

MEMBERSHIP, COMMITTEES, AND CHANGE IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE

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The House of Representatives has gone through a remarkable period of change that began with the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970. Its basic systems of organization and procedure have endured, but the cumulative impact of incremental change has been significant. No decade of this century can compare to the 1970s for sustained interest in what the proponents of change called "reform." From the subcommittee to the district office to the computer terminal to the television screen, the operations of the House have changed.

The membership of the House also has changed. A majority of the Representatives in the 98th Congress had served for three consecutive terms or less; only 80 of the Members (fewer than one in five) who took the oath of office in January 1983 had been in the House continuously since the 1970 Act was passed. Between 1953 and 1983, the percentage of freshman Members ranged from 8 percent (following the 1968 election) to 20 percent (following the 1974 election), but the fraction of Members who had served one to three terms never fell below one-third nor quite reached one-half of the House.¹ The percentage of Representatives who had served for three terms or less was 39 percent between 1953 and 1961, 39 percent between 1963 and 1971, and 45 percent between 1973 and 1981.²

During the 1970s, many of the junior Democratic Representatives supported changes in Democratic Caucus rules and Caucus-sponsored changes in House rules, and especially changes affecting the organization and operations of the House committee system. But the committee system was also subject to and affected by membership change. Turnover among the Members of the House has received considerable attention and analysis, but far less attention has been paid to turnover within the House--among the leaders and members of its committees and subcommittees.³

To inquire into the rates and consequences of turnover at these levels of House organization, it is illuminating to compare the leaders and members of each House standing committee and each of its subcommittees with the leaders and members of the same organizational unit during the previous Congress (as listed, in almost all cases, in the Congressional Staff Directory for each odd-numbered year) for each pair of Congresses from the 88th Congress (1963-1964) to the 98th Congress (1983-1984).⁴ This comparison indicates that, over the twenty-year period, (1) there have generally been higher rates of leadership and membership change on subcommittees than on full committees, and higher rates of membership

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change on full committees than in the House as a whole; and (2) there have also been generally increasing rates of subcommittee turnover, without regard to party, whereas the other turnover rates have not increased or decreased significantly over time.⁵ When the committee and especially the subcommittee turnover rates are considered in light of other institutional changes within the House that have enhanced the relative influence of subcommittees, we can speculate about the combined effects of these two types of change on such matters as committee influence and coalition-building in the House, the challenges for party and presidential leadership, and the difficulty of effective oversight.

COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP

The change in standing committee leaders from one Congress to the next was substantially higher between 1963 and 1983 than the change in total House membership. If the percentage of first-term House Members ranged from 8 percent to 20 percent during this period, the percentage of first-term standing committee chairmen fluctuated from lows of 5 percent in the 98th Congress and 10 percent in the 88th and 91st Congresses (comparing the House chairmen in each Congress with the chairmen of the same committees in the preceding Congress) to highs of 40 percent in the 94th Congress and 52 percent in the 97th Congress. The percentage of first-term ranking minority members varied over an even greater range and reached even greater heights: from 14 percent in the 91st Congress to 67 percent only four years later when the House committees of the 93rd Congress were organized. In the latter Congress, two of every three of the standing committees had a new titular Republican leader.

Table 1 indicates, for all standing committees of the House, each instance of change in majority or minority committee leaders positions between the beginning of one Congress and the beginning of the next Congress. These instances are summarized at the bottom of the table in terms of total, Democratic, and Republican replacement rates--a replacement rate being defined as the number of leadership changes that occurred, comparing the House committee leaders of each Congress with the leaders of the same committees in the preceding Congress, as a percentage of the total number of leadership changes that were possible. Standing committee leadership turnover also is summarized in terms of the rate of leadership change--this rate being defined as the percentage of committees that experienced a change in either or both leaders from one Congress to the next.

There are some striking differences among House committees in the frequency of leadership change. At one extreme, there was only one change between 1963 and 1983 in the chairmanship of the House Judiciary Committee (a change that resulted from Elizabeth Holtzman's primary victory over Emanuel Celler in 1972); the position of ranking minority member changed three times over the same period. At the other extreme, there was a change in one or both of the leadership positions on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee in all but two of the eleven Congresses. There appears to be some relationship between the generally perceived power and importance of committees and the frequency of leadership change, with less prestigious committees experiencing more turnover, but the association is not particularly impressive. The Agriculture, District of Columbia, Government

Table 1
Change in Committee Leadership Positions: 88th-98th Congresses (1963-1983)

	Congress*										
	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98
Agriculture	.....R.....CR.....	.....R.....CR.....	.....R.....CR.....	.....R.....CR.....	.....R.....CR.....	.....R.....CR.....	.....R.....CR.....	.....R.....CR.....	.....R.....CR.....	.....R.....CR.....	.....R.....CR.....
Appropriations	R.....CR.....	R.....CR.....	R.....CR.....	R.....CR.....	R.....CR.....	R.....CR.....	R.....CR.....	R.....CR.....	R.....CR.....	R.....CR.....	R.....CR.....
Armed Services	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....
Banking	C.....R.....	C.....R.....	C.....R.....	C.....R.....	C.....R.....	C.....R.....	C.....R.....	C.....R.....	C.....R.....	C.....R.....	C.....R.....
Commerce	.....R.....C.....	.....R.....C.....	.....R.....C.....	.....R.....C.....	.....R.....C.....	.....R.....C.....	.....R.....C.....	.....R.....C.....	.....R.....C.....	.....R.....C.....	.....R.....C.....
District of Columbia	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....
Education and Labor	R.....R.....C.....	R.....R.....C.....	R.....R.....C.....	R.....R.....C.....	R.....R.....C.....	R.....R.....C.....	R.....R.....C.....	R.....R.....C.....	R.....R.....C.....	R.....R.....C.....	R.....R.....C.....
Foreign Affairs	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....
Government Operations	R.....R.....R.....	R.....R.....R.....	R.....R.....R.....	R.....R.....R.....	R.....R.....R.....	R.....R.....R.....	R.....R.....R.....	R.....R.....R.....	R.....R.....R.....	R.....R.....R.....	R.....R.....R.....
House Administration	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....
Interior and Insular Affairs	.....C.....CR.....	.....C.....CR.....	.....C.....CR.....	.....C.....CR.....	.....C.....CR.....	.....C.....CR.....	.....C.....CR.....	.....C.....CR.....	.....C.....CR.....	.....C.....CR.....	.....C.....CR.....
Internal Security	R.....CR.....	R.....CR.....	R.....CR.....	R.....CR.....	R.....CR.....	R.....CR.....	R.....CR.....	R.....CR.....	R.....CR.....	R.....CR.....	R.....CR.....
Judiciary	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....
Merchant Marine and Fisheries	.....R.....C.....	.....R.....C.....	.....R.....C.....	.....R.....C.....	.....R.....C.....	.....R.....C.....	.....R.....C.....	.....R.....C.....	.....R.....C.....	.....R.....C.....	.....R.....C.....
Post Office and Civil Service	.....C.....	.....C.....	.....C.....	.....C.....	.....C.....	.....C.....	.....C.....	.....C.....	.....C.....	.....C.....	.....C.....
Public Works	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....
Rules	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....	.....CR.....
Science and Technology	C.....R.....	C.....R.....	C.....R.....	C.....R.....	C.....R.....	C.....R.....	C.....R.....	C.....R.....	C.....R.....	C.....R.....	C.....R.....
Small Business	.....C.....	.....C.....	.....C.....	.....C.....	.....C.....	.....C.....	.....C.....	.....C.....	.....C.....	.....C.....	.....C.....
Standards	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....
Veterans	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....	.....R.....
Ways and Means	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....	R.....R.....
Rate of leadership change	45%	65%	40%	24%	38%	76%	70%	62%	48%	67%	38%
Total replacement rate	23%	43%	25%	12%	26%	50%	45%	31%	26%	43%	19%
Democratic replacement rate	10%	20%	30%	10%	19%	33%	40%	38%	29%	52%	5%
Republican replacement rate	35%	65%	20%	14%	33%	67%	50%	24%	24%	33%	33%

* Cell entries: C = change in the chairman
R = change in the ranking minority member

Source: Congressional Staff Directories, 1961-1983

Operations, and Rules Committees all experienced a change in one or both leadership positions in six of the eleven Congresses examined.

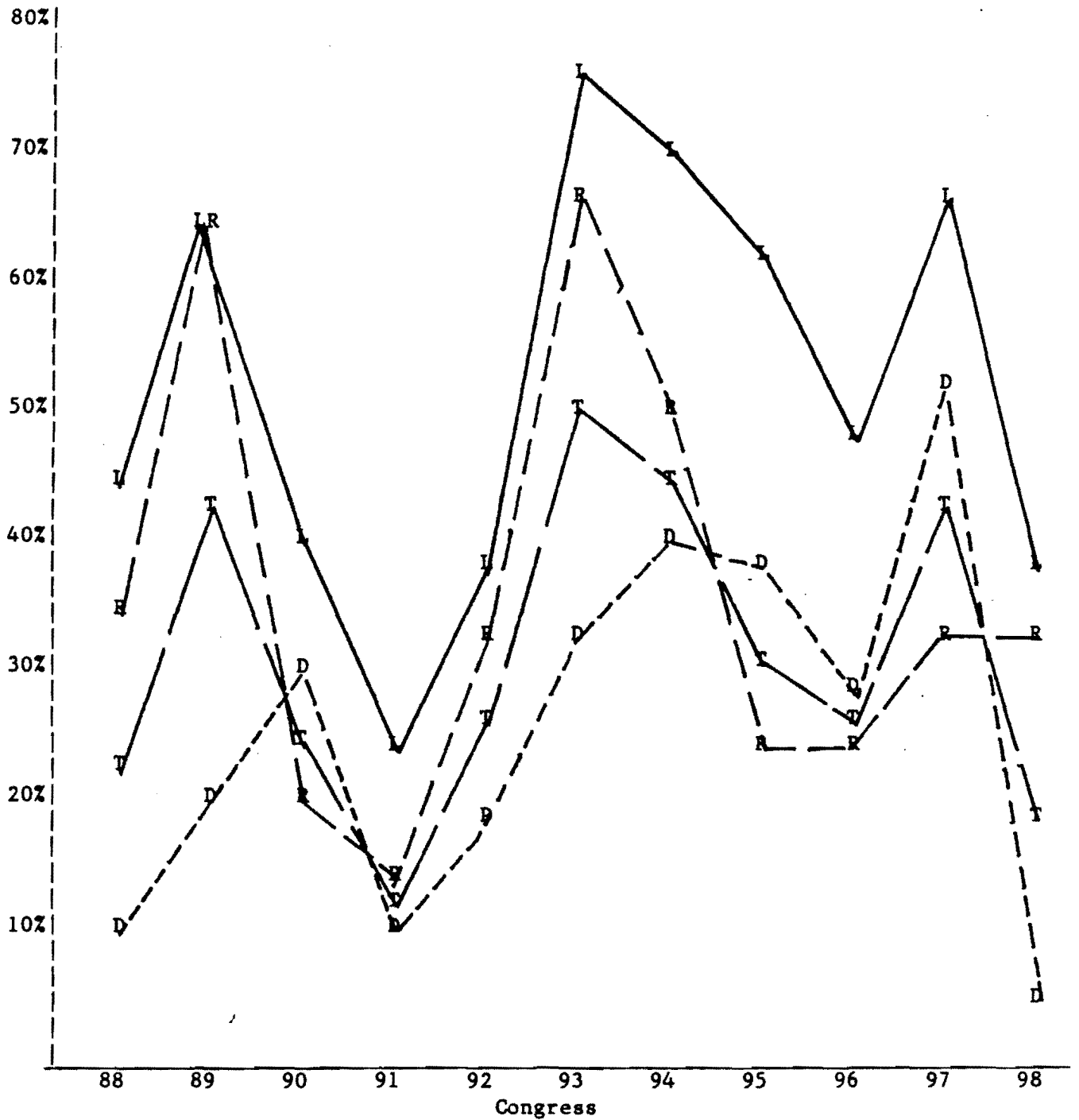
There is a correlation of .57 between the turnover rates in total House membership over time and the total replacement rates for full committee leadership positions during the same period. (The correlation between House turnover rates and the rates of full committee leadership change is .64.) The frequency of change in committee leaders does reflect the election returns, as well as other reasons that Representatives do not return to the House--e.g., death, retirement, and campaigns for different offices.

In the 1974 general election, for example, the Democrats enjoyed a net gain of 49 House seats, which was the largest net gain during the twenty-year period. When the House standing committees of the 94th Congress were organized early in 1975, only half of the ranking minority positions were held by the same Republicans who had held them during the 93rd Congress. But 40 percent of the chairmanships also changed hands--the second highest Democratic replacement rate between 1963 and 1983. Three chairmen were replaced by vote of the Democratic Caucus, but none because of electoral defeat (only 4 Democratic incumbents were defeated by Republicans in 1974). By contrast, the Democrats gained only one seat in the 1976 general election, but more than 60 percent of the standing committees experienced a change in one or both leadership positions. In the 1980 general election, the Republicans gained a net of 33 seats and only 3 incumbent Republicans were defeated. One-third of the ranking minority members on the standing committees were replaced when the 97th Congress convened the following January; more than half of the chairmanships also changed hands, and this time partly because of the defeat of Democratic chairmen Frank Thompson of House Administration, John Murphy of Merchant Marine and Fisheries, Harold Johnson of Public Works and Transportation, and Al Ullman of Ways and Means.

