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## Perceived Effectiveness of the Chicago Crime Commission, 1980-1985: Insiders and Outsiders

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Perceived Effectiveness of the Chicago  
Crime Commission, 1980-1985:  
Insiders and Outsiders

Dennis E. Hoffman

Vincent J. Webb

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## INTRODUCTION

This study examines the perceived effectiveness of the oldest and most famous citizens' crime commission in the United States--the Chicago Crime Commission.<sup>1</sup> The commission's effectiveness is measured by the perceptions of influential criminal justice decisionmakers and policymakers.

The Chicago Crime Commission is a nonpartisan organization and it is privately funded by Fortune 500-type corporations in the Chicago area. The commission's reputation among criminal justice professionals is based largely on its efforts to combat organized crime. Its mission is to serve as a watchdog, monitoring the criminal justice system to detect and deter corruption and to promote efficiency in agency operations.

### Perceptual Data and Evaluation Research

The justification for using perceptual data in assessing effectiveness is related to the Chicago Crime Commission's low-visibility approach to changing the criminal justice system. The commission prefers negotiation to public confrontation. Many of the commission's attempts to influence criminal justice policy are known only to three groups: (1) members of the board of directors, who provide funding and set goals for the commission; (2) professional staff (e.g., the executive director) who manage the organization; and (3) criminal justice decisionmakers and policymakers who are the targets of many of the commission's activities.

In this study, we focus only on the perceptions of criminal justice decisionmakers and policymakers. We are currently conducting another research project to determine whether the commission's board of directors and professional staff hold different perceptions of the commission's effectiveness than criminal justice decisionmakers and policymakers.

## Exploratory Propositions

Two exploratory propositions are examined in this research.

- H<sup>1</sup> Various decisionmakers and policymakers (e.g., police administrators, judges, prosecutors, and lawmakers) hold different perceptions of the commission's effectiveness.
- H<sup>2</sup> Decisionmakers and policymakers who perceive the commission as legitimate are more likely to perceive it as effective.

The first proposition relates to the long-standing sociological conception that differences in the social location of groups make for differences in interests and values. These differences involve variations in perceptions and perspectives among groups (Merton, 1972). Applying this theoretical expression to criminal justice, we assumed that decisionmakers and policymakers from various agencies, who operate at various levels of government and address diverse organizational goals, have divergent perceptions of the commission's effectiveness.

The second proposition is based on legitimacy theory--explaining individuals' acceptance of a policy or the institution making the demand as a function of the institution's authority and role in governance (Bickel, 1962; Black, 1960; and Patrick, 1968). Legitimation is the right of an organization to operate in a particular field or domain (Warren, 1983).

In this study, we ask whether the Chicago Crime Commission is legitimated to carry on activities within the official justice system. We also ask whether decisionmakers and policymakers regard the commission as insiders or outsiders in the criminal justice system. Insiders have privileged access to a system, while outsiders are excluded from it (Merton, 1972).

Our initial hunch was that the Chicago Crime Commission, a private sector organization, was viewed as an outsider by criminal justice professionals. Empirical support for this intuitive notion is contained in a survey of the

administrators of community-based correctional programs in a midwestern city (Wakefield and Webb, 1979). The researchers discovered that administrators of government agencies do not perceive nongovernmental organizations to be part of the justice system.

Organizational theorists, such as Price (1968), claim that organizations with legitimacy are more likely to be perceived as effective than organizations that lack legitimacy. As Warren, Rose, and Bergunder (1974) point out, the power that community organizations are able to exercise in influencing activities within their functional fields "is not simply a product of the power positions of their boards, the backing of the mayor and the financial and personnel resources at their command ... important as these components are. For these components of power, as well as others, are in turn rooted in the legitimation of the individual community decision organizations within the interorganizational field ..." (p. 25).

#### SAMPLE AND METHODOLOGY

Data were gathered through interviews with decisionmakers and policymakers in a three-stage research strategy. The first stage involved obtaining the following list of decisionmakers whom the commission tries to influence from the executive director of the crime commission: the Cook County State's Attorney, the Cook County Sheriff, the Chief Judge of the Cook County Circuit Court, the Chief Judge of the Criminal Division of the Cook County Circuit Court, the Chief Probation Officer of the Cook County Adult Probation Department, and the Deputy Superintendent of the Bureau of Technical Services of the Chicago Police Department.

