



1971

Mediocrity and Roll-Calls: The Identification of Marginal Congressmen and Some Study of Their Voting Behavior

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MEDIOCRITY AND ROLL-CALLS:
THE IDENTIFICATION OF MARGINAL
CONGRESSMEN AND SOME STUDY
OF THEIR VOTING BEHAVIOR

by

Richard K. Wray

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SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

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Submitted for Honors Work
In the Department of Political Science
Illinois Wesleyan University
Bloomington, Illinois, 1971

Accepted by the Department of Political Science of
Illinois Wesleyan University in fulfillment of the
requirement for departmental honors.

Robert L. Loh

Donald C. Brown

Max A. Pope

to Carol

PREFACE

During the political uproar about a threat of "mediocrity" to the Supreme Court, in response to President Nixon's nominations of Judges Clement Haynsworth and Harold Carswell last year, some of us had our attention diverted to the accusers in addition to the accused. That such bombastic, pious evaluations of a man's value could arise from the Senate, which is far from being above challenge to its own worth, seemed at least curious. It was a letter to the editor of Time magazine¹ which actually deserves the credit for opening this perspective to me. The Author of the letter challenged the "outstanding qualities" commonly attributed to Senator Birch Bayh (D. Ind), because he failed to pass the Indiana bar examination on his first attempt and was a member of a segregated fraternity during his undergraduate days at the University of Indiana.

Although this was a rather trivial accusation it brought to mind the possibility that there could well be a number of mediocre Senators, more hidden from the public eye than the Senator from Indiana, in several corners on Capitol Hill. Of course, the next logical step was to consider the degree of mediocrity which could flourish in the relative obscurity of the House of Representatives.

With the aid of some preliminary reading, it became evident that among certain analysts there exists the belief that mediocrity verges on the point of having a free rein

beneath the surface image of the House. The absence of quantitative analysis on this topic, coupled with the minimal amount of speculative or qualitative analysis available seemed to indicate the area had been largely ignored.

This paper is an extension of a December 1970 work which was less comprehensive, particularly in the area of treatment of voting records, and in regard to criteria for mediocrity. The purpose of this paper is to bring some attention to the fact that there are men in the United States House of Representatives who do very little in the way of becoming involved in the more significant actions taken by the body. The goal here is not to condemn, but simply to quantitatively state who is least active publicly in the House of Representatives. Those men who do the least are defined as mediocre Congressmen in the areas of public House activities. As in the determination of any index of this nature, there will be elements of subjectivity. Subjectivity arises in various aspects of weighting and evaluating as well as within sources of information. However, it is a primary goal in this paper to rely on objectively factual statistics wherever they are available. The specified Congressmen are then classified by political party and section, and their voting records compared to those of others of similar party or section. The measurement of correlations of voting records makes use of the legislative roll call analysis techniques of the index of relative cohesion, the Rice Index, the phi coefficient and chi square.

In any field there are

April 1971

Richard K. Wray

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I

In any field there are some people who excel and some who do poorly; the United States House of Representatives should not be expected to be an exception. A purpose of this paper is to analyze those in the House who perform relatively poorly; their actions and voting. However, it should be noted that a determination of who is mediocre and what effects mediocrity has on voting cannot be expected to explain how or if this factor can be dealt with or eliminated. Three major methods of research are made use of in this study. The initial step of researching the subject was the development of a concept of what it is that constitutes mediocrity in a Congressman, and a determination of which factors could be measured. The second of these is the creation and application of a quantitative definition of mediocrity; and the third method type used is a legislative roll-call analysis. This roll-call analysis will consider the differences in voting patterns between those Congressmen quantitatively deemed to be mediocre and the rest of the House members, within a party-sectional division.

A previous study* has produced data supporting the contention that those Representatives who qualified as mediocre, when considered as one group against the rest of the House, demonstrated no significant difference in voting behavior on

*(R.K. Wray, Mediocrity and the House of Representatives, unpublished term paper, 1970.)

fourteen of fifteen roll-calls analyzed. That is one of the primary reasons that the use of party-sectional divisions is considered essential to this work.

In the past researchers have dealt with questions approaching the range of a study of mediocrity in Congress. A look through the Social Sciences and Humanities Index (formerly the International Index) publications since the 1930's will demonstrate the fact that a significant amount of qualitative study in the areas of Congressional ethics and corruption has been done.² An examination of the scholarly works will illustrate the fact that in this area of ethics and corruption very little of the research has been done on a quantitative basis. However, qualitative analysis has been evident in publications in addition to the scholarly journals. Several news periodicals have featured articles relating to political standards and ethics for years.³ Major successful literary works dealing with the topics of corruption, secret dealing, and various conflicts of interest are led by the work of former newspaper columnist, Drew Pearson, in his well received book, The Case Against Congress.⁴ Other books along this line include that of Walter Goodman, whose major contribution to the field preceded that of Pearson.⁵

In all of the above examples "honesty" is the key factor, as opposed to initiative, inspiration, and imagination which are the primary concerns in this paper. However, the one quantitative study which most nearly approaches the methods used in the measuring of mediocrity does not deal with questions of corruption at all. That study is Donald R. Matthews'

"The Folkways of the United States Senate: Conformity to Group Norms and Legislative Effectiveness,"⁶ The methods used in Matthews' work included the establishment of scales of the amount of floor speaking and legislation introduced for groundwork in determining adherence to group norms. Both of these areas are included in the index of mediocrity established for this study. However, it must be noted that although the two works use some similar forms of research, they are quite different in their priorities. A primary difference is that Matthews was interested in measuring qualities of conformity held by groups of Senators, who qualify as effective to various degrees, while this study seeks to measure qualities of mediocrity in individual Representatives. It is not intended to imply that those who qualify as mediocre are legislatively ineffectual between these two factors. What is hopefully measured here is much closer to effort than to effectiveness.

The actual area of this study, political mediocrity, has been only nominally dealt with in speculative or qualitative research works. And absolutely no evidence of quantitative work on this topic has been found by the author of this study.

The existence of politicians despairingly called "party hacks" has probably been a subject of discussion among voters as long as sophisticated political parties have functioned in the United States, and it seems likely that discussion of similar parallels in various areas of society could be traced to the beginning of recorded history. Implications of these

discussions will hopefully be clarified by the work presented in this study. The first sections of research have been designed to attempt to quantitatively define those factors which contribute to the likelihood that a Congressman will fail to contribute a significant share of effort to his duties as a Representative. In other words, the purpose of the index is to establish what qualities are involved in the previously ambiguous classification of a "party hack" or a "mediocre Congressman", as well as to determine which Representatives could be classified in this category. The hypothesis connected to this segment of the research deals with the contention that mediocrity can be defined, and that any Representative who shows little initiative or interest in regard to his role in the House can be classified as mediocre. (No citations indexed)

Since it is likely that such an individual would not desire public attention in regard to his position on controversial issues of national importance, he should tend to vote as inconspicuously as possible on these issues. Therefore the hypothesis for the second line of research is that the mediocre Congressman will tend to vote with the majority of his party or sectional interest more than the other members on controversial issues of national importance. The reason for sectional in addition to party cohesion is that there are distinct differences among the voting patterns of members of the Democratic Party from different sections of the country.⁷

Because of the limited amount of previous work in this area it is necessary to define operationally what it is that is being measured in this paper. First of all, a basic

reality in any vocation is the fact that some individuals, due to differences of incentive or ability, do a better job than others. Take for example a doctor and a garbage man. It may very well be that perhaps the doctor is a bit clumsy and absent-minded. As a result of these two factors he often leaves unnecessary scars when stitching together lacerations, and he also creates a massive backlog of appointments because of an inefficiently run office. These factors exist as a result of his lack of ability or incentive to correct his shortcomings.

On the other hand perhaps the garbage man never misses a stop, always sticks closely to his schedule, and even offers to pick up objects which he is not required to. For some reason the garbage man has a surplus of incentive and excels in his field. This does not mean that the garbage man is more intelligent or a greater person than the doctor. The doctor who demonstrates overall mediocre ability or inspiration is going to be a poor doctor. However, the garbage man may be mediocre in his abilities and still do a good job in his field. There are places in our society for mediocre people, but those demonstrating a limited incentive or potential do not belong in positions of great responsibility.