Because the standing committee rates of change are based on the decisions and fates, electoral and otherwise, of so few Representatives, it is not surprising that these rates vary over a much greater range than the turnover rates for the membership of the House as a whole. It is less obvious that the turnover among committee leaders should be generally higher than the turnover among all House members. Committee leaders do tend to be older than their colleagues (and, therefore, more likely to die or retire but less likely to seek other office) but they are also relatively secure in their seats (the results of the 1980 elections to the contrary notwithstanding). The rate of standing committee leadership change and the three committee leadership replacement rates are plotted in Figure 1. There is no notable and systematic increase or decrease in any of these rates over time.

Data on the return rates for total, Democratic, and Republican standing committee membership are presented in Tables 2-4. A return rate is the percentage of the members of a committee (or subcommittee) who served on that same unit during the preceding Congress.⁶ Whereas the return rate for the entire membership of the House never fell below 80 percent between 1963 and 1983, the return rate for total standing committee memberships only reached 80 percent once, in the 91st Congress, and fell as low as 64 percent in the 94th Congress. In the latter Congress, less than two out of every three occupied committee

Figure 1
Change in Standing Committee Leadership: 88th-98th Congresses (1963-1983)



Key: L = rate of leadership change
T = total replacement rate
D = Democratic replacement rate
R = Republican replacement rate

Table 2
Total Committee Membership Return Rate: 88th-98th Congresses (1963-1983)

	Congress*										
	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98
Agriculture	74	63	49	88	72	69	49	76	83	67	80
Appropriations	76	68	86	94	80	82	76	89	81	75	89
Armed Services	86	62	88	78	85	67	78	87	78	70	76
Banking	58	64	70	80	76	78	52	66	79	70	72
Commerce	79	61	77	78	70	86	64	77	79	71	76
District of Columbia	75	68	75	76	67	44	50	55	71	58	100
Education and Labor	68	77	70	77	74	84	65	70	71	76	71
Foreign Affairs	76	81	89	82	79	73	85	73	71	64	62
Government Operations	65	68	71	83	72	75	63	72	77	65	58
House Adminis- tration	71	68	80	67	68	81	60	76	76	68	74
Interior and In- sular Affairs	58	58	64	82	71	61	63	63	79	71	76
Internal Security	75	44	67	44	56	67					
Judiciary	83	77	77	74	76	70	74	74	77	79	70
Merchant Marine and Fisheries	68	77	68	75	69	62	68	83	78	67	68
Post Office and Civil Service	56	64	58	81	76	69	54	72	59	64	71
Public Works	62	62	68	91	68	68	68	70	72	67	56
Rules	100	67	80	100	100	73	81	81	69	75	92
Science and Tech- nology	61	71	70	69	59	67	54	54	61	68	66
Small Business								68	72	48	70
Standards				67	92	58	67	58	33	8	67
Veterans	75	72	80	76	65	77	57	82	67	60	48
Ways and Means	80	72	88	76	80	88	49	76	81	86	83
Total	72	68	74	80	74	72	64	73	74	68	72

* Each cell entry is the percentage of all committee members who served on the same committee during the previous Congress.

Source: Congressional Staff Directories, 1961-1983.

Table 3
Democratic Committee Membership Return Rate: 88th-98th Congresses (1963-1983)

	Congress*										
	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98
Agriculture	62	54	65	94	68	75	48	71	81	88	73
Appropriations	73	68	93	97	79	85	78	89	78	79	86
Armed Services	80	48	100	78	84	83	78	92	76	72	72
Banking	61	64	74	80	86	79	54	66	93	84	70
Commerce	80	55	82	76	72	96	57	76	81	79	74
District of Columbia	73	65	85	71	71	29	53	57	78	75	100
Education and Labor	68	76	89	80	73	86	67	72	86	90	74
Foreign Affairs	90	79	95	81	81	77	82	68	68	67	63
Government Operations	63	78	100	90	78	86	55	76	88	74	56
House Adminis- tration	71	65	100	71	73	87	65	82	81	82	67
Interior and In- sular Affairs	58	55	63	95	74	65	62	59	86	81	74
Internal Security	75	50	80	20	80	80					
Judiciary	81	75	95	70	77	71	74	65	75	69	68
Merchant Marine and Fisheries	68	81	74	76	71	64	67	86	76	67	65
Post Office and Civil Service	36	65	60	87	86	73	58	71	62	53	67
Public Works	70	61	89	89	65	77	64	59	77	78	56
Rules	100	80	80	100	100	70	82	73	64	82	89
Science and Tech- nology	61	62	76	61	53	65	44	65	59	83	65
Small Business								68	84	52	69
Standards				67	100	67	83	50	50	0	33
Veterans	67	65	93	71	69	87	53	79	63	76	43
Ways and Means	73	71	93	73	87	93	52	72	79	78	83
Total	70	66	85	80	76	77	63	72	76	74	69

* Each cell entry is the percentage of Democratic committee members who served on the same committee during the previous Congress.

Source: Congressional Staff Directories, 1961-1983.

Table 4
 Republican Committee Membership Return Rate: 88th-98th Congresses (1963-1983)

	Congress*										
	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98
Agriculture	93	82	27	80	79	63	50	87	87	42	93
Appropriations	80	69	76	90	82	77	72	89	89	68	95
Armed Services	94	92	71	76	88	47	77	77	81	68	81
Banking	54	64	64	80	60	75	50	67	53	53	76
Commerce	77	73	71	81	67	74	79	79	73	61	80
District of Columbia	78	75	64	82	60	64	43	50	60	25	100
Education and Labor	67	80	43	73	75	81	62	67	46	57	67
Foreign Affairs	54	83	80	82	76	67	92	83	75	60	62
Government Operations	67	45	33	73	63	61	79	64	57	53	62
House Adminis- tration	70	75	55	60	60	73	50	63	67	50	86
Interior and In- sular Affairs	57	64	64	64	67	56	64	71	67	56	79
Internal Security	75	33	50	75	25	50					
Judiciary	86	82	53	80	75	69	73	91	82	92	73
Merchant Marine and Fisheries	67	70	60	73	64	59	69	77	80	67	71
Post Office and Civil Service	82	63	55	73	64	64	44	75	56	80	78
Public Works	50	64	40	93	71	56	77	93	65	53	56
Rules	100	40	80	100	100	80	80	100	80	60	100
Science and Tech- nology	62	90	62	79	67	69	75	31	64	47	67
Small Business								67	50	41	71
Standards				67	83	50	50	67	17	17	100
Veterans	89	88	64	82	60	64	67	89	73	38	58
Ways and Means	90	75	80	80	70	80	42	83	83	100	83
Total	74	72	59	79	70	66	66	74	68	57	76

* Each cell entry is the percentage of Republican committee members who served on the same committee during the previous Congress.

Source: Congressional Staff Directories, 1961-1983.

seats were held by Members who had been on that committee in the 93rd Congress. The Democratic committee return rate reached or exceeded the 80 percent mark twice but failed to reach 70 percent in each of three Congresses. House Republicans experienced return rates of less than 60 percent in two Congresses and did not reach an 80 percent return rate in any of the eleven Congresses.

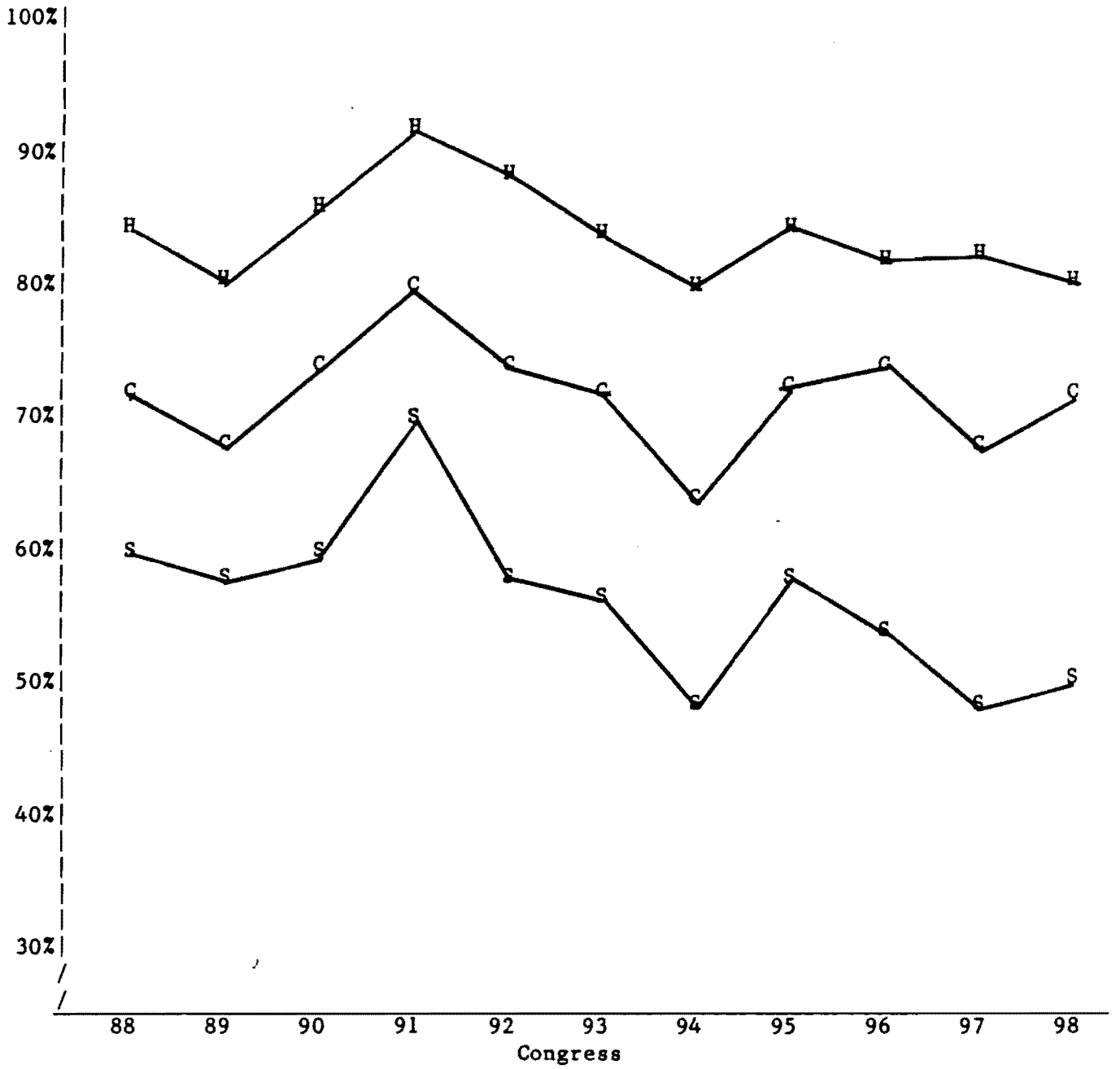
Again--and not surprisingly--there are differences among committees. The return rates for the Appropriations and Rules Committees were relatively high throughout the period, as were the rates for Ways and Means with the exception of the 94th Congress, when the Republicans suffered a major loss of House seats and the Democrats increased the size of the committee from 25 to 37 members. The rates of other, less prestigious, committees fluctuated more widely, and at somewhat lower levels. For instance, the total return rate for the Public Works and Transportation Committee exceeded 72 percent only during the 91st Congress, and the same rate for the District of Columbia Committee fell as low as 44 percent in the 93rd Congress and only once exceeded 76 percent (reaching 100 percent in the 98th Congress). Some of the fluctuations are also striking. The Republican return rate on the Agriculture Committee, for example, dropped from 82 percent in the 89th Congress to 27 percent in the 90th Congress before rebounding to 80 percent in the 91st Congress; during the same three Congresses, the Democratic return rate for the House Administration Committee increased from 65 percent to 100 percent before falling back to a more typical 71 percent.

Because of the small numbers of committee members (and the even smaller numbers of party members on each committee), not too much should be made of committee-to-committee comparisons or changes in any one committee's return rate from one Congress to the next. However, the aggregated committee return rates for all members, for all Democratic members, and for all Republican members can be examined as they have changed over time; these rates also can be compared with the comparable rates of membership change in the House as a whole. (A comparison of membership return rates at the full committee and subcommittee levels is reserved for the next section.)

Figure 2 presents the return rates for the 1963-1983 period for all House members, all standing committee members, and all members of the subcommittees of those committees. Figures 3 and 4 portray the comparable rates for Democrats and Republicans at all three levels of House organization. Without exception, the committee membership return rates are lower than the House membership return rates. What is even more striking is the frequency with which the difference between the two rates is between 10 and 15 percent. For any Congress that assembled between 1963 and 1983, the difference between the return rate for House members and the return rate for standing committee members is frequently within this range.

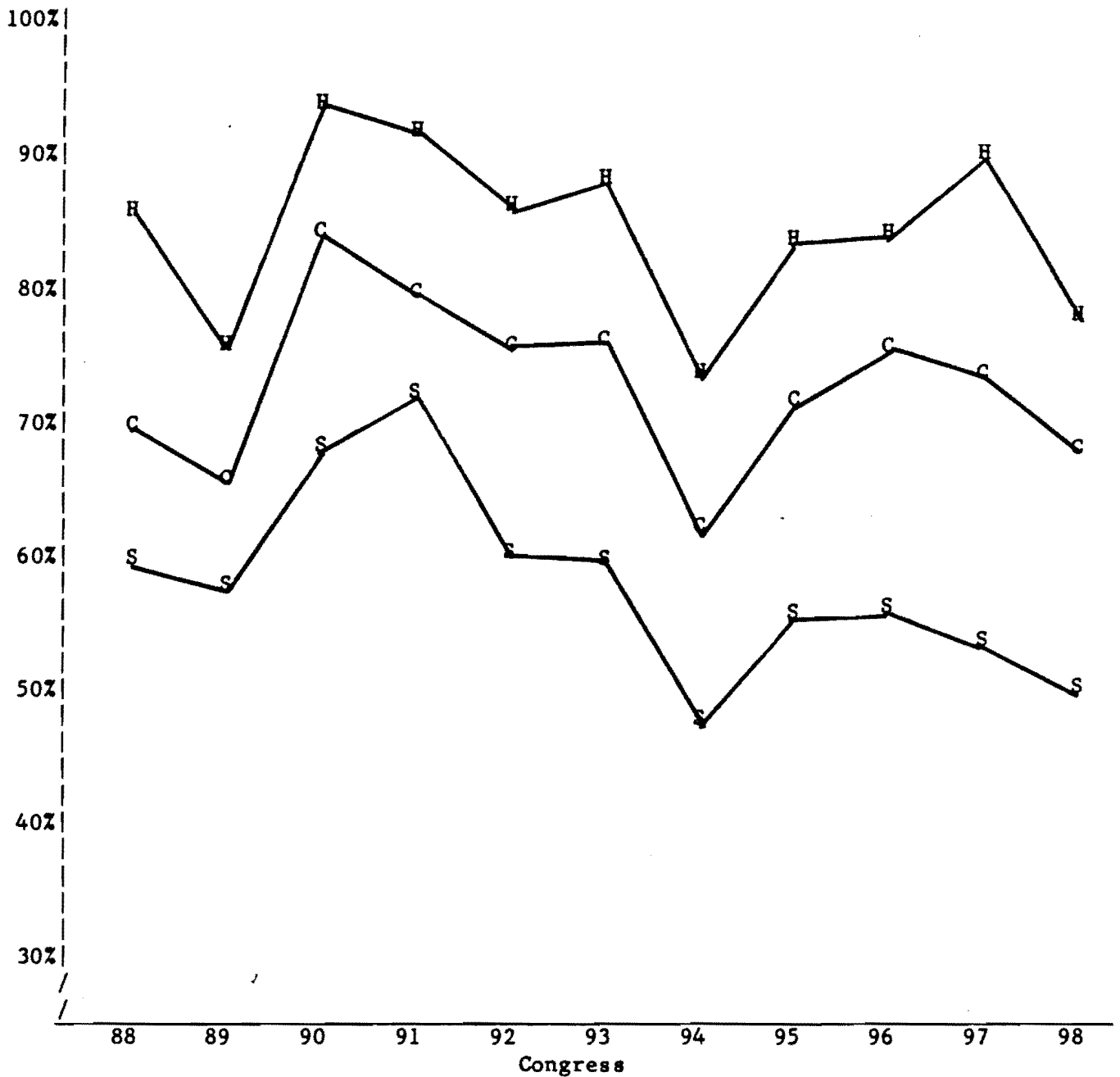
The trend lines for House and committee membership return rates are virtually flat. There has been no systematic increase or decrease in the rate of total turnover in House membership since 1963, nor has there been any notable change over time in the return rate of all standing committee members. There have been greater fluctuations, of course, in the return rates for all Democratic and for all Republican Members, because the changes in these rates reflect the partisan directions of election outcomes as well as voluntary decisions to leave

Figure 2
Change in Total House, Committee, and Subcommittee Membership:
88th-98th Congresses (1963-1983)



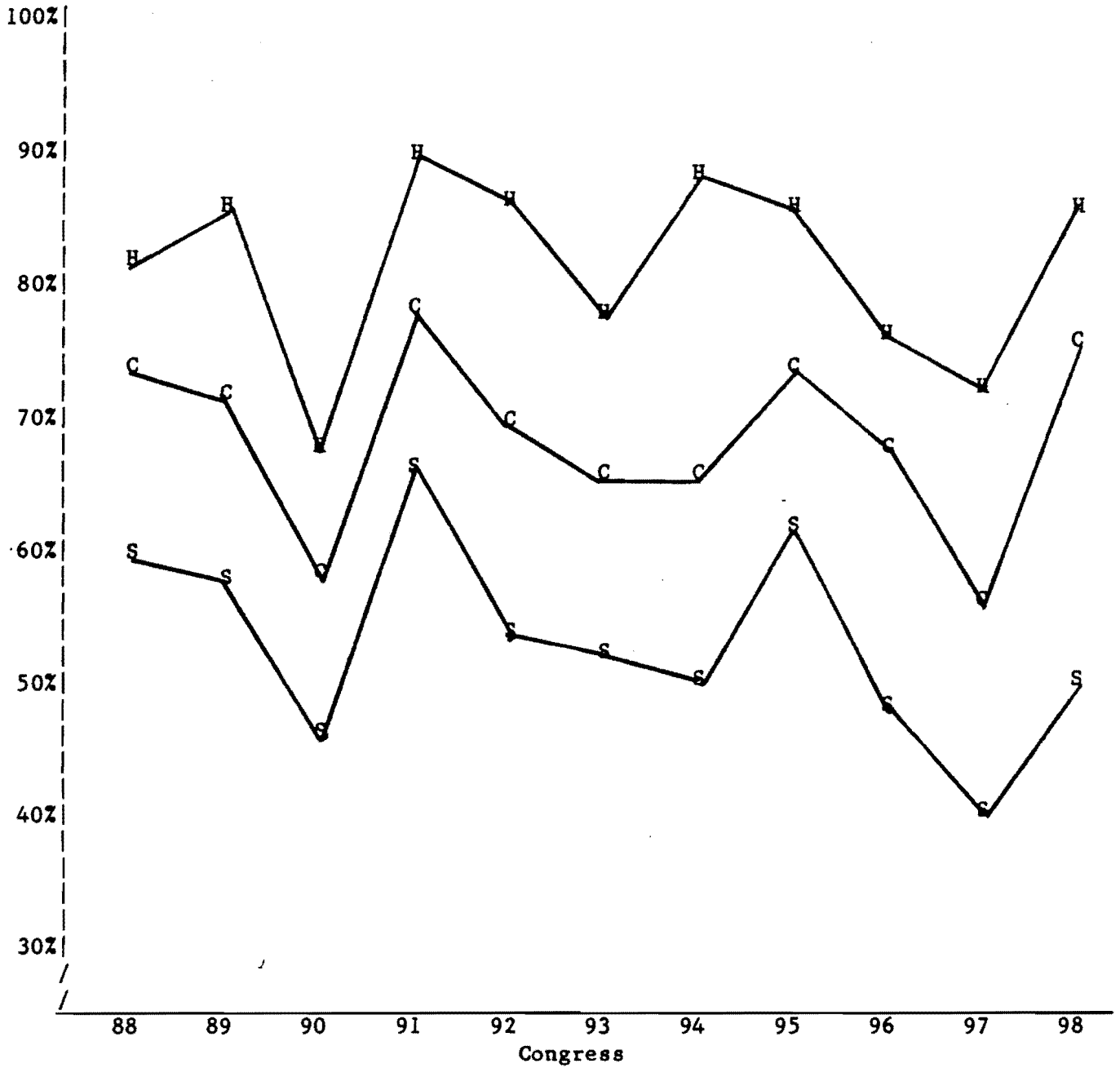
Key: H = return rate for the total membership of the House
C = return rate for the total membership of standing committees
S = return rate for the total membership of subcommittees of
standing committees

Figure 3
Change in Democratic House, Committee, and Subcommittee Membership:
88th-98th Congresses (1963-1983)



Key: H = return rate for the Democratic membership of the House
C = return rate for the Democratic membership of standing committees
S = return rate for the Democratic membership of subcommittees of standing committees

Figure 4
Change in Republican House, Committee, and Subcommittee Membership:
88th-98th Congresses (1963-1983)



Key: H = return rate for the Republican membership of the House
C = return rate for the Republican membership of standing committees
S = return rate for the Republican membership of subcommittees of standing committees

the House. But a regression of the party rates over time fails to reveal a significant trend during the twenty-year period. What is most impressive is the extent to which changes in each of the three committee membership return rates parallel changes in the corresponding House membership return rate.

Changes in committee membership are not solely a function of changes in House membership. Turnover in House membership creates committee vacancies, many of these vacancies are filled by newly-elected Representatives, and the net shifts in House party strength affect party ratios on most of the standing committees. However, any one committee vacancy can have a "ripple effect" as returning Members transfer from one committee to another. Figures 2-4 indicate that the return rates among House members from one Congress to the next and the return rates for either party in the House have resulted in consistently lower return rates for total and party membership on all standing committees (but not necessarily for the total or party membership on any one of the standing committees).

SUBCOMMITTEE LEADERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP

Table 5 presents data on change in subcommittee leadership positions that correspond to the data at the bottom of Table 1 on the rate of leadership change and the total and party replacement rates for the standing committees of the House. The subcommittee leadership data, like the standing committee leadership data, are based on a comparison of the names of the chairman and ranking minority member of each subcommittee of the standing committees of the House in one Congress with their counterparts on the same subcommittee during the preceding Congress, from 1963 to 1983.⁷ Figures 5 through 8 each depict one of the measures of change in subcommittee leadership positions in comparison with the corresponding measure of change in full committee leadership positions.

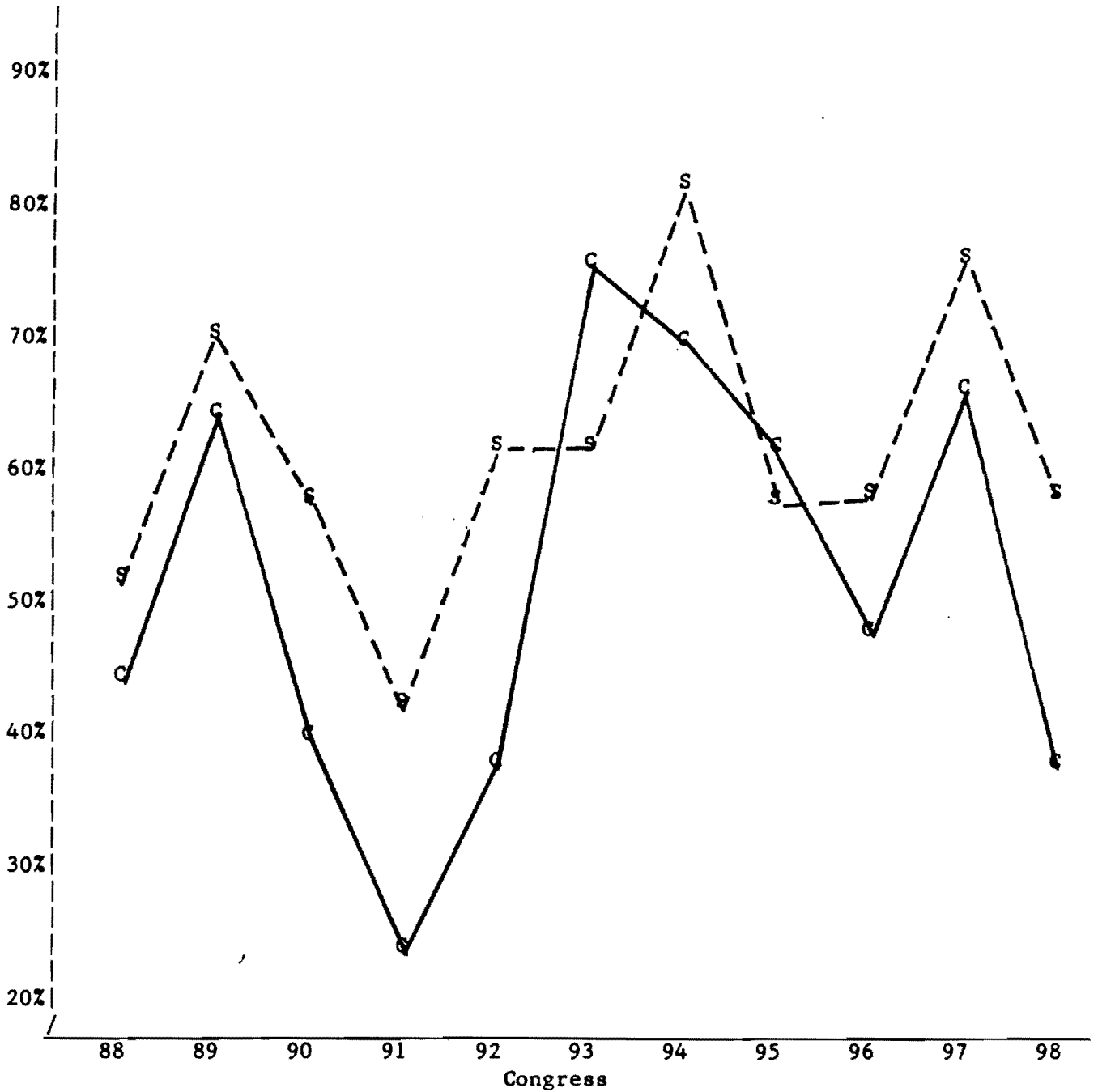
If the rates of turnover in standing committee leadership positions have usually been greater than the rates of turnover in total House membership, the rates of turnover in subcommittee leadership positions have been even greater. In only two of the eleven Congresses examined (the 93rd and 95th Congresses) was the rate of subcommittee leadership change lower than the rate of standing committee leadership change. And only in the 93rd Congress was the total replacement rate for all subcommittee leaders lower than the total standing committee replacement rate. In only two instances (the 89th and 93rd Congresses) did the Republican committee replacement rate exceed the Republican subcommittee replacement rate; in none of the eleven Congresses was there greater turnover among Democratic committee chairmen than among Democratic subcommittee chairmen.