The second stage consisted of interviewing these decisionmakers. We conducted five personal interviews and one telephone interview. Interviewees

were asked to provide the names of other high-ranking officials in their organization who were knowledgeable about the commission.

Decisionmakers named through this snowball sampling procedure were interviewed during the third phase of the project. This group included the First Deputy Superintendent of the Chicago Police Department, the Chief of the Organized Crime Division of the Chicago Police Department, the Administrative Assistant to the Mayor of Chicago, and two judges of the Criminal Division of the Cook County Circuit Court. These individuals were asked the same questions as the first group. All of the referrals except one were interviewed by telephone.

Policymakers in the Illinois state legislature were asked the same questions as decisionmakers in the Chicago criminal justice system. The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House supplied the names of several legislators whom they deemed to be influential on criminal justice issues. These legislators were interviewed and asked for referrals. Two of the interviewees were members of the House Criminal Law Committee, one was a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and the other individual was a powerful leader in the Senate.

Policymakers were included, although the crime commission did not identify the state legislature as an institution over which it exerted influence on a regular basis. Justifications for including state legislators are twofold. First, the Chicago Crime Commission expended considerable resources from 1983 through 1984 to defeat bills aimed at legalizing gambling and to sponsor four organized crime bills. Second, state legislators were included because the ability to shape criminal law seems to be a sine qua non of any community organization with the goal of changing and improving criminal justice.

Questions posed to decisionmakers and policymakers probed the area of perceived effectiveness. Respondents rated the commission on the following criteria: (1) maintaining political autonomy or independence; (2) developing useful proposals about how to improve the justice system; (3) having sufficient power to have its proposals adopted; (4) monitoring criminal justice agencies; (5) conducting policy research; (6) influencing criminal justice policies and practices; (7) sponsoring and operating programs that reduce crime; (8) being tied into neighborhood organizations; and (9) maintaining liaison with criminal justice agencies.<sup>2</sup> Respondents were asked open-ended questions relating to the perceived legitimacy of the commission. Decisionmakers and policymakers were also asked general questions about the value or utility of the commission.

The responses of decisionmakers and policymakers could have been affected by their awareness that their answers would reflect directly on their political institutions and agencies and on their interorganizational relations with the crime commission. We could not eliminate the professional courtesy effect, that is, the reluctance of members of a system to criticize other members of the system. Our strategy was to interview as many decisionmakers and policymakers as possible and to challenge the few respondents we suspected of puffery, that is, we asked them to explain why their answers diverged so much from the answers of other respondents. Sixteen individuals were interviewed.

PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS: RATINGS OF THE CHICAGO CRIME COMMISSION  
BY DECISIONMAKERS AND POLICYMAKERS

Data concerning the perceived effectiveness of the crime commission were analyzed. Aggregate data are presented first, and then disaggregated data are analyzed to examine similarities and differences in the ratings of decisionmakers and policymakers.

Perceived Strengths and Weaknesses

A general idea of the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the crime commission can be gained by examining the aggregate data. Table 1 shows the weighted mean score for each criterion of effectiveness.

Table 1

Ratings of the Chicago Crime Commission by Decisionmakers and Policymakers (N=16)

Effectiveness Criteria	Ratings						Weighted Mean Score
	(5) Excellent	(4) Very Good	(3) Good	(2) Fair	(1) Poor	Don't Know	
Political Autonomy	4	8	3	0	0	0	4.06
Liaison	3	4	6	0	0	2	3.76
Monitoring Programs	1	3	8	2	0	1	3.21
Policy Research	1	3	4	3	0	4	3.18
	1	3	5	3	0	3	3.16
Useful Proposals	1	4	5	4	1	0	2.93
Impact	1	3	5	5	1	0	2.86
Ties to Neighborhood Organizations	1	1	5	1	2	5	2.80
Power	0	1	7	6	1	0	2.53

Political autonomy was the highest rated area, receiving a mean score of 4.06 on a 5.00 scale. The commission also received high ratings for maintaining liaison with criminal justice agencies (3.76), monitoring criminal justice agencies (3.21), operating programs that reduce crime (3.18), and conducting policy research (3.16).

Lower ratings were assigned to the commission for developing useful proposals (2.93), having an impact on criminal justice policies and practices



(2.86), ties to neighborhood organizations (2.80), and possessing sufficient power to have its proposals adopted (2.53).

