Educational Policy
Volume 24 Number 3
May 2010 534-558
© 2010 Corwin Press
10.1177/0895904809335109
http://epx.sagepub.com
hosted at
http://online.sagepub.com

Charter Schooling and Democratic Justice

Kathleen Knight Abowitz
Miami University
Robert Karaba
California State University, Chico

As the mixed achievements of charter schools come under more intense political inspection, the conceptual underpinnings of current charter school reform remain largely unexamined. This article focuses on one moral-political concept centrally related to school reform and policy, the concept of justice. Using examples from the state of Ohio, the authors sketch two contrary concepts of justice, tracing their logical trajectory to varied empirical consequences as these relate to charter schooling policy. They contrast these two theories of justice as “libertarian justice” and “democratic justice.” There is ample evidence to suggest that a libertarian sense of justice has pervasively shaped charter policies and minimal evidence to suggest the influence of a democratic sense of justice, based on principles of both recognition and redistribution. The full democratic potential of charter schooling reform cannot be achieved without a democratic conception of justice driving its policies and goals.

Keywords: *charter schooling; democracy; justice*

The national charter movement now boasts around 4,200 schools serving approximately 1.2 million students in 40 states and the District of Columbia. Charter reformers have promised greater educational achievement in exchange for decreased state oversight and bureaucracy. As the charter school reform movement recently reached double-digit anniversaries in many states, critics and skeptics increasingly demand evidence that these publicly funded schools are truly upholding their promises for reform. By 2004, as more schools were failing to meet No Child Left Behind’s (NCLB) Adequate Yearly Progress benchmark, charter conversions were a reality facing multiple districts around the nation. The well-publicized release in August 2004 of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) study analyzing National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data for charter schools made national headlines. “Compared to students in

regular public schools, charter school students had lower achievement both in grade 4 (six scale points lower in math, seven scale points lower in reading) and grade 8 (five points lower in math, two points lower in reading)," with all differences, except for eighth grade reading, reported as statistically significant (Nelson, Rosenberg, and Van Meter, 2004, p. ii). The immediate public response from a number of charter school supporters criticized the AFT's analysis and provided alternative evidence to support charter school reform (Hassel, 2005; Hill, 2005).

The AFT 2004 report captures the growing scrutiny being applied to the results of over a decade of charter school reform in a recessionary age of tightening state budgets. The outcomes that provide the fodder for this scrutiny remain decidedly mixed (Robelen, 2008), though charter schooling reform is still young. The potential of the charter school movement to innovate and form break-the-mold schools that will surpass traditional public schools on traditional measures such as NAEP assessments has not yet been reached (Zimmer & Buddin, 2006). Statistical gains on achievement data are elusive for many charter schools, and studies of charter schools report that the "break-the-mold" innovation promised by charter reformers has all too often yielded to traditional curriculum and pedagogy (Carpenter, 2005; Lubienski, 2008). Those schools most noted for their consistent records of success include those following national models such as the Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP) and Green Dot, whose educational outcomes in low-income neighborhoods have received much media attention. Although the movement has spawned some exceptionally innovative as well as successful schools (both brick and mortar and virtual alike), as a whole charter school policy has yielded erratic outcomes, including the exacerbation of the already troubling rates of racial and social class segregation that we find in traditional public schools (Frankenberg & Lee, 2003; Mickelson, Bottia, & Southworth, 2008; Zimmer & Buddin, 2006). Although charter schools enroll higher percentages of African Americans than do their traditional public school counterparts (Finnegan et al., 2004; Frankenberg & Lee, 2003), the data on the ability of the charter school movement to "close the achievement gap" between ethnic groups and social classes remain uncertain. After more than a decade of charter school reform, this movement has not yet securely delivered on its major promises of increased academic achievement. Supporters argue that a mere decade of results proves little and want more and richer data to measure the impact of charter schools; critics call for slowing down or ending the development of new charter schools in the 46 states that have charter school policy on the books.

Consider the case of Ohio. Ohio is among a handful of states that most aggressively pursued charter schools, expanding over time the number of agencies eligible to authorize new charter schools, resisting caps on numbers of new schools, and allowing a high number of educational management organizations to start for-profit charter schools in the state (Mead & Rotherham, 2007). Today, with a Democratic governor elected in 2006, the Ohio charter school network that was aggressively pursued by a conservative legislative and executive state branch since the early 1990s is now being scrutinized.

> This year [2007], the state's school report card gave more than half of Ohio's 328 charter schools a D or an F. . . . Attorney General Marc Dann is suing to close three failing charter schools and says he is investigating dozens of others. It is the first effort by any attorney general to close low-performing charter schools. (Dillon, 2007, p. 1)

More states will likely take up this intense scrutiny of charter schools as they are judged both in terms of their promises to educate those students who were falling through the gaps of public education and in terms of their usage of state tax dollars (Mason, 2007).

Yet this scrutiny is being applied to the symptoms of the implementations of charter school policy rather than the root causes; that is, the moral-political ideas that provide much of the movement's policy substance. There are many studies that examine the empirical evidence of charter school reform. As the mixed achievements of charter schools are coming under more intense political inspection, the conceptual underpinnings that provide the philosophical bases for current charter school reform remain largely unexamined. It seems crucial to understand the philosophical frameworks that guide charter school reform to better understand the ways of current formulations of charter school reform (see Wilson, 2008).

This article focuses on one moral-political concept that is centrally related to charter school reform and policy, the concept of *justice.* We sketch two contrary concepts of justice and trace their logical trajectory to varied empirical consequences as these relate to charter schooling policy. For the purposes of this article, we contrast these two theories of justice as "libertarian justice" and "democratic justice." We claim there is ample evidence within current charter school reform of the influence of the libertarian sense of justice. Yet there is little evidence of the influence of what we consider to be a more democratic sense of justice, which we here develop using the critical-pragmatist philosophy of Nancy Fraser (1999; Fraser &

Honneth, 2003). In this sense, justice in educational policy encompasses fairly distributed material resources, adequate educational recognition of cultural and human differences and ecological contexts, and equal preparation for participatory parity as adult citizens in a democratic society (Fraser & Honneth, 2003; Knight Abowitz, 2008; Schlosberg, 2003). Charter schooling policies, which have been predominantly shaped by conceptions of libertarian justice, will continue to yield erratic outcomes, particularly for disenfranchised families. The full democratic potential of charter schooling reforms cannot be achieved without a democratic conception of justice driving its policies and goals.[1] *Charter school reform is a transformative democratic idea without an equally powerful democratic theory of justice behind it*. Although some charter schools will continue to enable underserved students to achieve academically, these victories will not be available for all who enter public schools of choice until educational policy shaping these schools is coherently and uniformly based in a more democratic notion of educational justice.