To be sure, there are considerable changes from one Congress to the next, and fluctuations over the twenty-year period, in all of the measures of committee and subcommittee leadership turnover. But for each of these four measures of turnover, the direction of change in full committee leadership turnover is usually the same as that for subcommittee leadership turnover. An increase (or decrease) in the rate of leadership turnover at the full committee level generally is accompanied by an increase (or decrease) in the rate of leadership turnover at the subcommittee level. For example, there is a correlation of .74 between the

Table 5
 Change in Subcommittee Leadership Positions:
 88th-98th Congresses (1963-1983)

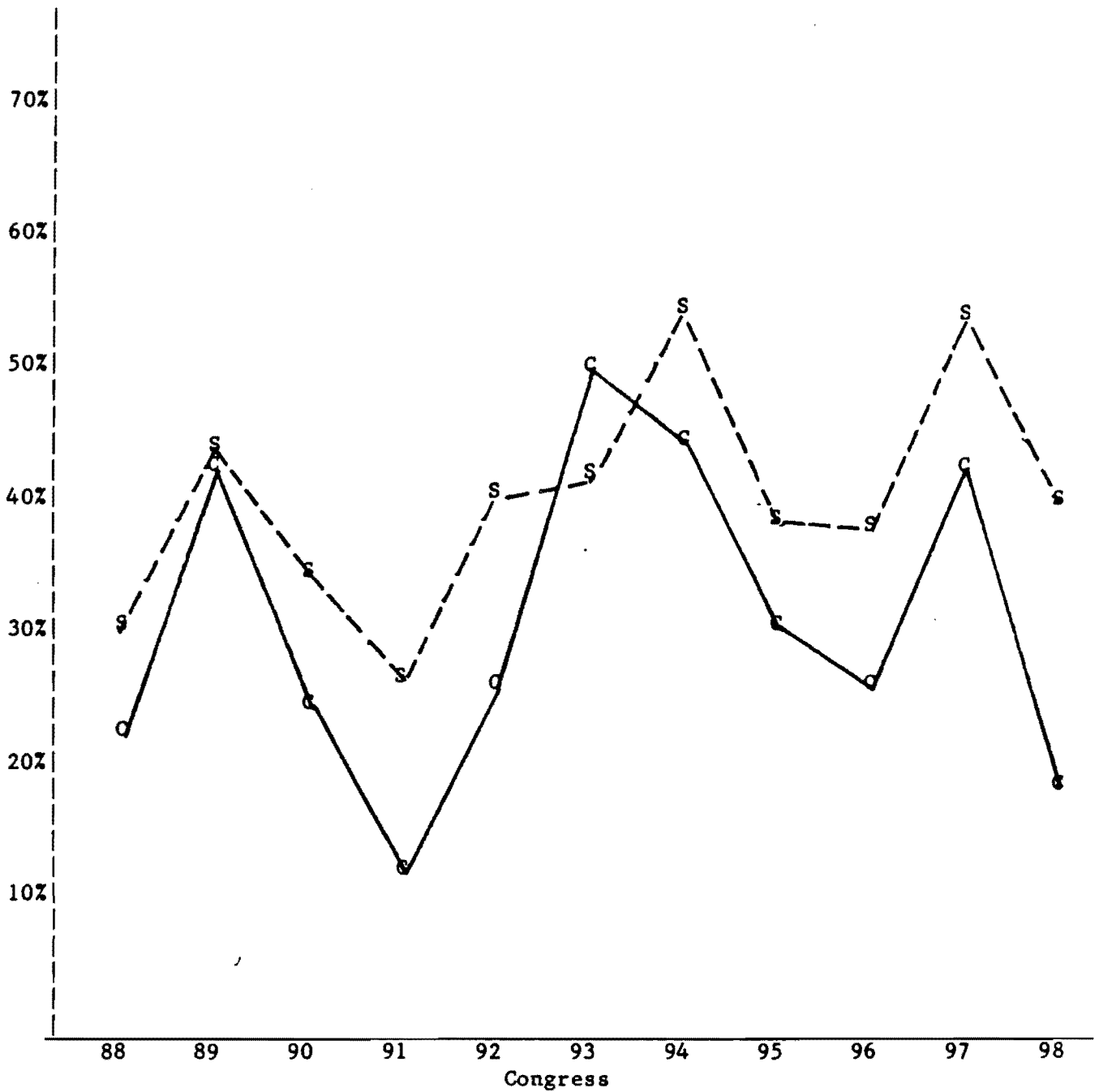
	Congress										
	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98
Rate of subcommittee leadership change	52%	71%	58%	43%	62%	62%	82%	58%	59%	77%	59%
Total subcommittee replacement rate	31%	44%	35%	27%	41%	42%	55%	39%	38%	54%	40%
Democratic subcommittee replacement rate	25%	27%	32%	22%	38%	34%	40%	41%	34%	56%	26%
Republican subcommittee replacement rate	38%	63%	37%	32%	44%	49%	69%	37%	42%	52%	53%

Figure 5
Rates of Committee and Subcommittee Leadership Change:
88th-98th Congresses (1963-1983)



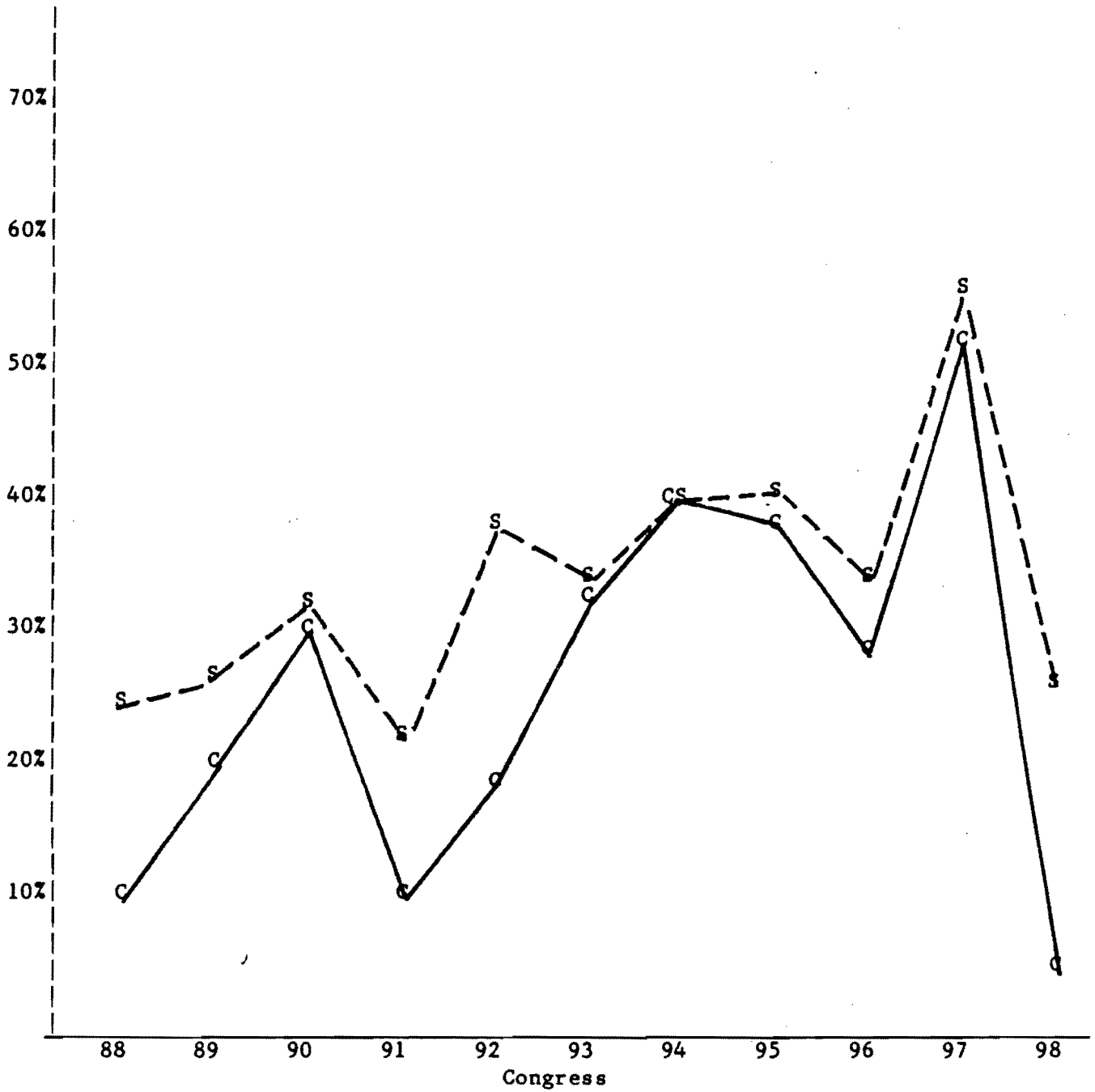
Key: C = rate of committee leadership change
S = rate of subcommittee leadership change

Figure 6
Total Committee and Subcommittee Replacement Rates:
88th-98th Congresses (1963-1983)



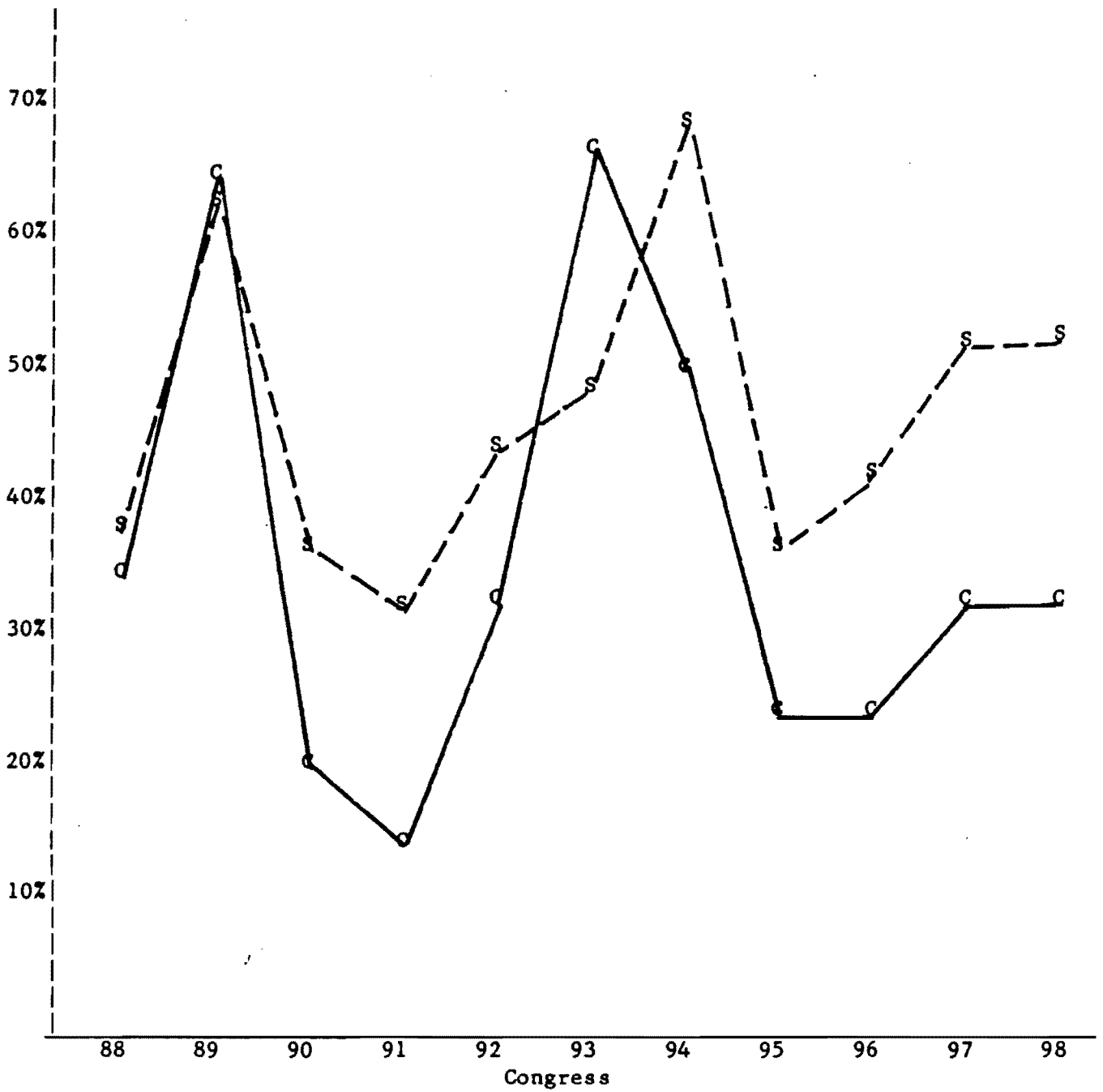
Key: C = total committee replacement rate
S = total subcommittee replacement rate

Figure 7
Democratic Committee and Subcommittee Replacement Rates:
88th-98th Congresses (1963-1983)



Key: C = Democratic committee replacement rate
S = Republican subcommittee replacement rate

Figure 8
Republican Committee and Subcommittee Replacement Rates:
88th-98th Congresses (1963-1983)



Key: C = Republican committee replacement rate
S = Republican subcommittee replacement rate

rate of committee leadership change and the rate of subcommittee leadership change; the correlations between the full committee replacement rates and the corresponding subcommittee replacement rates range from .73 to .89.⁸

Turnover among subcommittee leaders is affected by turnover among committee leaders, as members "move up" to preferred positions within the committee structure (and to the extent that committee chairmen and ranking minority members may or may not hold leadership positions on one or more subcommittees on the same committee or other committees). At the same time, turnover rates at both the committee and subcommittee levels are affected by biennial election results and by other events and decisions that cause Members to leave the House. For purposes of this analysis, what is striking is the consistency with which subcommittee leadership turnover has exceeded committee leadership turnover, sometimes by as much as ten or twenty percent.

