

**Closing Report  
2003 IUSB Summer Fellowship Grant**

**Title of the Project: Civilian review boards in the United States: The state of citizens' participation in the control of the police**

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**I. Project Description.**

The study is a comprehensive analysis of the current state of civilian review mechanisms in the United States. The objectives of the study are:

1. to determine how many and what type of citizen oversight were established in each police department in the United States employing 100 or more police officers,
2. to determine the extent of citizens' participation in the handling of citizen complaints against the police, and
3. to identify the factors related to the establishment of civilian oversight.

Data collection used several strategies. The primary strategy involved the electronic search of information. Using the Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS), the researcher identified the police departments with 100 or more employed sworn personnel. After establishing the list of departments, the researcher conducted an internet search of each department or city to determine whether there was a form of citizen oversight that existed in the said jurisdiction. The researcher also examined the websites for descriptions or reports about these oversights. Secondary document analyses were also conducted. The researcher examined other publications (hard and electronic copies) that had identified citizen oversights in the list of departments. The objective of this activity was to determine the type of oversight that had been established and validate some of the information in the websites. After doing these searches, the researcher contacted by phone or email departments that lacked the desired information.

The researcher also gathered demographic information for each of the departments identified in the study. The 2000 Census and LEMAS were used to gather information about the number of population, percent minority, and the number of officers in each department.

An SPSS database was produced containing information about the number of citizen oversight per state, the type of citizen oversight in each jurisdiction, the number of population as well as the percent of minority in each city/municipality, and the number of officers in each department. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and correlation (i.e., logistic regression) statistics.

## **II. Project execution and completion.**

The data gathering was completed sometime in December of 2003 and the analyses were conducted from January to March of 2004. The most difficult part of the data collection was the internet searches. Searching for the web information for the 477 police departments took most the research logistics. The next difficulty encountered was the non-responsiveness or lack of cooperation from police departments whose information cannot be retrieved from the internet or from secondary sources. Of the 60 or so departments that were contacted by phone or email, less than 10 responded or were willing to provide information to the principal investigator.

## **III. The products of the study**

The study resulted in the production of the pre-specified outputs. The following are the outputs from the study.

1. A more comprehensive database about citizen oversight was created. The data organized by state, city, and types of citizen oversight.
2. A comprehensive list of departments employing 100 or more officers was produced. A complete list of the police departments' website addresses and telephone numbers were compiled. The same documents also had information about each department's personnel and community policing activities.
3. The secondary analyses resulted in the compilation of citizen oversights and other relevant information such as their functions, contact numbers, office locations, and names of personnel.

The project and the analysis of the data were presented on two occasions. One venue was at the IUSB Dean's Seminar held on March 19, 2004. The other forum was at the annual conference of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences on March 9-13, 2004 in Las Vegas, Nevada. It was presented as a paper in a panel. There were around 30 participants who attended the presentation.

Some of my colleagues and practitioners in the field have shown interests in the study. They are asking for a final copy of the paper or inputs to their projects. Likewise, a manuscript is currently being prepared for possible publication in criminal justice journals. The manuscript is expected to be finished by the end of Summer of 2004. To enhance the manuscript, the researcher plans to incorporate the inputs of the participants in the presentations.

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