I.

> Reforms that appear to be affirmative in the abstract can have transformative effects in some contexts, provided they are radically and consistently pursued. (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 78)

For the past decades, a libertarian idea of educational justice has been at the heart of most charter school legislation and policy, pushed through by neoliberal political movements in state and federal policy-making bodies (Wells, 2002). Yet progressive charter school advocates, clinging to the grassroots and local community possibilities in the charter school vision, hold onto more egalitarian notions of justice—hoping that charter school laws as well as other forms of public choice policies might be (re)formulated so that educational publics of all types might develop schools that would ensure high-quality education and democratic participatory parity for their children as future citizens (Knight Abowitz, 2001; Rofes & Stulberg, 2004; Smith, 2001). Although the charter school movement is a broad, bipartisan, and diverse ideological movement, more neoliberal and conservative than progressive policy makers and legislators have influenced the actual construction of charter school laws and policies. Especially in states such as Ohio, Arizona, and Michigan, more democratic visions of educational justice have not strongly shaped charter school legislation and

policy at the state level; those advocating a free-market, neoliberal notion of educational justice have been most active and organized in state legislatures such as these (Wells, 2002). Neoliberal policy makers and politicians have been engaged in "borrowing—or hijacking, as its opponents describe the process—the aims of progressive educational reform" (Weiner, 2007, p. 276). (Although in this article the term *neoliberal* refers to a political ideology and the term *libertarian* refers to a philosophical tradition, we use both terms in this article. We consider neoliberalism to be the closest contemporary political expression of libertarian philosophy.)

Because neoliberal political agendas and the libertarian view of justice has provided the most prominent ethical vision driving most educational reform during the past several decades, its influence on the charter school movement is unsurprising but significant. The charter school movement as a whole cannot live up to its own democratic ideals as professed by *all* charter school advocates as long as libertarian notions of educational justice predominantly define the parameters and goals of charter school policy. But to move charter school laws toward progressive ends, we must first understand libertarian justice on its own terms, as an inadequate ethical vision for educational policy making in our present historical moment.

Libertarian justice represents the moral cornerstone of the neoliberal educational policy foundations that were beginning to be laid three decades ago in U.S. political life. Neoliberalism is the political-economic ideology that gave rise to the first arguments for vouchers in the early 1970s and to educational reform documents such as *A Nation at Risk* in 1983. "Neoliberalism argues that free markets, unfettered by government regulation, will solve social, economic, and political problems and that government regulation exacerbates or even causes problems, such as schools' failure to educate some children" (Weiner, 2007, p. 275). Although the rise of neoliberalism in educational policy making has been carefully analyzed (Hursch, 2007), its moral conceptions related to justice have not been so thoroughly examined in educational scholarship. As a political-economic ideology, neoliberalism's moral foundations are lodged in the classical liberal philosophy that we now call libertarianism, whose principal advocates have been the economist Milton Friedman (1962) and the philosophers Friedrich Hayek (1960) and Robert Nozick (1974).

For libertarians, market models are not simply more efficient; they are the social design most likely to produce a free life for individual human beings. Friedman, the economist who remains posthumously one of the leading libertarian spokespersons in educational policy circles, argued that the market is a more efficient and less coercive distributor of education than

is the government, whose "monopoly" on schooling is demonized in libertarian rhetoric. In the discussion of "Why School Choice" from the Milton and Rose D. Friedman Foundation (n.d.) Web site, this belief is articulated:

> In 1955, a forward-thinking Milton Friedman foresaw the result of this monopoly and encouraged a return to liberty through the introduction of school choice. He argued that it would be much better and more equitable if the government would "give each child, through his parents, a specified sum [voucher] to be used solely in paying for his general education.

Because classical liberalism is about retaining the rights of the individual and the private sphere against governmental intrusion and tyranny, Friedman's economic-cum-political philosophy of libertarianism holds true to that tradition.[2] When governments run schools, families are coerced, whether intentionally or not, to select government-run schools, primarily because choosing *not* to attend those schools has such high costs (private school tuition), particularly for those families that might live in poor neighborhoods or regions. It is these grounds—that poor families are most likely to be coerced into attending public schools no matter what their quality—from which Friedman followers argue that vouchers are *more equitable*, providing more educational opportunities for families to choose and pursue. It thus follows that if the government is to solve the problem of distributing the public good of education in the most moral, least coercive, and most efficient means, it must borrow from market models. Less coercion for libertarians means a more equitable society, on the belief that each family best knows and will vigorously pursue its own educational interests on behalf of its children. Individual freedom is the best means for promoting justice, in libertarian logic, because justice is served by the state safeguarding the rights of families to their "property," as it were; their children and their educational tax dollars should be left in their sole control.

Market models of libertarian justice have been energetically pursued through educational policy, law, and enterprise in the past 30 years and certainly in the past decade that has witnessed the birth and expansion of the charter school movement. As the history of charter schooling shows, the movement has always been an ideologically big tent, yet when it came down to translating charter dreams into law, libertarian ethical and political ideals were most influential, shaping potentially egalitarian charter reform into a more libertarian form. Wells (2002) described the diverse ideological and political origins of charter schooling in the United States: (a) systemic

reform and the autonomy-for-accountability framework that grew out of the Clinton administration and flourished under the Republican revolution in the 1990s and into NCLB; (b) the market metaphor for school reform, best characterized by Chubb and Moe's (1990) argument and propelled by conservative groups and think tanks that flourished in the dominant Republican politics of the era; and (c) the decentralization argument, popular to both laissez-faire libertarian and some conservative voters as well as to progressive groups that believe that more community control over schooling can empower historically disenfranchised groups and neighborhoods. The themes of decentralization and market-based reform structure of charter schooling were especially touted by neoliberal policy advocates, and when charter school movements were translated into law in the wake of the Republican Revolution of 1994, these were the people who were best positioned to shape charter school policy at the state level. Wells noted that "advocates of this view are the most active and organized at the political and policy-making level in terms of influencing the scope of charter school legislation" (p. 9). In his description of the evolution of the school choice movement, Henig (2008) noted how in the wake of widespread national defeat of voucher initiatives in the late 1980s, conservative and neoliberal groups "recognized [that] supporting charters could serve several tactical ends," including "a campaign platform issue in line with market ideas but more likely to gain than to lose votes" (p. 47).