In the House of Representatives a failure to live up to the expected standards would materialize in a failure to participate actively in the functions of the legislative body, particularly in nationally important issues; or a lack of advancement within the hierarchy of the body. Both of these factors could be classified as "effects" in contrast to potential "causes" of unsatisfactory behavior, such as a lack

of incentive to excell, and a lack of potential skill or mental ability.

Cause and effect are both immersed in realms not readily attainable by measurement, despite their far-reaching importance. However, cause does flow to effect through human patterns of behavior which are quantifiable, comparable and susceptible of evaluation. Failure to participate, previously identified as effect, can manifest itself, first of all, in an individual's non-involvement in speaking in House sessions. The importance of this factor can be elucidated with the aid of qualitative evaluation from a Wall Street Journal article entitled "How one Congressman Hangs onto His Seat by Wooing Home Folks."⁸ This article deals with Congressmen it terms "party hacks," and who appear to be similar to those studied in this work. These individuals are typified as lacking "inspiration, imagination or initiative," seeking to avoid controversy, and working mainly to help constituents with their personal problems. Finding no cause to dispute these allegations, it becomes advantageous to use them to analyze the various elements of causes and effects identified.

In regard to speaking on the floor of the House, it is a fact that one who lacks inspiration or initiative would show the effect in not making the effort to become involved in this manner. Also since speaking is an important part of a Congressman's role, one who speaks very rarely is apt to be not reaching the standards expected of him. Poor attendance is also an example of behavior representing lack of inspiration and initiative. In most cases one who seldom

attends House sessions would tend not to be fulfilling his duties to the maximum capacity to do so. Imagination in particular in addition to the previously mentioned qualities is evidenced in the legislation introduced by a Congressman. A lack of proposals introduced would also tend to indicate less than an exceptional fulfillment of opportunities. The area of advancement within the structure of the body is best represented by the prestige of the committee assignments received by an individual.⁹ The advancement within party and House leadership positions is also important. If one were to not receive the advancement normally due to one of his position and sincerity it seems logical that, with the reservation noted, this factor is indicative of the value of his work as a Representative. An effect of not excelling would therefore be lack of advancement.

The considerations mentioned in the previous paragraph reflect signs of the manifestations of the type of behavior with which we are dealing. Other factors are likely to indicate causes for this behavior. These include a primary cause for a lack of incentive, the absence of significant party competition for a House seat. If a Congressman knows he does not have to work to maintain his seat, it naturally tends to create an incentive to not excel. The other causes cited include the lack of potential physical or mental ability, as evidenced by advanced age, little formal education, or knowledge of a scandal with which a Congressman was associated. The fact that old age can be detrimental to the work of a Representative is highlighted in an article

from Nation, written by a relative newcomer to the House.¹⁰

A physical impairing of faculties is an element which could contribute to less than exceptional work. A nominal amount of formal education is sometimes indicative of limited intellectual capacity. To the extent that this relationship can be established, a lack of formal education designates limited potential contributing to the likelihood of an inferior fulfillment of duties. And the final one of these factors, association with scandal, needs little elaboration to explain that the negative aspects of this connection could cause a significant loss of potential to serve effectively as a Congressman.

The potentially contributing causes of mediocrity and the effects of those causes, the factors indicating failure to excel, have been identified. Fortunately, it is possible to obtain fairly detailed information in all of the above cited categories, and the information can easily be presented quantitatively. It is the contention of the author of this paper that a quantitative indexing of these criteria in relation to each Congressman is the most equitable and efficient means of determining the role played by each individual. First of all nine different criteria, of differing degrees of importance have been identified. Any assessment of all of these factors for four hundred thirty-five Congressmen without a specified and consistently maintained scale of relative importance would undoubtedly result in inequities. The most reliable and effective way to relate the various criteria is to give each one a numerical weight corresponding to

its importance and evaluate each category numerically from established guidelines to be maintained for all Congressmen. This is the best way to insure an equitable consideration of all cases on consistent criteria. Use of a quantitative method also allows for the clearest presentation of data used as well as enhancing possibilities for reanalysis of the various criteria in regard to their importance. None of these advantages would accrue from a qualitative analysis of these factors.

An operational definition of what this paper deals with was presented above. It was necessary to find a word to apply to this element which is being measured. A member of the House of Representatives, who does not take advantage of his opportunities to excel, could not fairly be termed totally inept.¹¹ It is assumed that those Congressmen, who put forth little effort in areas which do not contribute specifically to individual gain, could best be classified as mediocre. Mediocrity implies "a middle state, or moderate capacity"¹² according to a dictionary definition. But recent applications of this term to political figures indicate a definite negative connotation in its usage. It is expected that national leaders should be outstanding, or at least above average, individuals. Therefore when only mediocre work is done by a Congressman, for example, that work appears in perspective to be relatively inferior.

With this as a basis, the nine factors were established as measurable criteria for mediocrity. These factors are age of the individual, attendance at House sessions, formal

education, legislation introduced, party competition in home district, scandal, speeches made on the House floor, the individual's reputation and committee ratings. The criteria, for each of the members, were evaluated individually, and after each had received a raw score in one category a value from one to five was assigned to that score. One was the ranking of least mediocre up through five which was most mediocre. The lower the ranking, the more positive the denotation. Each of the nine areas was weighted as to its significance, also on a scale of one through five. The higher numbers denoted the more significant factors. A product was obtained for each criterion for each Congressman by multiplying the ranking by its weight. The sums of the nine products are then the index of mediocrity scores for the individual Representatives. Basis for the cutoff between those who qualify as mediocre and those who do not is derived from the previous qualitative work and the numerical sub-par rating for each of the categories.

Division of the Representatives into party-sectional groups resulted in three workable categories. They are Republicans, Southern Democrats, and Northern Democrats. Other studies have made similar divisions including Border Democrats as a fourth category.¹³ The reason this fourth category could not be used in this study was that the number of mediocre Congressmen from this category would be so small no significant data could be gathered by roll-call analysis. The states included in the division used here are listed in Table Seven.

Fourteen different roll-call votes on issues of a national scope, which were mainly party-sectional issues, were selected for analysis. Party-sectional issues were determined by votes on which there was a significant degree of party or sectional cohesion. Then mediocre Congressmen, within the three party-sectional divisions, were compared to their colleagues, from the same divisions, on their varying degrees of cohesion to the majority vote of their respective party or section. For each of the roll-calls analyzed the statistical methods used were the index of relative cohesion, Rice Index of cohesion, the phi coefficient, and chi square.

The reason for the selection of this two-fold methodology is, first of all, that a concrete quantitative definition of mediocrity in a Congressman must be firmly established before one can begin to speak of individual voting records. The establishment of this definition is the purpose of the first process, the index of mediocrity for each Congressman. Once the mediocre Representatives have been specified the second phase of the methodology, the roll-call analysis, can be used. This portion of the research was selected to either substantiate or refute the hypothesis that mediocre Congressmen will vote more closely with the party or sectional category of which they are members.

The reason the determination of which Congressmen were mediocre was chosen to be done on a quantitative basis was, primarily, to remove as many conceivable biased personal judgments as possible. Obviously there are still some subjective points of evaluation in the index, but they have been limited

to a minimum. Any non-quantitative estimation of who qualified as mediocre in the Ninety-First Congress, in this paper, would have had to depend almost fully on the opinions of various reporters and columnists. No first hand observation could be feasible. Due to the reasons that this type of information would be likely to be biased, that opinions would be available on only a very few of the members of the House, that few criteria for judgment would have been established for uniformity, and that this basis for categorization would be more conducive to libel, the quantitative method has been deemed to be more advantageous. With the method used in this paper information was readily available on all of the Representatives, most categories were strictly statistical and without subjective bias, the criteria for judgment are clear and it is less likely to bring charges of libel.

The methods chosen for statistical treatment of the selected roll-calls are standard for a roll call analysis. The Rice Index figure will give the percentage of party cohesion for each vote, and the chi square and phi coefficient will gauge the significance of any differentiation in the voting of those who qualify as mediocre. This will create a statistical guide to each vote and enhance a comparison of the voting of the mediocre Congressmen to the others on issues causing differing degrees of cohesion.

II

The quantitative elements of mediocrity, according to the definition used in this paper, have been listed above.

