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Neighbourhood Effects Research at a Crossroads: Ten Challenges for Future Research

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Abstract:

Neighbourhood effects research is at a crossroads since current theoretical and empirical approaches do not seem to be moving the debate forward. In this paper, we present a set of ten challenges as a basis for a new research agenda which will give new direction to the neighbourhood effects debate. The ten challenges are: 1) Future work should concentrate on explaining what is in the "black-box" of the 'neighbourhood effect' by deriving and testing clear hypotheses on causal neighbourhood effects and mechanisms; 2) Studies should explicitly investigate the relationship between neighbourhood context and individual outcomes; 3) Alternative outcome variables such as subjective well-being should be considered; 4) We should move away from point-in-time measures of neighbourhood characteristics and take into account people's neighbourhood histories; 5) More attention should be paid to the intergenerational transmission of neighbourhood effects; 6) We need to understand neighbourhood selection to incorporate neighbourhood selection explicitly in models of neighbourhood effects; 7) We need a better operationalization of neighbourhood; 8) Neighbourhood effects researchers need to broaden their horizon to include other spatial contexts which might matter, in addition, or in place of the residential neighbourhood; 9) We need bespoke data to investigate neighbourhood effects; 10) The tenth and final challenge is to combine qualitative and quantitative methods into one research design.

Text: See [Discussion Paper No. 6793](#)



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