In shaping charter school policies, conservative and neoliberal groups have aimed to deregulate schooling (e.g., fight limits to charter granting and provide autonomy for charter schools, waivers from state and district laws, exemptions from collective bargaining, and greater legal and fiscal autonomy for charter schools). Charter schools are supposedly guaranteed full per-pupil funding, but most states provide little if any support beyond those amounts, and some states fail to even meet these minimum standards (Fordham Institute, 2005).[3] The effect of this new "free market" in education has favored the more powerful over the least powerful communities. As a Fordham Institute report notes,

> Those seeking more local and/or community control of schools have found it in charter school reform but at a price to those who lack the local resources to supplement the meager public funding. In other words, the devolution aspect of charter school reform works better for some than others. It works very well for those with the private wealth to shape the laissez-faire policy to their advantage. (Wells, 2002, p. 11)

In other words, most charter school policies have used neoliberal and conservative arguments for "local control" and "deregulation" to create a laissez-faire system of charter schools that rewards those with wealth and means to raise capital but does little to redistribute capital to enable poorer communities or groups to create schools in their own educational interests or designs. Providing funding and resources associated with starting a school, including the social, political, and professional capital it takes to run a successful school, has not consistently been a priority in states eager to charter more and more schools.[4] As school reformers Nancy and Ted Sizer (2006) remarked,

> Massachusetts' charter schools—places that were to break the mold and chart new directions, no less—apparently were to be designed in persuasive detail by spontaneous combustion, with hardly any support from the state. That some of us designing Parker had substantial experience made our task easier—though never easy—but we were the exception. Only the big for-profit companies have the financial horsepower to create fresh material. Schools that have sprung from the grassroots public interest of a community have had to make do with very little to nothing. (p. 174)

Although entrepreneurial nonprofit school organizations such as KIPP have done well in building a national school model serving families in poorer urban communities, it is not often through grassroots efforts that community groups are empowered to use charter school laws to innovatively create schools in their own ideological or cultural vision. New charters often must turn to the private sector for capital, which favors the chances of middle-class charter school entrepreneurs who will more likely have access to such financial resources. In the case of KIPP, its founders tapped into the wealth and largesse of the private sector—the cofounders of Gap, Inc.—to sustain and build their educational network. To provide libertarian educational justice, then, a neoliberal state must simply "open" the educational market for new schools and loosen traditional schools' "monopoly" on education. The market will do the rest, though as we argue here the market is not a neutral arbiter of opportunity. As KIPP and multiple other examples show, the educational "free" market strongly favors those with access to the "financial horsepower" to enable sustainable schools and models to flourish.

As the very idea of libertarian justice is rendered at the level of the individual or, in the case of school choice, at the level of the family unit that chooses schools, libertarian justice is complete when the state maximizes

school options to be chosen by private citizens. Eradicating limits on new charter schools and reducing restrictions and accountability checks on existing charters enable greater libertarian justice to be pursued. The libertarian emphasis on individual freedom is the path to educational justice under this view, but it is a view that is bereft of any notion of "the social" or the greater general welfare that was part of the concern of utilitarian and egalitarian thinking that arose in the 19th and 20th centuries in liberal democratic societies. Libertarian or laissez-faire liberalism upholds that the best way to maximize public goods such as educational attainment is to provide free spaces for individuals to pursue those goods according to their private ends and means. Libertarian justice thus

> paradoxically abandons concern and planning for the social good in the faith that individual freedom is the best means of achieving the greatest good. Neglecting public goods, although seemingly callous, is necessary because concern for the social good is contradictory to individual freedom, and individual freedom is what maximizes the greatest good. (Karaba, 2007, pp. 9-10)

Indeed, the "public goods" recognized by neoliberal thinking in educational policy are those of individual or family freedoms to pursue their educational visions.

The moral foundations of libertarian thinking in charter schooling policy will continue to prevent charter schools from reaching their potential as a means by which poor and marginalized families might seek educational attainment. Charter school policies shaped by a libertarian sense of justice consider freedom in only its negative aspects. The moral foundations of libertarian thinking are summed up in the idea of "negative freedom," wherein freedom is achieved in the absence of coercion in the choosing of the best educational option for one's child. School choice policies remove government coercion from the selection of a family's (private) educational choice, which is their ultimate purpose.

The moral foundations of libertarian thinking in charter schooling policy cannot provide for the distribution of "positive liberty," that affirmative ability to actively take advantage of one's own agency in pursuing life goals and ambitions. For all children, both poor and rich alike, to be able to cultivate participatory parity, school choice policy must somehow enable poorer families and neighborhoods to develop positive liberty—the forms of agency to enact their own educational, political, and moral visions—as school choosers for their children as future citizens. School choice policies

resting on libertarian moral foundations fail in this regard because inherent in the libertarian way of thinking is the idea that inequality is not a problem that the state either can or should attempt to eradicate. The elimination, whole or partial, of unequal schooling opportunities through egalitarian schooling policies is neither possible nor desired for libertarians such as Hayek, who believe that material and social inequality is necessary for material and social progress.

> This is because, for Hayek, material progress comes from a leisured class that has the time, capital, and self- interested motivation to create for more material reward. In time, "new things will become available to the greater part of the people *only* because for some time they have been the luxuries of the few" (Hayek, 1960, p. 43, emphasis in original). By emphasizing the conditional term *only*, Hayek implies material inequality is a necessary condition for progress, without it, no progress will occur. Hayek . . . sees innovation and progress as requiring material inequality. (Karaba, 2007, p. 21)

Libertarian philosophy, therefore, sees material inequality as part of a larger necessary evil, so to speak, of a free, capitalistic society. Accordingly, in U.S. political life, neoliberals believe in creating the optimal conditions for individual choice, which should yield the best outcomes for all who can pursue their educational visions uncoerced by government "monopolies." Neoliberal conceptions of educational justice are not interested in egalitarian outcomes. This is not to say that conservative and neoliberal school choice advocates are insincere when they cite greater educational equity as a reason to support choice policies. It is to point out, however, the narrow and individualist framing of the conception of equity used by these advocates and the overall emphasis on liberty over equality as a moral and political aim of school choice. Hayek noted that too much equality would be devastating for capitalist "progress." So libertarian beliefs in the somewhat natural and even desirable aspects of inequality limit the degree to which neoliberal educational policies such as charter school laws are designed to fully address the need for educational institutions to actively promote positive liberty for students or their families. This is particularly true for those whose identity and status (racial, ethnic, national, etc.) undermine their quest for educational, political, and moral agency from the outset.

