

# CONTENTS

*LIST OF FIGURES* ix

*LIST OF TABLES* xi

*ACKNOWLEDGMENTS* xv

## CHAPTER ONE

Introduction: The Reciprocal Participation-Policy Relationship 1

## CHAPTER TWO

Overview: Rising Senior Participation and the Growth of the American Welfare State 14

## CHAPTER THREE

A Model of Senior Citizen Political Participation 38

## CHAPTER FOUR

Senior Citizen Participation and Policy over Time 65

## CHAPTER FIVE

Policy Threat and Seniors' Distinctive Political Voice 93

## CHAPTER SIX

Congressional Responsiveness 115

## CHAPTER SEVEN

The Reciprocal Participation-Policy Relationship across Programs 125

## CHAPTER EIGHT

Participation, Policymaking, and the Political Implications of Program Design 138

## APPENDIX A

Supplementary Tables 147

## APPENDIX B

Two-Stage Social Security Participation Model 161

## APPENDIX C

Senior/Nonsenior Mobilization Ratios by Party, 1956–96 165

## APPENDIX D

Multiple Interrupted Time-Series Analysis 166

viii CONTENTS

*NOTES* 169

*REFERENCES* 205

*INDEX* 221

# LIST OF FIGURES

- 1.1 The participation-policy cycle 4
- 2.1 Average monthly Social Security and AFDC benefits, 1950–96 17
- 2.2 Poverty rate among seniors and children, 1959–95 17
- 2.3 Change in real family income by age of householder, 1951–90 19
- 2.4 Voting and contributing by demographic subgroup, 1996 27
- 2.5 Turnout in presidential elections by age, 1952–2000 29
- 2.6 Turnout in midterm elections by age, 1958–98 29
- 2.7 Contributors in presidential elections by age, 1952–2000 31
- 2.8 Contributors in midterm elections by age, 1962–98 31
- 2.9 Campaign workers in presidential and midterm elections by age, 1952–2000 32
- 2.10 Contacting by age, 1973–94 33
- 2.11 Seniors as participators, 1952 and 2000 33
- 2.12 Contribution ratio versus average Social Security benefit, 1952–96 34
- 2.13 Campaign work ratio versus retirement rate, 1952–96 35
- 2.14 Turnout ratio versus proportion senior income from Social Security, 1968–94 36
- 2.15 Party mobilization ratio versus proportion seniors on Social Security, 1956–90 37
- 3.1 Percentage of senior income from Social Security by total income quintile, 1998 47
- 3.2 News salience scores for seniors by education 50
- 3.3 News salience scores for seniors by income 50
- 3.4 Predicted rate of traditional participatory activity by income, all respondents 52
- 3.5 Predicted rate of Social Security–related participatory activity by income, seniors 53
- 3.6 Predicted rate of Social Security contacting among seniors, “purged” Roper results 55
- 3.7 Predicted rate of party mobilization by income, seniors versus nonseniors 59
- 4.1 Senior/nonsenior political interest ratio, 1960–2000 67

4.2	Activity ratios: Low- versus high-income seniors, 1973–94	68
4.3	Senior/nonsenior party mobilization ratio, 1956–2000	69
4.4	Democratic share of two-party presidential vote among seniors and nonseniors, 1952–2000	71
4.5	Democratic share of two-party House vote among seniors and nonseniors, 1952–2000	71
4.6	Party platform mentions of seniors and their programs, 1932–2000	73
4.7	AARP membership, 1958–98	76
4.8	Congressional hearings on senior issues, 1947–94	88
5.1	Change in seniors' external political efficacy over 1952 level	99
5.2	Contacting by age, 1973–94	107
5.3	Senior contacting and public meeting attendance, 1973–94	110
5.4	Senior contacting by work status, 1973–94	112
5.5	Senior contacting by gender, 1973–94	113
5.6	Senior contacting by income, 1973–94	114
7.1	Contacting by seniors and low-income youth, 1973–94	133
C	Senior/nonsenior mobilization ratios by party, 1956–96	165

