Critical Education

News Framing and Charter School Reform

Abe Feuerstein
Bucknell University

Abstract

This paper reviews the historical development of charter schools and the ways in which charter schools are currently viewed by the American public. Using the tools of news framing analysis, the study also examines a sample of news reports from The Washington Post*,* The New York Times*, and* The Philadelphia Inquirer *in order to identify dominant news frames. This process reveals two dominant frames – Public Accountability, and Freedom, Choice, and Innovation – which are illustrated with excerpts from the news sample. The paper concludes by considering the implications of these frames for charter school reform and suggests several new directions for scholarship in this area.*

Introduction

Charter schools have been debated with great fervor since their initial development in the 1980s. At the national level, advocates for charters have successfully convinced the American public that charters are best course of action to improve public education. According to the most recent Phi Delta Kappan/Gallup Poll (2013), "Americans' support for public charter schools remains high at slightly less than 70%, and two of three Americans support new public charter schools in their communities" (Bushaw & Lopez, 2013, p. 15). According to Bulkley (2005), this national consensus reflects the broad based appeal of charter schools to individuals with a variety of viewpoints ranging from free-market conservatives to moderate Democrats. Such broad support for charter schools raises questions about where most American's get their information about charter schools and how that information might influence their perspectives with respect to school reform. In this paper, I examine the news media as one source of information about charter schools and some of the ways that newspapers have framed the issue of charter school reform.

Charter schools are typically understood to be public schools that have been formed by groups of people seeking alternatives to traditional public education. These tax-supported schools are often freed from many of the rules and regulations that govern traditional public schools and in some instances they are managed by private companies. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics the number of charter schools is increasing and rose from 1,993 serving over 440,000 students in the 2000-2001 academic year to 5,274 schools serving over 1.7 million students in the 2010-2011 academic year (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2012). The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (2013) estimates that there are now 5,997 charter schools serving 2.3 million students.

This rise in the popularity of charter schools has led to public debate and increased media attention regarding the merits of such schools vs. traditional public schools. This debate has often been drawn along liberal and conservative lines, with conservatives favoring plans that would provide families with the ability to choose from among competing school options, and liberals raising concerns about various dimensions of inequality that may develop as a result of the implementation of charter school programs (Mulvey, Cooper, & Maloney, 2010). Despite these conflicting interests, charter schools have developed strong bipartisan support and developing new charter school options for students has become an important focus of both state and national educational policy (Viteritti, Walberg, & Wolf, 2005; Wong & Shen, 2002). Given the growing interest in charter school reform, this project raises a number of questions about the ways that media has constructed various views of charter schools. For example, what are some of the dominant depictions of charter schools circulated by the media? Also, what issues seems to be most commonly associated with charter schools? Understanding more about the portrayal of charter schools is essential because the way an issue is framed can influence the way people think about it – particularly when that framing resonates with their beliefs or values.

In the sections below, I begin by reviewing the historical development of charter schools, the growing number of references to charter schools in the media, and the ways in which charter schools are currently viewed by the American public. Next, I describe the theoretical foundation of news framing analysis and various framing and reasoning devices (e.g. depictions, root causes, consequences, and values) that compose a typical news frame. Preceding my analysis of the data, I explain the methodology used to select the newspaper reports used in this study and

the process employed to characterize the media frames within that sample. My analysis of the news reports focuses on two dominant frames revealed through a process of reading and coding the articles; Public Accountability, and Freedom, Choice, and Innovation. I conclude the paper by considering the implications of these frames for charter school reform and suggest a number of related issues that would be useful to explore in future studies.

Historical and Contemporary Contexts of Charter Schools

Making sense of the media discourse about charter schools is challenging given the complex politics and unlikely allies that have developed around the issue. Some historical background can be helpful in developing a context for the current debate about the merits of charter schools and their growing popularity as the new face of educational reform in the United States. Charter schools were developed in the 1980s as a means to provide creative and engaging educational alternatives that would nurture and support poor students, and students of color who were not well served by large impersonal public schools (Fabricant and Fine, 2012). However, as Fabricant and Fine (2012) explain, the charter school movement has evolved over-time from a grass roots movement developed by progressive educators, into a, "wedge institution"(p. 3) designed to reduce investment in the public sector while creating new educational choices for parents and students. Proponents of charters see choice and the competition for students associated with it as the best way to encourage innovation, motivate teachers, and improve school performance.

Shifting Values

This shift in the values underlying the charter concept began in the late 1980s and early 1990s as charter schools started to attract greater public interest. Though limited public choice options such as magnet schools had existed since the 1970s, the 1980s saw renewed interest in free market advocacy and the ideas of Milton Friedman. Friedman, a Nobel prize winning economist, was a strong advocate for allowing the market to regulate both private and public services including public education and had written about the concept of school vouchers as early as 1955 (Friedman, 1955), and continued to advocate for school choice throughout his career. When President Reagan took office in 1980, after campaigning to reduce the role of government and reinstate free market principles, he invited Friedman to be a member of his Economic Policy Advisory Board. Friedman's free market philosophy meshed with Reagan's and according to Ravitch(2011), "Reagan was directly influenced by Friedman's ideas" (p. 117). Consistent with this view, in his first term as President, Reagan proposed several school voucher plans that would have allowed the parents of poor children to choose among public or private schools using public funds (Henig, 2008). For a Democratic congress backed by the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) these proposals were threatening and made little headway. By Reagan's second term, he had shifted his support away from vouchers toward the concept of public school choice which was viewed as being more conciliatory to the concerns of the unions (Ravitch, 2011).

Though voucher schemes continued to be controversial, proponents of vouchers sustained their advocacy. For example, Chubb and Moe published *Politics, Markets, and America's Schools* in 1990, which emphasized the important role educational markets could play in increasing the diversity of schooling options and their overall quality. Such arguments bolstered efforts to create voucher programs in many cities and states. In the same year, Wisconsin

approved a voucher program in Milwaukee that allowed families to choose to send their children to public or private schools at public expense. While a few states, such as Ohio and Florida, followed Wisconsin's lead, resistance to voucher proposals was more typical (Henig, 2008). Public referenda on the issue between 1970 and 2000 consistently resulted in the failure of voucher proposals (Henig, 2008).

From Vouchers to Charters

While most voucher proposals failed, choice proponents noted the relative success of the charter school concept. Charter schools had been quietly and successfully implemented in more than half of the states by 1996 (Henig, 2008). The number of states with charter school options has now grown to 42 and, as noted earlier, it is estimated that 2.3 million students now attend 5,997 charter schools nationwide (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2013c). According to Henig (2006), the rapid expansion of charters can be linked to three interrelated explanations: first, because charter schools were defined as public schools they seemed "friendlier" and less antagonistic to the traditional goals of public schooling; second, they provided conservatives with a choice-based platform that had appeal beyond the traditional free-market Republican base; and third, "charter schools, once in place, could become a staging ground for further privatization-oriented polices" (p. 46).

This shift in the discourse of school choice from school vouchers to charters schools can be observed in the media coverage of these issues. Figure 1, below, was developed from a search of five national newspapers (*The New York Times*; *The Boston Globe*; *The Washington Post*; *The Los Angeles Times*; and *The Wall Street Journal*) between 1980 and 2011 for the terms "charter schools" and "school vouchers" demonstrates the enormous growth in the volume of charter school coverage since 1990 and the shift in the emphasis of coverage from vouchers to charters in the period described above.

Although this analysis focuses on search term frequency and not the context in which those search terms are used, this figure helps to illustrate an aggregate shift in the media discourse surrounding market-based models of school reform away from a focus on school vouchers and towards a focus on charter schools. The theoretical foundation for a deeper and more contextual understanding of the framing of charter schools in the media is developed in the sections which follow. However, for the present more concise purpose, this diagram provides useful insights into the shifting terms used in the public representation of market-based school reform ideas.
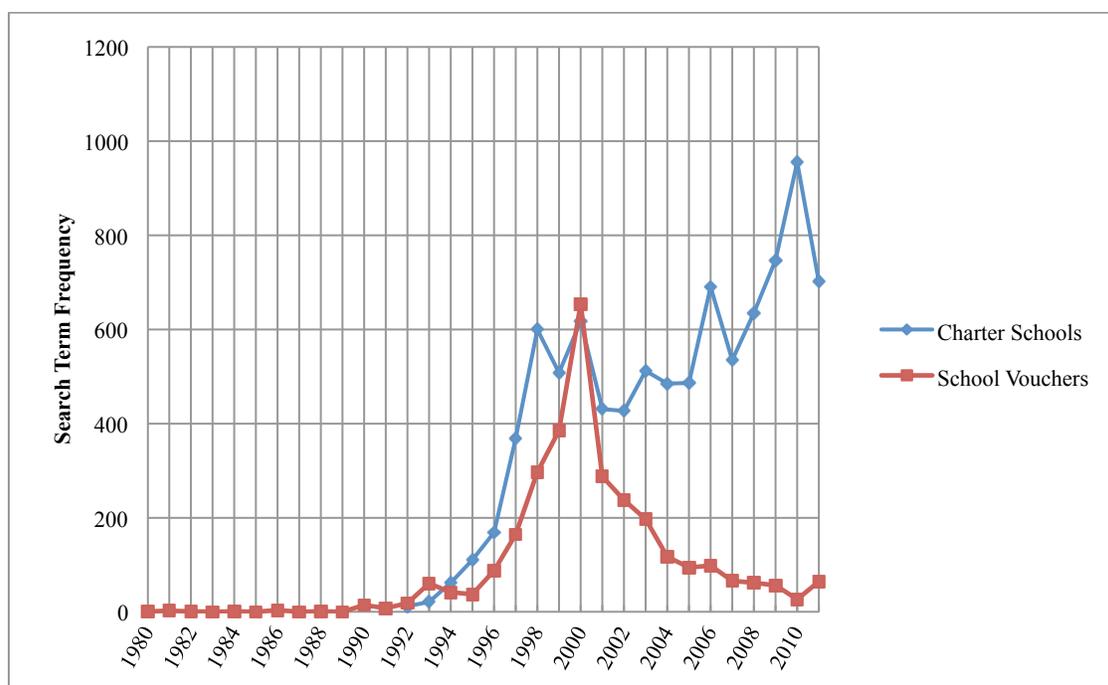
Figure 1. Search Term Frequency in Five Urban Newspapers 1980 to 2011[1]

Of particular note is the spike in articles about charter school and school vouchers around 2000. This spike coincides with the lead-up to the presidential election of 2000. In that campaign, presidential hopeful George W. Bush and Vice President Al Gore both came out in support of charter schools though President Bush also supported the concept of vouchers (Smith, Miller-Kahn, Heinecke, & Jarvis, 2004). According to Smith et. al. (2004), after Bush took office in 2001, his advisors sought to influence the press to describe his policy as "school choice" rather than "vouchers" because of its more positive connotation.

After the election, the number of articles about both vouchers and charters dropped until about 2002. At that time the trends in these two categories of articles diverge – with the overall volume of articles mentioning charter schools increasing while the numbers of articles mentioning vouchers decreased. Smith (2004) offers a likely explanation for this divergence: "With vouchers unavailable [because of voucher defeats in multiple referendums], the choice coalition pushed for several 'second best' alternative policy instruments" (p. 86).

Thus, charters provided proponents of market-oriented reforms with a way to promote the value of choice without directly challenging the existing public school system. Their hope was that charters would provide "vouchers" with a foothold or "wedge," that might eventually create

---

[1] This figure is similar to the one created by Henig (2008) in his analysis of media coverage of these issues between 1980 and 2004 in The New York Times; The Boston Globe; The Washington Post; The LA Times; and The Wall Street Journal (see Henig, 2008, p. 185). Using the ProQuest database I analyzed the same newspapers, and counted the number of articles published between 1980 and 2011 which included the search terms listed in the figure.

opportunities to develop a new market system that would replace the current structure of public education. From this perspective, it seems that the collision between progressive educators and free market reformers has resulted in a hybrid charter movement, supported by entrepreneurs, philanthropists, corporate leaders, and broad segments of the American public.

Beliefs and Evidence about Charter Schools

With regard to this last point, a brief look at the 45th annual Phi Delta Kappan/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools (Bushaw & Lopez, 2013) confirms that the charter school movement has gained significant mainstream support. As mentioned in the introduction to this paper, among the American public, support for charter schools is nearly 70% and two thirds of Americans would support new charter schools in their communities (Bushaw & Lopez, 2013). This is in contrast to public opinion about vouchers which are opposed by 70% of the public; the most opposition to vouchers ever measured by the survey. When compared to traditional public schools, charters also show remarkably high levels of support. Over half of the American public (52%) indicated that they believe "students receive a better education at a public charter school than other public schools" (p. 17) as compared to 31% who believe that there is "no difference" between the quality of education offered in these two types of institutions. Based on this evidence, it seems that charter schools advocates have successfully positioned this reform as the best way to improve public schools in the public consciousness.

Given the widespread support for charter school reform and the potential for this reform to fundamentally alter the nature of public education, it is important to understand the ways this reform is being presented to the public. This is particularly important given that published reports on charter school performance in the educational literature present a mixed picture that sometime contradicts the rhetoric of charter school proponents (Blazer, 2010). The reasons why some studies and information about charter school reform are underscored and widely reported, while others go unnoticed is related to framing and the efforts of policy advocates to have their perspectives featured in the media. For example, a recent study of the conservative think tanks by McDonald (2013) found that along with significant growth in the number of conservative think tanks over the past 25 years, they have also "gained disproportionate media presence by focusing on 'ideas' and discourse rather than the production of research" (p. 28). McDonald's (2013) study illustrates that conservative think tanks have been able to focus discourse about educational policy on market mechanisms as "the solution to perceived educational failure" (p. 28) by attaining greater dominance in the media.

In order to provide a more complete picture related to the performance of charter schools, Fabricant and Fine (2012) have done an extensive review of available studies. They conclude that charters often fail to live up to the claims of reformers in areas including student achievement, equity, parent engagement, the quality of teaching, and innovation. Other authors have reached similar conclusions (Betts & Tang, 2008; Center for Research on Educational Outcomes, 2009; Gleason, Clark, Tuttle, Dwoyer, & Silverberg, M, 2010; Zimmer et al., 2009; Zimmer, Blanc, Gill, & Christman, 2008). At the same time, however, it is important to reiterate that the reports on the performance of charters schools are mixed and some authors have reported improvements (Abdulkadiroglu et al., 2009; Booker, Sass, Gill, & Zimmer, 2008; Center for Research on Education Outcomes, 2013; Dobbie & Fryer, 2009; Tuttle, The, Nichols-Barrer, Gill, & Gleason, P., 2010). While summarizing the literature on either side of this debate is beyond the scope of this study, the contentious nature of the debate calls for a critical reading of

these studies in order to develop a better understand of the ways that various measures and methodologies embody assumptions that might preference some outcomes over others. With regard to the present investigation of the way charter schools are represented in the media, it is sufficient to point out that in two primary areas–improving student achievement and creating greater equity for students–charters appear to face significant challenges.

With regard to student achievement, the most comprehensive studies of charter school performance have been carried out by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO). Their first comprehensive study from 2009, found that while 17% of charters in the study outperformed a traditional public school comparison group (on a test of math achievement), the balance either performed about the same (46%) or worse (37%). A second, more sophisticated, study was carried out by CREDO in 2013, and the results indicate positive growth in charter performance during the intervening period. In 2013, 29% of charter schools in the study outperformed a traditional public school comparison group (on a test of math achievement) with the balance either performing about the same (40%) or worse (31%). While these data certainly illustrate growth in the ability of some charters to promote students achievement, the finding that 71% of charters are either the same or worse than traditional public schools with regard to their ability to promote math achievement fails to make a strong case for charters as superior institutions.

In terms of creating greater equity, Fabricant and Fine (2012) observe that, "Every published study of charter admissions and recruitment documents underenrollment of English language learners and students in special education" (p. 38). This assertion was based on a review of 21 studies carried out between 2003 and 2010 (Fabricant and Fine, 2012, p. 38). In addition, they note that "[s]tudies from Detroit and Minneapolis indicate that charters are more racially segregated than other public schools"(p. 28). This finding is supported by Frankenberg and Siegel-Hawley (2013)who conclude after a careful analysis of enrollment trends that, "Minority concentration is extremely high in charter schools, particularly of African American Students. In some instance, charter schools are [also] pockets of white isolation" (p.131).

Such evidence challenges the generally positive view of charters described above, and is suggestive of a situation where data that contradicts reformers claims is seemingly ignored or marginalized. In order to understand why this might be the case it is important to consider the media's role in interpreting, shaping, and representing issues to the public.

Theoretical Framework: News Framing

Studying the media's representation of charter schools is important because the media plays a central role in informing the public about educational issues. By highlighting certain aspects of charter school reform and omitting others, corporately controlled media has the potential to manipulate the public by presenting a slanted view of the issues (Bagdikian, 2004; P. R. Carr, 2010; Chomsky & Herman, 2011). A central element in this process is the use of frames to convey meaning. As Nisbet (2009) defines them, "Frames are interpretive storylines that set a specific train of thought in motion, communicating why an issue might be a problem, who or what might be responsible for it, and what should be done about it" (p. 15). Thus, despite journalists' efforts to present news objectively, framing is an "unavoidable reality of the communication process" (p. 15). It should be noted that although the potential exists for framing to be used to manipulate an audience, they are not typically used to provide a false spin on an

issue. Rather, frames are "used to pare down information, giving greater weight to certain considerations and elements over others."(Nisbet, 2009, p. 17).

Academic work on framing has developed across multiple social science disciplines including sociology, political science, journalism, and communications. Lippmann (1922) is often credited for recognizing news media as the bridge between external reality and the "pictures" in our heads which constitute our understanding of reality. Similarly, Goffman (1974) explored the role of framing in the social construction of reality by studying the way meaning can be conveyed in both verbal and non-verbal communication. In the 1980s, Edelman, who is best known for his work on role of political spectacle in diverting public attention away from more fundamental political issues, noted that "[f]or most men most of the time" politics is "a series of pictures in the mind, placed there by television news, magazines, and discussions" (Edelman, 1985, p. 5). This definition of politics emphasizes the role of the media in constructing reality through the selection and dissemination of "pictures." With regard to linguistic aspects of framing, Lakoff (2002) has studied how various kinds of representations can tap into liberal and conservative mental frameworks. Overall, these researchers share a common view of media framing as a fundamental aspect of political communication.

The media, however, is not the only participant in the framing process. Most studies of framing make an effort to understand the ways in which "politicians, issue advocates, and stakeholders use journalists and other news professionals communicate their preferred meaning of events and issues" (D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2009, p. 1). Journalists play a particularly important role in news framing because they receive, interpret, and transmit information to the public. As the term "media" implies, the information received by the public is "mediated" by news outlets such as newspapers, radio, television, the blogosphere, etc. From this perspective, news texts can be viewed as part of a discourse that involves the media, its audience, and other social players in a process that helps to define and reproduce cultural values and norms (Van Gorp, 2009, p. 88). According to Gamson and Modigliani (1989), media frames serve to accentuate certain aspects of complex topics and elevate certain arguments over others. These frames help to organize and structure the media's presentation of an issue by providing a packaged set of rhetorical devices which help to define the issue, its cause, who is to blame, and what should be done about it.

At the same time, Nisbet (2009) warns that news frames are not always tied to one particular policy position. "Any frame can include pro, anti, and neutral arguments," writes Nisbet (2009), "though one position might be more commonly used than others" (p. 18). To support this assertion he offers climate change as in issue that has been differentially framed in terms of its economic consequences. In this example, conservatives have framed climate change in terms of the negative economic consequences associated with increased environmental regulation, whereas environmental advocates have used the same "economic consequences" frame to emphasize new economic opportunities made available through the development of "clean energy technologies" (p. 18). Thus, it is not uncommon for political opponents to sometimes invoke similar elements in their framing of particular issues. This will be seen in the subsequent analysis of media portrayals of charter schools.

Depending on a particular individual's experiences, beliefs, and values, some frames may be more salient than others. As members of society, most individuals have internalized -- as a result of their personal experiences, social identity, and interactions with others -- a variety of ideological and political beliefs and/or positions. When frames resonate with these internal values and norms they can be particularly powerful influences on the way individuals and/or

groups think about an issue. Becoming aware of the way the framing process works is essential to interpreting the actions of issue advocates as well as the response of the general public to those efforts.

Characterizing Frame Elements

In studying the framing of the news, Gamson and his colleagues (Gamson & Lasch, 1981; Gamson, 1989; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989) sought to develop a methodology that would allow researchers to characterize the political culture surrounding various issues of public policy. Gamson and Lasch (1981) explained that one could gain insight into the political culture by looking at the various interpretive packages being used to frame an issue. These interpretive packages were often in conflict, and one way of viewing the political culture was as a contest among interpretive packages. In order to gain greater insight into these packages and their ability to define issues, Gamson and Lasch (1981) developed a framework for analysis, which helped to break the interpretive packages into more discreet and observable elements.

Each interpretive package includeds framing devices and reasoning devices that work together to create meaning (Gamson and Lasch, 1981). Interpretive packages are a key element in the mechanism that constructs public understandings and narratives about various issues. Framing devices provide, "the gestalt or pattern organizing nature of political culture" (p. 2) while reasoning devices provide justification and analysis.

In order to render visible the framing and reasoning devices that give meaning to events, Gamson and Lasch (1981) further broke these categories into their component parts. Framing devices were defined as metaphors, exemplars, catch-phrases, and depictions. Reasoning devices were defined as explanations of causes, consequences, and appeals to principles. These elements are summarized in the table below:

Table 1
Elements of the Frame Package

Frame Element		Description
Framing Devices	Metaphors	Link two concepts together. Provides a mental model of events and experiences by linking them with associated subjects (see Van Dijk, 1995, p. 252).
	Exemplars	Representative instances recalled from the past or present that are meant to characterize the current situation.
	Catch-phrases	Slogans or single theme statements used to sum up the issue or situation.
	Depictions and Visual Images	The way an issues is represented with descriptors and adjectives. Can also include the way images or symbols are presented.
Reasoning Devices	Root Causes	Causal narratives or stories that assign blame, praise, or take credit for particular situations or issues.
	Consequences	Extent or predicted outcomes under discussion.
	Appeals to Principle	Moral appeals and references to various values such as equity, efficiency, choice, and quality.

(Table 1 is based on Gamson & Lasch, 1981)

Together, these elements constitute what Gamson and Lasch (1981) called the "signature" of the interpretive package, and these elements could be organized into a "signature matrix." Building on this work, authors such as Entman (1993) and Van Gorp (2010) have sought to develop various frame summaries that distinguish the way problems are defined, the kinds of solutions offered, and associated moral considerations. An excerpt from such a matrix, drawn from Gamson and Lasch's (1981) work on welfare policy is provided below.

Table 2
Excerpt from a Signature Matrix

Frame Title: The Working Poor

Metaphor	A cartoon showing a poor person disdaining a handout while eagerly accepting an offer of honest work.
Exemplar	Stories of deserving poor who choose work over the dole but find that they lose money by doing so.
Catch-phrase	A way to independence through the dignity of work. The government's willingness to help the needy is linked to the willingness of the needy to help themselves. When you pay people to be poor, there are going to be plenty of poor people.
Depiction	Present welfare system as offering disincentives to work and degrading recipients by encouraging dependency.
Root Cause	Welfare rolls are inflated because the poor lack adequate job skills, have poor motivation, and have been socialized into a self-perpetuating culture of poverty, and because the welfare system provides disincentives to work.
Consequences	Pro [Family Assistance Plan] (FAP) - FAP achieves an appropriate balance by providing the poor with adequate minimum support plus the incentive to work. Anti FAP 1- The floor for minimum support is not high enough. Anti FAP 2 - The work incentive is too weak and ineffective.
Appeals to Principle	No one should receive more for being idle than for working. It is morally wrong for a family that is working to try to make ends meet, to receive less than the non-working family across the street.

(Gamson & Lasch, 1981, p. 24)

The construction of a matrix, such as the one above, suggests that if one begins to pay attention, not only to the content of media, but to the way that content is conveyed, it becomes possible to identify cultural, political, and/or ideological perspectives within the news such as, "stereotypes, values, archetypes, myths, and narratives"(Van Gorp, 2010, p. 85). Policy actors utilize the elements of cultural systems, such as those included in the "signature matrix" above, in an effort to achieve their particular goals. Public officials, politicians, interest groups, and political challengers are often identified as "frame sponsors" involved in the promotion of particular interpretive packages.

The importance of framing with respect to a particular issue is clear, as Goldstein(2011) explains, "those who have the power to effectively control the framing process can shape the

discourse surrounding an issue and how people might come to understand it" (p. 550). Over time, framing, which involves connecting the language used to describe events with particular social narratives, understandings, myths, archetypes, emotions, and metaphors has the potential to shape the public's perception of various issues (D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2009; Entman, 1993; W. Gamson, 1989). Uncovering the framing within media reports related to the debate over charter school reform is a central goal of this investigation. The following section outlines the specific methodology employed to interrogate the interpretive packages used to characterize the coverage of charter school reform in the news.

Methodology

This study was designed to determine the broad contours of the media's coverage of charter schools through an examination of the various framing devices used in news reports. Following an approach similar to that used by Gamson (1981), Van Gorp (2010) and others, my goal was to identify the signature elements -- metaphors, exemplars, catch phrases, depictions, roots, consequences, and appeals to principle -- associated with a set of frames that were inductively identified through a process of collecting, coding, and analyzing news texts.

I began the study by identifying a sample of news reports from three national papers: *The Washington Post (WP), The New York Times (NYT), and The Philadelphia Inquirer (PI)*. I chose these papers because of their national scope and broad readership which included both a local and national audience. The public school contexts within the cities represented by these papers are similar in some respects but differ in others. For example, the school districts of each city are facing tremendous budgetary pressures leading to school closings, layoffs, and furloughs. For the academic year beginning in 2013, New York identified 23 schools for closure (Gonan, 2012), Washington DC 15 (Brown, 2013c), and Philadelphia 23 (Hurdle, 2013). The cities also share mayors strongly in favor of charter school reform. One significant difference among the cities is the relative percentage of children attending charters schools in each. As of the 2010-2011 school year, only 3.9% of children in New York City attended charter schools (New York City Charter School Center, 2012). That percentage, for the 2011-2012 school year was 41% in Washington DC and 23% in Philadelphia (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2013a).

Using the Lexis Nexis database, I identified all of the articles published in these three newspapers which included the terms "charter school" or "charter schools" between July 1, 2012, and June 30, 2013. I selected this period because it focused on recent coverage of charter schools and would contain articles with the most current framing of the charter school issue. The search resulted in 177 articles from The New York Times, 366 from The Philadelphia Inquirer, and 416 articles from the Washington Post. In order to further narrow the sample to a representative, yet more manageable set of articles appropriate for content analysis, I further limited the sample to those articles where the term "charter" appeared six or more times. Applying this criterion resulted in a final sample that included 19 articles from The New York Times, 65 from The Philadelphia Inquirer, and 77 articles from the Washington Post. This process helped to insure that the articles had a more explicit focus on charter schools. After narrowing the sample, all of the articles were uploaded into a qualitative analysis software package (NVIVO) for the purpose of carrying out a more careful content analysis with the goal of identifying the various framing devices (metaphors, catchphrases, allusions, etc.) and reasoning devices (causal stories, appeals to principle, etc.) used to convey particular ideological perspective about charter schools (Gamson & Lasch, 1981).

Similar to Reese (2010), I assumed that the entire body of discourse in the sample was relevant for analysis. I did not make any distinctions between local and national coverage, nor did I differentiate between editorials or news articles when coding excerpts. The unit of analysis for the project was the excerpt rather than the entire article, as multiple frames can be invoked within a single article and frames are better understood as existing across a body of discourse (Nisbet, 2010; Reese, 2010). In practice, this meant that individual articles were not coded as belonging to a particular frame, but excerpts within an article consistent with a particular frame were coded accordingly. The result was that many articles contained excerpts representing more than one frame.

Coding of excerpts was carried out in a multi-step process facilitated through the creation and use of a basic protocol that helped me to recognize those constellations of ideas that made up the dominant frames and topical themes used to convey news about charter schools. The use of protocols is recommended by Altheide and Schneider (2012) as a way to guide data collection and capture the meaning of text. The protocol was informed by the Gamson and Lasch (1981) framework, but it was also necessary to create new categories to capture emerging patterns in the data. Clarifying these codes was an ongoing process and involved a constant comparative technique, whereby coded material was constantly compared with other coded excerpts and source material in order to further refine code categories and the frame package overall (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).Table C, summarizes the central elements of this protocol.

Table 3
Framing Protocol[2]

Signature Elements	Protocol Categories	Questions
Depiction	General focus of article	How is the issue described?
	Nature of the problem/issue	Is there a particular problem or issue that is emphasized?
	Affected groups	Who is affected by the issue?
Causal roots	Main cause	What is the main cause of the issue or problem?
		Who or what is to blame/praise for the situation?
Solutions	Existing policy/situation	What are the views on the current policy or situation?
	Policy prescriptions	What solutions are proposed or implied?
	Agency	Who is suggested or implied as having sufficient agency to address the issue?
Core Values	Policy Values	What values or principles are evident in the problem presentation? (e.g. choice, efficiency, quality, equality)

In the following section, I describe the dominant frames identified within the study sample and provide supporting excerpts from the data for various frame elements.

---

[2] This framing protocol is a modified version of that used by Jenkin, Signal, and Thomson (2011) .

Analysis

My exploratory analysis of the discourse surrounding charter schools in the news sample revealed two broad frames that revolve around issues such as the availability of resources, appropriate regulation and administration, and academic performance. These frames position different actors such as parents, teachers, school administrators, and mayors as being the most appropriate to decide issues of educational policy and depict charter school reform in both positive and negative terms. The frames frequently evoked fundamental principles related to issues of quality, equity, choice, and efficiency as a means of supporting the core position of the frame. The two most salient frames, which will be discussed in more detail below, were (1) Public Accountability; and (2) Freedom, Choice, and Innovation. These frames represent a starting point for analysis; often a variety of more nuanced, and sometimes opposing, positions emerged within these overarching constructions.

In the following sections, I provide examples of the depictions, root causes, solutions, and values that are associated with each frame. I have not reported on metaphors or catchphrases because I was unable to identify these framing elements on a consistent basis. Table D summarizes the prevalence of the two main frames identified in the sample. For the purpose of the table, those articles with at least one excerpt focused on a characteristics of Public Accountability such as regulation, accountability, or equity were included the tally of articles representing the Public Accountability frame. Articles where at least one excerpt focused on charter schools as innovative or providing needed choices were included in the tally of articles in the Freedom, Choice and Innovation frame.

Table 4
Differences in Issue Framing by Paper[3]

Differential Use of Dominant Frames by Paper			
	NYT (n=19)	PI (n=65)	WP (n=77)
Public Accountability	16 (84%)	58 (89%)	52 (68%)
Freedom Choice and Innovation	15 (79%)	17 (11%)	36 (47%)

The table above shows that Public Accountability was the dominant framing mechanism in then the articles in the study sample. Framing related to Freedom, Choice, and Innovation was also prevalent in each of newspapers in the sample but was not used as frequently as the Public Accountability frame. In both the NYT and the PI over 80% of the articles in the sample included evidence of Public Accountability framing. Freedom, Choice and Innovation framing

---

[3] Please note that the sum of columns can exceed total n because it was possible for articles to include more than one frame.

was most common in the NYT where it was determined to be present in 79% of the articles, and least common in the PI where it only appeared in 11% of the articles. I offer some possible explanations for these differences after more carefully characterizing each of the frames in the sections below.

Public Accountability

The Public Accountability frame presents the need for better oversight with respect to charter school resource allocation, administrative practices, and various regulatory issues. This frame suggests that without sufficient oversight, public resources will be used in ways incommensurate with the public interest. Lack of oversight is presented as a contributing factor in the ethical lapses exhibited by some charter school leaders, as well as the poor performance of some charter schools. In some instances, the Public Accountability frame draws attention to unequal resource allocations, portraying such allocations as unfairly favoring traditional public schools. At other times, the frame draws attention to the perspective that charter schools "siphon" away the best students and necessary resources from traditional public schools, giving rise to a two tier system of public education. Efforts to increase the regulation of charter schools and rethink the way resources are distributed are viewed as a means to treat charters and traditional public schools more equitably. The charter school approval and review process is depicted as being central to efforts to police charters and improve accountability and transparency.

The following excerpts from the WP, the PI, and the NYT provide examples of various depictions of charter school issues, the causes evoked to explain a given situation, solutions proposed to address perceived problems, and dominant policy values. For the purpose of analysis, I have grouped prominent story elements within the broader category of Public Accountability into themes including (1) unequal resource allocations between public and charter schools, (2) charter schools "siphoning" resources away from traditional public schools, (3) unequal disciplinary practices, and (4) the rigors of the application and review process for charter schools. Each of these themes fits within the general Public Accountability frame, but each is slightly different in the way it utilizes various framing and reasoning devices.

Unequal resource allocation. Perhaps the most prominent storyline within the Public Accountability frame emphasizes the inequalities in resources between public and charter schools. Some of the articles utilizing this frame depicted charters as receiving fewer resources than traditional public schools and others depicted them as having additional or surplus resources. In the WP, articles about resource allocation often focused on lack of resources for charters as the major impediment to creating more "high quality seats" for students in Washington DC. For example, within the WP sample, several articles focused on a Walton Foundation study showing that charter schools in DC were getting less funding per pupil than traditional public schools – primarily because funding for public schools could be increased outside of the established student aid formula (e.g. when money for traditional public school renovation projects was distributed outside of the official funding formula).

Articles about the Walton study, and others, featured charter proponents expressing their desire for additional resources for charter schools, including the buildings made available because of public school closures. The following examples from the WP help to illustrate the way these resource issues were framed in terms of Public Accountability:

- A city study found that an additional 39,758 seats are needed at high-quality public schools to adequately serve every District student. Yet high-performing D.C. public charter schools are being denied the right to move their schools into any of the buildings due to close. By denying surplus school buildings and space to D.C. public charter students, the city is failing its children (WP - Nida, 3/24/2013, p. C4).

- A law on the books in the District since the mid-1990s gives charter schools first priority to vacated public school buildings. Sadly, that hasn't prevented city officials from hoarding the properties, selling them off to private interests or, most appalling, letting them rot while deserving charter schools scrounge for space or turn students away (WP -Washington Post Editorial Board, 4/24/2013, p. A18).

In these excerpts, charter schools are depicted as "deserving" of vacated public school space with the underlying assumption that charter schools are doing a good job educating students. The implication is that charter schools will ultimately need to turn away students unless the District can be held accountable to a law already on the books. This depiction draws attention to a resource distribution viewed by charter school advocates as unfair.

Other articles featured charter school critics' claim that charter schools were drawing more than their fair share of resources. In the PI, for instance, there were several articles that focused on a report created by Pennsylvania State Representative James Roebuck detailing problems with charter school funding, fraud, and other types of mismanagement in the state of Pennsylvania. The following excerpts are drawn from articles related to Roebuck's report:

- Roebuck also calls for the creation of a statewide funding advisory commission to examine how charter schools and cyber charter schools are funded. Now, a school district's tuition payment for one of its students enrolled in a charter is based on how much the district spends to educate students in district schools. A cyber charter receives the same amount as regular charter, which has the expenses of serving lunch and operating a building (PI -Woodall, 3/19/2013, p B1).

- State Auditor General Jack Wagner estimates taxpayers would save $315 million a year if the state stopped funding charters and cyber charters at significantly higher levels than their actual costs of educating students. Good charters that produce acceptable academic results can be a viable option in public education. But the numbers must add up (PI - Philadelphia Inquirer Editorial Board, 20131/30/2013, A18).

The assertion that "the numbers must add up" suggests a desire for greater transparency in the way the charter schools are funded and that funding formulas should be related to actual costs so that resources can be distributed more equitably between public schools and charter schools. Such language constitutes a plea for greater Public Accountability in the use of public resources.

In both the Washington and Philadelphia examples, problematic resource allocations are depicted; however, the causal stories related to those problematic allocations differ. In the WP unequal resource distribution is blamed on the DC Public School Board and DC School Superintendent's unwillingness to share resources with deserving charter schools. In the PI,

charter schools are depicted as unfairly capturing too large a share of the funds made available for public schools. In both cases, the suggested solutions focus on developing oversight mechanisms that might be less influenced by politics in order to achieve a more equitable distribution of resources in the eyes of advocates or critics.

These instances also illustrate the ability of both charter school advocates and critics to draw on the Public Accountability frame in their depictions of the issues surrounding charter schools. As these examples show, frames are not always associated with a single position on an issue. Rather, frames are best thought of as organizing devices that can encompass a broad variety of positions.

Needed resources being siphoned away. In a similar vein, articles about charter schools in the sample sometimes focused on concerns that charter schools were "siphoning" needed resources and the best students away from traditional public schools. For example, the following passages from articles in the WP focused on the concerns of some charter school critics:

- "If we start giving out vouchers and everything, or the kids go to other charter schools," Mr. Meier said, "we're then hurting our district." Teachers' unions similarly argue that charter schools siphon away taxpayer dollars and the most motivated students (NYT - Motoko, 9/25/2012, p. A1).

- There are fears, too, that as charters grow, they will increasingly attract families who are equipped to navigate the school-choice world - leaving traditional schools with a greater concentration of the most difficult-to-educate children (WP - Brown, 2/11/2013, p. A1).

- Critics regard the charter movement as an assault on a bedrock democratic institution - the neighborhood public school. They cite studies showing that most charters do no better, and often worse, than traditional schools in serving poor children. By siphoning off money and motivated families, they say, charters have left the traditional school system with fewer resources to serve the most disadvantaged students (WP - Turque, 8/22/2012, p. A5).

In these quotes, concerns are expressed about public schools' capacity to fulfill their responsibility to serve all students in an environment where charter schools are drawing away needed resources. By emphasizing the responsibility of public schools to provide poor and disadvantaged children with access to public education, these quotes indirectly draw on the notion of Public Accountability and highlight a central concern of charter school critics.

Underlying this concern is deep anxiety about increasing inequality in our society and fear that charter schools will exacerbate the problem. Frequently proposed solutions to improve public accountability for charter schools, related to these issues, include at least two opposing alternatives. Critics of charter schools call for measures that would slow or limit the growth of charters so that traditional public schools maintain adequate support. At the same time, supporters of charters push to radically expand the number of charter schools so that more students will have access. Where charter critics frame the issue as a "siphon" leaking away needed resources that should be contained so that they might be used to support needy students, charter supporters frame the issue as excess capacity and wastefulness in government that could be ameliorated by creating more charter schools and fostering greater competition for students.

Weeding procedures. Other articles in the sample depicted charter school disciplinary procedures and the process of applying for admission to charters schools as tools that were sometimes used to consciously push out the most difficult to educate students. In these instances, charter schools were framed as elitist institutions able to enhance their status by catering to the most able students and avoiding the most difficult.

Applying the lens of Public Accountability, charters were depicted as avoiding the responsibility to educate "all" in order to enhance their record of performance. This framing was particularly prominent in a number of articles about charter school expulsion rates in DC that pointed out higher rates of expulsion in DC charter schools than in traditional public schools (Brown, 2013f). The following excerpt discussing the DC superintendent's response to these concerns illustrates the negative framing of charter schools with respect to this issue:

- In August, the District's Office of the State Superintendent of Education proposed rules that would govern discipline policies at all public schools, including charters. They called for minimizing suspension and expulsion of children 13 and younger and outlined due process rights for students. Charter leaders mounted a vigorous opposition, saying the federal law that established D.C. charters frees them from such local mandates. (WP - Brown, 1/6/2013, p. A1)

Here, charter schools are depicted as resisting efforts to create a common set of expectations for student discipline that would govern both public and charter schools. More supportive comments framed this resistance as part of a larger effort by charter schools to create communities with appropriately high behavior standards. At least one editorial in the WP supported strict disciplinary practices in both public schools and charter schools, emphasizing that such standards were necessary to create the kind of environment where children could learn. Articles with more critical framing of the issue focused on the link between expulsion and later dropping out of school. These articles tended to blame charters for using expulsions and transfers as ways of avoiding the challenges associated with educating the most difficult students.

The solutions proposed to address this issue focused on creating more uniform standards for charter and public school students, greater oversight, and more accountability. For example, one idea being discussed in DC would require charter schools to publish their expulsion rates in the hope that the public scrutiny would reduce these numbers. Other solutions focused on developing alternatives to expulsion similar to those used in many public schools, such as in school suspension.

Beyond student discipline, other articles focused on the way admissions processes could be used to weed out difficult to educate students from the charter school population. For example, in the excerpt below, the author is discussing her observation, based on her work in New Orleans charter schools[4], that there is little incentive for charters to take on the challenge associated with educating the neediest students.

---

[4] While comments about charter schools in New Orleans may initially seem out of place in the NYT, it is important to bear in mind that the coverage of charter schools in the NYT has a strong national character. Of the newspapers in the study sample, the NYT had more articles about charter schools from other locations, while the coverage in the WP and the PI tended to focus more on local issues.

- The most challenging students -- those with severe special needs, a history of school expulsions or a criminal record -- can also suffer disproportionately from a narrow focus on school improvement and test score gains. These are the students the schools have the least incentive to enroll …. (NYT - Carr, 5/16/2013, p. SR4)

Critical portrayals of charter schools cited barriers to admission such as incomplete information about charter options, complex application procedures, and the need to manage multiple waiting lists as disproportionally influencing disadvantaged children and parents who might lack the resources necessary to navigate the complex admissions process. Solutions aimed at increasing Public Accountability in charter school admissions focused on developing better procedures and more transparent mechanisms both for students applying to charter schools and for charter administrators responsible for managing waitlists.

Rigors of the application and review process for charter schools. Finally, Public Accountability concerns were central to coverage related to the rigors of the chartering process. For example, in the coverage related to charter approvals, the Washington, DC Charter School Board was portrayed as carrying out its public duties with a high degree of integrity by closing charters that were not performing well, and holding new applicants to high standards. This representation of competency is reflected in the following excerpt from the WP.

- The decisions reflect the board's efforts to clamp down on low-performing schools while opening doors for charter operators with a record of success. (WP - Brown, 2/27/2013, p. B3)

The public expects that oversight boards will provide this type of accountability. By showing the board to be efficacious, this type of framing conveys a sense of legitimacy to the work of the DC Charter School Board.

On the other hand, in Philadelphia it was implied that the approving body was negligent in its duties because greedy charter operators were using public resources in inappropriate ways. This lack of information and regulation is the focus of the following excerpt:

- Americans are overwhelmed by choices, not all of them good. In response to struggling public schools, Philadelphia parents have a staggering menu of public and charter options, many offering no improvement in educating children. Almost a quarter of the city's 84 charter schools have been under federal or state investigation, after some operators viewed their operations as an educational gold rush. That gold, by the way, would be your tax dollars.(PI - Heller, 4/24/2013, p. B1)

Pointing out the problems with deregulation and corruption that parents and citizens face when dealing with charter schools implies that some individuals and groups that gain approval to run charter schools are taking advantage of their position for personal gain. By describing the charter school situation in Philadelphia as a "gold rush" the author invokes an image of the "wild west" where individuals were out to make a profit for themselves and there was little public oversight.

Overall, these excerpts reinforce the important role accrediting bodies play in maintaining public support for various initiatives. Strong oversight boards with high standards are depicted as the cause of good outcomes. Boards that fail to address poor performance or ignore the misuse of funds are viewed as the cause of significant problems. In Philadelphia, where many charter operators have been under investigation, policies requiring additional accountability measures such as annual audits and required disclosure statements have been discussed. Within the Public Accountability frame, accrediting bodies are viewed as an essential element needed to provide oversight, accountability, and ultimately to legitimate charter schools.

Each of the excerpts discussed above focuses on various aspects of Public Accountability. Within the sample, these examples represent the dominant frame used to discuss charter schools. Such framing presents charter schools as entities that need additional oversight and regulation so that they might better serve the public good, or be treated fairly in relation to traditional public schools.

In the following section, I turn to an alternate set of depictions, causes, solutions, and values in the newspaper coverage of charter schools that emphasizes freedom, choice, and innovation.

Freedom, Choice, and Innovation

The Freedom, Choice, and Innovation frame suggests that charter schools embody an entrepreneurial spirit that helps them to overcome obstacles to produce stronger outcomes than traditional public schools. The entrepreneurial spirit and innovation associated with charter schools is presented as being nurtured by the autonomy of charters and the fact that they must compete for students. Children are frequently depicted as being trapped in failing public schools without the freedom to choose higher quality options. Traditional public schools and unionized school teachers are viewed as impediments to creating greater freedom and choice because of entrenched self-interest. The framing further suggests that there is a high demand for charters and that alternatives to traditional public schools are desired. In terms of principles, the frame strongly emphasizes parents' ability to make choices and pursue alternatives when they are displeased with the status quo. Equity is viewed in terms of providing all students with the ability to choose from among high quality options.

The following paragraphs provide examples from the WP, the PI, and the NYT of the way charter school issues or problems are depicted within the Freedom, Choice, and Innovation frame. Though this frame was less common in the media sample than the Public Accountability frame, it is still widely used and elements of this frame were evident in many of the articles about charters. Similar to the previous section, this section provides examples of the causes evoked to explain these situations, proposed solutions, and dominant policy values associated with the frame.

As the title of this frame suggests, charter schools are often portrayed as innovative institutions that foster creativity and provide new educational choices to parents and children. Within this frame, I have identified three prominent themes which I describe below along with examples. These themes include (1) freedom from regulation, (2) the merits of choice and competition as a way to weed out poor performers and spur innovation, and (3) the significant demand for charter schooling and the desire for charter school expansion. Within these themes, charters are often contrasted with public schools that are presented as overly bureaucratic and vested in protecting their "monopoly".

Freedom from regulation. A prominent theme found within the articles using the Freedom, Choice, and Innovation frame, focuses on the creativity and innovation that is thought to result from the relative autonomy of charter schools. Regulations are often depicted as being overly constraining, and an impediment to the kinds of changes that result in improved student performance. An example from the NYT and the WP illustrates this perspective:

- The charter school movement gained a foothold in American education two decades ago partly by asserting that independently run, publicly financed schools would outperform traditional public schools if they were exempted from onerous regulations. (NYT - New York Times Editorial Board, 2/2/2013, p. A22)

- Charter advocates see a movement that - without the rules and red tape that bog down traditional schools - has attracted parents in droves and lifted achievement in some of the most stubbornly poor and disadvantaged corners of America. (WP - Brown, 1/6/2013, p. A1)

Comments such as these make it seem that the primary problems our schools face result from internal bureaucratic constraints rather than external realities such as poverty and poor health care. Fundamental social issues that might impact student learning are rarely mentioned. At the same time, these types of comments are quite vague about the specific regulations or bureaucratic elements though to constrain innovation. When they do name constraints, as in the examples below, the most likely referent is the union contract, or teachers unions, which are viewed as impediments to creating new approaches to education.

- "I think charter schools are the best answer for improving urban districts," Mr. Milkie said. The struggles of traditional public schools, he said, is "not anybody's fault per se, but in a district with lots of bureaucracy both from the district side and union contract side, it's very difficult to make the kind of progress that's needed" (NYT - Motoko, 9/13/2012, p.A22).

- Mr. Walcott will say on Saturday that the above-average performance of some charter schools justifies the efforts to accommodate them. "It boggles the mind why a candidate for office would call for an end to this success story, except to appease a union that feels threatened by it," he says in the speech (NYT - Hernández & Baker, 5/18/2013).

In addition to being vague with respect to the critique of traditional public school bureaucracy, most of these types of statements fail to specify the nature of the educational innovations credited to charter schools. In some cases, however, excerpts from news reports did focus on charter schools' encouragement of new pedagogies and greater student engagement. The excerpts below suggest that the ability to try new ideas allows charter schools to connect better with students:

- "In interviews last month, [charter school] proponents said that charters would give educators the chance to experiment with new teaching strategies. 'Charter schools have cracked the code about how to reach some of these struggling populations of kids that the public schools, particularly in urban areas, are not doing well by,' said Lisa Macfarlane, Washington State director of Democrats for Education Reform (NYT - Motoko, 11/8/2012 p. 15).

- "Many of our students have struggled at traditional schools," Williams said. "But they thrive here because we're connecting education to real life." (WP - Bhattarai, 6/10/2013, p. A18)

Rationales such as these harken back to the experimental roots of the charter school movement discussed earlier.

In general, these depictions present an image of charter schools as institutions with agency. This projection of agency allows charter schools to be depicted as being directly responsible for their successes. In contrast, public schools are presented as bureaucracies that are unable to act because of various constraints including union negotiated agreements. Within the *Freedom, Choice, and Innovation Frame,* school autonomy is equated with the kind of creativity and responsiveness that promotes the educational success of all students.

Merits of choice and competition. In addition to stressing the benefits of increased freedom, many stories grouped in the Freedom, Choice, and Innovation frame focus on the purported benefits of competition in improving performance. In this category, coverage often focuses on the desire for alternatives to traditional public schools and the importance of being able to pick one's educational institution and/or pedagogical approach so that the schooling experience might better match the goals and expectations of parents and students. For example, the excerpts below focus on the importance of choice in helping parents and students find what is best for them:

- "It is about choices as a parent," she said. "Why would you stay in a place where you know your kids are not going to get the very best they deserve?" (Brown, 2012)

- Public school districts "have a monopoly they wish to protect," said Chip Rogers, "But if they're not serving their kids, you have to give them an additional option" (NYT - Motoko, 11/6/2012, p. A16).

- Some parents crave a computer system to match students with the schools they most want to attend. Charter leaders are also eager for a solution, though many are hesitant to introduce rules or systems that might limit parents' ability to choose. The power of the free market, after all, is an organizing principle of the charter-school movement (WP - Brown, 9/10/2012, p. A4).

In addition to stressing the importance of choice, the second quote above contrasts the ability to choose with the monopoly presumably enjoyed by traditional public schools. Here, the implication is that choice opens traditional public school monopolies to market forces that require greater creativity and responsiveness on the part of teachers and administrators. It is suggested that maintaining student enrollment in a competitive environment drives innovation and change. In a similar vein, the quotes below stress the value of competition both between charter schools, and between charter schools and traditional public schools.

- Competition has forced both school sectors to improve, Gray said in an interview, and should be preserved. "I don't believe in monopolies," he said. "Anything that tips the balance too far in one direction or the other is not good for our children" (WP - Brown, 2/11/2013, p.A1).

- The aim of his voucher and charter-school initiatives, Watkins added, was to strengthen public schools. "The hope of school choice . . . is that there is competition, and parents can choose where they send their kids to school." That way, "the schools that are underperforming will work harder to perform better, so that parents will choose them. Eventually, you will have a lot of great schools and a lot of great choices for parents" (PI - Hardy, 2/26/2012, p. B1).

In these excerpts, the values of choice and competition are positioned as the solution to the deficient approach to education supposedly taken by traditional public schools which have been sheltered from market forces. In the first example, Mayor Vincent Gray emphasizes his belief that monopolies lead to poor performance and that competition has been effective in improving both public and charter schools. In the second example, Joe Watkins, a wealthy charter school advocate appointed by the state of Pennsylvania to develop a recovery plan for the bankrupt Chester Upland School District also emphasizes the claim that competition will strengthen both charter and traditional public schools.

Such rhetoric positions competition as a simple solution for large public school systems that have had difficulty meeting the needs of the poor and minority students that make up the bulk of their enrollments. However, addressing the needs of these communities is far from simple and issues, such as poverty, poor nutrition, and unstable community environments make success for both public schools and charter schools uncertain. Choosing can only be beneficial to all students in an environment where none of the choices are materially worse than others. However, as discussed earlier, studies of charter schools present a mixed picture of charter performance with respect to student achievement on standardized measures and their ability to create greater equity in educational experiences for poor and minority students (Fabricant and Fine (2012). In addition, these arguments fail to recognize the problems associated with frequent changes in schools and school closings that are typically presented as positive outcomes of such plans. Such closings have the potential to be highly disruptive to students and their families and may exacerbate many of the problems they are supposed to address.

Demand for charter schools. Finally, the Freedom, Choice, and Innovation frame includes depictions that focus on the high demand for charter schools as an alternative to traditional public education. In the four excerpts that follow, the implication is that demand for charter schools is predicated on discontent with the traditional public schools and the superior performance of charters.

- 'To the extent families are in need of other options, growth does indicate there is something missing in the public school system," said Nina Rees, chief executive of the National Alliance (NYT - Motoko, 11/14/2012, p. A19).

- Over the years there has been a concerted effort to alter the facts, perpetuate the myths, and keep families in Philadelphia from knowing the truth about the success of charter schools. Yet, there are tens of thousands of families currently on waiting lists wanting to enroll children in a city charter school (PI - Wallace, 3/28/2013, p. A19).

- Even with less money, charters have outperformed the public school system: Their students score higher on standardized tests and graduate at greater rates. More than 40 percent of public school students attend charters and thousands

are on waiting lists. It's time the District give them their financial due (WP - Board, 4/21/2013, p.A22)

- Parents across the city say there aren't enough good schools to go around. They trade stories about lotteries, waitlists and rejection (WP - Brown, 1/6/2013, p. C6).

The solution to the paucity of high quality schooling options implied by these comments is generally rapid expansion of charter school opportunities. Expanding charter schools, it is argued, extends the value of choice too many parents and children now relegated to poorly performing traditional public schools.

Overall, these examples provide a sense of the kinds of portrayals that fall within the Freedom, Choice, and Innovation frame. This type of framing was most evident in articles focusing on the success of charter schools or their innovative practices. Those articles discussing charter school controversies were less likely to employ this type of framing.

Differences in Coverage Among the NYT, PI, and WP

Although the dominant frames discussed above were observable in all three newspapers, important differences in the coverage of charter schools among the newspapers should also be noted. For example, coverage of charter schools in the PI and the WP focused on local concerns more often than the coverage in the NYT. The NYT tended to focus on national coverage of charter school issues, and I surmise that this difference is related to the prominence of the New York Times as a national news outlet. These differences might also be attributed to the relative prevalence of charter schools in each city, though it is difficult to know. As mentioned in the methodology, New York has only a small number of charter schools in comparison with Philadelphia and Washington DC.

In Washington DC, nearly half of the school age children (41%) attend charter schools (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2013a). The coverage in Washington tended to focus heavily on resource issues and the desire to create greater equity between charters and public schools. In Philadelphia, 23% of students attend charters schools (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2013a) and resource allocation between charter schools and public schools was written about less often; however, there were many more articles focused on the need for increased oversight and management of charter schools in order to avoid corruption and wrongdoing. These local differences are important because they demonstrate the non-monolithic nature of charter schools. While the national conversation of charter schools tends to lump charter schools together and refer to them as a single entity, there is much variation in the kinds of charter schools that have been established. For example for the 2010-2011 school year the National Alliance of Public Charter Schools estimated that 67.5% of charter schools were freestanding, with the balance being run by educational management organizations, or charter management organizations (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2013b). There are also important differences in the level of charter school implementation from city to city and the kinds of problems that each city is working to address. Despite the local nature of the politics and news coverage of charter schools, articles from all three of the cities made frequent use of the Public Accountability, and Freedom, Choice, and Innovation frames.

Implications and Suggestions for Future Studies

Having now explored two prominent frames used to discuss charter schools in the media, as well as some differences in the coverage of charter schools among the newspapers in the sample, this final section of the paper discusses the importance of acknowledging and examining the role framing may play in the policy debate over charter schools. In addition, I make several suggestions for future studies that might help to further problematize taken-for-granted perspectives about public education by exposing additional elements of the discursive processes that influence the public's perception of the issue. Such insight is necessary, I argue, if we wish to deliberate on educational policy issues more openly and focus more carefully on designing solutions that strengthen our democracy and the public good.

Importance of Framing

Because of their ubiquitous nature, Public Accountability and Freedom, Choice, and Innovation frames function to shape the ways in which charter school issues are understood. Despite the fact that there are considerable differences in the issues related to charter schools in each city, as discussed above, these differences tend to be subsumed within the broader and more uniform framing of the issue. According to Shannon (2011), this is an example of the ability of frames to "set parameters for our thinking, talking, and acting…" (p. 65). In this sense, frames "position us" in relation to the charter school issue and align our thinking with dominant perspectives. Moreover, it is important to recognize that framing is, "an attempt to gain power in the discussion of issues, arguments, or events, setting boundaries on what will be considered appropriate thoughts and actions and what will be judged to be inappropriate, abnormal, and even subversive" (p. 54). These efforts to shape the discourse surrounding an issue make it difficult to consider alternative positions.