Neoliberal educational politics, as influenced by libertarian conceptions of justice, cannot properly account for intersubjective and shared life in a liberal democratic state set in larger, interlocking systems of linked nation-states, regions, and ecosystems. Because libertarian justice rests on the

individual pursuit of freedom from coercion, it provides no educational provisions for positive freedom and the ability of families and students to pursue individual and shared goods in relation to local, regional, national, transnational, and ecological contexts. The abilities to understand, deliberate, and pursue individual and collective solutions in these multiple spheres are critical, but providing for educational institutions that will develop these abilities should not be exclusively the domain of the 19th-century model of nationalist common schooling models. In this vein, public school choice policies, pursued through an alterative philosophical grounding to libertarian philosophies and neoliberal political ideologies, are indeed required. Charter school policies can be transformative of contemporary conditions of injustice only if they are, as Fraser reminded us, "radically and transformatively pursued" (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 78). Libertarian moral theory and neoliberal politics fail to provide these kinds of policies (see Fife, 2008).

What would charter school reform look like if we started with a more robustly democratic conception of justice, one that embraced the goals of equality and liberty in equal measure? In the next section, we summarize and apply Fraser's (1999; Fraser & Honneth, 2003) theory as an alternative sense of justice rather than the assumed libertarian conception on which charter school policies have relied. Fraser's model of democratic justice is one that is more capable of generating the kinds of egalitarian consequences that should be paramount goals in schooling in, and for, a democratic state.

II.

> Only by looking to integrative approaches that unite redistribution and recognition can we meet the requirements of justice for all. (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 94)

As an alternative to the pervasive notion of libertarian justice in the policies and politics of charter schooling, we here explore a democratic conception of justice, based in the goal of participatory parity for all adult citizens, pursued through schooling policies guided by the integrated principles of redistribution and recognition. A more robust conception of justice is needed to guide not just charter school reform but all educational policy today, as we live in a historical moment characterized by extreme material human inequality, transnational interdependence and migration, and growing ecological

threat. Domestic educational injustices include, in education, the existence of significant differentials in educational resources; the existence of some forms of education that promote oppression, misrepresentation, nonrepresentation, and discriminatory practices against non-White and poor students and their families; and the existence of educational forms that both ignore our ecological crisis and actively promote, through curriculum, a disregard for our obligations to current and future citizens of the planet. Charter schools are one important policy element that can be redesigned and used to provide substantive educational justice. This reconstruction of charter school law requires both a more substantially democratic theory of educational justice and a more powerful set of political strategies working on its realization. Charter schools are uniquely positioned to serve this complex view of educational justice, *if* these schools are collaboratively designed with citizens and monitored and evaluated by state authorities using guidelines developed from its integrated principles.

Fraser's work conjoins two distinct conceptual principles within the philosophical and social theory traditions related to justice: neo-Marxist arguments for economic (material) *redistribution* and poststructural, critical, and feminist arguments for the ethical (intersubjective) *recognition* of difference in public life. Fraser described the importance of both principles for the construction of democratic life. Both principles revolve around a normative core of participatory parity, a goal that works toward full inclusion and participation of all citizens. These principles have been "cast as mutually antithetical in current political debates" (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 11). With the two principles positioned as mutually exclusive, the politics and discourse of difference are marginalizing the politics and discourse of redistribution, as charter school policies and laws demonstrate.

Using a democratic conception of justice according to Fraser's theory, educational policies and schools must adhere to the condition of minimal recognition for individual families and students. Respect is equated with the recognition that families and communities should receive in the educational process, including curriculum and school structures that recognize the diversity of national origin, home language, social class, ability, and cultural orientations to education. This principle of recognition would also demand that schools respect the needs of future generations of citizens with regard to basic environmental needs for clean air, water, and soils. Charter schooling policies based in this principle would both nurture and hold schools accountable for providing curricula and structures that provided recognition of the multiple cultural traditions and identities constituting the U.S. and global landscapes. Charter schooling policies based in this

intergenerationally related principle also require forms of curriculum and structures that demonstrate competency for environmental stewardship, recognizing that the future participatory parity of citizens demands that they understand and can deliberate on the wise use of natural resources.

To be considered just, educational policy must also be guided by the second principle of justice: redistribution. The principled redistribution of increasingly unequal wealth and income is required in a society governed by democratic ideals so as to ensure that the ideals of meritocracy through equal educational opportunity can be realized in state-supported schools that still too often shy away from meaningful redistribution of resources (Wells, Scott, Lopez, & Holme, 2005). Charter school policies constructed with a libertarian notion of justice have largely ignored the importance of the ways in which material inequalities limit the "free market" of the charter school landscape. In many states, only those charter school entrepreneurs who can tap into the resources of powerful donors or investors can start charter schools, thus severely curtailing the ways that local neighborhood and grassroots community groups in economically depressed urban spaces can take advantage of the egalitarian promises of charter school reformers (Wells et al., 2005). Charter school policies structured through the lens of libertarian justice rhetorically gesture at equity as a general goal, but without a more principled approach to both the material and the intersubjective sources of inequality and injustice in educational settings, charter school policies will fall short of egalitarian goals.

The (re)distribution of material goods remains a cornerstone of many theories of justice. Justice theorists, particularly in the dominant social-contract egalitarian tradition, have "almost exclusively" regarded justice as "a question of equity in the distribution of social goods" (Schlosberg, 2003, p. 79) and in particular material resources. Distributive justice uses equality as a primary principle to evaluate how well a particular student fares in regard to the economic resources allocated to her or his formal education, attempting to find a definition of educational adequacy that educational policies should consider as a bottom line for redistributing educational tax dollars in ways that promote justice for all children. Public schools themselves represent the principle of distributive justice, wherein the state engages in forms of redistribution of educational tax dollars to educate all students.

Yet in the modern neoliberal era of educational policy making, redistributive notions of educational justice, which were powerful under the social welfare model of democratic governance, have been marginalized or eclipsed by policies that (in theory) allow for individual or familial choice. Libertarian ethics and neoliberal ideologies offer an incomplete vision of

educational justice, insofar as they offer no guiding principles for distributing resources or opportunities of schooling in a society characterized by growing rates of material inequality. “The demise of communism, the surge of free-market ideology, the rise of ‘identity politics’ in both its fundamentalist and progressive forms—all these developments have conspired to decenter, if not extinguish, claims for egalitarian redistribution” (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 8).

Again, Ohio is a case in point. Over an 11-year period beginning in 1991, Ohio’s Supreme Court ruled three times that the state’s property tax–based funding formula for public schools was unconstitutional and harmful to children in poor school districts, yet a change in that basic formula has yet to come from the legislature (Hunter, 2003; Rowland, 2009).[5] Support for charter school development as well as for the expansion of a statewide school voucher program, however, surged throughout this period. A new voucher program called EdChoice was launched in 2006-2007 and allows students who live in school districts designated as failing by the state to apply for scholarships to fund their attendance at participating private schools (Ohio Department of Education, 2008).[6] Choice, in neoliberal logic, allows for equity through market means; different kinds of families are free to choose different kinds of institutions that reflect their beliefs. Fraser noted this same pattern; she saw the policy-making shift from redistribution to recognition occurring

> despite (or because of) an acceleration of economic globalization. Thus, status conflicts have achieved paradigmatic status at precisely the moment when an aggressively expanding neoliberal capitalism is radically exacerbating economic inequality. In this context, they are serving less to supplement, complicate, and enrich redistribution struggles than to marginalize, eclipse, and displace them. I shall call this *the problem of displacement.* (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 92)

The influence of neoliberalism in educational policy-making bodies has weakened the influence of the principle of redistribution as an important mechanism for educational justice; choice policies such as charter schools represent the opportunity for families to pursue the kinds of schools that respect their educational, cultural, or ideological visions.

Instead of redistribution, policy makers have seen recognition through educational choice as a more viable principle for school reform. Schooling policy in Ohio and other states has heavily focused on policies that arguably provide weak forms of recognition for the diverse educational visions

of different kinds of families. This weak recognition entails, essentially, your right to exit the traditional public school if your family's culture seems to be a source of disrespect and discrimination for your child at school (if indeed a suitable option does exist and if you have the means to follow through on your choice in terms of transportation services, money for tuition, etc.). Yet recognition and respect, in the pursuit of educational justice, must go far beyond market models that provide only negative liberties of choice for those families already empowered to exercise such options. The principle of recognition focuses on injustices that are rooted in cultural nonrecognition, domination, and disrespect, suffered by status groups identified by intersections of race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and, increasingly, nationality in an increasingly transnational world with porous nation-state borders. The principle of recognition could also seek to redress the forms of ecological disregard that current generations are inflicting on present and future populations. Educational justice requires forms of schooling that enable these forms of misrecognition and disrespect to be remedied, but our dualistic thinking regarding distribution *or* recognition, as seen in action through school choice policies in the state of Ohio and elsewhere, will not remedy these or other forms of injustice now facing our society. For educational policies to remedy injustices, they must concurrently attack both dimensions: the objective as well as the intersubjective conditions. To force a false choice *between* redistribution of resources *and* recognition of cultural differences and ecological realities is what Fraser called the "false antithesis" that plagues justice theorizing (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 11). Without adequate redistribution of resources to help communities realize a variety of charter school models that might meet their needs, the token recognition offered by charter school policies in many states is without substance (Wells et al., 2005).

Consider an example illustrating the problems with this false antithesis. A young girl growing up in the Cincinnati neighborhood Over-the-Rhine faces a number of challenges in her environment: tense race relations, poverty, and adverse environmental conditions, such as poor air quality and lack of green spaces. She is asthmatic, of Central American descent, and poor; her parents work long hours in low-wage, manual work. Educational policies designed to provide an education for this girl must address both her material and her intersubjective conditions to help her achieve participatory parity as an adult in her society. Her material or objective conditions relate to her poverty and the poor respiratory health she suffers as a result of growing up in an urban area with poor air quality. Her intersubjective conditions are connected to her objective ones; the lower status she suffers as

a result of her ethnic and social class identities is connected to her material conditions in a context of poverty, urban decay, and environmental blight seen in neighborhoods such as Over-the-Rhine. Educational policies must be designed, in cooperation with other social welfare policies, to remedy *both* the objective conditions of this girl's poverty and health problems and the intersubjective conditions related to her status as a poor Hispanic American. Redistributing educational resources for students like this girl is required for such children to receive participatory parity; without excellent teachers and a responsive, well-equipped school with high expectations, this girl will not realize her potential as a citizen who fully participates in democratic life. Redistributing resources for full health—for clean air on her playgrounds and for quality health care—is also required for the future participatory parity of this child. Furthermore, recognizing this child's unique cultural and social location is necessary; the school this child attends must see her cultural identity and allow its expression, seeing it neither as her central essence nor as a negative challenge to be overcome. Her identity as a young woman descended from Central American immigrants and with currently vital links to Central American cultural forms should not be erased but seen as part of her cultural story and one that documents the positive attributes of the mosaic-like nature of our current democracy. Recognition in curriculum and school infrastructure must be provided, as well, to the links that human society has with the ecosystems and natural resources on which current and future human life depends.

What kind of school might serve this girl best? A local elementary school run by the state of Ohio and the local school district might do the job quite nicely if this school provided the kinds of material resources (high-quality teachers, books, curricula, facilities, health care resources) and intersubjective conditions (cultural recognition and ecological respect) that are required. In a local school system that is small and a vital center of the community, this girl might also achieve a growing sense of membership in public life. Although such school systems exist in the United States, they are not the national norm, nor are they typical in the state of Ohio. State schools controlled by legislators who are typically conservative or neoliberal in their political orientation are primarily interested in state schools that heavily promote national interests in the form of nationalist history and patriotic rituals; they are chiefly interested in promoting educational efficiency in the form of large school systems that foster individual participation in the market economy but largely fail to promote a sense of public life for families and students; they are interested in an assimilationist notion of American identity rather than a culturally pluralistic one. Finally, they are

presently disinterested, as was previously pointed out, in policies that significantly redistribute educational and health care monies away from wealthier families and into the hands of poorer families and neighborhoods. Thus, young people in neighborhoods such as Over-the-Rhine in Cincinnati are not likely to find the kinds of local, state-run neighborhood public schools that might provide the conditions for educational policies and structures that ensure participatory parity for them as future adults. What young people in Over-the-Rhine are likely to find, however, are conditions that face a number of poor and non-White families in the United States: segregation and marginalization.