Similarities and Differences in the Ratings of Decisionmakers and Policymakers

Table 2 displays the ratings for each effectiveness criterion by level of government and department. In general, the rank order of the criteria is the same for the disaggregated data. Regardless of level of government or department, decisionmakers and policymakers tended to give the highest ratings to political autonomy, liaison, monitoring, programs, and policy research. By contrast, lower ratings were assigned to power, impact, useful proposals, and ties to neighborhood organizations.

Especially noteworthy is the high degree of similarity in the overall ratings of decisionmakers in city and county criminal justice agencies. The overall ratings were: chief probation officer 3.63, sheriff 3.33, state's attorney 4.33, administrative assistant to the mayor 3.33, judges' mean score 3.28, and police administrators' mean score 3.70.

Ratings by state legislators differed substantially from those of decisionmakers in city and county agencies. The mean score for state legislators was 2.49.

Table 2

Ratings of the Perceived Effectiveness of the Chicago Crime Commission by Decisionmakers and Policymakers (N=16)

Level of Government/Official Position or Office	Effectiveness Criteria									Composite Mean Score	Group Mean Score
	Political Autonomy	Useful Proposals	Power	Monitoring	Policy Research	Impact	Programs	Ties to Neighborhood Organizations	Liaison		
	<u>Rating<sup>1</sup></u>										
Cook County:											
Adult Probation Department-- Chief Probation Officer	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	DK	4	3.63	MD
Circuit Court-- Chief Judge	5	3	3	3	DK	3	3	3	3	3.25	MD
Chief Judge, Criminal Division	3	2	2	3	2	2	5	3	3	2.78	MD
Judge, Criminal Division	4	4	3	3	5	4	4	4	5	3.44	MD
Judge, Criminal Division	4	2	2	3	DK	2	DK	DK	3	2.67	MD
Judges' Mean Score	4.00	2.75	2.50	3.00	3.50	2.75	3.00	3.33	4.67	MD	3.28
Sheriff's Office-- Sheriff	5	4	3	4	4	3	2	2	3	3.33	MD
State Attorney's Office-- State's Attorney	5	5	3	4	3	5	4	5	5	4.33	MD
City of Chicago:											
Police Department-- Deputy Superintendent, Bureau of Technical Services	4	4	2	3	4	4	3	3	5	3.56	MD
Chief of O.C. Division	4	3	3	5	2	4	4	3	4	3.56	MD
First Deputy Superintendent	5	4	3	4	5	3	2	3	4	3.66	MD
Police Administrators' Mean Score	4.33	3.66	2.66	4.00	3.66	3.66	4.00	3.00	4.33	MD	3.70
Mayor's Office: Administrative Assistant to Mayor	5	3	4	4	4	3	2	1	4	3.33	MD
State of Illinois:											
House--											
(D) Member, Criminal Law Committee	4	1	1	2	3	1	DK	DK	3	2.14	MD
(R) Member, Criminal Law Committee	3	2	2	DK	DK	2	DK	1	DK	1.67	MD
Member, Criminal Law Committee	4	3	3	3	4	3	DK	3	4	3.37	MD
Senate--											
(D) Anonymous senator	4	4	2	3	3	2	3	DK	3	3.00	MD
(R) Member, Judiciary Committee	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	DK	DK	MD	MD
Legislators' Mean Score	3.60	2.40	2.00	2.00	2.66	2.00	2.50	2.00	3.33	MD	2.49

<sup>1</sup>Numbers represent the following rating scale: excellent, 5; very good, 4; good, 3; fair, 2; poor, 1; DK, do not know; and MD, missing data.

PERCEIVED LEGITIMACY: THE CRIME COMMISSION  
AS BOTH AN INSIDER AND AN OUTSIDER

Differences in perceptions of the commission's legitimacy may account for some of the variation in the perception of effectiveness held by state legislators and local criminal justice officials.

The View From Chicago: The Crime Commission as Part of the Unofficial Justice System

To what degree do the decisionmakers' perceptions about the commission's legitimacy parallel their perceptions about the commission's effectiveness? Qualitative data indicate that nearly all of the criminal justice decisionmakers from city and county agencies agreed that the crime commission was not part of the official justice system. At the same time, however, many interviewees implied strongly that the crime commission was part of the unofficial justice system in Chicago.

Part of the perceived role of the commission in the unofficial system is to provide information regarding citizens' views and concerns about criminal justice problems. This includes pressuring official decisionmakers to do something about the issues that citizens perceive as problematic (e.g., prostitutes soliciting customers in residential neighborhoods and organized crime).

