey:

Bulletin of the National Crime Survey:

Bulletin of the National Crime Survey:

Bulletin of the National Crime Survey:

Bulletin of the National Crime Survey:

Bulletin of the National Crime Survey:

Bulletin of the National Crime Survey:

Bulletin of the National Crime Survey: