

on the floor – without need for any intercommittee deals or deference. Thus, if reciprocal noninterference among autonomous and distinctive committees is to be the dominant story line in Congress, then many members must be assigned to unrepresentative committees. Indeed, a majority of members must be so assigned; otherwise, intercommittee logrolls would be ineffective because too few members need them.

A little bean counting is sufficient to show that this puts a fairly strong requirement on the number of unrepresentative committees. It has long been recognized that the control committees in the House – Appropriations, Ways and Means, and Rules – are broadly representative of the House's regional and ideological groupings. Thus, if the subgovernment thesis is true, then over half of the remaining committees must be unrepresentative of the regional and ideological groupings in the House.<sup>3</sup> Otherwise, the pervasive necessity and centrality of intercommittee logrolls is brought into question.

The first section of this chapter reviews the early scholarly literature dealing with the representativeness of House committees. The next two sections update previous results, while also trying to improve a bit on the data and methods used. Our findings are in general agreement with those reported in earlier studies: a few committees are frequently unrepresentative, but most do not differ in a statistically significant manner from the full House membership. Section 4 reviews the recent literature on what has become known as the "representativeness hypothesis." Section 5 considers how these results square with the subgovernment thesis and with the committee government model more generally.

## 1. THE PREVIOUS LITERATURE

Committee representativeness has been examined in numerous case studies of individual committees.<sup>4</sup> Here we shall focus on those scholars who have looked at more than one committee over a span of Congresses.

The dimensions along which a committee might be unrepresentative of its parent chamber are many. The literature has typically focused on just two: a regional dimension (is the South overrepresented on committee X?) and an ideological dimension (are liberals overrepresented on committee Y?). The natural suspicion is that committees will represent not the broad spectrum of societal interests but rather the narrow regional or ideological interests of the constituencies affected by the policies over which they have some influence.

<sup>3</sup> See discussion later and also Shepsle (1978) and Kiewiet and McCubbins (1991).

<sup>4</sup> These include the following committees: Appropriations (Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991), Budget (Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991; Palazzo 1989; Schick 1980), Agriculture (Jones 1961; Ornstein and Rohde 1977b; Hall 1989), Armed Services (Ray 1980b; Goss 1972; Arnold 1979), Ways and Means (Manley 1970), Post Office and Judiciary (Ogul 1976), and Rules (Robinson 1963).

## Subgovernments and the Representativeness of Committees

One of the key notions entailed in the committee government model, especially in its more extreme "subgovernment" version, is that many congressional committees are unrepresentative of their parent chambers. It is easy to see why this notion is important: if most committees mirrored the range of interests found on the floor, then the autonomy that they are assumed to possess would have much fewer far-reaching consequences.

The belief that many committees are unrepresentative is partly based on a deduction from the assumptions that members seek assignment to committees pertinent to the interests of their constituents (the interest-seeking hypothesis) and that most assignment requests are routinely accommodated by each party's CC (the accommodation hypothesis).<sup>1</sup> We believe the premises of this deduction to be shaky (see Chapter 2), but unrepresentative committees may arise even if members do not self-select onto committees. Self-selection focuses on the unrepresentative character of those who enter a committee, but it can also be that those who exit are unrepresentative, and either process is sufficient to produce unrepresentative panels. If we accept the possibility that subgovernments may arise whenever there are unrepresentative committees (unrepresentativeness + autonomy = subgovernment), then committee unrepresentativeness itself is of interest to those who would assess the plausibility of the view that Congress is something like a giant logroll among subgovernments.<sup>2</sup>

The view that a system of reciprocity exists among autonomous committees, who trade support on the floor (or "defer" to one another's policy-area expertise), seems to require a certain number of unrepresentative committees. After all, if a committee is representative of floor preferences, then legislation that passes muster in committee will also be likely to pass muster

<sup>1</sup> An ancillary assumption, that districts are small enough so that many of them are dominated by one or another interest that looks special from a national viewpoint, is usually unstated.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Shepsle (1990) and Miller (1962, 110).

Of the two criteria of representativeness, regional balance is the easier to operationalize. It is mostly just a matter of seeing whether the pattern of regional representation in the House as a whole is reflected in each of its panels. There is substantial agreement that several committees have been persistently unbalanced in terms of the geographical location of their members' constituencies: for example, the South often has been overrepresented on Agriculture, the East on Education and Labor, the West on Interior, and the coasts on Merchant Marine and Fisheries. In addition, various other committees have been identified as regionally unbalanced in one or another Congress. Table 3.1 summarizes those identified by Goodwin (1970), Fenno (1973), and Smith and Deering (1990).<sup>5</sup>

Measuring ideological representativeness is a bit more complicated because it is easier to find out the region from which a member hails than to classify him unambiguously as a liberal, moderate, or conservative. Most of the early literature relies for such classifications on the roll call ratings produced by interest groups such as the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), the United Auto Workers (UAW), and the League of Conservation Voters (LCV).