The next element of concern will be to explain the criteria for the ranking and weighting of each category, along with the rationale for the use of the category, and evaluation of the data obtained. (Throughout this paper the lower rating will indicate less likelihood toward mediocrity, while the higher ratings will be factors contributing to mediocrity. (See Table One) All ratings are on a basis of one to five. The weight of any of one criterion can be from one to five also. The higher the number in the weight category, the more significant that criterion in determination of the total evaluation. The rating is multiplied by the weight to determine the product for each category, and the products are totalled to arrive at the total score for one individual.)

But before delving into the statistical analysis of the data obtained, it is necessary to point out some pertinent facts applying to this analysis. This paper deals only with the 91st Congress. It is imperative that that be kept in mind, because those who qualify as mediocre in the study of these two sessions of the 91st Congress will not necessarily qualify as mediocre in the study of any other years. One primary example to illustrate this fact is that although Representative F. Edward Hébert (D. La.) was ranked as one of the most mediocre Congressmen in this study,¹⁴ he would quite possibly not qualify as mediocre at all in the 92nd Congress now in session. The main reason for this change is that Congressman Hébert inherited the chairmanship of the House Armed Services Committee when L. Mendel Rivers (D. S.C.) died earlier this year.¹⁵ Results of this change would in-

TABLE ONE -- Sample of sheet used to compile mediocrity scores

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES - MEDIOCRITY SCORE

CONGRESSMAN _____

STATE _____ DISTRICT _____

PARTY _____ POPULATION _____

HOMETOWN _____ TYPE DISTRICT _____

CRITERIA	WEIGHT	RATING	PRODUCT
Age factor	4		
Attendance at House sessions	3		
Committee evaluation	5		
Formal education	1		
Introduction of legislation	4		
Party competition in district	5		
Scandal	5		
Speeches on floor	4		
Reputation	4		

PAGE _____

TOTAL SCORE _____

clude a considerable increase in number of speeches made, a bettering of his committee rating and reputation, as well as several other factors which could cut off enough points to bring him below the mediocrity cut-off. Although changes of this sort are not common it is important to remember that an individual's qualification in this study will not necessarily affect his rating in any other Congress.

It is also important to note that the various criteria applied to the study of the 91st Congress in this work would be applicable to a study of any other session of the Congress with minor adjustments in some cases. This is another advantage of the use of a quantitative methodology.

Returning to the quantitative elements of mediocrity, the first of these to be considered is the age of the Congressman. According to the study of Leonard Z. Breen¹⁶ an individual's capability for activity will generally decrease in his latter years. However, Breen does state that there is a considerable variation possible from person to person. The gauging of this factor accepts the analysis that a significantly older individual will be less likely to fulfill his role as a Congressman as actively as a more average-aged Representative. There is the possibility that the very young Congressman would suffer disadvantages in fulfilling his role effectively also. But these disadvantages would not accrue directly from physically disabling effects resulting from his comparative youth. It would be more likely that his youth would bar him from those ~~privileges~~ associated with seniority, factors which would be reflected in other criteria. Also, as has been

TABLE TWO -- Criteria guidelines for mediocrity ratings

Age factor

- 1 1910 +
- 2 1900 - 1909
- 3 1895 - 1899
- 4 1890 - 1894
- 5 1889 -

Party competition

- 1 100 - 90.0
- 2 89.9 - 75.0
- 3 74.9 - 60.0
- 4 59.9 - 30.0
- 5 29.9 - 0.0

Attendance

- 1 0 - 1 absence
- 2 2
- 3 3 - 6
- 4 7 - 10
- 5 11 +

Scandal

- 1 no knowledge of any scandal
- 2 allegations of scandal
- 3 some evidence of scandal
- 4 significant exposure of scandal
- 5 obvious guilt, national attention

Formal education

- 1 exceptional graduate work
- 2 some graduate work
- 3 college degree
- 4 some college
- 5 no college

Speeches on floor

- 1 19 +
- 2 12 - 18
- 3 5 - 11
- 4 2 - 4
- 5 0 - 1

Legislation introduced

- 1 16 + bills
- 2 9 - 15
- 3 4 - 8
- 4 2 - 3
- 5 0 - 1

Reputation

- 1 major leader
- 2 some leadership, ran for high office
- 3 average or no information
- 4 moderately negative information
- 5 very negative information

Committee evaluation - (see Table Four)

previously stated, the main concern of this paper is to establish mediocre behavior among those who have had opportunities to excell and have not done so.

A rating of one, the most positive rating, was given to all Congressmen born in 1910 or more recently.¹⁷ Since the two years covered by the 91st Congress are 1969 and 1970 this would imply that any Congressman under the age of sixty years would not be

adversely affected by his age. As can be seen in Table Two, a rating of two was given to those from the approximate ages of sixty to seventy, and a rating of three to those born from 1895 to 1899. The adversely high ratings of four and five were reserved respectively for those between the approximate ages of eighty and eighty-five and those over eighty-five. It was decided that it was reasonable to assume Representatives would be less affected by age than figures would indicate for the average person. There have been many examples of exceptional performances in Congress by the most elderly of the Representatives. This category was weighted as four, one less than the highest, because of the realization that differences exist in the effect that aging has on different individuals, but that this can also be a very significant factor in some cases.

Second on the list of criteria is the regularity of attendance of each Representative at House sessions. The method used to determine attendance was to select a random sample of thirty legislative days from the 91st Congress, fifteen from each the first session and the second session.¹⁸ The goal of a selection by the use of a table of random numbers was to give the most representative cross section of legislative days. The only criterion used for selection was that one half of the days should come from each session to insure a greater distribution. Other than that the selection was totally random. These same thirty days were used for the random sampling involved in the determination of the ratings for introduction of legislation and speeches given on the

House floor.

In twenty-five of the thirty meetings selected, either roll-calls or roll-call votes were taken. It was, therefore, possible to determine which Representatives were absent on those days. The number of absences varied from none to twenty-four of the twenty-five days. The criteria for ratings are listed in Table Two. Those with very few absences received ratings of one or two, while the greatest number of Congressmen received ratings of three, and lesser numbers, of those absent from more meetings, were given fours. A rating of five was credited to those who missed nearly half or more of the sampled meetings.¹⁹ The attendance factor was given a weight of only three. Even though it would be extremely difficult to miss all of the meetings and be a good Congressman, it is realized that attendance is not one of the most important primary factors involved in the contribution any single Representative makes. Some observations, which seem to support the case for a low weight in this category, were that several individuals with very few absences spoke very rarely and also that a disproportionate number of those with top ratings in formal education had very poor attendance records.²⁰

Next in the list of criteria is the one which was most complex to determine, the committee evaluation. Much of the real work in the House is done behind the scenes in the several standing committees. There is no simple way to measure the contribution any Congressman makes to the committees of which he is a member, but the method used here is not extremely

TABLE THREE -- Congressmen's view of House committees

Committee prestige

A -- highest

- 1 Appropriations
- 2 Ways and Means
- 3 Rules

10 Public Works

11 Interior and Insular Affairs

C -- lowest

B -- middle

- 4 Foreign Affairs
- 5 Judiciary
- 6 Armed Services
- 7 Commerce
- 8 Science and Astronautics
- 9 Agriculture

12 House Administration

13 Government Operations

14 Banking and Currency

15 Merchant Marine

16 District of Columbia

17 Internal Security

18 Education and Labor

19 Veterans Affairs

20 Post Office and Civil Service

complicated and is hopefully relatively accurate. The evaluation used in this case operates on the principle that the contribution made by a Representative is reflected in his committee advancement. From several sources comes the information that different committees are considered to warrant various degrees of prestige²¹ or differ in their exclusive or nonexclusive nature.²²

Raymond E. Wolfinger and Joan Heifetz have expressed the opinion that those Congressmen who are most concerned about fulfilling their roles in the House tend to seek advancement through the seniority system to positions of leadership in committees or to seats on the most prestigious or exclusive committees.²³ With the available information it was a minor matter to separate the House standing committees into three distinct categories. The divisions are illustrated in Table Three.

TABLE FOUR -- Scale of guidelines for committee evaluation ratings

Committee evaluation

If Congressman elected
before 1946

- 1 ch A
- 2 ch B
- 3 ch C, m A
- 4 m B
- 5 m C

elected 1948 - 1952

- 1 ch A, A+
- 2 ch B, m A
- 3 ch C, mBB
- 4 m B, m BC
- 5 m C, m CC

elected 1954 - 1958

- 1 A+
- 2 m A, B+
- 3 m B, BC
- 4 C+
- 5 C

elected 1960 - 1962

- 1 m A
- 2 m B+, m BC+
- 3 m B, m C, m BC
- 4 m C
- 5 none

elected 1964 - 1970

- 1 m A, m BB
- 2 m BC
- 3 m B, m CC
- 4 m C
- 5 none

key - ch=chairman; m=member;
capital letters = prestige of com-
mittee; a + = anything more than
membership in that level commit-
tee. Each category is the minimum
requirement for receiving the
equivalent rating.