The question of whether the commission is a true insider hinges on whether it has direct access to information and decisionmakers. Several decisionmakers indicated that the crime commission enjoys a high degree of access to the system in Chicago.

Within the police department, the Deputy Superintendent of the Bureau of Technical Services reported that the Chicago Crime Commission has hands-on involvement in criminal justice administration. He said that the commission,

through its Report Crime Program,<sup>3</sup> supplies the police department with valuable information. The department, in turn, shares arrest statistics and other data with the commission.

The Chief Judge, Criminal Division, Cook County Circuit Court, stated that he makes court statistics available to the executive director of the commission. Moreover, he admitted providing the executive director with information on court administration problems that is not given to the media or anyone outside the court system.

The Cook County State's Attorney indicated a similar situation, when he said, "Anything Pat (the executive director) wants from us, he gets." Similar statements were made by the Cook County Sheriff, the Chief Probation Officer of Cook County, and the Administrative Assistant to the Mayor.

This suggests that the commission has formal and informal access to official decisionmakers in the justice system. Few other community organizations in Chicago have the same degree of access to the system, to use its information, and to make face-to-face recommendations to administrators.

#### The View from Springfield: The Crime Commission as an Outsider

Policymakers from the Illinois legislature in Springfield, Illinois, gave the commission much lower ratings on both effectiveness and legitimacy than decisionmakers from criminal justice agencies in Chicago. Most of the policymakers do not consider the commission to be part of the criminal justice system. They view the commission as playing an advisory role outside the system and raising the awareness of public and elected officials about organized crime and criminal justice problems.

Most of the legislators who were interviewed indicated that they thought the commission was not only outside the legislative system but also out of touch with the realities of legislative politics. Some lawmakers felt the

commission's organized crime bills were "too heavy handed," given the substantial representation of former defense lawyers on key committees. More specifically, a legislator complained that the commission's proposal to allow state officials to eavesdrop on a telephone conversation without the consent of one of the parties was regarded by many legislators as violating individuals' rights.

Other lawmakers criticized the commission for lacking sophistication in legislative politics. According to one legislator, the commission sometimes releases its position paper on an issue after the bill has been introduced, which is "too late in the game." Another lawmaker noted that commission representatives do not monitor closely enough legislative proposals related to criminal justice to be informed participants in the legislative process. Another legislator asserted that commission representatives do not fully appreciate the political meaning attached to certain pieces of legislation, such as the commission's statewide grand jury bill. In this legislator's view, many lawmakers opposed the idea of a statewide grand jury because they feared it would broaden the power of the state's attorneys and they might abuse the power. Finally, one legislator offered what seems to be a partial explanation of these perceived deficiencies. He thought that because the crime commission did not have a professional lobbyist in Springfield, it was unable to participate in the informal "wheeling, dealing, and compromising" that constitutes the routine way of getting things accomplished in the legislature.

It should come as no surprise that lawmakers perceive relations between the legislature and the crime commission to be practically nonexistent. Yet, many legislators said they would be available to the board and the executive director if the commission representatives took the time to contact them.

Several legislators commented that informal access to legislators would be easier for crime commission board members than for average citizens because of the high socioeconomic status of board members. Most of the legislators indicated that board members would have to get more involved in lobbying efforts to get proposed legislation passed.

One senator noted that the commission finds itself in a dilemma regarding lobbying. The commission may get more bills passed in the short run if members use their political connections and personal contacts more than they have in the past. But, too much lobbying may compromise the commission's political autonomy, thus potentially reducing the commission's effectiveness in the long run.

#### TENTATIVE, UNANTICIPATED FINDINGS

Two tentative, unanticipated findings emerged from the qualitative data: (1) perceptions of the commission's effectiveness seem to be related to whether criminal justice decisionmakers and policymakers can use the commission for their purposes, and (2) the commission's perceived association with the business elite and the perceived effectiveness of the executive director appear to influence the kind of evaluations the commission receives on effectiveness.

#### Perceived Utility

Legislators, who as a group gave the commission lower ratings on the effectiveness criteria, reported that the commission was useful to them in only one way. Four legislators stated that the commission's policy research papers on topics such as organized crime and off-track betting provided valuable information and raised their awareness of these issues.

By contrast, decisionmakers in city and county criminal justice agencies, who gave the commission higher ratings on effectiveness, indicated that the commission was useful to them in a variety of ways. First, the commission serves as a bridge between the private and public sectors. The Deputy Superintendent, Bureau of Technical Services, Chicago Police Department, stated that the crime commission identifies public administrators' problems and then uses private sector resources to solve them. For example, the commission provided the police department with bank loan officers and computer experts to advise the department on acquiring computers.