These scores are thought to tap into two different types of ideology. First, they might measure the general ideological predispositions of members – how liberal or conservative they are. Second, they might measure more specific ideological predispositions – whether a member is a social liberal, a defense hawk, and so forth.<sup>6</sup> In either case, however, substantial problems loom.

Consider first the difficulty of taking interest group scores as measures of general ideology. As Fowler (1982) indicates, interest groups do not intend their ratings to measure ideology. They are designed instead to identify interest groups' friends and expose their enemies. Unfortunately, a group may have both conservative and liberal friends, both conservative and liberal enemies (especially if it has a fairly narrow issue focus). To the extent that it does, the effort to separate friends from enemies will interfere with the separation of conservatives from liberals.

Another problem is that many interest groups, especially the more broadly focused ones, such as the Americans for Constitutional Action (ACA) and the ADA, choose controversial but nonpartisan issues to calculate their ratings. These groups want to rate their friends and enemies in Congress, regardless of party. Partisan issues clearly separate Democrats from Republicans, of course, but they provide little intraparty variance – thus the incentive to include important votes that produce intraparty divisions. The question then arises as to whether the ACA and ADA scores are based on too many

<sup>5</sup> We do not analyze these findings here. The interested reader can refer to Fenno (1973), Goodwin (1970), and Smith and Deering (1990).

<sup>6</sup> Of course, as we get more and more specific about ideological predispositions, they begin to look increasingly like issue preferences of one kind or another.

TABLE 3.1. *Geographical Unrepresentativeness on Committees in the House*

Committee	Fenno <sup>a</sup>	Goodwin <sup>b</sup>	Smith and Deering <sup>c</sup>
Agriculture		South overrepresented	South and Midwest overrepresented
Banking		East overrepresented	
District of Columbia		South overrepresented	
Education and Labor	East and West overrepresented;	East and West overrepresented	
Foreign Affairs	South underrepresented	East and Midwest overrepresented	
Government Operations		East and Midwest overrepresented	
HUAC	Midwest overrepresented		
Interior	West overrepresented	West overrepresented	West overrepresented; South underrepresented
Judiciary		East overrepresented	East overrepresented; Midwest underrepresented
Merchant Marine		East and West overrepresented	East overrepresented; Midwest underrepresented
Post Office	South and East overrepresented		Balanced
Rules			South overrepresented
Ways and Means	Balanced overall; South slightly favored; West and Midwest underrepresented	Balanced overall; South slightly favored, East slightly underrepresented	

<sup>a</sup> Fenno considers the regional representativeness of six committees in the Eighty-fourth through Eighty-ninth Congresses, using a five-way regional breakdown (East, Midwest, Border, South, West). He offers no significance tests. See Fenno (1973, Table 3.3, 47-79).

<sup>b</sup> Goodwin computes an index of regional overrepresentation for all committees for the Eightieth through Ninetieth Congresses, using a four-way regional breakdown (East, Midwest, South, West). He offers no significance tests. See Goodwin (1970, Table 6.3).

<sup>c</sup> Smith and Deering compare regional representation on selected committees to regional representation in the House as a whole in the Eighty-ninth to Ninetieth, Ninety-sixth to Ninety-seventh, and Ninety-ninth to Hundredth Congresses, using the same five-way regional breakdown as Fenno. They offer no significance tests. See Smith and Deering (1990, Table 3-7).

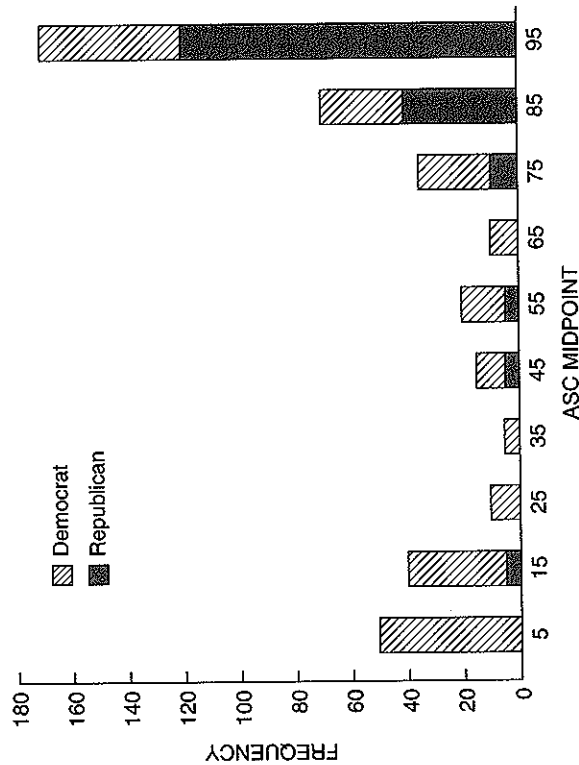


FIGURE 3.1. ASC Ratings, Ninety-seventh Congress.

nonpartisan issues – more proportionally than occur in Congress. If they are so based, then they will provide a picture of Congress that is misleadingly nonpartisan. If we believe that salient ideological divisions lie along party lines, then using these ratings as general measures of ideology will be problematic.