It would have been simple to proclaim the worse the com-
mittee appointment the higher the index rating across the board.
However, the effect of the seniority system necessitated the
use of a sliding scale to account for differing lengths of
membership in the House. It is not difficult to understand
that the freshman Congressman with one low prestige committee
appointment and the twenty-five year House veteran with a
single low prestige committee position are likely to indicate
quite different situations. The sliding scale for five approx-
imately equal groups of Representatives with different amounts
of seniority is outlined in Table Four. Membership on Joint
Committees and Special Committees was also taken into consider-

ation requiring a flexible interpretation of the scale. No attempt will be made to justify this whole table point by point; the evidence of strong support for the concept behind this type of rating will be assumed to be justification enough. Because of the well substantiated principle behind this scale and the importance of committee work this factor was weighted at the maximum, five.²⁴

Fourth in the list of criteria was the degree of formal education experienced by the Congressman. The educational backgrounds ranged from high school attendance for some to Rhodes Scholarships and Ph. D.'s for others.²⁵ The plurality of Representatives received ratings of three on the scale outlined in table two. This factor was included since it is assumed that a Representative who failed to graduate from high school could be more likely to be potentially mediocre, while an exceptionally well-educated individual would be more likely to achieve excellence. However, standards of education have changed dramatically over the years spanned by the members of Congress, and it is also difficult to document and establish any direct correlation of enthusiasm or effort to education in these cases. For primarily these two reasons education was given the lowest weight possible in this system, a one.

Legislation introduced was the fifth element to be included in the list of criteria. It has previously been mentioned that the introduction of legislation was one of the three factors investigated through the use of a random sample of House meetings. Public bills, resolutions, and joint

resolutions were considered for all thirty of the selected legislative days. Since aid to constituents through private bills or memorials does not necessarily contribute directly to the making of a good Congressman in areas of national policy, these areas of legislation were not included in the number of bills introduced. One of the major reasons this category was selected as one of the nine criteria was the fact that the amount of legislation introduced should be representative of the creative initiative of a Representative. It is realized that the number of bills may also indicate that the individual is either associated with the administration or actively involved with pressure groups. However, these factors, if they result in public involvement, also can contribute to making the Congressman more active in important issues.

Because of the element of initiative all proposals listed as being made by a Representative for someone other than himself have been eliminated from the count. Also, in the frequent case of there being several co-sponsors for a single piece of legislation, only the member introducing the bill received credit for it. The reason none of the co-sponsors received credit for the same proposal is, again, the idea of initiative. It is assumed that the person introducing a piece of legislation was primarily responsible for its development and progress. Following these assumptions to their logical conclusion, it must be conceded that the introduction of legislation is a sign of initiative and often imagination.

The number of bills introduced by an individual Congressman ranged from zero to ninety-one in the thirty legislative days of the random sample.²⁶ Table Two lists the scope of each of the five ratings; in this case also the largest number of Representatives received ratings of three. There were quite a large number of individuals who qualified for ratings of four and five. It is suspected that our reason for this was the fact that there seemed to be a tendency for a few Congressmen to introduce bills in a group on one day.²⁷ Since a random sampling procedure was used it would be possible that some individuals could have been inaccurately represented to a certain extent. However, the size of the random sample, nearly ten percent of all the legislative days, as well as the fact that January 3, 1969, the opening day of the 91st Congress on which a great number of bills were introduced, was included in the sample are major factors adding to the reliability of the statistics.

The possibility of inaccuracy was considered in giving the introduction of legislation category a weight of four, keeping in mind its potential as a effective gauge of initiative. In similar surveys the problems of a random sampling procedure could be avoided by the use of journals listing all public bills made during a session of Congress.²⁸ However, at the time of this final draft, these journals for the full 91st Congress are not available.

The next criterion in the list of mediocrity index factors was that of party competition in members' home districts. Party competition figures were calculated according to the

formula used by John H. Fenton in his book, People and Parties in Politics.²⁹ Scores for the 435 districts, derived from the use of the formula, varied within the total range from zero to 99.8.³⁰ The scores were distributed approximately equally throughout the one to five scale within the guidelines listed in Table Two. One note of caution must be made in regard to this factor. In all cases party competition was measured in the final election only. Therefore, some of the Congressmen, particularly in the South, could have had a greater degree of competition in the primary than in the final election, and that competition would not have been measured.

However, in almost all cases, the most important race is in the final election, and the significance of the degree of confidence given the Representative cannot be overlooked. After all, the main necessity for most politicians is to remain in office. If a Congressman realizes his position is constantly in jeopardy, he must constantly keep on top of things. However, if a Representative is quite sure of his position there is a much greater incentive to lapse into a less active role in important affairs. Because of the many implications of this factor, and in spite of the minor possibility of bias, it was given a weight of five.

Seventh in the index is the criterion of scandal. This factor has a very limited application within the categories listed in Table Two and with the information available. A weight of five is given to the scandal rating out of respect for its potential destructiveness of the reputation and power of any Congressman. However, in almost all cases the

rating of one was given.³¹

Speeches delivered on the floor of the House of Representatives were the subject for the eighth point of the index. The data for this area was gathered from the same random sample of thirty legislative days, fifteen from each session. Each member was credited with one speech for each time his name appeared on a different page of the Congressional Record.³² The effect of this was twofold. First of all it gave the same weight to each prepared speech regardless of the number of pages of statistics or length of the text either read or inserted into the record. Secondly this procedure allowed consideration of participation in debate. If debate continued on for several pages in the Congressional Record the speakers were given credit for the degree of their participation by the use of this method. In this manner debate was given an important place in consideration of speeches from the floor. It does illustrate involvement and initiative.

No credit was given for making motions to adjourn, to call the roll, or to vote; for requests for committees or subcommittees to meet while the House was in session; for adjusting the legislative calendar, (usually the duty of the majority and minority leaders); for roll-calls or roll-call votes; for announcements; or for speaking from the Chair. The number of speeches credited ranged from zero to 119. Although it may be difficult to believe, considering the great quantities of speeches made by some Congressmen, the average rating was evenly divided between threes and fours as outlined in Table Two. This was the lowest average of any of

the individual criteria, indicating that scores were skewed toward some Representatives with greater numbers of speeches.

As in the case of the legislation introduced, it could have been possible to use another source, this time the Congressional Record Index, instead of a random sample, if there had been a greater time from the conclusion of the 91st Congress to the time of this research. However, there would not have been a clear cut case in favor of the use of the Index in this instance. A major factor which would have been lost by the use of the Index was that participation in actual debate, instead of only speeches, was measured through the use of the random sampling technique. Use of the Index would have allowed inclusion of the whole length of the Congress and more ease in computation, two factors which would have worked to offset the advantages of the random sample method.

This element of House speaking ranks, behind committee work, as one of the most significant areas of active contribution by a Representative. It is not as basic as the committee progress or home district party competition of a Congressman in determining his tendencies toward mediocrity. Involvement in speaking on the floor of the House and in debates is not the type of activity which would seem attractive to a candidate for a high rating of mediocrity on the basis defined in this study. For these reasons a weight of four was given to this factor.

The final area of concern was that of the reputation of the individual Congressman. This subjective-sounding criterion was treated as objectively as feasible. A great majority

of the Representatives received ratings of three on the guidelines specified in Table Two. Leadership positions within the House structure, other than those arising directly from seniority, and candidacy for higher office were the major elements contributing to ratings of one or two in this category, while substantiated lack of success or respect was the main factor in determination of evaluations of four or five.³³ The weight of four was given to this area because it is logical that with only a few obvious departures from the average score on this point, and with clear reasons for those departures, the factors causing them are likely to be significant and should be reflected in the score.

Reconsideration of the weighting used in these nine criteria would be the only major change necessary to adapt these factors to a different time in history. For example, in a time of less innovation in the field of educational norms a greater weight could be given to the formal education category. The feasibility of using any specific weight depends upon the circumstances relating to the criterion involved. Flexibility of the weighting allows for the available information to be reliably incorporated into the concept of mediocrity at any given time.