Second, some criminal justice administrators use the commission as a stalking horse. The same deputy superintendent revealed that sometimes it is useful to have the commission argue with city officials for more space or staff for the police department because of the commission's independent, nonpartisan, public-interest reputation.

Third, the commission serves as a sounding board for citizens concerns and complaints. Through the commission's Report Crime Program decisionmakers obtain information about public attitudes and preferences. A judge in the Criminal Division of the Cook County Circuit Court recalled that in 1984, the commission discovered through Report Crime that citizens in several neighborhoods were upset about prostitutes soliciting for customers in residential areas. The commission investigated the situation and then criticized the judges for not sentencing repeat-offender prostitutes to jail to get them off the streets. According to the judge, if the commission had not taken action, the court would not have known that the community perceived this to be such a serious problem.

Fourth, the commission is a tool for criminal justice reform. The Chief Probation Officer of Cook County explained how he used the commission to

increase professionalism in his department. According to him, the probation department operated inefficiently and sometimes hired personnel on the basis of patronage prior to 1980. In his words, "it needed to be changed." The crime commission prepared a highly critical evaluation of the department which provided the factual documentation and the "third-party support" that he needed to make changes in areas such as personnel hiring practices, classification of offenders, and case management.

Fifth, some administrators use evaluative information collected through the commission's monitoring activities as a management tool. The Chief Judge of the Cook County Circuit Court credited the commission's judicial performance evaluations with providing meaningful, objective, unbiased information on the behavior of judges under his supervision. The same judge also stressed that the commission assisted the court by identifying old cases in which numerous continuances were granted. The Cook County State's Attorney agreed with the judge, stating that the commission's list of old cases made prosecutors more sensitive to the problems of the lack of celerity in processing cases.

Sixth, the commission provides information on crime and criminals. The Chief of the Chicago Police Department's Organized Crime Unit reported using the commission's information on gangs and individuals suspected of having ties to organized crime.

#### Elite Sponsorship, Leadership of the Commission, and Effectiveness

Findings on elite sponsorship, leadership of the commission, and effectiveness are based on unsystematic, anecdotal evidence. Although we are uncertain about the degree of confidence to place in these findings, they are presented to give a more complete picture of factors that may be related to the commission's perceived effectiveness.



The explanations that some policymakers and decisionmakers gave for their evaluations provide insight into the reasons behind the ratings of effectiveness. For example, the Cook County Sheriff rated the commission high on effectiveness criteria because of the board members' high social status and the dedication and fairness of the executive director. The First Deputy Superintendent of the Chicago Police Department also pointed out that his high ratings of the commission reflected his positive evaluation of the executive director. The first deputy praised the executive director for his "constructive criticism" and for his willingness to listen to viewpoints with which he disagrees. One lawmaker, who gave the commission high ratings on all effectiveness criteria, said that he gave the commission's recommendations special consideration because of the makeup of the board of directors and because of his respect for the executive director.

These findings suggest the possibility of a halo effect, wherein some assessments of effectiveness may have little relationship to real or objective effectiveness. Instead, some evaluations may reflect the decisionmakers and the policymakers opinions of the commission members rather than the effectiveness of their actions, i.e., the business elite and an esteemed executive director rather than the commission's accomplishments.

#### DISCUSSION

High-level decisionmakers in the Chicago criminal justice system and state lawmakers disagree about the effectiveness of the Chicago Crime Commission. Our findings suggest that perceived legitimacy is an important factor in accounting for the similarity of ratings by local decisionmakers and the difference between ratings by state and local authorities. Whether the commission is regarded as an insider or an outsider seems to make a difference

in decisionmakers and policymakers perceptions of effectiveness. Perceived utility, although not predicted to be a factor initially seemed to account for some variation in ratings of effectiveness.

#### Exchange Relations, Community Politics, and Organizational Domains

Relating our findings to exchange relations, community politics, and organizational domains may explain how the commission's linkages with personnel in the local justice system affect the perceived effectiveness of the commission within the system. Research on the criminal justice system in Chicago indicates that it is integrated by machine politics. City and county agencies comprise a relatively coordinated and unified system (Jacob, 1980; Ruchelman, 1974).