Another consequence of interest groups' choosing controversial but nonpartisan votes to include in their scores is that many scores tend to be better at discriminating among Democrats than among Republicans. (The reason is that most controversial but nonpartisan votes are squabbles among the members of the majority party; many are on amendments that the minority designs specifically to split off some segment of the majority, if it can.) The ratings of the American Security Council (ASC) for the Ninety-seventh Congress (Figure 3.1), and of the ADA for the Ninety-seventh Congress (Figure 3.2), are typical. As can be seen in Figure 3.1, more than 90 percent of all Republicans received a rating of 85 percent or higher on ASC's National Security Index. Democrats, on the other hand, are dispersed more or less uniformly over the entire 0 to 100 range. Figure 3.2, displaying the distribution of ADA ratings for the Ninety-fifth Congress, shows the Democrats more or less uniformly distributed over the full range of scores but over 90 percent of the Republicans concentrated below 45.

This problem is still worse for ratings by the more specialized interest groups, such as the National Education Association (NEA); the American

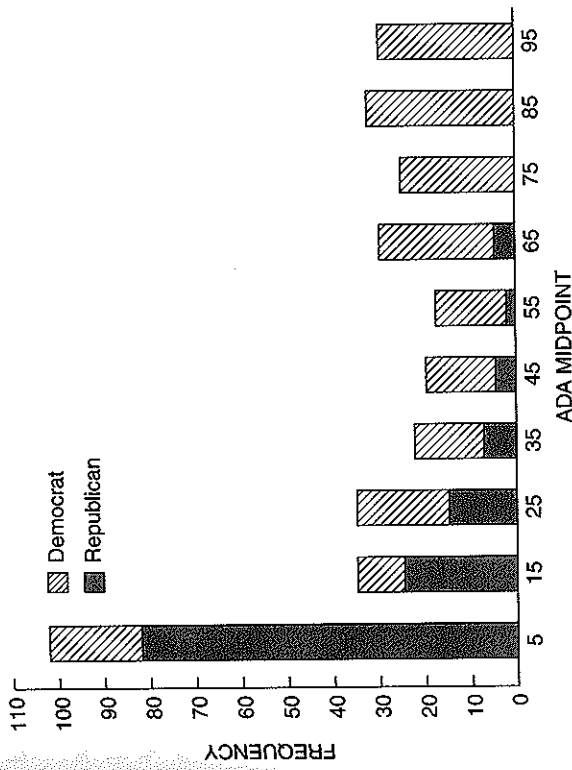


FIGURE 3.2. ADA Ratings, Ninety-seventh Congress.

Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME); the UAW; and the AFL-CIO's Committee on Political Education (COPE). These groups tend to have been closely affiliated with the Democratic Party and thus to identify Republicans as implacable enemies. They consistently place Republicans in the lowest part of the ratings order, with little or no variance among Republican members.

One might argue that there is little variance among the Republicans because they are ideologically homogeneous. But an alternative possibility is that interest groups' use of controversial but nonpartisan votes in their scores, in combination with the tendency of most such votes to split the majority rather than the minority party, overstates the divisions among Democrats and understates the divisions among Republicans.<sup>7</sup>

Consider next the use of interest group scores as measures of specific ideology. There is an important potential benefit from using interest group ratings, especially those produced by the more narrowly focused groups, in this way. If every group that calculates and publicizes a rating is part of some subgovernment, then each may pick roll call votes that highlight the divergence of interest between the members of "its" committee and other members of the House. Thus, the interest groups may solve the analyst's

<sup>7</sup> In spatial modeling terms, if the status quo is already somewhere near the center of Democratic opinion, and an attempt is being made to move it in some direction, then the Democrats are likely to be split, the Republicans to be unified.

problem of identifying the relevant issue cleavage(s) between committee and noncommittee members.<sup>8</sup>

It should be noted, however, that none of the interest groups include enough roll call votes in their ratings to cover the whole range of issues that come before any House committee. Moreover, in producing their ratings most interest groups choose votes on bills from several committees. Thus, because the typical view of "iron triangles" holds that there is only one committee per subgovernment, the potential advantage of using ratings produced by special interest groups – that the issues they include in their ratings correspond to the policies most important to a particular subgovernment – may be illusory. We shall have more to say on this score in Chapter 9.

Whether one seeks to use interest group scores as measures of general or specific ideology, another deficiency is that they typically are based on only a few roll call votes. One consequence of this (together with the desire to identify friends and enemies) is that the distribution of scores is skewed toward the extremes and away from the middle. This further reduces the discriminatory power of data that are lumpy enough to begin with.