The fluctuations in the subcommittee leadership turnover rates are not as great as those for the corresponding full committee rates. This is to be expected, because the full committee rates are so sensitive to the fates and decisions of such a small number of Representatives. Nonetheless, the changes in the subcommittee rates from one Congress to the next are more dramatic than the relatively small increases in the rates of change for each of the four measures over time. But what are undoubtedly most important for the operations of the House are the levels of subcommittee leadership turnover themselves.

Consider the rates of subcommittee leadership change presented in Table 5. Of the eleven Congresses examined, only in the 91st Congress did a majority of subcommittees of the standing committees have the same chairman and ranking minority member as in the preceding Congress. In the other ten Congresses, a majority of the subcommittees experienced a change in one or both leadership positions. A change occurred in the leadership of more than three of every four subcommittees when the House organized at the beginning of the 97th Congress. This rate of change was higher still--82 percent--in the 94th Congress. In terms of the total subcommittee replacement rate, more than one-third of the possible subcommittee leadership changes that could have occurred actually did take place in nine of the eleven Congresses.

With two exceptions, the Republican subcommittee replacement rates are even higher than the total rates. In four of the eleven Congresses, more than half of the subcommittee ranking minority members had not occupied the same position during the previous Congress. And in only one Congress (the 91st) did less than one-third of the ranking minority subcommittee positions change hands. When the House subcommittees of the 94th Congress were organized, more than two of every three ranking minority positions changed hands. The reverse is true for subcommittee chairmen; with two exceptions, the Democratic replacement rates are lower than the total replacement rates. Even so, in all but one Congress, at least one-quarter of all subcommittee chairmen were replaced. In a majority of the Congresses, the replacement rate for subcommittee chairmen exceeded one-third, and this rate reached a high of 56 percent in the 97th Congress. There has been a considerable range in the subcommittee replacement rates; for each of the three rates, the highest rate was more than double the lowest rate, and the rate of leadership change varied from 43 percent in the

91st Congress to 82 percent in the 94th. But even with this variability, the turnover among House subcommittee leaders has been impressive, both in absolute terms and in comparison with the rates of committee leadership turnover.

Turning now to changes in subcommittee memberships between 1963 and 1983, Tables 6 through 8 present data, committee by committee, on the total, Democratic, and Republican return rates. Each entry in these tables is the percentage of the members of all the subcommittees of a standing committee who served on the same or the corresponding subcommittee during the previous Congress.⁹

As was true of the standing committee return rates presented in Tables 2-4, there are some substantial differences among committees. The total subcommittee membership return rate for the Appropriations Committee--the most prestigious committee to have subcommittees throughout this period--never fell below 50 percent and was 67 percent or higher in seven of the eleven Congresses. The return rate fell to a low of 42 percent for Republican members of Appropriations subcommittees, but it was always 60 percent or more for Democratic members. At the other extreme, only once was the total subcommittee return rate for the Post Office and Civil Service Committee greater than 50 percent, and only twice was it 50 percent or more for the members of each party.

There also has been considerable variability in the stability of certain committees' subcommittee memberships over time.¹⁰ For example, the return rate for all District of Columbia subcommittee members fell from 69 percent in the 89th Congress to 26 percent in the 93rd Congress. Not one Democratic Representative served on the same District of Columbia subcommittee in the 93rd Congress that he or she had served on during the 92nd Congress. The Democratic return rate on Veterans' Affairs subcommittees increased from 43 percent to 90 percent and then returned to 69 percent in the 89th, 90th, and 91st Congresses. On the other hand, the Republican return rate on House Administration subcommittees was 67 percent in the 93rd Congress before dropping to 27 percent two years later and then rebounding to 73 percent in the 95th Congress.

Figures 2-4 permit a comparison of these subcommittee membership return rates, cumulated for all of the standing committees, with the corresponding full committee rates, as well as with the return rates for the total membership of the House. Several conclusions emerge from an inspection of these figures.

First, the directions of change in each set of rates generally parallel each other. For the total rates, the Democratic rates, or the Republican rates, an increase (or decrease) in the return rate for the membership of the House is usually accompanied by an increase (or decrease) in the return rate for the membership of the standing committees as well as the return rate for the membership of the subcommittees of those committees. There are correlations of .79 and .83 between the total subcommittee return rate on the one hand and the total committee and House return rates on the other. The comparable correlations between the party subcommittee return rates and the party committee and House return rates range from .69 to .85.¹¹

Second, there has been a more noticeable decrease over time in the subcommittee return rates than in the corresponding return rates for the House and

Table 6
Total Subcommittee Membership Return Rate: 88th-98th Congresses (1963-1983)

	Congress*										
	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98
Agriculture	66	59	35	62	64	56	32	55	64	--	67
Appropriations	74	59	70	91	67	64	58	70	71	57	77
Armed Services	76	47	81	78	75	53	44	63	59	43	51
Banking	**	68	64	75	66	60	--	47	59	51	59
Commerce	68	40	49	67	51	72	--	53	51	47	60
District of Columbia	53	69	56	47	--	26	--	--	--	--	68
Education and Labor	31	69	36	63	54	61	--	50	55	60	45
Foreign Affairs Government	65	71	81	68	64	69	--	--	43	49	34
Operations	39	54	55	69	44	59	--	48	43	42	28
House Adminis- tration	70	61	64	55	45	74	38	63	58	41	50
Interior and In- sular Affairs	49	48	55	68	56	53	61	--	56	53	58
Internal Security	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Judiciary	67	54	69	40	57	40	--	56	39	52	42
Merchant Marine and Fisheries	63	66	54	71	61	49	54	68	54	55	51
Post Office and Civil Service	33	36	28	55	--	44	31	--	29	36	41
Public Works	59	55	62	91	53	--	49	58	61	49	43
Rules	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	83
Science and Tech- nology	--	--	73	74	49	43	--	45	--	43	40
Small Business								--	37	24	34
Standards				**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Veterans	64	45	73	68	54	54	53	73	50	45	37
Ways and Means	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	67	52	61	58
Total	60	58	60	70	58	57	49	58	54	49	51

* Each cell entry is the percentage of all subcommittee members who served on the same or corresponding subcommittee during the previous Congress.

** No subcommittees.

-- No percentage is entered if more than half of the subcommittees did not have corresponding subcommittees during the previous Congress.

Source: Congressional Staff Directories, 1961-1983.

Table 7
Democratic Subcommittee Membership Return Rate: 88th-98th Congresses (1963-1983)

	Congress*										
	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98
Agriculture	54	52	47	58	58	65	29	48	62	--	60
Appropriations	77	60	71	97	70	62	61	67	69	66	75
Armed Services	61	41	97	81	77	67	44	67	57	38	47
Banking	--	67	73	80	78	57	--	42	66	59	61
Commerce	68	36	43	72	60	79	--	57	53	54	56
District of Columbia	47	62	54	36	--	00	--	--	--	--	58
Education and Labor	30	72	48	68	53	60	--	49	64	75	54
Foreign Affairs	84	71	84	67	67	75	--	--	42	51	40
Government Operations	33	67	72	71	44	66	--	50	48	46	26
House Adminis- tration	73	62	79	47	47	78	43	59	58	56	42
Interior and In- sular Affairs	50	47	60	89	58	57	60	--	63	61	61
Internal Security	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Judiciary	71	63	86	43	59	42	--	59	45	45	44
Merchant Marine and Fisheries	63	67	58	79	66	49	53	70	52	60	54
Post Office and Civil Service	18	42	32	53	--	55	32	--	42	28	41
Public Works	69	59	81	89	56	--	40	51	61	53	45
Rules	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	70
Science and Tech- nology	--	--	79	70	48	41	--	52	--	54	45
Small Business								--	47	27	39
Standards				**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Veterans	54	43	90	69	66	55	46	65	46	52	28
Ways and Means	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	71	57	55	55
Total	60	58	69	73	61	60	48	56	57	54	51

* Each cell entry is the percentage of all Democratic subcommittee members who served on the same or corresponding subcommittee during the previous Congress.

** No subcommittees.

-- No percentage is entered if more than half of the subcommittees did not have corresponding subcommittees during the previous Congress.

Source: Congressional Staff Directories, 1961-1983.

Table 8
Republican Subcommittee Membership Return Rate: 88th-98th Congresses (1963-1983)

	Congress*										
	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98
Agriculture	86	71	19	67	73	43	36	74	68	--	82
Appropriations	69	57	68	83	63	66	50	78	70	42	81
Armed Services	83	59	58	78	71	33	45	54	62	50	59
Banking	--	71	51	68	48	64	--	59	44	46	57
Commerce	67	50	56	61	39	63	--	43	47	35	70
District of Columbia	63	80	58	60	--	60	--	--	--	--	86
Education and Labor	33	61	21	55	56	63	--	52	36	29	21
Foreign Affairs	34	72	76	69	60	62	--	--	45	46	22
Government Operations	50	29	33	67	45	50	--	43	33	36	32
House Adminis- tration	67	60	43	67	40	67	27	73	58	18	67
Interior and In- sular Affairs	47	50	49	45	52	48	63	--	43	40	52
Internal Security	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Judiciary	60	40	48	37	53	37	--	47	27	61	40
Merchant Marine and Fisheries	62	65	47	59	51	48	57	63	57	47	46
Post Office and Civil Service	50	25	20	57	--	25	29	29	12	48	40
Public Works	45	54	37	94	49	--	65	85	60	42	38
Rules	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	20	100
Science and Tech- nology	--	--	64	78	50	45	--	29	--	26	31
Small Business								--	16	19	25
Standards				**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Veterans	78	48	52	68	40	52	67	89	57	36	54
Ways and Means	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	60	41	71	63
Total	60	58	47	67	54	53	51	62	49	41	51

* Each cell entry is the percentage of all Republican subcommittee members who served on the same or corresponding subcommittee during the previous Congress.

** No subcommittees.

-- No percentage is entered if more than half of the subcommittees did not have corresponding subcommittees during the previous Congress.

Source: Congressional Staff Directories, 1961-1983.

its standing committees. A simple regression of the total subcommittee return rate over time yields an adjusted R-square of .37; the corresponding values for the Democratic and Republican subcommittee return rates are .29 and .15. By contrast, comparable regressions of the House and full committee return rates over time yield adjusted R-square values no higher than .06.

Third, the subcommittee return rates are all consistently lower than the other return rates. The distances between standing committee and subcommittee return rates tend to be as great or greater than the distances between the standing committee rates and the rates for the House membership as a whole. Just as changes in House membership have had a "ripple effect" in the membership of House committees, so too have changes in committee membership reverberated throughout the subcommittee system.

Fourth and perhaps most important is the level of the subcommittee return rates. The subcommittee return rates at their highest usually do not reach the levels of the committee return rates at their lowest. Only three times during the twenty-year period did the total committee membership return rate fall below 70 percent; the total subcommittee rate only reached 70 percent once (in the 91st Congress), and that was the only time the rate exceeded 60 percent. In ten of eleven Congresses, at least 40 percent of all subcommittee seats were occupied by Members who had not served on the same subcommittee two years earlier. Subcommittee memberships have been markedly less stable than committee memberships and even less stable than House membership.¹²

Much the same is true for the party membership return rates. The Democratic committee return rate never dropped below 63 percent; the party's subcommittee return rate only exceeded that level twice (reaching a high of 73 percent in the 91st Congress). The full committee rates for Republicans ranged from 57 percent to 79 percent; their subcommittee rates fell as low as 41 percent and only reached 60 percent in three of the eleven Congresses. Generally, the total subcommittee return rates for Democratic subcommittee members have been somewhat higher than for Republican subcommittee members. But the return rates for members of both parties have been low--certainly in comparison with the full committee rates.

MEMBERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP CHANGE WITHIN THE COMMITTEE SYSTEM

The primary purpose of this paper is to document the levels of membership and leadership change within the House standing committee system--levels of change that are generally higher than change in the total membership of the House, and levels of change that are consistently higher for subcommittees than for full committees.

These phenomena suggest a number of questions. What follows is a preliminary and speculative discussion that touches on trends in turnover within the House committee system and some of the possible causes of this turnover, and then begins to explore what difference such turnover may make for the operations of the House, the way in which it reaches (or fails to reach) decisions, and the decisions it does reach.

With respect to the question of stability or change in the turnover rates, a simple regression analysis of each rate over time suggests little in the way of systematic linear change over the twenty-year period for the rates of change in House membership and in committee leadership and membership, whether for both parties together or for each party separately. With only one exception, the slopes of the regression lines for all these rates are negative, indicating some increase in turnover over time, but, as noted earlier, none of the adjusted R-square values for these rates exceed .06. What is most striking is the fluctuations in these rates from Congress to Congress, such that very little of the variations in the rates is associated with the passage of time.

By contrast, there are more noticeable trend lines pointing toward increases in the subcommittee turnover rates between 1963 and 1983. As also noted earlier, a simple regression of the total subcommittee membership return rate over time yields an adjusted R-square value of .37; the corresponding values for the Democratic and Republican subcommittee membership return rates are .29 and .15. There also has been a slight increase in turnover among some subcommittee leaders. An adjusted R-square of .13 is associated with changes over time in the total subcommittee replacement rate. There is a slightly higher value of .19 associated with turnover among Democratic subcommittee chairmen, but no significant trend (adjusted R-square = -.06) in change among subcommittees' ranking Republicans. It appears, therefore, that during an era in which subcommittees have become more prominent in the House, the rates of subcommittee turnover have generally been increasing.