> Cincinnati is the ninth most segregated city in the United States, with Over-the-Rhine, about 77 percent black, being its poorest neighborhood. This extreme social and spatial isolation exacerbates the effects of poverty, making it difficult to sustain neighborhood institutions and social organizations. (Dutton, 2001)

In such conditions, local schools are labeled failing, and in response neoliberal policy makers design policies that ship out any viable students in these neighborhoods to private schools through expanding voucher programs such as EdChoice in Ohio. Such “solutions” will continue to marginalize families in Over-the-Rhine and other regions hard hit by neoliberal governance combined with racial, ethnic, and social class segregation.

Broadly speaking, the state’s role in achieving educational justice is to ensure that schools provide recognition and redistribution to diverse families and students through providing a variety of educational structures and opportunities, including but not limited to traditional state-run neighborhood and district school systems. The charter school movement is a promising democratic reform that can help provide this requisite variety, but the movement cannot guarantee justice to disenfranchised groups without a more complex and egalitarian philosophical basis for its policies. Public choice movements such as charters, when based in the principles of recognition and redistribution, not only can provide more egalitarian educational outcomes but also can help interject more vital educational public movements. The egalitarian goal of empowering students, teachers, and families through more flexibility and autonomy is not simply good for student “achievement,” narrowly defined; it is good for the larger achievement of participatory parity of present and future students and their families. Charter schooling based in a robust conception of democratic justice enables students and their families to become citizens who can and do participate in public spaces and deliberations around their educational futures.

III.

> When we consider institutional questions, theory can help to clarify the range of policies and programs that are compatible with the requirements of justice; weighing the choices within that range, in contrast, is a matter for citizen deliberation. (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 72)

The aim of this article has been to demonstrate the importance of philosophical foundations; the prominence of a libertarian conception of justice in much charter school law and policy has, we argue, provided an inadequate basis for this reform movement. Although both left- and right-wing champions of charter schooling have promised that these schools would bring equitable outcomes, the strength of the libertarian notion of justice has structured policies and laws that throw open educational markets without solving deeper and intertwined problems of educational injustice. Thus, the aim of this article has been to show how the philosophical foundations and assumptions that guide policy are more important that the public rhetoric used to promote the particular policy.

Yet this aim should not be misunderstood as an inflated claim for the importance of philosophy. Having a robust conception of democratic justice is necessary but not sufficient to achieve the ultimate educational goal of participatory parity of future and current citizens. A democratic and deliberative institutional sociopolitical structure is equally important. The general philosophical principles of democratic justice can provide the necessary conceptual understanding of the proper moral and political aims of charter school reform, but the specific and localized details, programs, and policies that help to realize these aims must be deliberated by citizens and legislators. Democratic justice requires more than the intertwined principles of recognition and redistribution, then; it requires public engagement beyond the traditional state-centered forms of democratic governance.

Some charter school advocates have touted the value of the educational free market. Charter school reform rationale often includes the libertarian sense that when the state government no longer coerces families to attend traditional public schools—when families have a range of charter school choices—equitable outcomes will be achieved. As this article has demonstrated, this logic is flawed yet contains an element of truth. An array of institutions *is* needed to match the complex needs and identities of today's students and families; an alternative to state-run traditional public schools is needed to achieve both recognition and redistributive goals of educational justice. The goal of participatory parity is not achieved through a

purely "free"-market approach to charter school reform, but neither is a traditional, state-centered educational regime desirable as the most promising way to invite public participation in schooling processes and deliberations. Unlike the "free"-market model of charter schooling as espoused by neoliberal politicians and thinkers, ensuring participatory parity through principles of redistribution and recognition requires a role for the state in educational governance and accountability, yet parity of participation is best achieved through state education policies that promote the formation of educational publics to pursue and ensure educational justice at the levels of the child and the school. As constructed from the pragmatist tradition, educational justice theory requires a jettisoning of the rigid forms of the liberal democratic public–private binary that for many seems to force a choice between no state and omnipotent markets or a powerful state with no flexibility or local differentiation available. As Smith (2004) noted,

> failure to recognize the multifarious vertical and horizontal ways that power operates across the public/private binary poses the potentially negative consequence for the antichoice Left that it will overlook the possibility that the market might serve as a mechanism for achieving democratic ends such as equality and community. . . . The question then becomes, how can market allocation be governed democratically, and with democratic outcomes? (pp. 234-235)

One answer to Smith's important query is to turn to models that feature partnerships and collaborations between state educational authorities and civil society institutions. The multiple "publics" of our diverse society can, in Fraser's words, become "strong publics"—spaces between government and civil society that operate as quasi direct sites of democracy. Rather than thinking of charters according to the libertarian notion of (privatized) markets, a democratic sense of justice requires that charter reform have a substantial footing in, and connection with, public life. This translates into chartering groups empowered through recognition and redistribution practices to operate schools accountable to larger publics, including state governments (Knight Abowitz, 2000, 2001).

How might governments, working as partners with charter school operators, enable schools to be both high-quality institutions and designed to be highly responsive to the voices and needs of the educational publics they serve?

> We have learned that charter school reform is a laissez-faire policy that allows people greater freedom but provides them with virtually no support. . . .

> Furthermore, without additional resources targeted toward the poorest communities, charter school operators have little power to overcome existing inequalities. (Wells, 1998, p. 305)

Since Wells wrote those words in 1998, charter school support has improved to some extent; most obvious is the existence of charter development centers in some states. These centers are typically nonprofit ventures or state-supported organizations that offer assistance to start-up charter operators.[7] Although such centers are a step in the right direction, these organizations are mainly aimed at giving technical assistance—how to author a charter document, how to financially manage a school, how to meet state standards—for the processes of application and establishment to those who already have the appropriate cultural and material capital. What is needed is more state support, both financial *and* for the development of local educational publics' voices. Can state agencies provide support (both materially and intellectually) without overbearing bureaucratic regulation? Can state agencies give voice to local educational publics while maintaining the needs of the wider public?

A democratic conception of justice is realized through political engagement among citizens. There is surely a role for experts (researchers, scholars, consultants) to guide citizen groups as they strategize ways and means to execute their particular educational visions through charter schools. Yet it is rare that experts alone can construct schools where justice is realized for all children. This is the central lesson, for example, as we retrospectively view the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) decision and the subsequent desegregation efforts that followed. As Rogers and Oakes (2005) demonstrated, the educational reforms generated by *Brown* were largely about technical dissemination of information rather than transformative of the ideologies and assumptions about race that so firmly kept racial hierarchies in place. Drawing from Dewey's pragmatist philosophy, Rogers and Oakes argued that it is social movements and citizen participation and pressure that push the types of transformation necessary among educators and the larger society to achieve egalitarian educational outcomes.

