Abstract

Many committees operate through subcommittees which are charged with the task of gathering information, debating the issues, and finally drafting motions for consideration and ratification by the committee of the whole. No doubt this process saves time and enhances the ability of the entire decision-making body to address many issues, but a cursory application of game theory suggests that it may also change substantially the character of decisions made by the larger committee. That is, the theory implies that even if the committee of the whole took an extraordinary amount of time on each decision, gathering information and debating the issues, the resulting decisions might deviate substantially from those that would have emerged from a subcommittee process.