If the system is unified, decisionmakers within the system could be expected to hold similar views about which groups are inside the system and which groups are outside the system, which groups are legitimate and which are not, and so forth. The substantial convergence in the ratings of the commission's effectiveness by local decisionmakers is consistent with this post hoc explanation.

Clearly, the commission is tied to local criminal justice agencies through exchange relations. The commission is dependent on the decisionmakers for access to information about administrative problems, and decisionmakers use the commission in a variety of ways. State legislators may not be part of this system or network of relations. While there may be overlap between the local justice system and the legislature, it is plausible that individuals are perceived as insiders in one system and outsiders in another system. This seems to be the case with the crime commission.

A key issue is how the members of in each system define effectiveness.<sup>4</sup> Within their policy-oriented domain, state legislators measure success by who

wins and who loses conflicts over specific bills. Furthermore, lawmakers follow certain norms in going about the business of negotiating, bargaining, and voting.

The commission receives low ratings using this criteria because of its defeat on organized crime bills and its perceived violations of some norms of legislative behavior (e.g., enter the process too late and introduce bills that carry excessive political baggage).

By contrast, the commission receives high ratings when it is evaluated using local justice agencies' standards of success. Within this management-oriented domain, effectiveness means rationalizing the system to make it more cost-efficient and cost-effective. Apparently, the commission has been very successful in this regard.

In summary, the crime commission suffers from the Rashomon Effect (Schon, 1971). This phenomena occurs when individuals occupying roles in various domains view an organization from various vantage points, use various measures of effectiveness, and have different perceptions of reality.

#### Legislative Change Versus Administrative Change/Realistic Change Versus Fundamental Change

Thinking about the perceived effectiveness of the commission in a critical way leads to a consideration of the kinds of change that the commission has and has not produced in the criminal justice system. Distinctions can be drawn between legislative versus administrative changes and between realistic versus fundamental changes.

Constraints built into the crime commission's raison d'entre seem to limit its potential for effecting legislative change. It is conceivable that the commission could enhance state legislators' perceptions of its effectiveness by becoming more involved in the legislative process. But, what kinds of favors or political trade-offs would the commission have to offer, and what

would be the likely consequences if the commission became more involved in the legislative process? Board members could use their socioeconomic status and economic resources to gain more political clout for the commission. However, this would endanger the commission's political independence, an important reason for the commission's perceived effectiveness within the local criminal justice system.

Decisionmakers regard the commission as being useful in producing realistic change rather than fundamental change. This study reveals that the commission is perceived as being effective in bringing about administrative changes within various local agencies. Presumably, criminal justice agencies in Chicago operate more efficiently today because of commission-supported alterations in organizational procedures and resources generated as a result of the commission's lobbying.

Data presented in this study lead to the conclusion that the commission is very effective in doing what local decisionmakers want it to do, i.e., assisting in administrative change. What this study does not address, however, is how effective the commission has been in reducing the crime rate or in producing a more just criminal justice system. These concerns relate to fundamental change.

To study the commission and fundamental change would require collecting perceptual information from a different set of individuals. For example, the heads of community organizations with a liberal bias (e.g., the American Civil Liberties Union) may perceive the crime commission as being more of a lapdog than a watchdog. That is, they may contend that the administrative changes for which decisionmakers credit the commission do not constitute real changes or major accomplishments.

## NOTES

1. A large void exists in the criminal justice literature regarding citizens crime commissions. More is known about citizens crime commissions that operated during the first part of the twentieth century than is known about current commissions. Virgil W. Peterson (1945), a former Operating Director of the Chicago Crime Commission, has written an interesting historical account of the early crime commissions. Other scholars (Haller, 1970, 1971; Goldberg, 1940; and Morse and Moley, 1929) examined the origins and the early years of the Chicago Crime Commission. Yet, only two empirical studies have been concerned with modern crime commissions. Hoffman (1986) analyzed the Chicago Crime Commission's response to organized crime in 1980-84. Webb and Hoffman's (1985) national survey of citizens crime commissions was the first comprehensive study of all private crime commissions since Peterson's work.
2. These criteria were selected based on the authors' previous research on the Chicago Crime Commission and citizens crime commissions in the United States (Webb and Hoffman, 1985; Hoffman, 1986).
3. The Report Crime Program, operated by the Chicago Crime Commission, handles telephone reports of criminal activity from citizens who prefer to remain anonymous. The commission forwards these reports to law enforcement agencies.
4. This interpretation is based on Kouzes and Mico's (1979) domain theory.

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