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Leiden
The Netherlands

Summaries in English

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Citation

Summaries in English. (1987). Summaries in English. *Acta Politica*, 22: 1987(1), 126-127. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3449607>

Version: Publisher's Version
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Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Summaries

Intergenerational mobility, individual political preference and societal political balance

by Nan Dirk de Graaf and Wout Ultee

This article models data for the Netherlands in 1970/71 and 1977 on prestige of respondent's occupation, prestige of occupation of respondent's father and left/right score of political party preferred by respondent. These models embody current hypotheses on the influence of intergenerational mobility on political preference.

Two hypotheses hold that individuals behave according to economic self-interest. The first of these supposes that mobile persons adjust immediately to the political preference of those immobile in the respondent's category of destination. The second assumes a time lag in this adjustment. Two other hypotheses postulate a status motive. For upwardly mobile persons, their predictions are identical to those of economic self-interest hypotheses. For downwardly mobiles predictions clash. One status hypothesis predicts that downwardly mobile persons will stick to the political preference of those immobile in the downwardly mobiles' category of origin. The other one predicts, besides some stickiness, a certain adjustment to the preference of those immobile in the downwardly mobiles' category of destination. In statistical terms, the first two hypotheses postulate additive effects and the last two interaction effects. For a proper test of these hypotheses, Sobel's new Diagonal Mobility Models are estimated. The second economic self-interest hypothesis resulted in the best fitting model.

This article also discusses macro-implications of these individual hypotheses. To determine macro-effects of status hypotheses, it is necessary to ascertain the total percentage of mobile persons in a society. For the macro-application of economic self-interest hypotheses, not the total amount of mobility in a society is relevant, but the percentage upwardly mobile persons minus the percentage downwardly mobile. The latter percentage difference, in sociological literature sometimes called structural mobility, is smaller than the total percentage of mobility. As in the literature of political science total mobility figures more heavily than structural mobility, and as an economic self-interest hypothesis was corroborated, macro-effects of social mobility on the political balance in a society might have been overrated.

The substance of a shadow. A critique of power measurement methods

by Don F. Westerheijden

The fundamentals of a theory of decision-making, which has 'reputation for power' as its explanatory variable, are sketched in this paper. Three common methods of measuring individual power, viz. the reputational, positional and decision-making methods, are then discussed regarding their validity for the study of decision-making processes using this theory, and regarding the validity of their most important observational techniques (the 'positional technique', interviews and content analysis). None of these methods is judged to be fully satisfactory. Although critique is the primary goal of this paper, a combination of all three methods is suggested, to make better use of available ways of obtaining an indication of an individual's reputation for power.

Amende honorable

Door eindredactionele nalatigheid reageerde R.H. Lieshout in Commentaar en Discussie, Reacties op: Over het 'kritisch' toepassen van 'zuivere' theorieën (AP, april 1986, p. 200-7) op een andere versie van het artikel van J.W. Nobel dan uiteindelijk in druk verscheen. Met name de laatste alinea van Lieshouts reactie zou daardoor enig misverstand hebben kunnen opleveren. Daarvoor biedt de redactiesecretaris auteurs en lezers zijn verontschuldiging aan.