The U-shaped distribution of ratings is clear in the example of Figure 3.3, which presents a histogram of ratings produced by the AFL-CIO's Committee on Political Education for the House in the Ninetieth Congress. Over half of the members in the Ninetieth Congress were placed at the very extremes of the distribution of COPE ratings. Similar examples could be adduced for the ACA's ratings or for the *National Journal's* conservative coalition score.

Another consequence of the low number of votes included in interest group ratings is that the scores for individual members of Congress over time are not very stable. For example, ratings by groups such as the National Taxpayers Union (NTU), National Farmer's Union (NFU), and the UAW often fluctuate wildly over time. This is particularly disturbing in a measure of ideology (whether general or specific) because we do not generally expect a member's ideology to change greatly from one Congress to the next.

Putting aside these caveats about the use of interest group scores, we can turn to some of the results obtained in the previous literature (Table 3.2). As can be seen, there is general agreement that conservatives have been consistently overrepresented on some committees (e.g., Agriculture and Armed Services), liberals on others (e.g., Education and Labor and Foreign Affairs). There is not agreement on the overall tenor of the data, however. Davidson (1981b, 111), articulating the conventional wisdom, concludes that "many

<sup>8</sup> The very existence of such roll calls, however, undercuts the assumption of reciprocity in the subgovernment thesis. Logically, if one of the reasons that subgovernments are considered undesirable is that the members of each subgovernment deferentially vote in favor of legislation produced by the other subgovernments – in a gigantic logroll – then all participants in the logroll would have very similar voting records.

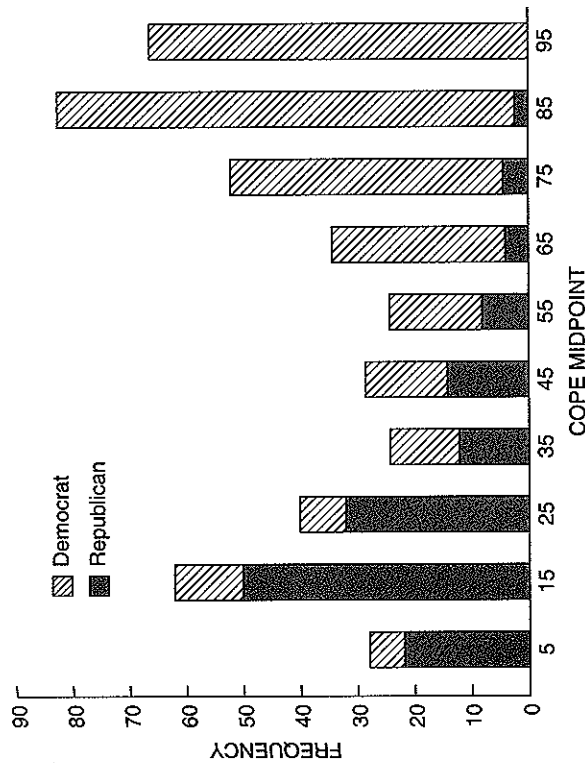


FIGURE 3.3. AFL-CIO COPE Ratings, Ninetieth Congress.

congressional workgroups are not microcosms of the parent houses, but are biased in one way or another." Krehbiel (1990, 159), lodging a dissent, argues that "few contemporary committees are composed predominantly of high-demand preference outliers."

## 2. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Our own research into the geographical and ideological representativeness of committees differs slightly from the previous literature in terms of both data and methodology. In addition to spanning a longer time period than previous studies (the Eightieth to Hundredth Congress), our data on committee membership are derived directly from the *House Journal*, rather than from unofficial sources such as the *House Directory*.<sup>9</sup>

We use essentially the same methodology as employed by many researchers in investigating the geographical balance of committees. The primary difference is that we adopt a three-way regional classification (North,

<sup>9</sup> These data were compiled by Garrison Nelson. As noted in Chapter 2, note 9, we found that alternative sources of committee assignment data have fairly high error rates. We checked Nelson's data by comparing them to the committee lists published at the beginning of committee hearings and to assignments data given to us by Keith Poole.

