

**World Education Research Association's International Research Network**  
**School Segregation and Education Marketization**

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Theoretical Framework on the Causes of School Segregation

\*\*\*Recording available on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/CaKXNt-5ssE> \*\*\*

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**Dr Laura Perry** is Professor of Education at Murdoch University in Perth, Australia. She conducts comparative research about educational disadvantage and inequalities, especially as they appear between schools, and the systems, structures and policies that shape them. The aim of her research is to inform policy and practice for improving equity of educational opportunities, experiences and outcomes. Specific research interests include educational marketization, school segregation and stratification, between-school inequalities, and social class and education.

Abstract

***Theoretical Framework on the Causes of School Segregation***

Comparative cross-national studies are ideal for developing novel theoretical insights about the conditions and contexts that influence social phenomena. This is because policies, systems and structures often vary between countries substantially. Case studies of national contexts are particularly useful because they enable deep understanding of educational ecosystems, which are complex and multi-layered. Applying a common comparative theoretical framework to several national case studies will allow new insights into the causes of school segregation. While several factors are known to cause school segregation, no single factor is likely to explain a large role. Rather, it is likely that theoretical explanations of school segregation are characterized by equifinality (multiple pathways) and conjuncture (multiple configurations of variables). Comparative cross-case analysis holds great potential for uncovering these multiple and complex causal pathways and the conditions and contexts that shape them. In this presentation, I propose a theoretical framework for explaining school segregation. The fundamental premise of the framework is that school stratification and school segregation are mutually reinforcing and interrelated, and that particular social contexts, ideologies, and education policies and structures further reinforce the dynamic.