These nine characteristics make up a scale of mediocrity from which a mathematical model of the minimum requirements for a theoretically mediocre Congressman can be drawn. All nine factors contribute to the definition, and although some are weighted more heavily than others no one or two factors alone can result in any Representative being classified as

mediocre. In this consideration of a mathematical model of an individual who would qualify as mediocre, it is important to keep in mind the verbalized concept of mediocrity presented earlier in this paper.

The two most influential factors in the index are those of party competition and committee rating. Both of these have weights of five, the most significant. We would expect the mediocre Congressman to have a rating of four or less in at least one of these two areas. Scandal has also been weighted at five, but realistically, since there are so few examples in this category, a rating of one can be anticipated. As we progress toward a consideration of the factors with weightings of four, it can be noted that forty points have been accumulated so far.

The reputation factor closely parallels that of scandal; a fair analysis indicates a rating of three, in this case, is extremely likely. A rather poor showing could easily place ratings of four in both the speeches and introduction of legislation criteria. Quite possibly the Representative would be under sixty, giving him a rating of one in the age category. With the inclusion of the four-weighted products the total has risen to eighty-eight. Anticipated averages in the absence category, weighted at three, and the education category, weighted as one, would produce threes for both of those scores bringing the cumulative total to one hundred points.

These minimum requirements would result in the model of a mathematically mediocre Congressman being one who has not risen to a position of power within the committee structure,

has no serious threat from the opposing party in the way of competition for his job, and has shown little initiative in his work as illustrated by his poor ratings in the areas of legislation introduced and speeches on the floor. Keeping in mind the verbal definition of mediocrity presented earlier in this paper it can be seen that the theoretical individual just described apparently fulfills the requirements of lack of incentive, ability, or initiative which typify a mediocre Congressman. It should also be noted that an average rating in each category would produce a score of eighty-seven, well below the level of the mathematical model presented here.

After the consideration of a mathematical model for mediocrity it is possible to examine the establishment of a real cut-off point. First of all, any member of the House elected for the first time in 1964 or more recently was automatically eliminated from consideration due to the fact that this rating system would be rather harsh on an unestablished newcomer. It was not the spirit of this study to consider the problems of new Congressmen, but rather to analyze an inactive and established base of mediocrity. With these guidelines, forty-five members still qualified with scores of 100 or higher. An analysis of Representatives with scores of 98 or 99 determined that several of them had fairly respectable scores outside of products of 25. in party competition, or else were just on the verge of being disqualified because of too little time in office.³⁴ These considerations eliminated those at rankings just below 100 from qualification.

TABLE FIVE -- Congressmen with high ratings

Those qualifying as mediocre

Abbitt	114	Hansen (Wash)	100
Baring	106	Hawkins	115
Barrett	120	Hebert	124
Bell	111	Jarmon	111
Berry	105	Jones (Ala)	113
Betts	102	Landrum	117
Blanton	101	Lennon	104
Burlison (Tex)	110	Mosher	102
Cabell	101	Murphy (Ill)	103
Clancy	101	Nix	109
Clark	105	O'Konski	107
Corbett	109	Philbin	110
Davis (Ga)	110	Poage	103
Dawson	129	Quie	102
Diggs	107	Powell	146
Dowdy	114	Roberts	109
Dulski	100	Stafford	103
Fountain	102	Stephens	119
Frelinghuysen	102	Stubblefield	107
Freidel	103	Wilson (B. Cal)	108
Green (Ore)	107	Wylder	102

Most individuals with scores of 100 or higher seemed to have universally poor ratings in most categories. However, three Congressmen of the forty-five, Representatives Andrews (Ala), Passman (La), and Wright (Tex), had good scores in speaking on the floor, coupled with products of 25 in party competition. All three Southerners also had total scores which would have been below the cut-off point had the party competition scores been 20 or less.³⁵ Since in these cases the competition factor, which is not the fault of the Representative, seemed to contradict the other indicators, these three individuals were dropped from the list of mediocre Congressmen.

TABLE SIX -- A breakdown of those qualifying as mediocre

Where the mediocrity comes from

<u>Southern Democrats</u>		<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Northern Democrats</u>	
14		12	16	
<u>rural</u>	<u>medium rural</u>		<u>medium urban</u>	<u>urban</u>
19	5		5	13
<u>South</u>	<u>East</u>		<u>Mid-West</u>	<u>West</u>
14	11		11	6

In the final analysis with scores ranging from the low of 55 to the high of 146,³⁶ forty-two Congressmen qualified within the guidelines set to determine a mediocre Representative in the 91st Congress. Those qualifying are listed along with their scores in Table Five.³⁷ A breakdown of the regional and party ties of the Congressmen listed in Table Five is presented in Table Six. It should be noted that it's quite likely the party competition factor had a definite impact on the outcome of the scores. This is evidenced by the fact that one-party districts are most common in rural Southern or extreme urban areas, both of which are Democratic strongholds, and seem to be the primary sources of those who qualified.

Now that it has been determined that certain Congressmen were quantitatively defined as mediocre during the 91st Congress, attention must be directed to another aspect of the accumulation of data. Since a roll-call analysis was to be used with the idea of illustrating cohesion to party-sectional lines it was necessary to establish and define those lines. For a reason already introduced, that is the small number of

TABLE SEVEN -- Party-sectional classification

Those states classified as "Southern"

Alabama	North Carolina
Arkansas	South Carolina
Florida	Tennessee
Georgia	Texas
Louisiana	Virginia
Mississippi	

Border Democrats in Congress, the often used division of our political nation into the coalitions of Republicans, Southern Democrats, Northern Democrats, and Border Democrats will be reduced to Republicans, Southern Democrats and Northern Democrats. This definition is specified in Table Seven in which the states involved and the resulting breakdown of Congressional districts is clarified.

Fourteen roll-call votes have been selected for analysis; four of them come from the first session of the 91st Congress, and ten of them from the second session.³⁸ All fourteen issues are listed in Table Eight. The reason there are more from the second session is that there was a greater number of significant issues voted upon toward the close of the Congress' meetings.³⁹ Ten of the roll-calls used were votes on party-sectional issues of significance. Two, numbers four and fourteen, were incidental, minor issues and two other votes, numbers five and seven were non-partisan issues. These different types of votes were used to give perspective to the analysis of the cohesion of mediocre Congressmen to party-sectional lines in various cases. A party-sectional issue, as defined

TABLE EIGHT -- Roll-calls used for analysis

Amend Labor and HEW Appropriation	(1)	July 31, 1969
Amend Federal Employees Pay Increase	(2)	October 14, 1969
Recommit Bank Holding Company Act	(3)	November 5, 1969
Potato Growers' Expansion	(4)	November 12, 1969
Defense Procurement Act	(5)	May 6, 1970
Amend Emergency Home Financing	(6)	June 25, 1970
Newspaper Preservation	(7)	July 8, 1970
Amend Congressional Reform	(8)	September 17, 1970
Amend Mass Transit	(9)	September 29, 1970
Foreign Trade	(10)	November 19, 1970
Amend Occupational Safety	(11)	November 24, 1970
Supersonic Transport	(12)	December 8, 1970
Amend Food Stamp Reform	(13)	December 16, 1970
Previous Question on Conference Report on Food Stamps	(14)	December 30, 1970

for this paper, is an issue in which the majority of the Republicans opposed a majority of the Northern Democrats. The method in which roll-call votes were selected was to find the dates on which the House voted on the most significant issues as defined and published in the Congressional Quarterly "Weekly Report." These issues were pursued in the Congressional Records to determine if there was any party-sectional issue evident in the vote on the bill, an amendment to it, or its recommittal. The primary procedure used to estimate whether a vote was likely to be a party-sectional issue before actually counting all the votes, was to determine whether key individuals had opposed each other. If the Republicans, Anderson of Illinois, caucus chairman; Arends, whip; Ford, minority leader; and Morton, future Cabinet member opposed Democrats, Albert, majority leader; Boggs, whip; Ottinger, future Senatorial candidate; and Rostenkowski, caucus chairman; the chances were the issue was divided along partisan lines.⁴⁰

After a selection of votes on this basis the actual count of the votes from each category was made.