TABLE 3.2. Ideological Representativeness on Committees in the House

Committee	Fenno <sup>a</sup>	Goodwin <sup>b</sup>	Hinckley <sup>c</sup>	Krehbiel <sup>d</sup>
Agriculture		Conservative	Conservative	Balanced (slightly conservative)
Appropriations	Conservative	Balanced	Balanced (slightly conservative)	Balanced
Armed Services		Conservative	Conservative	Conservative*
Banking		Liberal	Liberal	Conservative
District of Columbia		Conservative	Fluctuates	Liberal*
Education and Labor	Liberal	Liberal	Liberal	Liberal*
Foreign Affairs	Liberal	Liberal	Slightly liberal	Liberal*
Government		Liberal	Liberal	Conservative
Operations		Conservative		
HUAC		Slightly conservative		
Merchant Marine		Liberal	Balanced	Conservative
Post Office	Balanced (slightly conservative)	Balanced	Balanced	Liberal*
Science				
Official			Balanced	Conservative
Conduct			Conservative	Conservative
Veterans' Affairs		Balanced	Balanced (slightly conservative)	Conservative

<sup>a</sup> Fenno considers the ideological range and representativeness of six committees in the Eighty-fourth through Eighty-ninth Congresses. He offers no significance tests. See Fenno (1973, Table 3.1, 47-79).

<sup>b</sup> Goodwin uses conservative votes identified by the *New Republic* to compute an index of ideological overrepresentation for the Eightieth through Ninetieth Congresses. He offers no significance tests. See Goodwin (1970, Table 6.4, 105, 110).

<sup>c</sup> Hinckley looks at the Eighty-sixth, Ninety-first, and Ninety-fifth Congresses, using a measure of conservative coalition support. She neither offers significance tests nor discusses the import of the ideological spread that she finds. We classify one of Hinckley's committees as liberal, for example, if she showed it to be liberal in at least one of the three Congresses she looked at and not significantly conservative in either of the other two. See Hinckley (1983, Figure 6.1).

<sup>d</sup> Krehbiel (1990), using interest group ratings for the Ninety-sixth to Ninety-ninth Congresses, concludes that most committees accurately reflect the House as a whole most of the time. He tests his results (difference of medians) at the .05 level and finds that only five committees differ significantly from the entire House.

\* Significance at .05 level.

South, and West) rather than a four- or five-way classification.<sup>10</sup> If a committee is representative of the House, then the proportion of members from each geographic region on the committee should not be significantly different than the analogous proportion for the House as a whole. This can be tested using a simple *t* statistic. It is possible, however, for the distribution of regional affiliations on a committee to be skewed relative to the regional breakdown in the House as a whole, while none of the individual regional discrepancies is alone significant (i.e., none of the *t* statistics is significant). We can capture such distributional unrepresentativeness by using a chi-square statistic computed across the three regional categories.<sup>11</sup>

Our methodological differences are larger when it comes to measuring ideological representativeness. We use two different approaches. One, pursued for the sake of comparability with previous research, measures ideology in terms of interest group scores. Though we originally included twelve interest group ratings in our analysis,<sup>12</sup> we ultimately restricted our analysis to scores produced by the ADA, the ACA, and the *National Journal* (conservative coalition). The conclusions to be drawn from the omitted ratings do not differ substantially from those we draw from these three.

Our second approach to measuring the general ideological predispositions of members relies on the one-dimensional spatial coordinate estimated by Poole and Rosenthal's (1985) Nominal Three-step Estimation (NOMINATE) procedure. This score registers a member's location along an underlying spatial dimension derived from the scaling of all nonunanimous roll call votes taken during a session of Congress.<sup>13</sup> Although the NOMINATE

<sup>10</sup> The motivation for including only three regions was simply to vary the analysis slightly from that conducted by previous researchers, to see if it made any difference. As will be seen, it made little. The regions were defined as follows: South (former Confederacy plus Border), North (New England, Middle Atlantic, Midwest), and West (Mountain plus Pacific).

<sup>11</sup> The chi-square distribution is used in goodness-of-fit tests of contingency table data. The test statistic is calculated by dividing the expected frequency in each cell under the null hypothesis into the squared difference of the expected frequency from the actual observed frequency in the cell, repeating the calculation for all cells in the table, then summing the values calculated for each. This statistic is then compared to "critical" values of chi-square, the rule of thumb being to reject the null hypothesis of no relationship between the two categorical variables if the test statistic is larger than the critical value of chi-square. For more on chi-square tests, consult any introductory text in statistics.

<sup>12</sup> The twelve ratings were produced by: Americans for Democratic Action, the AFL-CIO's Committee on Political Education; the National Farmers' Union; Americans for Constitutional Action, Conservative Coalition, the American Security Council; United Auto Workers; the National Education Association, the National Taxpayers' Union, the League of Conservation Voters, the Consumer Federation of America (CFA), and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees.

<sup>13</sup> The NOMINATE measure has its detractors. For example, Koford (1987) argues that though NOMINATE represents a significant improvement over previous techniques, it overstates the statistical fit of the first dimension extracted relative to subsequent dimensions. In his view, the issue space in which congressional voting takes place is not as unidimensional as Poole



procedure consistently identifies two or more dimensions in roll call votes, the first accounts for most of the variance (more than 70 percent) in the votes. Moreover, because they are derived from hundreds of roll call votes, the NOMINATE scores constitute a very fine-grained measure.