The passage of time, of course, does not cause increases or decreases in turnover. In a sense, time is a summary variable that reflects the effects of developments that occurred during the period. If subcommittee membership turnover has increased, what accounts for this trend? To what extent does it reflect turnover at higher levels of House organization; to what extent does it reflect organizational changes, such as changes in subcommittee assignment procedures and limitations?

Committee and subcommittee membership turnover are not independent of each other, and both are related to turnover in House membership. The correlations among these return rates--for all Representatives, for all Democrats, and for all Republicans--range from .69 to .92. We would expect, therefore, that the turnover rates among all Representatives would be reflected in the standing committee turnover rates, and that the combined effects of House and committee turnover would account for much of the variation in the subcommittee turnover rates.

Changes in total House membership do account for 63 percent of the variance in the total committee return rate; the corresponding adjusted R-square values are .83 and .60 for the association between House and committee membership change for Democrats and Republicans respectively. There is a lesser relationship between House and committee membership change and committee leadership change. Taken together, the total House and committee return rates account for one-half of the variation in the total committee replacement rate, but this association disappears when the return and replacement rates are examined separately for each party.

With respect to subcommittee membership turnover, the rates of change in total House and committee membership combine to account for approximately two-thirds of the variance in the total subcommittee return rates (adjusted R-square = .66). There is the same association between Republican turnover in the House and on committees, taken together, and turnover among Republican subcommittee members, but a less powerful relationship on the Democratic side of the aisle (adjusted R-square = .55). House membership change and committee leadership and membership change combine to account for 72 percent of the variance in the total subcommittee leadership replacement rate; the same regressions for turnover within each party yield adjusted R-squares of .76 for the Democrats and .64 for Republicans.

Thus, there is generally a strong association, and presumably a causal relationship, between membership and leadership change at different levels of House organization. But we would not expect to find, nor do we find, a perfect correspondence between membership (or leadership) turnover rates. Instances of turnover generally have a "ripple effect" at the lower levels of organization. The departure of a Member from the House more often than not creates vacancies on at least two committees and even more subcommittees; by the same token, a Member's transfer from one committee to another results in a membership change on more than one subcommittee of each committee. Moreover, there may be changes in subcommittee leaders and rosters even if the membership of the full committee remains unchanged.

Changes in the subcommittee turnover rates also may be associated with changes in the rules governing subcommittee structure and autonomy, chairmanship selections, and assignment procedures. These changes--primarily changes in Democratic Caucus rules which were made gradually throughout the 1970s--had the effect of requiring the election of subcommittee chairmen, permitting committee members to select the subcommittees on which they wish to serve, limiting the number of chairmanships a Member may hold, and also limiting the number of subcommittee assignments per Member.

For example, the Democratic Caucus prohibited any of its members from chairing more than one legislative subcommittee (1971) or serving on more than two committees with legislative jurisdiction (1971), required a separate vote in the full Caucus on each nominee for committee chairman (1973) and Appropriations subcommittee chairman (1975), established a process by which subcommittee chairmen are elected by the Democratic committee caucus (1973) and a bidding system for allocating Democratic subcommittee seats (1973 and revised in 1975), and limited the opportunities for certain committee chairmen to chair or serve on other committees (1975). In the following years, the Caucus rules were amended further to require secret ballots for the election of subcommittee chairmen (1977), tightened the prohibitions against multiple chairmanships (1977 and 1978), limited each member to service on no more than five subcommittees of standing committees (1979), and imposed a cap on the number of subcommittees per standing committee (1981).¹³ Each of these developments may have prompted some Democratic turnover within the committee system that otherwise might not have occurred. And although these developments only affected Democrats directly, they also affected Republicans indirectly to the extent that changes in the numbers and sizes of subcommittees resulted.

The most dramatic, and probably the most important, of these changes occurred when the Democrats of the 93rd Congress convened after the 1972 election. In Caucus, they approved the "subcommittee bill of rights" and established a bidding system for committee Democrats to elect subcommittee chairmen and select subcommittee assignments (the latter procedure was modified significantly in 1975). These Caucus rules changes marked a point of departure from prior practices by which committee chairmen appointed subcommittee chairmen and Democratic subcommittee members. Table 7 indicates that the Democratic subcommittee membership return rate then dropped from 61 percent in the 92nd Congress to 60 percent in the 93rd Congress and then to 48 percent in the 94th Congress, and has not returned to its pre-93rd Congress levels. The Republican rate declined by only three percentage points between the 92nd and 94th Congresses, but, on average, the five pre-93rd Congress return rates for Republicans were also higher than the rates from the 93rd to the 98th Congresses. Moreover, whereas the replacement rate among subcommittee chairmen fluctuated from 38 to 34 to 40 percent between the 92nd and 94th Congresses, the replacement rate for ranking minority members rose from 44 to 69 percent during the same three Congresses.

The aggregate data discussed in this paper do not directly address whether or how changes in the way Democratic subcommittee chairmen and members are selected have affected Democratic subcommittee turnover rates. The Democratic subcommittee leadership replacement rate has generally been lower than the Republican rate, even in four of the six Congresses since the 1973 Caucus rules changes, and Figure 3 indicates that the decline in the Democratic subcommittee membership return rate between the 93rd and 94th Congresses was paralleled by drops in the Democratic House and committee membership return rates. Moreover, one or more changes affecting committee and subcommittee rosters were made in Democratic Caucus rules after virtually every election during the 1970s, making it very difficult if not impossible to isolate their effects, if any, on subcommittee turnover rates during the same period.¹⁴

However, these changes in the organization and relative autonomy of House subcommittees deserve attention for another reason. With turnover among subcommittee leaders and members at high, and even increasing, levels, subcommittees have become an increasingly important locus of agenda-setting and decision-making in the House. According to Roger Davidson, for example, subcommittees are "the leading initiators and drafters of legislative measures and reports."¹⁵ Although this is a difficult proposition to document, the available information on congressional workload and activity indicates that subcommittees have been meeting more--and presumably, therefore, doing more.¹⁶

Committee chairmen are regularly and more visibly accountable to the full Democratic membership of the House, and these chairmen have lost much of the control they used to be able to exercise over their committees' organization and activities. Most subcommittee chairmen are elected by their Democratic committee colleagues, Democratic committee members generally can select the subcommittees on which they wish to serve, and subcommittees (or at least subcommittee chairmen) have more control over their budgets, staffs, and agendas. Many more Representatives hold elective leadership positions, most within narrow policy domains. The coordination of policy development has been complicated by the presence of more leaders, each of whom can deliver less.¹⁷ The result--so the

conventional argument goes--is a House that is more democratic by virtue of greater decentralization, but a House that is less efficient and accountable by virtue of greater fragmentation in its committee system.

To be sure, there are important differences among the standing committees of the House--in their positions within the House and in their formal and informal modes of operation, as well as in their rates of leadership and membership change. The House continues to give its committees great latitude in deciding what to do and how to do it, and generalizations about committees must be greeted with this variability in mind. Still, there is little argument that changes in subcommittee chairmanship and membership selection procedures have made a difference, as have changes in the relationships between subcommittees and their parent committees. But the data presented in this paper suggest that there is another direction in which to look for the implications and consequences of subcommittee decentralization. High rates of leadership and membership turnover on House subcommittees--rates that are consistently and significantly higher than the comparable full committee turnover rates--have characterized the House for the past twenty years. The increased importance of subcommittees, however, has made these characteristics more important than before.

It would be extraordinarily difficult to isolate the independent effects of subcommittee turnover. Yet reasonable arguments can be made that the rates of both leadership and membership change in House subcommittees have added to the difficulties of policy making and control in Congress, as in the following ways.¹⁸

Deference to subcommittee recommendations. The influence of House committees and subcommittees rests on two pillars: first, the difficulty of overriding their decisions not to act; and second, the deference among other Representatives to their recommendations for legislative action. The latter depends in turn on the acknowledged standing of committees and subcommittees as policy experts, on the unity of their members in defending their bills on the floor, and on their ability to develop legislation that is generally acceptable to the membership as a whole.¹⁹ Because each subcommittee has relatively few members, it may not accurately reflect the distribution of opinion within the House, especially when Democratic subcommittee members are more or less self-selected. Thus, to the extent that legislation is shaped in subcommittee more than ever before, that fact alone may have increased the likelihood that important reported bills and resolutions will be challenged and significantly changed on the floor.

It remains true, of course, that subcommittee recommendations may be reviewed and reversed by the full committee. Differences between the House Energy and Commerce Committee and its Subcommittee on Health and the Environment over clean air standards are a case in point. Generally, however, a practice among committee members of accepting subcommittee proposals whenever possible is attractive because it adds to the value of subcommittee leadership positions that committee members hold or expect to hold within a few years. The virtual autonomy of House appropriations subcommittees illustrates the extreme to which this tendency may be carried. The relationships between committees and their subcommittees in developing and marking up legislation in the contemporary

House have not been adequately studied, and certainly vary from committee to committee. The prevailing assumption, however, is that House committees are tending more and more in the direction of the Appropriations Committee. If so, the question remains: has decentralization in fact led to greater specialization within the House committee system?²⁰

Representatives are most likely to defer to the judgment of a committee or subcommittee if it has a reputation for knowledge and experience and for developing sound legislation. For example, an official 1963 publication of the House stated that:²¹

Generally speaking, and in the absence of convictions to the contrary, Members are justified in voting with the committee. Committees are not infallible but they have had long familiarity with the subject under discussion, and have made an intimate study of the particular bill before the House and after mature deliberation have made formal recommendations and, other considerations being equal, are entitled to support on the floor.

The turnover in subcommittee leadership and membership has made this argument more difficult to sustain when the committee bill is known to be primarily a subcommittee product. How much deference can a subcommittee expect when the House knows that its chairman has had little time and experience in that position and that many of his or her subcommittee colleagues probably are even less familiar with the intricacy of policy and the history of legislative development? Although Members cannot be expected to know about the stability or instability of each subcommittee's leadership and membership, their observations and their own committee experiences can only tell them not necessarily to assume that each subcommittee proposal reflects years of study and experience. To the extent that committee recommendations are actually shaped in subcommittees, and that bills are managed on the House floor by subcommittee leaders, the levels of turnover among subcommittee leaders and members tend to undermine the reasons that have made deference to committees a rational decision-making strategy for Members when faced with floor votes on issues on which they do not have intensely held positions.²²

In this respect, the possible impact of high turnover within subcommittees is related to the rates of turnover within the full committees and the House as a whole. If the return rate among all Representatives were high and stable, lower committee return rates could lead to a House composed of many Members with experience on several committees and, therefore, considerable breadth of policy experience, if not true expertise. In turn, if the committee return rates were high and stable, lower subcommittee return rates could lead to a comparable situation in which a subcommittee would develop initial policy recommendations which would be reviewed by full committee members many of whom may have served on that subcommittee in the past.²³ But high levels of subcommittee turnover combined with high, though not equally high, levels of committee and House turnover, point more toward a House in which turnover limits effective subcommittee specialization without the compensating advantage of wide-ranging experience within the full committees or the House generally.

Building majority coalitions. It has never been enough for a committee to bring a bill to the House floor and assume that a majority will support it, either out of party loyalty or out of deference to the committee's judgment or reputation. In fact, the floor success of a committee, such as Ways and Means enjoyed under the chairmanship of Wilbur Mills, depends on its ability to gauge the requirements of a legislative package necessary to attract majority support (and its willingness to be guided by this calculation). The House was willing to consider major tax bills under closed rules largely because a majority was prepared to pass them as reported. The coalition of support had been built in committee and floor amendments might only have jeopardized it. The reputation and success of a House committee reflects its ability to anticipate what the House wants, or at least what the House is willing to accept.

In this respect, too, the rates of turnover among subcommittee leaders and members create problems for a House that relies more than ever on its subcommittees. One problem is the difficulty of establishing stable norms and predictable patterns of interaction and decision-making within the subcommittee, when one or both of its leaders may be new to their positions and when a large percentage of its members are new to the subcommittee.²⁴ Certainly any collective sense of identity or purpose is hard to develop when half of the subcommittee members are newcomers. Much of the subcommittee's work and decisions often is delegated in practice to its chairman and ranking minority member, but the frequency of change among subcommittee leaders also is high. Such subcommittee leadership change reduces the likelihood of stable relationships between chairmen and ranking minority members--relationships either of cooperation or of conflict--which both can anticipate with confidence as they decide what can be accomplished and how best to accomplish it. Moreover, subject matter expertise and effective working relationships with important clientele groups are important attributes for chairmen and ranking minority members who wish to lead their subcommittee colleagues. Frequent turnover probably diminishes the likelihood of subcommittee leaders possessing these attributes and, therefore, adds to the difficulty of building majority coalitions around leaders' positions in subcommittee, much less in full committee or on the floor.

A second, and related, problem is the difficulty of anticipating what the House will accept in legislation, and what compromises and adjustments are necessary to ensure majority support in an era when the inter-relationships among policies and the redistributive implications of policy choices are increasingly evident. The ability of a subcommittee or committee to construct legislation that will attract majority support depends on its members' sensitivity to the interests and needs of various Members and groups of Members. In turn, this sensitivity comes with experience--with experience as Representatives of course,²⁵ but more particularly, with experience in having fought similar battles before. To the extent that subcommittee members are relatively unfamiliar with each other and with the political dynamics of the issues within their jurisdiction, they are more likely to err in their political calculations and confront opposition to their legislative products.²⁶

Problems of presidential and congressional party leadership. House committees and subcommittees characterized by relatively stable leadership and membership can either help or hinder presidential and congressional party leader-

ship efforts, depending on the circumstances. There are few things more helpful to a President or Speaker than a supportive chairman who can mobilize a dependable committee or subcommittee majority.²⁷ For example, the Speaker generally can depend on the Rules Committee to propose special rules on controversial bills that meet his political needs and promote his policy goals. On the other hand, a recalcitrant chairman who is supported by a majority of his committee colleagues may be able to kill legislation, no matter how avidly it is supported either by the President or by the House majority party leadership. For example, much of President Reagan's "social agenda" came to rest quietly in the files of the House Judiciary Committee. Consider also the difference between the Rules Committee of the late 1970s and early 1980s with the same committee before its membership was expanded in 1961.