> Dewey's work argues that citizens engaged in public social inquiry will better connect forms of educational inequality to their social, cultural, and political contexts and account for the ideologies of privilege that sustain those inequalities. Better, more progressive policies can result, in Dewey's view, only from the full "flowering human capacities" and the power of participatory politics. Dewey does not dismiss expert knowledge entirely.

> Rather, he seeks to forge close relationships between experts and common citizens so that each can inform the other in the process of inquiry. Such inquiry, he argues, would create new and useful systems of knowledge accessible to all. And that is where the promise to complete the project of American democracy rests. (p. 2181)

Although philosophy can help to clarify the moral and political conceptions of justice that schools must help to realize, diverse citizens must deliberate the meanings of these principles and be empowered by government to help enact them. Charter schools are one way to bring about schools that advance the aim of justice, but participatory politics are necessary to bring about its specifics in local communities.

Notes

1. Two caveats are necessary before moving forward to defend this claim. The first concerns the scope of this argument. In saying that charter school reform fails to achieve its democratic promise because of the "root cause" of the moral-political concept of justice belies the complexity of the issue. How people make sense of justice is cultural, historical, and philosophical. This article merely outlines one philosophical component. Within a consistent philosophical framework, concepts, such as the moral-political notion of justice, coherently fit with other metaphysical, epistemological, and moral-political notions and assumptions. In other words, it is important to note that the authors consider the concept of "justice" as residing within an overall philosophy or worldview. Like Carnap's boat, we will not be dismantling all the planks at once but rather narrowing the focus to one concept while realizing its interconnectedness within other beliefs and assumptions that make up a worldview. The second caveat concerns the broad brush strokes we use to consider conceptions of justice. The two competing concepts of justice that we sketch are libertarian and democratic conceptions. We are sure that worldviews are complex and that not every individual within these "camps" agrees with all the concepts and how they are entwined. However, by explicitly expressing characterizations of each of these notions of justice we can analyze them by tracing their respective logical trajectories that lead to contrary empirical results.

2. "Classical" liberalism should not be confused with more contemporary forms of the liberal tradition that have influenced political thinking in the past century. Most notably, John Rawls's (1993) political liberalism is distinct from classical formations but is not discussed in this article.

3. The Fordham Institute, a Dayton-based think tank supportive of charter school initiatives, has recently documented that, across 16 charter school states and the District of Columbia, "charter schools receive about 22 percent less in per-pupil public funding, or $1,800, than the district schools that surround them" (Fordham Institute, 2005).

4. Such supports for charter schooling do not necessarily require merely large amounts of cash derived from state tax dollars; in fact, states might better place emphasis on models, networks, and educational forums that can be tailored to fit the needs of local charters rather than merely redistributing tax money. And civil society has much to contribute as well in

partnership with the state. For example, there are now growing numbers of various nonprofit and philanthropic networks, such as EdVision and the National Council of La Raza, now supporting local charter schools, enabling communities to partner with larger entities that can provide help with areas such as curriculum, teaching, fund-raising, and management (see Hassel, 2006, pp. 156-160).

5. This is not to suggest that the state failed to respond to the pressures that came from the *DeRolph* case rulings from 1997 to 2001. As one summary of Ohio's recent school funding battles describes, headway came in the form of funding for school facilities but not in the form of change in school funding formulas:

> Looking back on eleven-years of struggle in *DeRolph*, the educators and advocates who brought the case can take pride in the billions of dollars of school facilities funding now flowing from the state to some of its neediest districts and schools. . . . Advocates are undoubtedly disappointed, however, by the state's failure to reduce reliance on local property taxes and other flawed features of the current finance system, which result in profoundly unequal and inferior educational opportunities for the large portion of the state's students who attend urban and rural schools. (Hunter, 2003).

Democratic Governor Ted Strickland has proposed a new state budget for Ohio that attempts to address these basic funding formulas, but at present, this budget faces an uphill battle (Rowland 2009).

6. This program was initiated by a Republican-dominated legislature and a Republican governor. When in 2006 the newly elected Democratic governor, Ted Strickland, tried and failed to dismantle this program during his first year in office, he faced heavy opposition from families who currently use these scholarships as well as well-funded organizations supporting school choice in the state.

7. For example, the Charter School Development Corporation in Maryland (http://www.csdc.org/about/contact.htm) reports its mission as "a non-profit organization established to help assist public charter schools with the acquisition and financing of educational facilities and related capital improvements." The Charter School Development Center in California (http://www.cacharterschools.org/center.html) says that it provides "technical assistance to the charter school reform movement."

References

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

Carpenter, D. (2005). *Playing to type? Mapping the charter school landscape*. Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Institute. Retrieved March 2, 2008, from http://www.edexcellence.net/doc/Carpenter%20ProjectV2.pdf

Chubb, J. E., & Moe, T. M. (1990). *Politics, markets, and America's schools*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

Dillon, S. (2007, November 8). Ohio goes after charter schools that are failing. *New York Times*, p. A1. Retrieved January 4, 2008, from http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/08/us/08charter.html?ex=1195189200&en=3c3a2e51d2410fd2&ei=5070&emc=eta1

Dutton, T. (2001, May 13). "Violence" in Cincinnati. *The Nation*. Retrieved November 3, 2008, from http://www.thenation.com/doc/20010618/dutton