It should be kept in mind, however, that like the interest group ratings just discussed, the NOMINATE rankings are based solely upon roll call votes and do not reflect behavior in committee. Variance between actions taken in these two different legislative arenas may compromise the value of these ratings as measures of ideology.

Another problem the NOMINATE scores share with interest group ratings is the arbitrary nature of the underlying scale.<sup>14</sup> This can be partly remedied by utilizing only the ordinal properties of these scores. We have accordingly converted the NOMINATE scores into percentile rankings. Thus, if Representative X's score is 30 percent in a given Congress, this means that 30 percent of the House in that Congress was to X's left and that 70 percent was to his right. By construction, the distribution of the percentagized NOMINATE scores in each Congress is uniform over the range from 0 to 100, with the median (and mean) at 50.

Our solution to the problem of defining the null hypothesis — of how to tell when a committee is representative — is simple but arbitrary. We compare the distribution of rating scores (ADA, ACA, conservative coalition, or NOMINATE) on each committee to the distribution in the House, using a difference-of-means test for the interest group scores and a Wilcoxon difference-of-medians test for the NOMINATE scores.<sup>15</sup>

### 3. RESULTS

In examining ADA, ACA, conservative coalition, and NOMINATE scores, along with our measure of regional diversity, for the twenty-one Congresses

and Rosenthal's results suggest. In any case, our use of this measure does not require us to assume that all issues facing Congress can be projected neatly onto a single dimension. The advantage to using Poole and Rosenthal's measure is that no other simple measure accounts for more of the variance in roll call votes. Moreover, NOMINATE scores are unbiased; as long as the other dimensions are orthogonal to the one liberal-conservative dimension we use, there can be no bias resulting from our reliance on the one-dimensional NOMINATE scores.

<sup>14</sup> The scale is arbitrary because there are no fixed or external (to Congress) referents that we can use to rate members. Moreover, we have no way of measuring the size of ideological differences between members: all we can do is state that member A is to the left of member B (perhaps with some other members between them). We cannot say how great the ideological difference between A and B actually is.

<sup>15</sup> This latter statistic is calculated by ranking each observation in the sample and multiplying this rank by 1 if the observation is greater than the predicted median and -1 if the observation is less than the predicted median. The Wilcoxon statistic is then the sum of these weighted ranks. See Hogg and Craig (1978, 314-320).

TABLE 3.3. *Summary of Difference-of-Means Tests on ADA Scores for House Committees, Eighty-sixth to Ninety-seventh Congresses*

Committee	Congress											
	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97
Agriculture	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Appropriations												
Armed Services												
Banking	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Education and Labor												
Foreign Affairs												
Government	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Operations												
Interior												
Interstate Commerce												
Judiciary												
Merchant Marine												
Post Office												
Public Works												
Rules												
Science												
Veterans' Affairs												
Ways and Means												

Notes: + = Mean committee ADA score significantly greater than House mean.

- = Mean committee ADA score significantly lower than House mean.

from 1947 to 1988, we found even less support for the subgovernment thesis than our review of the literature would lead us to expect. For most committees in every Congress, we could not reject the hypothesis that the committee was representative of the rest of the House. Only five committees (discussed later) showed any persistent tendency to be unrepresentative of the House as a whole.

Table 3.3 displays the differences between mean ADA scores for each committee and mean ADA scores for the rest of the House in the Eighty-seventh through Ninety-seventh Congresses.<sup>16</sup> A plus (+) sign indicates that the mean ADA score for a committee was significantly larger than the mean for the rest of the House (i.e., the committee's members were significantly more likely to support the ADA position than was the remainder of the House); a minus (-) sign indicates that the mean ADA score for a committee was significantly less than the mean for the House. As can be seen, the mean ADA score for the Agriculture Committee was significantly lower than

<sup>16</sup> In this chapter we ignore the comments of Hall and Grofman (1990). We shall deal with them in Chapter 9.

the chamber mean in the Eighty-seventh and Ninetieth to Ninety-second Congresses. Further, the membership of the Armed Services Committee was less supportive of the ADA's position than the rest of the House in the Ninety-second to Ninety-seventh Congresses. Education and Labor Committee and Government Operations Committee were significantly more likely than the rest of the chamber to support the ADA-endorsed position for all but a few Congresses. The Judiciary and Banking Committees were occasionally more supportive of the ADA than the rest of the House.

The results in Table 3.3 indicate that only the Agriculture, Armed Services, Education and Labor, and Government Operations Committees were unrepresentative of the House membership more than a few times. Only the Armed Services Committee (after the Ninety-second Congress) and the Education and Labor Committee were consistently unrepresentative. Perhaps the only surprise here is Government Operations, which is not considered to be a major policy committee and therefore was not expected to be unrepresentative. On the other hand, the committees on Foreign Affairs, Interior, Commerce, Merchant Marine and Fisheries, Post Office, Public Works, Science, and Veteran's Affairs tend to be representative on this measure, contrary to the expectations of the subgovernment thesis.

We performed the same kind of difference-of-means analysis using ACA ratings from the Eighty-seventh to Ninety-seventh Congresses. The results, summarized in Table 3.4, show a consistent pattern of unrepresentativeness in only two committees - Armed Services and Education and Labor.

The difference-of-means tests based on the *National Journal's* conservative coalition support scores are in close agreement with those based on ADA ratings. The results, reported in Table 3.5, again shows the committees on Agriculture and Armed Services to be frequently unrepresentative (Agriculture for all but the Ninety-fourth to Ninety-sixth and Armed Services for the Ninety-second to Ninety-seventh Congresses). The members of both committees on average are more supportive of the conservative coalition than the rest of the members of the House. On the other hand, the membership of the Committee on Education and Labor is consistently less supportive of the conservative coalition than the rest of the House. This is true as well for the Banking Committee for the Eighty-sixth, Eighty-seventh, Eighty-eighth, and Ninety-third Congresses; the Foreign Affairs Committee for all but two Congresses after the Ninetieth; the Government Operations Committee for the Eighty-eighth, Ninetieth, and Ninety-first Congresses; and the Judiciary Committee for the Ninety-first to Ninety-third Congresses.

The difference-of-medians tests we derived from the one-dimensional NOMINATE scores reveal much the same pattern among committees as did the difference-of-means tests for ADA and conservative coalition scores. The members of the Agriculture Committee in the Eighty-sixth and the Eighty-ninth to the Ninety-second Congress and of the Armed Services Committee in the Ninety-second to Hundredth Congress were significantly

TABLE 3.4. *Summary of Difference-of-Means Tests on ACA Scores for House Committees, Eighty-sixth to Ninety-seventh Congresses*

Committee	Congress										
	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96
Agriculture					+	+					
Appropriations											
Armed Services					+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Banking											
Education and Labor											
Foreign Affairs					-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Government					-						
Operations											
Interior											
Interstate Commerce											
Judiciary											
Merchant Marine											
Post Office											
Public Works											
Rules											
Science											
Veterans' Affairs										+	+
Ways and Means											

Notes: + = Mean committee ACA score significantly greater than House mean.

- = Mean committee ACA score significantly lower than House mean.

more conservative than the House as a whole. In the Eighty-ninth, Ninety-second, Ninety-fourth, and Ninety-eighth Congresses, the membership of the committee on Education and Labor was significantly more liberal than the House as a whole. The members of the committees on Foreign Affairs, Government Operations, and Judiciary occasionally were significantly more liberal than the membership of the House. These results are summarized in Table 3.6. The remaining committees, including the control committees, are representative of the House over the full period from the Eightieth to Hundredth Congresses (i.e., we cannot reject the null hypothesis for any of those Congresses).<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, we find very little evidence in support of the notion that committees are geographically imbalanced. In fact, we can reject the null hypothesis that a committee is representative of regional groupings in the House only for the Agriculture and Interior Committees. While Agriculture

<sup>17</sup> The results are based on the difference-of-means test for ADA, ACA, and conservative coalition scores and the difference-of-medians test for NOMINATE about 90 percent of the time.

TABLE 3.5. *Summary of Difference-of-Means Tests on Conservative Coalition Scores for House Committees, Eighty-sixth to Ninety-seventh Congresses*

Committee	Congress											
	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97
Agriculture	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+				+
Appropriations												+
Armed Services							+	+	+	+	+	+
Banking	-	-										
Education and Labor	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Foreign Affairs												
Government Operations					-	-						
Interior												
Interstate Commerce												
Judiciary						-	-	-				
Merchant Marine												
Post Office												
Public Works										+		
Rules												
Science												
Veterans' Affairs											+	+
Ways and Means												

Notes: + = Mean committee conservative coalition score significantly greater than House mean.

- = Mean committee conservative coalition score significantly lower than House mean.

overrepresented southern and western members in twelve of twenty-one Congresses, Interior overrepresented westerners in twenty of twenty-one Congresses. We could find no significant regional imbalances, based on a three-way regional breakdown, in any other committees in any of the Congresses we examined.

We thus have very little evidence in support of the subgovernment thesis. Only a handful of committees – Agriculture, Armed Services, Education and Labor, Government Operations, and Interior – are frequently unrepresentative of the ideological or regional groupings in the House. This list falls far short of containing all of the major policy committees in the House.

#### 4. THE REPRESENTATIVENESS THESIS

The recent literature on the committee representativeness thesis has produced mixed results, although a few scholars have found widespread or

TABLE 3.6. *Summary of Difference-of-Medians Tests on NOMINATE Rankings for House Committees, Eightieth to Hundredth Congresses*

Committee	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
Agriculture							+						+								
Appropriations													+								
Armed Services													+								
Banking													+								
Education and Labor													+								
Foreign Affairs													+								
Government Operations													+								
Interior													+								
Interstate Commerce													+								
Judiciary													+								
Merchant Marine													+								
Post Office													+								
Public Works													+								
Rules													+								
Science													+								
Veterans' Affairs													+								
Ways and Means													+								

Notes: + = Median committee NOMINATE score significantly more conservative than House median.  
- = Median committee NOMINATE score significantly more liberal than House median.



consistent support for the hypothesis that the membership of House committees diverge, in some significant way, from the House as a whole.

Using Monte Carlo simulation techniques, Peterson and Wrighton (1994, 1996, 1998) find that Agriculture, Appropriations, Armed Services, Foreign Affairs, and Small Business and Education Committees all show outliers; that is, these committees' members' preferences are ideologically distinct from the floor.<sup>18</sup> Also, employing the same methods, Maltzman and Smith (1994) and Maltzman (1995) find that members on Appropriations and Energy and Commerce are more congruent with chamber preferences than are those on Agriculture. Groseclose (1994), again using the same technique, finds the evidence to be mixed. Adler and Lapinski (1997) and Adler (2000) find that the Appropriations subcommittees are composed of members whose constituency display a high need for that particular committee's jurisdictional goods and services. None of this research conflicts with what we have found.

A few scholars have extended this line of inquiry to the Senate. In examining the 1950s through to the mid-1980s, Sinclair (1989) finds that Appropriations and Finance were consistently unrepresentative of the Senate as a whole. After 1978, however, she finds that they become fairly representative.

Campbell (2001) extended the analysis to include the Forty-fifth through Hundredth Congresses. She finds, first, that even in the Seventieth Congress, which had the *most* unrepresentative committees, fully three quarters of the majority party contingents were representative of the majority party. Second, she finds that with the exception of the Seventieth Congress, all three control committees (Appropriations, Finance, and Rules) were representative.<sup>19</sup>

### 5. CONCLUSION

The evidence presented here on committee representativeness does not support the subgovernment thesis. By our measures, a majority of members of Congress do not serve on committees that are dominated by preference outliers. A handful of semiexclusive and nonexclusive committees tend to be persistently unrepresentative of regional or ideological groupings in the

<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Young and Heithusen (2003), using Monte Carlo simulation techniques, find that levels of partisan bias vary widely according to committee type. Specifically, control committees and policy committees exhibit similar levels of majority partisan bias; however, control committees display much less variance.

<sup>19</sup> Specifically, committees with "uniform externalities" (including Commerce, Interstate Commerce, Foreign Relations, Judiciary, Public Buildings, Post Office, Public Lands, and Privileges and Elections) were representative in 93 percent of the cases; committees with "mixed externalities" (Indian Affairs, Military Affairs, Naval Affairs, Education and Labor, and Pension) were representative in 86 percent of all cases; those with "targeted externalities" (Agriculture, Immigration, and District of Columbia) were representative in 95 percent of all cases. The control committees were representative 92.4 percent of the time (Campbell 2001).

House. For most committees, however, we were unable to reject the null hypothesis that the committees were representative of the interests and preferences in the House.

The tests conducted in this chapter were of course limited to only two of the many dimensions along which one might look for unrepresentativeness in committee personnel. In particular, we did not utilize measures of preference specific to each committee's jurisdiction. However, we doubt that such measures would yield additional support for the subgovernment thesis. In examining eight additional policy-specific interest group ratings, from the National Security Index compiled by the ASC to the ratings of the LCV, we found less support for the subgovernment thesis for each relevant committee than we found using the more general interest group ratings or the one-dimensional NOMINATE scores.

Given these results, is it necessary for committees in the House to maintain a norm of reciprocal deference to each other's handiwork? Most committees are representative of the broader interests of the House. These committees can presumably draft legislation reflecting the diversity of interests in the chamber. Although such legislation no doubt will reflect extensive intra-committee logrolling, it can pass without the need for any intercommittee logrolling.<sup>20</sup> Only a handful of committees are dominated by preference outliers and can be expected to draft legislation that, not being reflective of broader House interests, requires reciprocity among House committees to be passed. But reciprocity would not be forthcoming from the vast majority of House committees because they have no need for intercommittee logrolls and would therefore only bear the cost of passing legislation that did not reflect their interests.

This line of argument is far from showing that intercommittee logrolls do not or cannot occur. But it is sufficient to raise some doubts about the simplest version of the committee government model, in which distinctive panels reciprocally defer to one another's proposals on the floor. Only about a quarter of House committees have been persistently unrepresentative of chamber preferences in the postwar era. Is this enough to sustain a system of committee-based reciprocity as the dominant feature of legislation?

<sup>20</sup> By intercommittee logroll we mean here either an explicit logroll—votes for bill X in exchange for votes for bill Y—or an implicit logroll of the kind envisioned in the concept of deference.