Four-fold (two by two) tables were constructed for each of the party-sectional divisions as well as the overall majority-non-majority vote for each of the roll-calls. In all cases the four-fold table measured the mediocre Congressmen voting with and against the majority, compared to the other Congressmen voting with and against the majority.⁴¹ In all fourteen cases the votes were analyzed by computation of the index of relative cohesion, the Rice Index, the phi coefficient, and chi square as shown in table nine.⁴²

The Rice Index was used to measure overall cohesion of the whole body voting either "yea" or "nay", on each of the bills rather than being put to its more common usage of measuring intra party cohesion. The statistics from this index illustrate that in only two cases, votes number five and seven, did the minority opinion receive fewer than one hundred votes. It has already been mentioned that these are the two non-partisan, one-sided issues. Therefore in almost all of the examples used the overall vote on the issue was relatively close. However, to contrast the findings of the Rice Index, the index of relative cohesion, which is used here to measure overall cohesion to party-sectional divisions, indicates that there is a strong adherence to party-sectional lines. The only two cases in which fewer than two-thirds of the Representatives follow their party-sectional majorities are on roll-calls number ten and twelve. These examples are the result of the obscuring of party lines on certain

TABLE NINE -- Results of statistical evaluations

<u>Rice Index</u>	<u>Index of Relative Cohesion</u>
1 0.424	1 71.60
2 0.061	2 89.40
3 -0.324	3 78.92
4 -0.073	4 67.03
5 0.650	5 82.62
6 0.309	6 88.18
7 0.547	7 77.84
8 -0.090	8 75.00
9 0.159	9 78.84
10 0.132	10 58.01
11 0.122	11 87.60
12 0.101	12 64.06
13 -0.031	13 84.05
14 0.080	14 88.72

Phi Coefficient (range from +1 to -1 through zero)

Overall	Republicans	Southern Dem.	Northern Dem.
1 0.0437 less	-0.0568 more	0.1085 less	0.1127 less
2 -0.0040 m	-0.0941 m	-0.1939 m	-0.1318 l
3 -0.1060 m	-0.0959 m	0.1021 m	0.0966 m
4 -0.0557 m	-0.0083 l	-0.2017 m	-0.0584 m
5 -0.0193 m	0.0964 l	-0.0769 m	-0.0461 m
6 0.0657 l	-0.0257 m	-0.0296 m	-0.0982 l

Phi - continued

	Overall	Republicans	Southern Dem.	Northern Dem.
7	-0.0135 m	0.0369 l	-0.0186 m	-0.0038 m
8	-0.0055 m	0.0104 l	0.1302 m	-0.0021 l
9	0.0727 l	0.0793 l	0.0042 l	-0.0909 l
10	-0.1470 m	-0.0420 m	-0.0929 m	-0.1832 m
11	0.0824 l	0.0810 l	-0.1172 m	-0.2260 l
12	0.0426 l	0.0181 l	-0.1216 m	-0.2034 l
13	0.0785 l	0.1168 l	-0.0868 m	-0.3067 l
14	0.0536 l	-0.0875 m	-0.0669 m	-0.2524 l

Chi Square -- (same categories) -- one degree of freedom for all tables

1	0.503	0.208	0.404	0.175
2	0.041	0.414	1.604	1.311
3	3.337	0.721	0.190	11.261
4	0.782	0.063	1.986	0.127
5	0.026	0.485	0.078	0.071
6	0.827	2.102	0.027	0.514
7	0.003	0.010	0.084	0.093
8	0.010	0.056	0.565	0.147
9	1.295	0.301	0.113	0.505
10	7.278	0.042	0.130	3.764
11	1.861	0.254	0.431	5.075
12	0.431	0.012	0.473	4.787
13	1.519	1.017	0.113	8.365
14	0.288	0.057	0.001	4.209

Chi squares range from 2% at 0.0006 to 99.9% at 10.827.

international and defense issues such as, in these two cases, a foreign trade bill and appropriations for the S S Transport.⁴³

The phi coefficient illustrates in which cases the cohesion to the party-sectional line was greater by the mediocre Congressmen than by the others. When the numbers in the "A" and "C" squares of the four-square table are larger than those of the "B" and "D" squares, in other words when there are more "yea" than "nay" votes in the party-sectional examples, a negative phi coefficient means that there was more cohesion among the mediocre Congressmen. This relation holds true for all fourteen of the overall statistics in the phi category. To help clarify this point, the word "more" or "less" has been added to each statistic for the phi coefficient in Table Nine.

In seven of the fourteen roll-calls the results illustrated that there was more cohesion to party-sectional lines among those qualifying as mediocre. Of the seven in which a greater amount of cohesion was demonstrated by mediocre Congressmen, three were issues of little significance or nominal party-sectional dispute. However, the two most significant overall statistics are also included in those of more cohesion among mediocre Congressmen. They are roll-calls number three and ten, at -0.106 and -0.147 respectively.

Also of interest is the fact that in the party-sectional sub-categories, twenty-four of the forty-two show a greater degree of cohesion among those Congressmen defined as mediocre. The Southern Democrats' phi coefficients showed more cohesion among the mediocre Congressmen in twelve of the fourteen examples. Seven of the phi coefficients for the Republicans

showed more cohesion among mediocre party members. However, only five of the fourteen figures for the Northern Democrat category indicated more cohesion among the mediocre Congressmen. Under further analysis these figures may prove to be important.

Because the hypothesis for this paper was that mediocrity should cause greater agreement within areas where the index of relative cohesion has already illustrated a significant degree of agreement, it is not surprising to find the overall chi square scores are rather low in most cases. It was not expected that mediocrity could be shown to be the primary factor affecting the votes of the Congressmen involved, but rather that it should have some affect. In only eight of the fourteen roll-calls did the overall chi square indicate a greater than fifty percent probability that any difference between the voting of the mediocre and the other Congressmen was caused by something other than chance. That is equivalent to a chi square greater than 0.455. Of these eight votes, five of them demonstrated less adherence to the party-sectional line by the mediocre Congressmen, according to the phi coefficient statistics. However, of the three cases in which there was more cohesion by the mediocre Representatives, two of them produced chi squares which translate to mean there is a greater than ninety percent probability that chance alone did not cause the difference. None of the other five reached even an eighty-five percent probability. Roll-call number ten, with a chi square of 7.278, and a greater than ninety-

nine percent probability that more than chance caused the difference between the two groups, is the only example of an overall chi square which rises above the usual ninety-five percent level of significance.

Of the forty-two chi squares from the party-sectional groups only five reach the ninety-five percent level of significance. Amazingly all five, plus a sixth which converts to ninety-four percent, are from the Northern Democrats' category. Of the six cases half showed more cohesion by the mediocre Congressmen according to the phi coefficient and the other three showed less. But it is worthy to note that in the four examples, of these six, in which there was clearly a conservative and liberal side to the issue⁴⁴ the mediocre Northern Democrats voted more conservatively than the other Northern Democrats.

III

In summary of the data presented it is important to add that some attention must be given to the six appendixes included with this paper. The data contained in them is essential to the understanding and substantiation of the claims made and statistics produced in the nine tables within the body of the text. The scale of mediocrity, presented in this paper, has necessarily been limited to those qualities which could be statistically quantified from information available. It is believed that the integrity of the research has been supported strongly in regard to the index of mediocrity. But there are several additional qualities

which contribute to mediocrity or "party hack-ism" which would be much more difficult to measure. Factors such as interaction with constituents, evaluation by colleagues, percentage of major debate slept through,⁴⁵ and activism on major issues could definitely contribute to the analysis if they could be determined. For the present the scale used here, which approximates ability through education and age,⁴⁶ action through attendance, committee evaluation and speeches on the floor,⁴⁷ initiative through legislative formulation,⁴⁸ inspiration through party competition,⁴⁹ and adds an evaluation of subjective factors affecting reputation,⁵⁰ has served the purpose of determining which individuals in the 91st Congress had the greatest tendencies toward mediocrity. It could be possible to improve the accuracy of the heavily weighted factor of party competition by an inclusion of intra-party competition for Southern districts which otherwise have very low competition scores. A reevaluation of this factor with this increased area of input could eliminate any need or justification for the exclusion of individuals who qualify above the cut-off point for mediocrity. For these reasons, the verdict on the present scale must be conclusively that it enables a viable measurement of mediocrity probabilities, but that it also is definitely not perfected and could possibly benefit from further analysis. The mathematical model constructed of a minimally mediocre Congressman served as an essential factor in crystalizing the factors involved in the establishment of a cut-off point. Use of a cut-off point derived in this manner added credibility to the contention

that individuals rating above a certain score do qualify to be termed mediocre. The final analysis left little doubt about the characteristics of the forty-two final qualifiers.⁵¹