## LIST OF TABLES

- 2.1 Measures of Financial Stability by Age 20
- 2.2 Subjective Social Class by Age, 1956 and 1994 21
- 2.3 News Stories Followed Closely 23–24
- 3.1 Average Annual Expenditures of All Consumer Units and Senior Units, 1997 43
- 3.2 Institutional Affiliations and Skills Practiced by Age 45
- 3.3 Participation by Resource Level 46
- 3.4 Mean Political Engagement Scores by Age 48
- 3.5 News Salience Scores by Age 49
- 3.6 Activity Mobilization by Age 56
- 3.7 Mobilization in Institutions by Age 57
- 3.8 Mobilization by Political Parties by Age, 1996 58
- 3.9 Summary: Factors in Senior Participation 62
- 4.1 Republican and Democratic Presidential Coalitions, 1952 and 1996 72
- 4.2 Role of Party Mobilization in Senior Participation, Pooled 1952–96 Results 75
- 4.3 Empirical Indicators of the Participation-Policy Cycle 91
- 5.1 Opinion on Age-Related Policies by Age 94
- 5.2 Average Group Thermometer Scores, 1964–92 96
- 5.3 Least-Fair Tax 97
- 5.4 Events in the History of Welfare State Programs for Senior Citizens 102–103
- 5.5 Change in Contacting Rates for Five Policy Periods 108
- 6.1 Correlations between Percentage of Senior Constituents and Pro-Senior Votes on Social Security and Medicare Roll Calls, 1983–88 118
- 6.2 Proportion of Pro-Senior Roll-Call Votes by Senior Population Quartile, 1983–88 119
- 6.3 Proportion of House Medicare Catastrophic Act Switchers by Senior Population Quartile 120
- 6.4 Proportion of Medicare Catastrophic Act Switchers by Senior Population Quartile and Median Home Value 121
- 7.1 Political Interest and Demographic Characteristics of Program Recipients 126
- 7.2 Institutional Affiliations and Civic Skills of Program Recipients 127
- 7.3 Mobilization of Program Recipients 128

7.4	Membership in Program-Related Organizations	129
7.5	Participation Rates of Program Recipients	130
7.6	Participation in Regard to Program	131
A.1	Explaining the Participation of All Respondents: Logistic Regression Results for Figure 3.4	147
A.2	Explaining Social Security Participation by Seniors: Logistic Regression Results for Figure 3.5, Contacting and Contributing	148
A.3	Civic Voluntarism Model, Seniors versus Nonseniors: Logistic Regression Results for Table 3.9, Citizen Participation Study Data	149
A.4	Civic Voluntarism Model, Seniors versus Nonseniors: Logistic Regression Results for Table 3.9, 1992 and 1996 National Election Studies Data	150
A.5	Civic Voluntarism Model, Seniors versus Nonseniors: Logistic Regression Results for Table 3.9, Roper Survey 8108 Data	151
A.6	Influences on Senior Participation, Including Mobilization: Logistic Regression Results for Table 4.2, NES Data, 1952–96	152
A.7	Influence of AARP Membership on Respondent Participation: Logistic Regression Results for Chapter 4, “Senior Citizen Interest Groups” Section	153
A.8	External Political Efficacy of Senior Citizens over Time: Basis of Figure 5.1	154
A.9	House and Senate Roll-Call Votes on Social Security and Medicare Included in Chapter 6 Analysis (Tables 6.1 and 6.2)	155–156
A.10	External and Internal Political Efficacy of Program Recipients—Social Security, Veterans’ Benefits, and AFDC—for Efficacy Discussion in Chapter 7, “Recipient Participation” Section	157
A.11	Respondents Reporting Voting for Whom No Record of Voting Could Be Found	158
A.12	Voter Turnout in 2000 by Age	158
A.13	Work Status among Seniors by Gender	158
A.14	Senior/Nonsenior Mobilization Ratios, All Respondents versus Registered Respondents	159
A.15	Number of Roper Survey Respondents by Age	159
A.16	Predicting Pro-Senior Roll-Call Voting	159
A.17	Predicting Medicare Catastrophic Act Vote Switching in the House	160

A.18	Predicting Medicare Catastrophic Act Vote Switching with Home Value	160
B.1	Logistic Regression Estimate of Social Security Voting, Seniors Only (Figure 3.5b)	163
B.2	Logistic Regression Estimate of Roper (Social Security) Contacting, Seniors Only (Figure 3.6)	164
D.1	MITS Analysis Coefficients for Contacting by Age (ARIMA Results)	167
D.2	Changes in Participation Rates, All Subgroups, All Time Periods	168