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Effects Of The Social Composition Of The Neighborhood On The First Required School Choice In Germany. A Small-Scale, Ego-Centered And Multiscalar Approach.

This research contribution investigates the effect of the social composition of various scales of the neighborhood on the first required transition from primary school to secondary school in Germany. The first transition has a long lasting effect on a variety of outcomes throughout the life course, as it sets the course for a further educational career. The social and geographical environment provides different sets of resources, such as information, peer networks, social norms and role models that enhance or restrict opportunities, which in turn shape the individual framework of action. Thus making action, behavior and decisions deeply entangled with the social and physical environment.

Based on data from the German Socio-Economic Panel, I can control for a wide array of individual and household level variables, while geographically situate the household in small-scaled, ego-centered and multiscalar neighborhoods. The neighborhood information is generated by the combined usage of georeferenced consumer marketing data, GPS coordinates of all schools in Germany and 100x100 meter raster data from the population census 2011. This research design overcomes widely known challenges in analyzing neighborhood effects. The effects of the social composition in dependence of the scale of the neighborhood, different thresholds of the concentration of social groups (affluent vs. disadvantaged) and in interactions with household characteristics (effect heterogeneity) are analyzed under the general counterfactual framework.

The results indicate small but significant effects of the social composition depending on concentration thresholds, neighborhood scale and characteristics of the household of origin.