By the same token, relatively high subcommittee turnover can be a mixed blessing for the President and the majority party leaders. Territorial disputes over jurisdiction may be easier to resolve if Members' long-term ambitions in the House are not tied to specific subcommittee posts. On the other hand, new subcommittee chairmen may be particularly anxious to establish themselves by protecting or expanding their jurisdictions, and informal jurisdictional arrangements and understandings may have to be re-negotiated when chairmanships are assumed by new members with different interests and priorities.²⁸

Given the already high subcommittee turnover rates, Democratic Members may be more willing to bid for subcommittee chairmanships and assignments in order to create majorities when and where they are most needed to promote primary party objectives. Republican Representatives also may be more willing to shift subcommittee assignments in their party's interests when such shifts do not sacrifice the investment of many years in the wait for a ranking minority position. On the other hand, Members also may shift from subcommittee to subcommittee in response to opportunities for increased visibility and changing perceptions of constituency interests.

More important, inexperienced chairmen and members with no long-term commitment to or investment in the subcommittee's jurisdiction may be more susceptible to the influence of party leaders or the urgings of groups mobilized in support of presidential initiatives. On the other hand, any such tendency is limited by the centrifugal force of electoral entrepreneurship. Instead of looking primarily to congressional party leaders or presidents of their party for policy guidance, new subcommittee leaders and members may be particularly sensitive and responsive to perceived constituency preferences and the opinions of national groups that can supply critical campaign resources, especially money. Sunshine rules undoubtedly have pushed Representatives in the same directions. Years of experience dealing with the same issues on the same subcommittee can give Members a fairly good sense of how their actions and decisions in subcommittee can affect their electoral security. If, conversely, the lack of such experience breeds insecurity, it may be manifested in an especially acute sensitivity to constituent interests and those of politically active groups, at the expense of a willingness to cooperate with presidents and party leaders.

High levels of subcommittee turnover can complicate the process of consultation and coordination, negotiation and bargaining.²⁹ What Michael Malbin has

said of bargaining between President and Congress applies to bargaining within Congress as well:³⁰

For the process to work well, there must be skilled bargainers on both sides of the relationship--people who are willing to engage in the process, who know what to offer to whom, and who have developed a reputation for constancy that will permit people to take risks, with the understanding that those risks incur mutual obligations.

Frequent change among subcommittee leaders and members complicates political bargaining with, and within, a decentralized House. A relatively inexperienced subcommittee chairman may not know "what to offer to whom," may have had little opportunity to develop "a reputation for constancy," and may very well move to another subcommittee within the next two or four years. Under these circumstances, making bargains that can and will be honored becomes more problematical than usual.

Effective party leadership involves winning as well as communicating and coordinating. To the extent that subcommittee turnover--together with other developments such as recorded teller votes on amendments--has undermined deference on the House floor to subcommittee and committee recommendations and increased the problems of building majority coalitions, the task of party leaders has grown more important at the same time that the inexperience of many subcommittee leaders in their leadership roles has made the task more difficult. Many bills, of course, continue to be reported and passed more or less routinely. But the apparent increase in Members' proclivity to offer floor amendments means that more policy decisions are made when the time for tactical planning is shortest, the potential for confusion is greatest, the opportunity for communication is least assured, and, therefore, the challenges for party--and committee--leadership are greatest. And the same developments create problems that are even more acute for Presidents and presidential agents attempting to influence legislative outcomes.

Decentralization and multiple referrals of legislation have meant that more Members participate more directly in developing legislation. As the identities of these participants change, new understandings among subcommittee chairmen with related responsibilities, and new relationships between subcommittee chairmen and subcommittee ranking minority members, committee chairmen, and party leaders, as well as new strategies for mobilizing support and coordinating agendas and priorities all may have to be developed. Legislative success is made far easier by established personal relationships, effective channels of communication, and track records of cooperation and accomplishment among legislative actors--whether in the White House, executive branch agencies, party leadership suites, or committee and subcommittee offices.³¹ The higher the rates of subcommittee turnover, the more often it can become necessary to reconstruct legislative systems and subsystems every two years.

Moreover, the rates of subcommittee leadership and membership turnover may require subcommittees to "re-invent the wheel" over and over again. If subcommittees preserve the institutional memory of the House for policy, high rates of turnover reduce the persistence and breadth of memory. The details of policy

must be learned by new members, just as they must learn to weigh and evaluate the constellation of interests surrounding major policy choices. When a subcommittee considers a re-authorization bill, one or both of its leaders and many of its members may not remember, because they were not involved in, the battles that were fought when the program was last re-authorized--one, two, or however many years earlier. In this respect, high subcommittee turnover may slow down the legislative process, to the detriment of presidential or congressional party leadership, because of the time that new leaders and members may need to develop the grounding in policy and politics they consider necessary before they are prepared to act.³²

The basis for effective oversight. At least since 1946, Congress has been attempting to convince itself to worry more about systematic oversight of the executive branch. Most Members have not been very interested in schemes designed to encourage committees and subcommittees to hold more hearings that are solely for oversight. On the other hand, few Cabinet secretaries and agency heads would agree that more and better oversight is needed as they prepare for what seems to be an unending series of appropriation and re-authorization hearings and as their staffs respond to a regular flow of inquiries from individual Members and staff.

Whatever form congressional oversight takes, however, effective oversight requires a base of knowledge among subcommittee members and staff which enables them to ask the right questions and recognize misleading or incomplete answers. It used to be said that political appointees in the executive branch may come and go, but committee chairmen remain; chairmen were effective overseers because they were largely responsible for developing and nurturing the programs within their jurisdictions and so knew more about the programs than the political executives appointed to administer them. The same cannot be said today, especially if more and more of the oversight hearings and legislative hearings with oversight value occur at the subcommittee level.³³

What is the incentive for a subcommittee leader or member to devote the time and effort to examining legislative implementation and program administration if he may very well transfer to a different subcommittee two years later? And even if he is willing to make the investment, how effective is he likely to be if he is a relative newcomer to the subject and, for a chairman or ranking member, his position of leadership? Most subcommittee leaders have relatively little time to devote to any other subcommittee assignments they may hold; if a chairman or ranking minority member moves at the beginning of the next Congress to a more prestigious or powerful subcommittee leadership post, he may have much to learn about the details of the policies and programs within that subcommittee's jurisdiction, even if he had been a member of the subcommittee. And a Representative who does not hold any subcommittee leadership position tends to focus on the work of only one or two of the subcommittees on which he sits; when that Member has an opportunity to move up to a subcommittee leadership position, it may be on a subcommittee that had not attracted much of his attention before or one on which he had not even served. Thus, high rates of turnover among subcommittee leaders and members probably have impeded development of the knowledge and experience that facilitate effective oversight.³⁴

Long years of subcommittee experience can actually impede oversight if the results are close and mutually supportive relationships among Members, executive branch agencies, and clientele groups and associations--relationships that have been described as iron or cozy triangles.³⁵ Subcommittee turnover may ensure frequent infusions of new members with new perspectives and with a greater willingness to look with a skeptical eye at established programs and policies. On the other hand, turnover among subcommittee leaders and members is likely to result in irregular oversight and changing signals and directions to executive branch officials, as new chairmen emphasize interests and encourage policies that differ from those of their predecessors and as membership change alters the subcommittee's balance of opinion.³⁶ An agency official who receives unwelcome guidance or pressure from a subcommittee with oversight jurisdiction over his agency or program may be tempted to "wait until next year" when the roster, interests, and priorities of his subcommittee overseers may well change.

CONCLUSION

This paper has focused on leadership and membership change within the structure of the House committee system. From 1963 to 1983, the rosters of House subcommittees have changed more from Congress to Congress than the rosters of the committees themselves, and committee rosters have changed more than the total membership of the House. Moreover, turnover among subcommittee leaders and members has even increased somewhat during this period. There is no standard by which to gauge whether subcommittee turnover has been too high (or too low), but it certainly has been high.

Turnover within the House and its committees accounts for much, but by no means all, of the turnover within its subcommittees. Subcommittee membership and leadership change results largely from a combination of electoral outcomes and personal choices over which the House as an institution exercises little control. The House has not sought to promote or retard turnover in its committees (with the exception of membership rotation on the Budget and Intelligence Committees). In fact, proposals to impose limits on the tenure of committee chairmen have never received serious consideration.³⁷ But high levels of subcommittee turnover have been a persistent characteristic of the House since the early 1960s.

In view of all the deliberate institutional changes that the House and its majority party have made, it is exceedingly difficult to isolate the effects of any one of them, much less the effects of a phenomenon that was neither planned nor sought. But the phenomenon exists and its implications and possible consequences merit attention.³⁸ The speculations in the preceding section are just that, and they are also generalizations. At one level, the overall turnover rates must be considered in assessments of how the House goes about its business and with what results. At another level, the variations in committee turnover, and the numerous cases of fairly stable subcommittee memberships and leaderships, offer another dimension for comparisons among committees, their modes of operation and their fortunes.³⁹

It would seem difficult to exercise effective and deliberate control over

turnover within the committee system. Much of the turnover flows from changes in the membership of the House. When committee vacancies occur, Members seek to fill them, and both parties have generally found it to be in their interests to try to accommodate Members' preferences for committee assignments and re-assignments.⁴⁰ And, in part for the same reason, it seems unlikely that the House would revert to a process of imposing subcommittee assignments from above. Decentralization of authority in Congress that appears to benefit individual Members is difficult to reverse, short of an acute institutional crisis. From this perspective, regular and significant personnel change within the committee and especially the subcommittee system has been, and probably will continue to be, a noteworthy institutional characteristic of the contemporary House of Representatives.

Notes

1. What clearly has changed is the significance of voluntary retirement for membership change in the House. See, for example, Joseph Cooper and William West, "The Congressional Career in the 1970s," in Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer (editors), Congress Reconsidered, 2nd edition (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1981), pp. 83-106.
2. Norman J. Ornstein, et. al., Vital Statistics on Congress, 1982 (Washington: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1982), pp. 16-17. Barbara Sinclair has calculated that turnover among Democratic Representatives has increased in recent Congresses; see Sinclair, "Majority Party Leadership Strategies for Coping with the New U.S. House," in Frank H. Mackaman (editor), Understanding Congressional Leadership (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1981), pp. 182-183. On the causes of membership change in the House, see Joseph Cooper and William West, "Voluntary Retirement, Incumbency, and the Modern House," Political Science Quarterly, v. 96, n. 2, Summer 1981, pp. 279-300. Cooper and West present data on the tenure of Representatives which differ consistently from those in Ornstein, et. al. These differences may be explained (in part, at least) by an apparent decision by Cooper and West to include in the category of Members serving one to three terms all Representatives who did not serve four full consecutive terms--including, presumably, Members who began but did not complete their fourth consecutive term.
3. Fenno presents data concerning turnover between the 85th and 89th Congresses on the five House committees he studied intensively. Richard F. Fenno, Jr., Congressmen in Committees (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973), p. 112.
4. The Budget and Intelligence Committees are excluded because of their rotating memberships. Moreover, the data do not take account of any changes in committee or subcommittee rosters that occurred during the course of a Congress.
5. See Thomas E. Cavanagh, "The Dispersion of Authority in the House of Representatives," Political Science Quarterly, v. 97, n. 4, Winter 1982-83, pp. 623-637.
6. This study does not investigate average tenure or the tenure distribution among committee and subcommittee members. Such a study over time and across committees and subcommittees would be informative. One subcommittee might have very low turnover among its senior members and very high turnover among its junior members; another subcommittee might be characterized by an intermediate turnover rate among all its members. The two subcommittees could have the same return rate and the same average tenure, but with considerably different consequences.
7. The data presented here on subcommittee leadership and membership turnover are based on a comparison of each subcommittee roster with the roster of the same or corresponding subcommittee in the preceding Congress. New subcommittees are excluded. The identification of corresponding subcommittees from one Congress to the next requires judgments about degrees of continuity in memberships

and titles; no rigid criterion would be sensible, given the fluidity of subcommittee organization and nomenclature on many committees. For example, the Banking Committee's Subcommittee on Domestic Monetary Policy is not considered here to be the same unit as the abolished Subcommittee on Domestic Finance, despite the similarity in their titles. But the same committee's Subcommittee on Bank Supervision and Insurance is treated as the same unit as the successor Subcommittee on Financial Institutions Supervision, Regulation and Insurance.

8. The partial correlation between the total committee and the total subcommittee replacement rates falls to .35 when the total House and the total committee return rates are controlled. By contrast, the partial correlations between the committee and subcommittee replacement rates for the two parties remain high--.71 for the Republicans and .89 for the Democrats--when the party return rates in the House and on the full committees are controlled.

9. The data on subcommittee memberships do not take account of full committee chairmen and ranking minority members who are identified in the Staff Directory as subcommittee members, ex officio or otherwise, unless they also are specifically listed on a subcommittee's membership roster. The Staff Directory also notes certain vacancies in committee and subcommittee rosters which, if filled during the course of the Congress, were more than likely filled by members who had not been on that committee or subcommittee during the preceding Congress. No subcommittee membership return rate is reported for a committee for a Congress during which the committee's subcommittee structure underwent a major reorganization. Thus, the return rates reported in this paper are almost certainly understated because they do not reflect those instances in which a committee reorganization caused significant realignments of subcommittee memberships.