Fife, B. L. (2008). *The anatomy and ideology of a charter* (ED501289). Washington, DC: Education Resources Information Center.
Finnegan, K., Adelman, N., Anderson, L., Cotton, L., Donnelly, M. B., & Price, T. (2004). *Evaluation of the public charter schools program: Final report*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.
Fordham Institute. (2005, August). *Charter school funding: Inequity's next frontier*. Retrieved February 4, 2008, from http://www.edexcellence.net/doc/Charter%20School%20Funding%202005%20FINAL.pdf
Frankenberg, E., & Lee, C. (2003). Charter schools and race: A lost opportunity for integrated education. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 11*. Retrieved May 15, 2008, from http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v11n32/
Fraser, N. (1999). *Justice interruptus: Critical reflections on the "postsocialist" condition.* New York: Routledge.
Fraser, N., & Honneth, A. (2003). *Redistribution or recognition? A political-philosophical exchange.* New York: Verso.
Friedman, M. (1962). *Capitalism and freedom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Hassel, B. C. (2005). *Studying achievement in charter schools: What do we know?* Washington, DC: Charter School Leadership Council.
Hassel, B. C. (2006). Charter schools: Mom and pops or corporate design. In P. E. Peterson (Ed.), *Choice and competition in American education* (pp. 149-160). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
Hayek, F. (1960). *The constitution of liberty*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Henig, J. R. (2008). *Spin cycle: How research is used in policy debates—The case of charter schools.* New York: Russell Sage and Century Foundation.
Hill, P. T. (2005). Assessing achievement in charter schools. In R. Lake & P. T. Hill (Eds.), *Hopes, fears and reality: A balanced look at American charter schools in 2005* (pp. 21-32). Bothell: University of Washington, National Charter School Research Project.
Hunter, M. (2003, May 22). Ohio Supreme Court turns away legal challenge to school finance system. *Access: Education Finance Litigation, School Funding Policy and Advocacy*. Retrieved January 4, 2008, from http://www.schoolfunding.info/states/oh/5-22-03WritofProhib.php3
Hursch, D. (2007). Assessing No Child Left Behind and the rise of neoliberal education policies. *American Educational Research Journal, 44*, 493-518.
Karaba, R. G. (2007). *Making sense of freedom in education: Three elements of neoliberal and pragmatic philosophical frameworks*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Miami University, Oxford, OH.
Knight Abowitz, K. (2000). Civil society as a site for building educational publics: Possibilities and limitations. *Educational Studies, 31*, 375-393.
Knight Abowitz, K. (2001). Charter schools and social justice. *Educational Theory, 51*, 151-170.
Knight Abowitz, K. (2008). Intergenerational justice and school choice. In W. Feinberg & C. Lubienski (Eds.), *School choice policies and outcomes: Philosophical and empirical perspectives on limits to choice in liberal democracies* (pp. 79-98). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
Lubienski, C. (2008). *Educational innovation and diversification in school choice plans*. East Lansing, MI: Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice. Retrieved May 14, 2008,from http://greatlakescenter.org/docs/Research/2008charter/policy_briefs/07.pdf
Mason, E. (2007, September 26). Legislators want more scrutiny of charter schools, especially funding. *Salem News*.Retrieved May 20, 2008, from http://salemnews.com/punews/local_story_269094058?page=1

Mead, S., & Rotherham, A. J. (2007, September). A sum greater than the parts: What states can teach each other about charter schooling. *Education Sector Reports*.Retrieved May 16, 2008, from http://www.educationsector.org/research/research_show.htm?doc_id=521913

Mickelson, R., Bottia, M., & Southworth, S. (2008). *School choice and segregation by race, class, and achievement*.East Lansing, MI: Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice. Retrieved May 14, 2008, from http://greatlakescenter.org/docs/Research/2008 charter/policy_briefs/08.pdf

Milton and Rose D. Friedman Foundation. (n.d.). *Why school choice?* Retrieved January 4, 2008, from http://www.friedmanfoundation.org/friedman/schoolchoice/why.jsp

Nelson, H. F., Rosenberg, B., & Van Meter, N. (2004). *Charter school achievement on the 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress*. Washington, DC: American Federation of Teachers. Retrieved November 2, 2007, from http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/downloads/teachers/NAEPCharterSchoolReport.pdf

Nozick, R. (1974). *Anarchy, state, and utopia*. New York: Basic Books.

Ohio Department of Education. (2008). *EdChoice general information*. Retrieved February 18, 2008, from http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=667&ContentID=46634&Content=47692

Rawls, J. (1993). *Political liberalism*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Robelen, E. (2008, May 19). NAEP gap continuing for charters. *Education Week*. Retrieved May 19, 2008, from http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2008/05/21/38charter_ep.h27html?tmp=370128370

Rofes, E., & Stulberg, L. M. (Eds.). (2004). *The emancipatory promise of charter schools: Towards a progressive politics of school choice*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Rogers, J., & Oakes, J. (2005). John Dewey speaks to Brown: Research, democratic social movement strategies, and the struggle for education on equal terms. *Teachers College Record, 107*, 2178-2203.

Rowland, D. (2009, April 16). House Democrats rewrite Strickland's school-funding plan. *Columbus Dispatch*. Retrieved May 1, 2009, from http://www.dispatch.com/live/content/local_news/stories/2009/04/16/aschools.html?sid=101

Schlosberg, D. (2003). The justice of environmental justice: Reconciling equity, recognition, and participation in a political movement. In A. Light & A. de-Shalit (Eds.), *Moral and political reasoning in environmental practice* (pp. 77-106). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Sizer, N., & Sizer, T. (2006). A school built for Horace: Tales from a start-up charter school. In P. Peterson (Ed.), *Choice and competition in American education* (pp. 172-182). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Smith, S. (2001). *The democratic potential of charter schools*. New York: Peter Lang.

Smith, S. (2004). School choice through a Foucauldian lens. In E. Rofes & L. M. Stulberg (Eds.), *The emancipatory promise of charter schools: Towards a progressive politics of school choice* (pp. 219-262). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Weiner, L. (2007). A lethal threat to U.S. teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 58*, 274-296.

Wells, A. S. (1998). Charter school reform in California. *Phi Delta Kappan, 80*(4), 303-311.

Wells, A. S. (2002). Why public policy fails to live up to the potential of charter school reform. In A. S. Wells (Ed.), *Where charter policy fails: The problems of accountability and equity* (pp. 1-28). New York: Teachers College Press.

Wells, A. S., Scott, J. T., Lopez, A., & Holme, J. J. (2005). Charter school reform and the shifting meaning of educational equity: Greater voice and greater inequality? In *Bringing equity back: Research for a new era in American educational policy* (pp. 219-243). New York: Teachers College Press.

Wilson, T. S. (2008). *Negotiating public and private: Philosophical frameworks for school choice*. Lansing, MI: Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice. Retrieved April 23, 2008, from http://greatlakescenter.org/docs/Research/2008charter/policy_briefs/01.pdf

Zimmer, R., & Buddin, R. (2006). *Making sense of charter schools: Evidence from California* (Rand Institute occasional papers series). Retrieved January 5, 2008, from http://rand.org/pubs/occasional_papers/2006/RAND_OP157.pdf

Kathleen Knight Abowitz is a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at Miami University, teaching courses in philosophy of education and social foundations of education. Her scholarship explores questions of democracy, citizenship, and democratic education.

Robert Karaba is currently a lecturer in the Department of Education at California State University—Chico. He teaches democratic foundations of education and cultural studies in education courses. His scholarship interprets current educational practices and policies from philosophical and cultural standpoints.

For reprints and permission queries, please visit SAGE's Web site at http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav.