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School Segregation modelling in Amsterdam

School segregation, the uneven distribution across schools of pupils of different socioeconomic, ethnic, or other characteristics, not only reflects existing inequalities, but also plays a crucial part in maintaining and exacerbating them. Despite the egalitarian character of the Dutch educational system, compared to other school contexts school segregation in Dutch cities is high. The COMPASS (Computational Modelling of Primary School Segregation) project (compas-project.nl) is a new project undertaken by the University of Amsterdam, University of Groningen, The Inspectorate for Schools and the City of Amsterdam. This project will examine school segregation as an emergent phenomena of a complex system where the interaction and choice of parents leads to specific school allocations. To be specific, by a complex systems approach we intend a combination of theoretical agent-based modelling of school choice dynamics, coupled with empirical spatial data and school choice data, both to calibrate and to test model outcomes. This talk will cover three topics, firstly we will introduce the project and the expected impact of the project for stakeholders (Amsterdam and School Inspectorate). Secondly, we present work of the project team that includes an analysis of the current state of segregation in Amsterdam and the challenges of correctly measuring segregation. Finally, we present some initial findings of the modelling work that offers an explanation for the high primary school (relative to residential) segregation observed in Dutch cities and the implications that this has for policy makers.