10. There also is variability in the membership stability of individual subcommittees. For example, eleven of thirteen members were new to the Subcommittee on Housing of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs at the beginning of the 89th Congress (the subcommittee had only five members in the 88th Congress); only one of its ten members was new to the same subcommittee at the beginning of the following Congress.

11. When the rates of change in total House membership are controlled, the partial correlation between the total committee and subcommittee return rates falls to .37. Controlling for the party membership return rates in the House, the partial correlation between the committee and subcommittee return rates for each party are .46 for the Democrats and .69 for the Republicans.

12. The subcommittee membership return rates are sensitive to changes in subcommittee size. For example, the Subcommittee on Investigations of the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce (now Energy and Commerce) dropped from sixteen members in the 91st Congress to five members in the 92nd Congress. There has been a general increase in subcommittee size, and the return rate for a specific subcommittee may result more from additions than replacements. For example, the Democratic contingent on the same committee's Subcommittee on Health and the Environment was expanded from six members at the beginning of the 93rd Congress to eleven at the beginning of the following Congress. Five of the seven Democratic members who were newcomers to the subcommittee in the 94th

Congress were additions to its roster. In this respect, the committee and subcommittee return rates are not exactly equivalent to measures of turnover, if turnover is defined to refer only to instances in which one member replaces another on a committee or subcommittee.

13. Democratic Study Group, "Reform in the House of Representatives." Special Report No. 94-28, November 30, 1976; Thomas R. Wolanin, "A View from the Trench: Reforming Congressional Procedures," in Dennis Hale (editor), The United States Congress (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1983), pp. 209-228; Norman J. Ornstein, "Causes and Consequences of Congressional Change: Subcommittee Reforms in the House of Representatives, 1970-73," in Ornstein (editor), Congress in Change (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), pp. 88-114; and Steven S. Smith and Christopher J. Deering, Committees in Congress (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1984). Ornstein concludes (at p. 102) that the 1971 limitation on subcommittee chairmanships brought in sixteen new subcommittee chairmen "solely because of the reform." On the other hand, Smith and Deering find (at p. 128) that the cap on the number of subcommittees per standing committee did not force any incumbent subcommittee member to relinquish a chairmanship. See also John E. Stanga, Jr. and David N. Farnsworth, "Seniority and Democratic Reforms in the House of Representatives: Committees and Subcommittees," in Leroy N. Rieselbach, Legislative Reform (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1978), pp. 35-47.

14. It is possible that a more discriminating analysis of the organizational decisions made within each committee--for example, which members seek election as chairman or appointment as members of which subcommittees--might reveal relationships between specific rules changes and subcommittee turnover. However, this would be extraordinarily difficult, given the effect that one committee member's decision may have on the options available to the next member and the effect that the decisions a member makes in one committee may have on the options available to him in the second or third committee on which he also serves.

15. Roger H. Davidson, "Subcommittee Government: New Channels for Policy Making," in Thomas E. Mann and Norman J. Ornstein (editors), The New Congress (Washington: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1981), p. 114. For a mixed review of the extent to which committee decentralization has led to subcommittee government, see Smith and Deering, op. cit. See also Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer, "The House in Transition," in Dodd and Oppenheimer (editors) Congress Reconsidered, 1st edition (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977), pp. 21-53.

16. See Smith and Deering, op. cit., pp. 133-136, for data that indicate some shift in the locus of activity from standing committees to their subcommittees. See also Davidson, "Subcommittee Government," op. cit., pp. 99-133; and Steven H. Haeberle, "The Institutionalization of the Subcommittee in the United States House of Representatives," Journal of Politics, v. 40, n. 4, November 1978, pp. 1054-1065. Haeberle portrays the increasing number of subcommittee meetings as an indicator of the institutionalization of subcommittees; membership stability and continuity would be another component of institutionalization. On the question of institutionalization, see Cavanagh, op. cit.

17. Waldman notes that the Ad Hoc Committee on Energy, created in 1977 at Speaker O'Neill's instigation to coordinate House committee action on President Carter's national energy program, included five committee chairmen and eleven subcommittee chairmen among its forty members. Sidney Waldman, "Majority Leadership in the House of Representatives," Political Science Quarterly, v. 95, n. 3, Fall 1980, p. 384.

18. Smith and Deering, op. cit., mention some of these implications at pp. 148-149, as does Dodd in Lawrence C. Dodd, "Congress, the Constitution, and the Crisis of Legitimation," in Dodd and Oppenheimer (2nd ed.), op. cit., p. 408.

19. On the association between committee unity or integration and floor success, see James W. Dyson and John W. Soule, "Congressional Committee Behavior on Roll Call Votes: The U.S. House of Representatives, 1955-64," Midwest Journal of Political Science, v. 14, n. 4, November 1970, pp. 626-647; and Joseph K. Unekis and Leroy N. Rieselbach, "Congressional Committee Leadership, 1971-1978," Legislative Studies Quarterly, v. 8, n. 2, May 1983, pp. 251-270.

20. See Cavanagh, op. cit.

21. U.S. Congress. House of Representatives. Cannon's Procedure in the House of Representatives. 87th Congress, 2d Session. House Document No. 610. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963), p. 221.

22. Smith and Deering note that there has been a decline in the number of years Representatives have served in the House before becoming subcommittee chairmen. They also present some data to indicate a steady rise from the 86th Congress to the 95th Congress in the percentage of bills managed on the House floor by subcommittee chairmen; in the 95th Congress, according to their data, two of every three bills were managed by subcommittee chairmen. Smith and Deering, op. cit., pp. 191-197. See also Christopher J. Deering, "Subcommittee Government in the U.S. House: An Analysis of Bill Management," Legislative Studies Quarterly, v. 7, n. 4, November 1982, pp. 533-546. Rule 39 of the House Democratic Caucus for the 98th Congress provides that "[t]he chairmen of full committees shall, insofar as practicable, permit subcommittee chairmen to handle on the floor legislation from their respective subcommittees." This rule was first adopted in 1971, at the beginning of the 92nd Congress.

23. Similar arguments can be made respecting the relative replacement rates among subcommittee leaders and full committee leaders. According to Dodd and Oppenheimer, for example, "the recent decline in the number of careerists in the House means that many subcommittee chairs will be younger and relatively inexperienced individuals whom an astute and experienced committee chair can seek to control or constrain through use of greater knowledge and legislative skill." Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer, "The House in Transition: Change and Consolidation," in Dodd and Oppenheimer (2nd ed.), op. cit., p. 45.

24. See Fenno, op. cit. Rieselbach and Unekis are impressed by the continuity in factional alignments and committee performance that they found in three committees whose chairmen were replaced by vote of the House Democratic Caucus following the 1974 election. They attribute this continuity in part to the new

chairmen who "were also committee members with long service, presumably well versed in committee norms and routines." Leroy N. Rieselbach and Joseph K. Unekis, "Ousting the Oligarchs: Assessing the Consequences of Reform and Change on Four House Committees," Congress & the Presidency, v. 9, n. 1, Winter 1981-82, p. 112. However, such continuity may be less likely on subcommittees if new chairmen are not members of long service and if rapid membership turnover undermines or retards the development of subcommittee norms and routines.

25. If floor managers are less experienced and, therefore, less adept at calculating what the House will accept, and if there is less instinctive deference to committee (or subcommittee) recommendations, the result may be greater incentives for (or pressures on) party leaders to intervene to build support or identify necessary amendments in preparation for floor action. As the committee system has become more decentralized, the leadership system has become more elaborate. See Barbara Sinclair, Majority Leadership in the U.S. House (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983); and Sinclair, "Majority Party Leadership Strategies for Coping with the New U.S. House," and Lawrence C. Dodd and Terry Sullivan, "Majority Party Leadership and Partisan Vote Gathering: The House Democratic Whip System," both in Mackaman, op. cit., pp. 181-206, 227-260.

26. One way to minimize this possibility is to preclude floor amendments. The difficulty of successful coalition-building in subcommittee and committee may have contributed to the increasing use of suspension of the rules and restrictive special rules. Either device can protect committee proposals against attractive alternatives or modifications, leaving the House only with a choice between the committee proposal (or at least the heart of it) and no legislation at all.

27. See Sinclair, Majority Leadership in the U.S. House, chapter 1, especially pp. 19-20. The Democratic Caucus rules changes of the early and mid-1970s reduced the ability of standing committee chairmen to deliver their members, as chairmen were deprived of much of their ability to use subcommittee assignments, chairmanships, and resources to convince committee colleagues that supporting the chairman usually was in their own long-term best interests.

28. Oppenheimer asserts that a "visible way that committee and subcommittee chairs could show their committee colleagues that they were doing a good job was to protect their committee's jurisdictions." Bruce I. Oppenheimer, "Policy Effects of U.S. House Reform: Decentralization and the Capacity to Resolve Energy Issues," Legislative Studies Quarterly, v. 5, n. 1, February 1980, p. 12.

29. For example, John Ferejohn made the following observation in his 1974 study of rivers and harbors legislation from 1947 to 1968:

Those officials with responsibilities in the water resources area are accustomed to thinking about and dealing with a small group of congressmen and senators....The interviews repeatedly produced references to a "club," which implies that senior members share common interests and perceptions and that there is a certain chumminess among them. Budget officials realize that the representatives they have to deal with are an extremely stable group.

John A. Ferejohn, Pork Barrel Politics (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), p. 151. The relatively high levels of instability in subcommittee leadership and membership call into question whether such perceptions are, or should be, prevalent in 1984.

30. Michael Malbin, "Rhetoric and Leadership: A Look Backward at the Carter National Energy Plan," in Anthony King (editor), Both Ends of the Avenue (Washington: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1983), p. 216.

31. Deering and Smith contend that most of the communications between subcommittee chairmen and Democratic party leaders occur at the chairmen's initiative and after the legislation to be discussed has been reported from subcommittee. Scheduling, they argue, is the most frequent subject of these communications. Christopher J. Deering and Steven S. Smith, "Majority Party Leadership and the New House Subcommittee System," in Mackaman, op. cit., pp. 268-270. Bills reported from subcommittee naturally are important to subcommittee chairmen, whereas party leaders necessarily restrict their interest to a small percentage of such bills.

32. A potentially fruitful line of further research would be an examination of committee and subcommittee staff turnover. It is possible that, for purposes of institutional memory, continuity among senior subcommittee staff could compensate in part for lack of continuity among subcommittee leaders and members. Such a finding could also have interesting implications for changes in the weight of staff influence. See, for example: Michael J. Malbin, Unelected Representatives: Congressional Staff and the Future of Representative Government (New York: Basic Books, 1980); and Smith and Deering, op. cit., chapter 7, passim. Salisbury and Shepsle conclude that "committee staff turnover is far less dependent on member-patron relationships than personal staff turnover." "Committee staffers tend, with some frequency, to survive chairperson changes ... so that their turnover rates are considerably more independent of member turnover than a strict reading of the ties-that-bind hypothesis would require." Robert H. Salisbury and Kenneth A. Shepsle, "Congressional Staff Turnover and the Ties-That-Bind," American Political Science Review, v. 75, n. 2, June 1981, p. 389.

33. See David E. Price, "The Impact of Reform: The House Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations," in Rieselbach, op. cit., pp. 133-157.

34. For example, none of the nine members of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs of the 97th Congress had served on the Subcommittee on Oversight and Special Investigations at the beginning of the previous Congress. There was also a complete turnover in the membership of the Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service at the beginning of the 96th Congress and at the beginning of the 97th Congress.

35. See Roger H. Davidson, "Breaking Up Those 'Cozy Triangles': An Impossible Dream?" in Susan Welch and John G. Peters (editors), Legislative Reform and Public Policy (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977), pp. 30-53.

36. See Joel D. Aberbach, "Changes in Congressional Oversight," American Behavioral Scientist, v. 22, n. 5, May/June 1979, especially p. 502.

37. For two rotation proposals, see Norman J. Ornstein, "Towards Restructuring the Congressional Committee System," and John W. Gardner, "Restructuring the House of Representatives," both in Ornstein (editor), Changing Congress: The Committee System. Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, v. 411, January 1974, pp. 147-157 and 169-176. See also Davidson, "Breaking Up Those 'Cozy Triangles'," op. cit., pp. 47-48.

38. For an examination of the impact of leadership, membership, and other changes on specific committees, see Norman J. Ornstein and David W. Rohde, "Shifting Forces, Changing Rules and Political Outcomes: The Impact of Congressional Change on Four House Committees," in Robert L. Peabody and Nelson W. Polsby (editors), New Perspectives on the House of Representatives, 3rd edition (Chicago: Rand McNally Publishing Company, 1977), pp. 186-269.

39. For example, both Wolanin and Goldstone have examined differences among House committees in the criteria used to appoint subcommittee chairmen before the chairmen were elected by vote of the Democratic committee caucus. Thomas R. Wolanin, "Committee Seniority and the Choice of House Subcommittee Chairmen: 80th-91st Congress," Journal of Politics, v. 36, n. 3, August 1974, pp. 687-702; communication by Jack A. Goldstone, "Subcommittee Chairmanships in the House of Representatives," American Political Science Review, v. 69, n. 3, September 1975, pp. 970-971.

40. The process by which committee assignments are made has received considerable attention. Smith and Ray, for example, examine this process after the responsibility for it on the Democratic side was shifted from the Democratic members of the Ways and Means Committee to the Steering and Policy Committee; they also cite many of the earlier examinations of the subject. Steven S. Smith and Bruce A. Ray, "The Impact of Congressional Reform: House Democratic Committee Assignments," Congress & the Presidency, v. 10, n. 2, Autumn 1983, pp. 219-240.