The party-sectional divisions were relatively clear cut and supported in concept by previous work.⁵² Analysis of roll-call data was relatively easy to establish with the aid of the University's computer services. Information, derived from the fourteen roll-call votes analyzed, indicated that, first of all, from the use of the Rice Index, all partisan votes were fairly close. The index of relative agreement demonstrated that there was a considerable degree of intra party agreement in most issues. Because of this high degree of agreement there was little leverage for mediocrity to cause more agreement, and it was not surprising to find low chi square scores in most cases. However, the results of the use of the phi coefficient tests showed the unanticipated fact that in eight of the fourteen roll-calls selected there was actually less party-sectional cohesion among mediocre Congressmen.⁵³

Progressing from this summary of data it is possible to evaluate the original hypothesis in light of quantification. Mediocrity in the House was defined in terms of measurable criteria. Statistical quantification of these criteria netted scores for all Congressmen, and mathematical analysis determined that some Congressmen would qualify as mediocre on the basis of the accepted definition. Therefore, in the first part of the hypothesis it has been shown that there are some individuals in the House who demonstrate little initiative

and imagination in their roles as Representatives. The first part of the hypothesis is valid.

However, the second part of the hypotheses--that mediocre Congressmen will adhere more closely to party and sectional voting patterns--was not so clearly substantiated. Statistical results do not clearly indicate any unquestionable direct influence of the mediocrity ratings upon the voting patterns of Congressmen. But there are indications that, in regard to specific roll-calls analyzed, some effect upon voting behavior is made by the fact that a Congressman qualifies as mediocre, even if it is not an obvious effect. First of all, roll-call vote number three, to recommit the Bank Holding Company Act, presents almost a perfect example of support for an original hypothesis. It was a partisan issue since all three party-sectional groups illustrated considerable unity in voting, and in all three divisions there was greater cohesion to the party line by those who qualify as mediocre. But most important is the fact that the chi square for the overall vote indicates that there is a greater than ninety percent probability that something other than chance caused the difference in the voting pattern of the mediocre Congressman.

Although this does not exceed the normal ninety-five percent cut-off point for significance, it must be kept in mind that the chi square is measuring greater cohesion to party-sectional lines which are normally adhered to quite strongly. In other words, there is not a lot of leeway for the mediocre Representatives to be more cohesive. The most

significant chi squares and the greater number of party-sectional phi coefficients indicated there was more cohesion by mediocre Congressmen. Certainly this is not definite proof of the hypothesis, but it tends to imply that there is some credibility to the concept.

Secondly, it is important to note that the mediocre Northern Democrats show much less cohesion to party lines than either the mediocre Republicans or Southern Democrats. One consideration which could partially account for this fact is the tendency, previously alluded to, for the group classified as mediocre to have a conservative bias. A conservative leaning would probably cause a Northern Democrat to vote against his party more often than the same position would cause members of either of the other two groups to oppose their majorities. If this factor were working against cohesion it would be clear to see how the tendency to follow party-sectional lines could be obscured.

It also must be noted that other outside factors could have a bearing on the results of the roll-call analysis. Primary among these is that it would be quite possible for some other motivating factor to overcome the desire of the specified Representatives to vote with party or sectional leadership in order to not be conspicuous. Rather, more basic than voting with party or sectional leadership to avoid conflict, a given Congressman could, perhaps, more easily avoid conflict by voting with what he feels to be the majority opinion of his constituents. If opinions of constituents come into conflict with the party or sectional

line the mediocre Congressman could very well chose to vote against his party for the same motivation as that expressed in the second part of the hypothesis--to avoid individual attention. If one were to follow the voting peculiarities of his constituents he could easily find himself required to oppose his party or sectional majority. David Truman has emphasized that the "relatively fluid, unstructured voting behavior" of the House is, in fact, caused by peculiarities of constituencies.⁵⁴

The conclusion to be made in regard to the second part of the hypothesis is that mediocrity has not been proven to be a primary influence increasing party or sectional voting cohesion in the areas studied.⁵⁵ However, considering the effect of other factors, this could contribute to cohesion without being an obvious determinate factor. Although this analysis does not determine a direct effect of the existence of mediocrity in the House of Representatives, it does offer some analysis of the probable effects of mediocrity on voting behavior. It is hoped that this study will draw attention to the applications of the question of mediocrity to other work of the House or Senate, and give direction to those desiring to continue this initiation of the construction of a foundation for additional work with this concept of political mediocrity.

It would definitely have been advantageous to have had the aid of previous work, in the field of the quantitative analysis of Congressional mediocrity, with which to compare and contrast this analysis. However, a significant degree

of research has been unfruitful in its goal to find any previous scholarly work dealing with mediocrity in politics since the 1920's. On the other hand, there have been numerous examples of the use of legislative roll-call analysis. The roll-call analysis done in this paper follows the traditional treatment of the analysis of categoric groups in a legislature. It is, perhaps, unusual to the extent that the division of the categoric groups are subjected to statistical analysis.

The value of this work cannot accurately be assessed until more work has been done in this field of political mediocrity. It must be kept in mind that mediocrity can be measured, and its effects ought to be gauged. The members of the supreme legislative bodies of the nation should definitely be expected to show enough initiative and imagination to at least create an image of moderate enthusiasm and respectability. And if they do not fulfill these minimum requirements, attention should be called to both that fact and its implications

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NOTES

- 1 Time, "Letters: Quite Right," Mrs. Julianne Fletcher, May 4, 1970, p 2.
- 2 Scott, James C., American Political Science Review, "Corruption, Machine Politics, and Political Change," December 1969, vol 63, pp 1142-1158.
- 3 Commonweal, "Congressional Dirty Linen," December 12, 1969, pp 327-328.
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- 4 Pearson, Drew, and Jack Anderson, The Case Against Congress, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1968.
- 5 Goodman, Walter, All Honorable Men, Boston, 1963.
- 6 Matthews, Donald R., American Political Science Review, "The Folkways of the United States Senate: Conformity to Group Norms and Legislative Effectiveness," December 1959, vol 53, pp 1064-1089.
- 7 Riker, William H., and Donald Niemi, American Political Science Review, "The Stability of Coalitions on Roll Calls in the House of Representatives," vol 56, March 1962, p 58.
- 8 Miller, Norman C., Wall Street Journal, "How One Congressman Hangs on to His Seat by Wooing Home Folks," 50:230, September 8, 1970, p 1.
- 9 This is not meant to imply a prejudice against "mavericks" such as Senator William Proxmire (D. Wis) or Representative Paul McClosky (R. Cal) who may be halted from advancing within the party. Special cases such as these have been kept in mind in evaluations.
- 10 Harrington, Michael J., The Nation, "The Dead Hand of Seniority," September 21, 1970, pp 229-232.
- 11 We would hope that any totally inept person would find it impossible to even get into the House of Representatives.

- 12 World New International Dictionary, Second Edition, Unabridged, New York, p 1346.
- 13 Riker, and Niemi, op. cit., p 60.
- 14 Appendix, Section 4, Table 186, "Mediocrity Scores," The 124 point total for Hébert is third highest in the whole House.
- 15 Newsweek, "Mendel Rivers," December 14, 1970, p 34.
- 16 Handbook of Social Gerontology, ed. Clark Tibbitts, "The Aging Individual," Leonard Z. Breen, pp 145-162.
- 17 Congressional Directory, Joint Committee on Printing, 91st Congress, First Session, pp 3-198, was the source for this information on the age of each Representative.
Appendix, Section 4, Tables 1-435, "Mediocrity Scores," contain the information alluded to. After the words "Age factor" on each table appear the dates of the birth of the Congressman and his entrance into the House of Representatives.
- 18 Congressional Record, "The House of Representatives," all pages for each day, vol 115 and 116. The fifteen sample days from each session are listed in Appendix Section 1.
- 19 Appendix, Section 2, pp 2-18, lists the number of absences for each Representative under consideration.
Appendix, Section 4, Tables 1-435, list the equivalent value for the number of absences for each Representative.
- 20 Appendix, Section 4, Tables 1-435, this generalization is made because of the unusual proportion of those who are ranked one in formal education and five in attendance at House sessions.
- 21 Bullock, and Sprague, Journal of Politics, "Committee Reassignments of Southern Democratic Congressmen," June 1969, p 325.
- 22 Masters, Nicolas A., American Political Science Review, "Committee Assignments in the House of Representatives," vol 55, June 1961, p 353.
- 23 Wolfinger, Raymond E., and Joan Heifetz, American Political Science Review, "Safe Seats, Seniority, and Power in Congress," vol 57, June 1965, p 337.
- 24 Congressional Staff Directory 1970, ed. Charles B. Brownson, Washington, 1970, pp 279-358, was the source for committee assignments.
Appendix, Section 4, Tables 1-435, list the equivalent ratings for the committee membership of each Representative.
- 25 Congressional Directory, op. cit., pp 3-198.
- 26 Congressional Record, op. cit., all of the same samples were used for this statistic as were used for the attendance factor.