Shannon (2011) further notes that frames and discourses, "compete with one another in order to be considered relevant, if not controlling in every situation" (p. 54). Frame contests of this sort, play out in the media as various interests seek to control the discourse and public opinion for the purpose of shaping policy in ways that they find to be favorable. In this instance, however, the frames identified in the study do not appear to actually be in competition with each other, but rather, reflect accommodation and possibly reconciliation. Rather than resisting charter schools, the Public Accountability frame emphasizes the necessity of having them run with appropriate controls. In addition, there is an emphasis on making sure that charters and public schools have appropriate resources.

Overall, these depictions reflect a general acceptance of charter schools of a viable alternative to traditional public schools for students in urban settings. Neither of the frames identified for this study provide a radical critique of charters. The absence of such critique in the mainstream media is not surprising given the current support for federal and state policies that are aimed at expanding the number of charters. Such support is consistent with neoliberal values that favor competition, choice, and deregulation. At the same time, Wells et. al (2002) cautions that charter schools are not strictly a neoliberal reform because, "charter advocates and founders of charter schools represent very different political and philosophical perspectives—from neoconservative members of the religious right to more leftist and progress educators who seek autonomy form a state-run system to provide viable educational alternatives to students who have not succeeded in the traditional educational system" (p. 345). Thus, this lack of critique

may also reflect a deep disaffection with traditional public schools because of their seeming inability to address the needs of poor and minority students (Lipman, 2011).

While the current discourse on charter schools does not necessarily capture an active resistance, recognizing how frames work can help readers to use their sociological imagination to assess the "dangers inherent in the positions offered them within a certain time and place" (Shannon, 2011, p. 65). Such dangers can be particularly hard to see given that the news "knows how to render its own mechanics almost invisible and hard to question" (Botton, 2014, p. II). Often, this invisibility allows for the mystification of power relations and obscures a reader's ability to identify responsible agents (Potter, 1996). A better understanding of the way framing works and how news frames are employed by journalists may create a different and more cautious reading of the news that recognizes the capacity of the news both reflect and construct reality. Problematizing the framing of the news, and those truth claims embedded within particular frames, opens up the possibility for new questions and improved deliberation on issues of public policy. A more overt recognition of framing might inspire journalists to present multiple perspectives on the news while motivating readers to consider a broader variety of interpretations.

Applied to the issue of charter schools, insight into the working s of news frames might help citizens make more informed choices about accepting or resisting particular readings of charter schools. Rather than characterizing charters as vehicles for choice, innovation and freedom, or entities in need of greater public accountability, as illustrated in this analysis, a more critical framing of charter schools might emphasize the narrow view of public education that some charters have embraced. For example, KIPP which runs 47 elementary schools, 74 middle schools and, 20 high schools (Knowledge is Power Program, n.d.) focuses heavily on test preparation and idea of individual economic utility (Ellison, 2012). Such perspectives, which reveal the ways some charter schools place competition and preparation for work above other social values such as democratic participation and critical inquiry, remain absent in the broader media discourse focused on charter schools.

This is not to say that it is impossible for charter schools to support democratic values, promote increased political participation, or teach students to think critically. For example, Feinberg (2008) has argued that as long as schools meet particular public criteria with respect to diversity in admissions, standards for teachers, the retention of students, accountability to "a body of citizens that represent a reasonable crosssection of the community"(p.234), the adoption of a curriculum that represents matters of public concerns, and student autonomy, their mode of governance should be largely immaterial. Within this context, charter schools that meet Feinberg's criteria, could "satisfy the right of parents" to enhance the education of their children while also serving "the obligation of society to promote equality and a level playing field" (p. 235). However, in its current incarnation, the charter school movement, as a whole, has not embraced Feinberg's (2008) criteria. In fact, many view the movement as becoming increasingly corporate in character with a bias toward privatization, individualism, and competition that is self-reinforcing and seemingly impervious to any meaningful critique (Fabricant & Fine, 2012).

Recognizing the ways that framing shapes discourse, and ultimately our perceptions, provides an opening, however slim, to both critique current frames, and consider alternate interpretations. By becoming aware of the dangers that popular frames conceal from us, we may choose to resist that framing and act, either individually, or with others to confront those dangers (Shannon, 2011).

Future Studies

This study provides a basis for further inquiry related to the framing of charter schools in the news. In considering future directions for inquiry, it is helpful to first considers some of the limitations of the present study. In particular, identifying frame elements within a text is a challenging task and one that is open to critique because it is largely subjective in nature. In the present case, an inductive qualitative analysis supported the development and characterization of two dominant frames but my subjective judgment still played a central role in the analytical process. In order to address this concern, Van Gorp (2010) has suggested, that framing studies follow a two-step process where an inductive process of frame reconstruction should begin with a focus on materials developed by "frame sponsors" such as interest groups, or political parties. Once the frames in these materials have been identified, he suggests that they be validated through a deductive analysis of media texts in order to determine their presence and prevalence (Van Gorp, 201). These types of improvements to the methodology would strengthen the present study, and are recommended for future studies in this area.

Beyond improvements in methodology, I believe that additional framing studies should be carried out to determine the ways in which frames may evolve over time. Within the current context, it would be interesting to do a similar analysis on media excerpts from the beginning of the charter movement to see how representations of charters may have changed over time. This procedure would be similar to that used by Lindmakr and Karlsson (2012) in their study of ideational change related to charter schools in Sweden between 2003 and 2011. In addition, it would be helpful to understand the degree to which the frames present in the three newspapers studied are also present in media samples taken from other geographic regions. Such findings would help to contrast regional and national issues and the potential interplay between them.

Finally, it would be useful to understand more about framing effects with regard to the charter school issue. For example, it would be helpful to carry out studies that begin to establish the linkages between media framing and the actual perceptions and beliefs of individuals exposed to that framing. Sussing out the psychological and discursive mechanisms through which framing operates, and how these might vary based on individuals characteristics such as social class, socio-economic background, and other social characteristics would provide new insights into the cognitive processes associated with media exposure . There have been relatively few framing effects studies carried out which focus on educational policy issues (Brewer & Gross, 2005). Given the transformation currently taking place in public education, it would be valuable to know more about the role discursive strategies play in making assertions about school reform seem natural, unassailable and consistent with widespread popular consensus. Such knowledge is essential to our ability to fully consider the implications of the growth in charter schooling now taking place and to formulate new possibilities that will support the preparation of citizens better able to support and sustain our democratic aspirations.

References

Abdulkadiroglu, A., Angrist, J., Cohodes, S., Dynarski, S., Fullerton, J., & Kane, T. (2009). *Informing the debate: Comparing Boston's charter, pilot and traditional schools*. Boston: The Boston Foundation.

Altheide, D. L., & Schneider, C. J. (2012). *Qualitative media analysis* (Second Edition.). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Bagdikian, B. H. (2004). *The new media monopoly*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Betts, J. R., & Tang, Y. E. (2008). *Value-added and experimental studies of the effect of charter schools on student achievement*. University of Washington, Seattle, WA: National Charter School Research Project, Center on Reinventing Public Education.

Bhattarai, A. (2013). D.C.'s Hospitality High School moves to new home. *The Washington Post*, Pg. A18.

Blazer, C. (2010). Research comparing charter schools and traditional public schools. Literature Review. Research Services, Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Retrieved fromhttp://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/recordDetail?accno=ED536259

Board, E. (2013). Give charters their due. *The Washington Post*, EDITORIAL COPY; Pg. A22.

Booker, K., Sass, T., Gill, B., & Zimmer, R. (2008). Going Beyond Test Scores: Evaluating Charter School Impact on Educational Attainment in Chicago and Florida. Rand Education.

Botton, A. D. (2014). *The news: A user's manual*. New York: Pantheon.

Brewer, P. R., & Gross, K. (2005). Values, framing, and citizens' thoughts about policy issues: Effects on content and quantity. *Political Psychology*, *26*(6), 929–948.

Brown, E. (2012, September 10). Parents struggle with "wait-list shuffle" in D.C. schools. *The Washington Post*, p. A4.

Brown, E. (2013a, January 6). Expulsion rate higher for charter students. *The Washington Post*, p. A–SECTION; Pg. A01.

Brown, E. (2013b, January 6). Thousands attend D.C. charter school expo. *The Washington Post*, p. METRO; Pg. C06.

Brown, E. (2013c, January 18). 15 D.C. public schools to close. *The Washington Post*, p. A–SECTION; Pg. A01.

Brown, E. (2013d, February 11). Charters' growth raises questions. *The Washington Post*, p. A–SECTION; Pg. A01.

Brown, E. (2013e, February 27). Board clamps down on two charter schools. *The Washington Post*, p. METRO; Pg. B03.

Brown, E. (2013f, June 21). Group finds high rates of school suspensions. *The Washington Post*, p. METRO; Pg. B08.

Bulkley, K. (2005). Understanding the charter school concept in legislation: the cases of Arizona, Michigan and Georgia1. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *18*(4), 527–554.

Bushaw, W., & Lopez, S. (2013). The 45th annual PDK/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Twoard the Public Schools. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *95*(1), 9–25.

Carr, P. R. (2010). Re-thinking normative democracy and the political economy of education. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, *8*(1), 1–40.

Carr, S. (2013, June 16). Can school reform hurt communities? *The New York Times*, p. Section SR; Column 0; Sunday Review Desk; OPINION; Pg. 4.

Center for Research on Education Outcomes. (2013). *National Charter School Study 2013* (p. 95). Stanford University: Center for Research on Education Outcomes. Retrieved from https://credo.stanford.edu/documents/NCSS 2013 Final Draft.pdf

Center for Research on Educational Outcomes. (2009). *Multiple choice: Charter school performance in 16 states*. Stanford, CA. Retrieved from http://credo.stanford.edu

Chomsky, N., & Herman, E. S. (2011). *Manufacturing consent: The Political economy of the mass media*. New York: Pantheon.

D'Angelo, P., & Kuypers, J. A. (Eds.). (2009). *Doing news framing analysis: Empirical and theoretical perspectives*. New York: Routledge.

Dobbie, W., & Fryer, R. (2009). Are high quality schools enough to close the achievement gap? Evidence from a social experiment in Harlem. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.

Edelman, M. J. (1985). *The symbolic uses of politics*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Ellison, S. (2012). It's in the name: A synthetic inquiry of the Knowledge Is Power Program [KIPP]. *Educational Studies*, *48*(6), 550–575.

Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, *43*(4), 51–58.

Fabricant, M., & Fine, M. (2012). Charter schools and the corporate makeover of public education: What's at stake? New York: Teachers College Press.

Feinberg, W. (2008). The dialectic of parents rights and societal obligations. In W. Feinberg & Chris Lubienski (Eds.), *School choice policies and outcomes: empirical and philosophical perspectives* (pp. 219–236). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Friedman, M. (1955). *The role of government in education*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.

Gamson, W. (1989). News as framing. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *33*(2), 157–161.

Gamson, W. A., & Lasch, K. E. (1981). The political culture of social welfare policy. Retrieved from http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/handle/2027.42/51014

Gamson, W. A., & Modigliani, A. (1989). Media Discourse and public opinion on nuclear power: A constructionist approach. *American Journal of Sociology*, *95*(1), 1–37.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research. Chicago: Aldine Transaction.

Gleason, P., Clark, M., Tuttle, C., Dwoyer, E., & Silverberg, M. (2010). *The evaluation of charter school impacts.* Washington, DC: Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20104029/pdf/20104029.pdf

Goffman, E. (1974). Frame analysis: an essay on the organization of experience. New York: Harper & Row.

Goldstein, R. A. (2011). Imagining the frame: Media representations of teachers, their unions, NCLB, and education reform. *Educational Policy*, *25*(4), 543–576.

Gonan, Y., & Reporter, E. (2012, February 10). Officials vote to close 23 city schools. *New York Post*. Retrieved September 24, 2013, from http://nypost.com/2012/02/10/officials-vote-to-close-23-city-schools/

Hardy, D. (2012). Chester Upland's recovery chief scrutinized. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, PHILADELPHIA; P–com News Local; Pg. B01.

Heller, K. (2013, April 24). In Philly, the fast track to the cyber-school bottom. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, p. PHILADELPHIA; P–com News Local; Pg. B01.

Hernández, J. C., & Baker, A. (2013, May 17). Schools Chancellor to Strike Back at Candidates Critical of Mayor's Policies. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/18/nyregion/schools-chancellor-to-strike-back-at-candidates-critical-of-mayors-policies.html

Hurdle, J. (2013, March 8). Philadelphia Officials Vote to Close 23 Schools. *New York Times*. New York, N.Y. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/1315037225?accountid=9784

Jenkin, G. L., Signal, L., & Thomson, G. (2011). Framing obesity: the framing contest between industry and public health at the New Zealand inquiry into obesity. *Obesity Reviews: An Official Journal of the International Association for the Study of Obesity*, *12*(12), 1022–1030.

Knowledge is Power Program. (n.d.). About KIPP. *About KPP*. Retrieved November 11, 2013, from http://www.kipp.org/about-kipp

Lindmark, A., & Karlsson, M. (2012). Debating the Education Utopia : Ideational change in the Swedish debate about privatization of education between 2003 and 2011. Retrieved from http://hv.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2:534692

Lipman, P. (2011). *The new political economy of urban education neoliberalism, race, and the right to the city*. New York: Routledge. Retrieved from http://site.ebrary.com/id/10462530

Lippmann, W. (1922). *Public opinion*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co.

McDonald, L. (2013). Think tanks and the media: How the conservative movement gained entry into the education policy arena. *Educational Policy*, 0895904813492372. doi:10.1177/0895904813492372

Motoko, R. (2012a, September 13). Push to add charter schools hangs over strike. *The New York Times*, p. Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 22.

Motoko, R. (2012b, September 25). Teachers' unions wooing G.O.P., Too. *The New York Times*, p. Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1.

Motoko, R. (2012c, November 6). Georgia's voters will decide on future of charter schools. *The New York Times*, p. Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 16.

Motoko, R. (2012d, November 8). Charter schools win support in Georgia vote. *The New York Times*, p. Section P; Column 0; Politics; Pg. 15.

Motoko, R. (2012e, November 14). Enrollment in charter schools is increasing. *The New York Times*, p. Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 19.

Mulvey, J. D., Cooper, B. S., & Maloney, A. (2010). *Blurring the Lines: Charter, public, private and religious schools coming togethe*r. Charlotte, NC: IAP.

National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. (2013a). Charter school market share. *The Public Charter Schools Dashboard*. Retrieved September 23, 2013, from http://dashboard.publiccharters.org/dashboard/students/page/mkt/district/NY-10/year/2012

National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. (2013b). Schools by management organization. *The Public Charter Schools Dashboard*. Retrieved September 23, 2013, from http://dashboard.publiccharters.org/dashboard/schools/page/mgmt/year/2011

National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. (2013c). Total number of schools. *The Public Charter Schools Dashboard*. Retrieved September 23, 2013, from http://dashboard.publiccharters.org/dashboard/schools/page/overview/year/2013

National Center for Educational Statistics. (2012). Number and enrollment of public elementary and secondary schools, by school level, type, and charter and magnet status: Selected years, 1990-91 through 2010-11Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey, 1990-91 through 2010-11. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d12/tables/dt12_108.asp

New York City Charter School Center. (2012). *The state of the NYC charter school sector, 2012*. New York City: New Your City Charter School Center.

New York Times Editorial Board. (2013, February 2). More lessons about charter schools. *The New York Times*, p. Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; EDITORIAL; Pg. 22.

Nida, T. (2013, March 24). Why won't D.C. let charters move into closed schools? *The Washington Post*, p. EDITORIAL COPY; Pg. C04.

Nisbet M. (2009). Communicating climate change: Why frames matter for public engagement. *Environment Environment*, *51*(2), 12–25.

Nisbet, M. (2010). Knowledge into action: Framing the debates over climate change and poverty. In P. D'Angelo & J. A. Kuypers (Eds.), *Doing News Framing Analysis: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives* (1st ed.). Routledge.

Philadelphia Inquirer Editorial Board. (2013). Inquirer Editorial: Truth revealed about charters. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, EDITORIAL; P–com Nav Inquirer Opinion; Pg. A18.

Potter, J. (1996). Representing reality: Discourse, rhetoric and social construction. New York: SAGE.

Ravitch, D. (2011). *The death and life of the great American school system: How testing and choice are undermining educati*on. New York: Basic Books.

Reese, S. (2010). Finding frames in a web of culture. In *Doing news framing analysis: Empirical and theoretical perspectives* (1st ed.). New York: Routledge.

Shannon, P. (2011). *Reading wide awake: Politics, pedagogies, and possibilities*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Siegel-Hawley, G., & Frankenberg, E. (2013). A Segregating choice? An Overview of charter school policy, enrollment trends, and segregation. In E. Frankenberg & G. Orfield (Eds.), *Educational Delusions?: Why choice can deepen inequality and how to make schools fair*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Smith, M. L., Miller-Kahn, L., Heinecke, W., & Jarvis, P. (2004). *Political spectacle and the fate of American schools*. East Sussex, UK: Psychology Press.

Turque, B. (2012, August 22). D.C. charter schools chafe at 2nd-class status. *The Washington Post*, p. A–SECTION; Pg. A05.

Tuttle, C. C., The, B., Nichols-Barrer, I., Gill, B. P., & Gleason, P. (2010). *Student characteristics and achievement in 22 KIPP middle schools*. Washington, DC: Mathematica Policy Research.

Van Dijk, T. A. (1995). Discourse semantics and ideology. *Discourse & Society*, *6*(2), 243–289.

Van Gorp, B. (2009). Strategies to take subjectivity out of framing analysis. In P. D'Angelo & J. A. Kuypers (Eds.), *Doing news framing analysis: Empirical and theoretical perspectives*. New York: Routledge.

Viteritti, J. P., Walberg, H. J., & Wolf, P. J. (2005). School choice: How an abstract idea became a political reality. *Brookings Papers on Education Policy*, (8), 137–173. doi:10.2307/20062557

Wallace, Jean. (2013). Charters a hit with familes. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, EDITORIAL; P–com Nav Inquirer Opinion; Pg. A19.

Washington Post Editorial Board. (2013, May 24). Opening a door for charters. *The Washington Post*, p. EDITORIAL COPY; Pg. A18.

Wells, A. S., Slayton, J., & Scott, J. (2002). Defining democracy in the neoliberal age: Charter school reform and educational consumption. *American Educational Research Journal*, *39*(2), 337–361.

Wong, K. K., & Shen, F. X. (2002). Politics of state-led reform in education: Market competition and electoral dynamics. *Educational Policy*, *16*(1), 161–192. doi:10.1177/0895904802016001009

Ylimaki, R. M. (2010). Critical curriculum leadership: A framework for progressive education. New York: Routledge.

Zimmer, R., Blanc, S., Gill, B., & Christman, J. (2008). *Evaluating the performance of Philadelphia's charter schools*. Rand Education. Retrieved from http://www.rand.org/pubs/working_papers/2008/ RAND_WR550.pdf

Zimmer, R., Gill, B., Booker, K., Lavertu, S., Sass, T. R., & Witte, J. (2009). *Charter schools in eight states: Effects on achievement, attainment, integration, and competition*. Rand Education.

Author

Abe Feuerstein is Associate Professor of Education at Bucknell University. He publishes in the areas of educational politics, school governance, and school reform.

Critical Education