

Constrained School Choice: An Experimental Study

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Abstract: The literature on school choice assumes that families can submit a preference list over all the schools they want to be assigned to. However, in many real-life instances families are only allowed to submit a list containing a limited number of schools. Subjects' incentives are drastically affected, as more individuals manipulate their preferences. Including a safety school in the constrained list explains most manipulations. Competitiveness across schools play an important role. Constraining choices increases segregation and affects the stability and efficiency of the final allocation. Remarkably, the constraint reduces significantly the proportion of subjects playing a dominated strategy.

JEL classification: C72, C78, D78, I20

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