Contents

List of Illustrations vii
List of Tables ix
Preface xi
Introduction: Definitions and Background 1

Part One
Rational Decision Making in U.S. Legislative Committee Systems 11
1 Understanding Individual Preferences in a Committee 13
2 The Internal Forces for Decentralized Agenda Setting in American Legislative Committee Systems 20
3 Party Leadership, Party Caucuses, and Standing Committees: Why Committee Outcomes Are Preferred in the United States 37
4 Does Decentralized Agenda Setting Pay Dividends? 52

Part Two
Lifestyle and Career-Pattern Influences 67
5 Costs and Benefits of Legislative Service 69
6 Self-Interest and Legislative Turnover 82

Part Three
Explorations in Efficiency and Reform 95
7 Risk, Efficiency, and Adaptation in Committee Decision Making 97
8 Committee System Optimalities: Size Preferences and Member Adaptation 106
9 Representation and the Reduction of Complexity in Lawmaking 122
10 The Complex Committee Game 143

Appendix: Survey Information 153
Bibliography 159
Index 165
Illustrations

3.1 Classification of State Chambers According to Importance of Party and Committee Decision Making.

4.1 Percentage of Legislator Responses Indicating Factional Conflict, by Representation of Their Parties in the Legislature.

5.1 Indifference (or Preference) Curves of “Citizen” and “Professional” Legislators.

7.1 Theoretical Relationship between Decision Costs and External Costs.

8.1 Decision/External Cost Functions for Varying Committee Sizes under Constant Decision Rule.

9.1 Relationship between Chamber Size and Four Committee System Characteristics.

10.1 Scenario for Sponsorship Success.

10.2 Counter-Scenario to Sponsorship Success.
Tables

2.1 Minimum Estimate of Bill Sponsorship Rate.

2.2 Tendency of Legislators to Sponsor Bills That Are Assigned to Their Own Committees.

2.3 Average Committee Size and Standard Deviation by Chamber (1981).

2.4 Successful Sponsorships: Percent Leading to Committee Approval or Enactment.

3.1 Influence of Majority Party Advantage and Chamber Size on Party and Committee Decision Making.

3.2 Satisfaction Ratings: Mean Differences between Party Caucus and Committees for Fifty Chambers in which Party Caucus Is Important.

3.3 Comparison of Majority and Minority Party Member Preferences for Committee versus Caucus Outcomes.

4.1 Number of House and Senate Bills Received by Each State Chamber, 1981, and Final Chamber Action.

4.2 Legislator Perceptions of Significant Decision-Making Loci (Frequencies).

4.3 Decision-Making Centralization Scores for State Legislative Chambers.

4.4 Identification of Committee System Problems.

4.5 Variables Affecting the Chamber Passage Rate.

5.1 Number of Workdays, 1981: State Legislative Chambers.
5.2 Majority Member Satisfaction Ratings of Outcomes (Mean Scores).

6.1 Summary of Reasons for Voluntarily Vacating Legislative Seat.

7.1 Committee Work Distributions in a Typical Legislative Day.

8.1 Differences between Preferred and Actual Committee Size (I–A1).

8.2 Differences between Preferred and Actual Committee Size (I–A2).

8.3 Subcommittee Use and the Relationship between Actual and Preferred Committee Size.

8.4 Large and Small Chamber and the Relationship between Actual and Preferred Committee Size (1981).

8.5 Chamber Size, Subcommittee Use, and the Relationship between Actual and Preferred Committee Size (1981).

8.6 Committee Attendance: Relationship to Actual Committee Size and Preferred Committee Size.

8.7 Criticisms of Committee Systems by Senators in Legislatures with Joint Committees and in Other Legislatures.

9.1 Illustrative Cmin and Cmax Values for Increasing Numbers of Members and Proposals.

9.2 Relationship between Committee Characteristics and Time-Costs.

10.1 Relationship between Mean Number of Committee Assignments and “Too Many Committee Assignments” Complaint.