

# Research Communication

## To the Editor:

Since 1964, the Institute of Governmental Studies has undertaken studies of Ombudsman offices and other related grievance machinery. The Ombudsman Activities Project is currently supported by a grant from the Office of Economic Opportunity. Principal investigator of the project is Stanley Anderson, of the Department of Political Science, University of California, Santa Barbara. Professor Anderson has studied Ombudsman offices and proposals in Scandinavia, the Commonwealth countries, and the United States.

Other faculty members from the Santa Barbara campus are also engaged in the project. Professor Dean Mann is studying the Governor's Branch Offices in Pennsylvania. Professor Alan Wyner has begun a study of four grievance mechanisms in the Chicago area: the Governor's Branch Offices, the Ombudsman function of the Lt. Governor, the Chicago office of Inquiry and Information, and the Chicago Registrar of Citizens' Complaints. He will also study the OEO-supported Citizens' Aide appointed by the Governor of Iowa.

Professor John Moore is completing a monograph on the first American State Ombudsman office in Hawaii. He will also study two new Ombudsman offices in Nebraska and Seattle/King County, both supported initially by the Office of Economic Opportunity. Professor Philip Hannon of Skidmore College is investigating the Ombudsman activities of the Nassau County, Long Island, Commissioner of Accounts, and Mr. Douglas Capps has interned in the office of the Executive Ombudsman appointed by the Governor of Oregon.

Tentatively, the Ombudsman Activities Project has verified that an independent, impartial and expert Ombudsman is compatible with American political systems, and that this office can contribute to both the resolution of grievances and the improvement of government administration. Further analysis of the nature and extent of that contribution should demonstrate which grievance mechanisms or combinations of mechanisms are most appropriate for differing governmental and semi-governmental functions. The Project will also attempt to ascertain how public attitudes toward government responsiveness are affected by different complaint handling procedures.

Scholars who have conducted or are conducting related research are invited to communicate with the Institute through the Ombudsman Activities

Project coordinator, Assistant Director Stanley Scott, or with Professor Anderson.

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