- Appendix, Section 2, pp 2-18, contains the raw data figures for the pieces of legislation introduced.
- Appendix, Section 4, Tables 1-435, list the equivalent value for the number of pieces of legislation introduced by each Representative.
- 27 Congressional Record, "The House of Representatives," Washington, January 3, 1969.
 - 28 Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States, Ninety-First Congress, First Session, Washington, 1970.
 - 29 Fenton, John H., People and Parties in Politics, Glenview, Ill., 1966, p 46.
 - 30 Appendix, Section 3, pp. 19-27, lists the competition rating for each Congressional District, computed from information in the Congressional Quarterly, "Weekly Report," November 11, 1966, vol 24, number 45, pp 2792-2802, and November 15, 1968, vol 26, number 46, pp 3162-3167.
 - Appendix, Section 4, Tables 1-435, list the equivalent value for the individual district's party competition rating.
 - 31 Appendix, Section 4, Tables 1-435, list the equivalent value for each member of the House. (Also see Additional comments A.)
 - 32 Congressional Record, op. cit., all of the same samples were used for this statistic as were used for the attendance and introduction of legislation factors. (Also see Additional comments B.)
 - Appendix, Section 4, Tables 1-435, list the equivalent value for each member of the House.
 - 33 Appendix, Section 4, Tables 1-435, list the equivalent value for each member of the House.
 - 34 Appendix, Section 4, Tables 25, 40, 44, 116, 128, 160, 167, 181, 240, 254, 359, 397, 420, and 431.
 - 35 Appendix, Section 4, Tables 11 "Andrews (Ala)," 299 "Passman," and 424 "Wright."
 - 36 Appendix, Section 4, Tables 35 "Boggs," and 314 "Powell," respectively.
 - 37 Alterations in the weighting and inclusion or exclusion of various factors have been experimented with by the author and have shown that approximately the same individuals qualify as mediocre in all cases.
 - 38 Congressional Record, "The House of Representatives," all pages for each day, vol 115 and 116. The fourteen days from which these figures come are listed in Table Eight in the body of the text.
 - 39 Congressional Quarterly, "Weekly Report," vol 28, number 51, December 11, 1970, inside cover.
 - 40 This indicator proved accurate in thirteen of the fourteen roll-calls.

41 Appendix, Section 5, includes four square tables for all fourteen roll-calls overall and in the three party-sectional divisions.

42 Anderson, Lee F., Meredith W. Watts, Jr., and Allen R. Wilcox, Legislative Roll-Call Analysis, Evanston, Ill., 1966, and Young, Robert K., and Donald J. Veldman, Introductory Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences, Chicago, 1965, are the sources for the statistical formulas used.

Statistics were computed at Illinois Wesleyan University on a GE-200 Timesharing computer arrangement. The programs used are as follows; in Basic:

Rice Index -

```
10 PRINT "PRINT VALUES FOR X,Y,T"
20 INPUT X,Y,T
30 LET R=X/T-Y/T
40 PRINT R
50 GO TO 10
60 END
```

Index of Relative Cohesion

```
10 PRINT "PRINT VALUES FOR M,T"
20 INPUT M,T
30 LET P=M/T*100
40 PRINT P
50 GO TO 10
60 END
```

Phi Coefficient

```
10 PRINT "PRINT VALUES FOR A,B,C,D"
20 INPUT A,B,C,D,
30 LET P=(A*D-B*C)/((A+B)*(C+D)*(A+C)*(B+D))*.5
40 PRINT P
50 GO TO 10
60 END
```

Chi Square

```
10 PRINT "PRINT VALUES FOR A,B,C,D,N"
20 INPUT A,B,C,D,N
30 LET X=(N*(ABS(B*C-A*D)-N/2)^2)/((A+B)*(C+D)*(A+C)*(B+D))
40 PRINT X
50 GO TO 10
60 END
```

43 Congressional Record, "The House of Representatives," Second Session, vol 116, Washington, November 19, 1970, and December 8, 1970.

44 Congressional Record, "The House of Representatives," Second Session, vol 116, Washington, November 24, 1970, December 8, 1970, December 16, 1970, and December 30, 1970.

45 Miller, op. cit., p 1.

46 Supra, at notes 16, 17, and 25.

47 Supra, at notes 18-24 and 32.

48 Supra, at notes 26-28.

- 49 Supra, at notes 29-30.
- 50 Supra, at notes 31 and 33.
- 51 Supra, at notes 34-36.
- 52 Supra, at notes 7 and 13.
- 53 Supra, at notes 38-43.
- 54 Truman, David B., American Political Science Review, "The State Delegations and the Structures of Party Voting in the United States House of Representatives," vol 50, December 1956, p 1023.
- 55 The distinction in the wording should be emphasized. This sentence reads, "has not been shown to be," it does not read, "has been shown not to be."

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Additional comments

A. There was a definite problem in the compilation of data for the scandal ratings. The primary method used in researching this category was to examine any sources dealing with political corruption listed in the Reader's Guide and Social Sciences and Humanities Index. Although, as previously mentioned, there were several articles dealing with the topic in general, very few specific allegations were made toward individual Congressmen. And of those few individuals mentioned it was rare to find a member of the House of Representatives. It can be assumed that most sources would use extreme caution in associating any Representative, by name, with any form of corruption. Also House members are more rarely in the national public eye than are members of the Senate, and are therefore less likely to receive attention in nation-wide publications.

B. A question may be raised in regard to the equitability of using the same random sample of legislative days for this factor (speaking) as well as for attendance and legislation. However, assuming there is no bias in the selection of the random sample, the relative number of absences should equitably represent the attendance of each Representative for the duration of the 91st Congress. The factors of legislation and speeches on the floor are, to a great extent, dependent upon the fact that a member must be present at House sessions. Therefore, it might be assumed that the weightings for legislation and speeches are basically mere additions to the weighting of attendance.

However, an examination of such individual statistics as those of Representative Teague (D. Texas) and Representative Belcher (R. Okla)

illustrate that it is possible, respectively, to be absent often while still speaking quite often and introducing several bills, or to be present consistently while rarely speaking or introducing legislation. Additionally, even if there could be a direct connection established between the attendance factor and the other two categories, we would anticipate no inequity. The real manifestation of harm from absence includes, in addition to the fact that a member misses hearing the operations of the House, the facts that he cannot speak or introduce legislation. To the extent that these two criteria are affected by attendance, it is justifiable that they be dependent upon it.

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_____, "The House of Representatives," United State Government Printing Office, Washington, vol 115, First Session, April 30, 1969.

- _____, "The House of Representatives," United States Government Printing Office, Washington, vol 115, First Session, April 28, 1969.
- _____, "The House of Representatives," United States Government Printing Office, Washington, vol 115, First Session, May 17, 23, 1969.
- _____, "The House of Representatives," United States Government Printing Office, Washington, vol 115, First Session, June 30, 1969.
- _____, "The House of Representatives," United States Government Printing Office, Washington, vol 115, First Session, July 2, 1969.
- _____, "The House of Representatives," United States Government Printing Office, Washington, vol 115, First Session, July 7, 1969.
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- _____, "The House of Representatives," United States Government Printing Office, Washington, vol 115, First Session, October 6, 1969.
- _____, "The House of Representatives," United States Government Printing Office, Washington, vol 115, First Session, October 8, 1969.
- _____, "The House of Representatives," United States Government Printing Office, Washington, vol 115, First Session, October 14, 1969.
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Correction: on page all terms "First Session" should read "Second Session."