

Summaries

The multilevel approach

by Harry J.M. Hüttner and Pieter van den Eeden

The multilevel approach is an obvious part of social-scientific research, it stresses the hierarchical structure of social life. This article opens with a summing up of the typical characteristics of a multilevel investigation. Besides this classification, the authors distinguish a number of theories to explain observed contextual effects. Each theory emphasizes a different mechanism according to which the contextual effects operate. The following four mechanisms are described: conforming, adapting, choosing, and meeting chances. Also attention is given to the operationalization and observation of collective properties, and to procedures for a multilevel analysis.

The effects of interviewer and respondent characteristics on response behaviour in survey research: a multilevel approach

by Johannes H. Smit, Pieter van den Eeden, Dorly J.H. Deeg and Aartjan T.F. Beekman

Until recently, the study of interviewer effects has focused on establishing direct effects of interviewer characteristics on respondent response. An alternative approach emphasizes the conditioning influence of the interviewer characteristic on the respondent's answering process. This paper supports the alternative approach with empirical evidence. First, the answering process is described at the level of the respondent. Subsequently, respondent-specific parameters are related to interviewer-specific variables. This two-level model is applied to data collected in the Longitudinal Aging Study Amsterdam (LASA; 2838 respondents within 43 interviewers). The dependent variables are the items belonging to the 'positive affect' dimension of well-being (Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale); relevant variables on respondent level and interviewer level are incorporated in the analysis. It turns out that all items depend on respondent characteristics, and that the means of the items 'worthfulness', 'hopefulness' and 'pleasure in life' per interviewer depend on their age. The means of 'worthfulness' also depend on 'interviewer security'. A more interesting outcome is that the regressions of 'worthfulness' and 'hopefulness' on respondent age, are effected by interviewer age.

The importance of social contexts: subgroups and classes as social resources for achievements in mathematics

by Jan Terwel and Ton Mooij

Subgroups and classes can serve as social resources for cognitive and affective learning achievements in mathematics instruction of pupils in secondary education. This issue is stu-

died by means of a secondary analysis of data which originate from a study into the effectiveness of mathematics instruction starting from the principle of adaptive learning (the Ago-project). It turns out that pupils' cognitive and affective learning in mathematics depend on their individual characteristics. Moreover, it appears that cognitive achievement depends on class characteristics and affective achievement on characteristics of classes and subgroups.

Class voting in Western industrial countries, 1945-1990: a systematization and test of explanations

by Paul Nieuwbeerta and Wout Ultee

Significant differences are found among countries in their levels of class voting. The Scandinavian countries had the highest and Canada and the United States the lowest levels of class voting. Furthermore, from the 1950s in almost all countries a decline in the level of class voting occurred. In this paper, from a limited number of individual assumption several hypotheses were deduced each purporting to explain the differences among and declining trends within countries. Test of these hypotheses, applying multilevel techniques, revealed that differences among countries can best be explained by the amount of religious-ethnic diversity among its inhabitants and by the union density within countries. The decline in most countries can best be explained by the growth in standard of living within these countries. Furthermore, a rise in the percentage union members, especially among the nonmanual classes, accelerated the decline in the level of class voting in some countries.

Religious voters and confessional political party preference: a two-level analysis

by Rob Eisinga, Jan Lammers and Ben Pelzer

This paper attempts to assess the importance of the contextual variable religious diversity of place next to the individual characteristics church membership and age in explaining votes for confessional political parties in the Netherlands. Two-level logistic analyses with ML3 of 1986-91 micro-data from 244.050 respondents (level 1) living in 582 Dutch municipalities (level 2), suggest that religious diversity has no independent effect on party choice, but it does have a small positive effect on the influence of church membership on confessional political party choice.