



Debating the Education Utopia

- Ideational change in the Swedish debate about privatization of education between 2003 and 2011

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Bachelor's thesis in Political Science 15 ECTS

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Spring term 2012

ABSTRACT

There is strong support among scholars that ideas are important in shaping public policy. The aim of this thesis is to investigate the ideas present in the Swedish debate about privatization of education between 2003 and 2011 during different governments, and if Sweden has undergone an ideational shift where ideas of privatization are becoming more accepted not just among politicians but also among a wider base of actors. Framing theory and the concept of counter framing are used to categorize these ideas. A mixed methods approach is used where frames are first defined based on previous research about privatization of education, then identified in newspaper articles from three major Swedish newspapers, then quantified according to whether they are used by proponents or opponents of privatization and finally analyzed to investigate their content. We found that there had indeed been a change in which frames were used as well as how they were used between the years analyzed. This indicates that there has been an ideational shift towards market oriented ideas in Sweden which could be attributed to the change in government as counter framing was more common for proponents of privatization during a social democratic government and more common for opponents during a center-right government, however further research is needed to determine the validity of this correlation.

Key Words: | Framing | Ideas | Privatization | Education | Newspaper debate

AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank our supervisor Hanna Kjellgren for her inspiration, input and help in the writing of this thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENT

| | |
|---|----|
| AKNOWLEDGEMENTS | 2 |
| TABLE OF FIGURES | 4 |
| 1. INTRODUCTION..... | 5 |
| 2. LITERATURE REVIEW..... | 9 |
| 2.1 GAP AND CONTRIBUTION..... | 11 |
| 3. THEORETICAL APPROACH | 12 |
| 3.1 PRIVATIZATION POLICY AND THE ROLE OF IDEAS | 12 |
| 3.1.1 CONCEPT OF PRIVATIZATION..... | 12 |
| 3.1.2 CONSTRUCTIVISM AND THE FRAMING OF POLICY IDEAS | 12 |
| 3.2 FRAMING OF PRIVATIZATION IN FORMER RESEARCH | 15 |
| 3.2.1 EFFICIENCY FRAME..... | 15 |
| 3.2.3 EQUALITY FRAME..... | 16 |
| 3.2.2 FREEDOM FRAME..... | 17 |
| 3.2.4 COMMON VALUES FRAME..... | 18 |
| 3.4 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK | 18 |
| 4. AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTION..... | 20 |
| 5. DESIGN AND METHODS | 21 |
| 5.1 RESEARCH DESIGN..... | 21 |
| 5.2 CHOICE OF DATA | 22 |
| 5.3 METHODS FOR ANALYSING DATA | 24 |
| 6. RESULTS..... | 27 |
| 6.1 WHICH FRAMES ARE MOST COMMONLY USED?..... | 27 |
| 6.2 THE FRAMING OF PRIVATIZATON IN THE EDUCATION DEBATE | 31 |
| 6.2.1 2003..... | 31 |
| 6.2.2 2011..... | 37 |
| 6.2.3 COMPARISON | 43 |
| 7. CONCLUSION | 45 |
| 8. BIBLIOGRAPHY | 47 |
| 8.1 DATA | 51 |
| Appendix 1- Complete Data..... | 54 |

TABLE OF FIGURES

Table 1 Problem, Cause and Solution indicators for the four frames 19

Table 2 Changes in framing between 2003 and 2011 (Percent)..... 27

Table 3 The use frames by proponents and opponents during 2003 (Percent) 28

Table 4 The use frames by proponents and opponents during 2011 (Percent) 29

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the late 1970s and early 1980s neo-liberal ideas have taken a firm hold of the western world which has led to re-organizing of various public institutions. Institutions that were previously considered backbones of the public sphere and state responsibility are now considered to be best run as private companies (Davies & Bansel 2007). Scholars point to a trend of these ideas as being more and more accepted in society (Ball 2009). But this trend is mainly observed among politicians; few scholars look to how a broader audience views privatization. Looking at debate articles in three major Swedish newspapers during both a centre-left and a centre-right government this thesis seeks to investigate whether this acceptance of neo-liberal market oriented ideas has grown among a wider audience than just politicians.

Charter schools (*Friskolor*) are one example of how an institution that traditionally has been managed by the state that has in part been transferred from government to private companies. The main idea of charter schools with vouchers (*skolpeng*) is that students and parents become education consumers in an education market and choose which school to go to rather than being assigned to one by the government. With every student comes a voucher which is paid for by the government making it in the schools interest to attract as many students as possible (Friedman 2002, Bagley 2006). Proponents of freedom of choice claim that this allows for competition between schools which increases the quality of the schools just as how competition between different companies increases the quality of any product (Friedman 1997). Others argue that there is a downside to freedom of choice and that charter schools have fewer teachers and generally spend less money on each student in order to make a profit which might lead to lower quality in education (Vlachos 2011). A potential problem is that a student that is easily taught is more beneficiary for schools since the cost will be lower, than for example students with special needs. This might lead to a greater segregation between students due to their ability to perform in school (Lauder et al 1999, Ahonen 2000, Ball & Youdell 2009). The effects of privatization of education have been highly debated among scholars and there is no clear consensus of the issue and some claim that both sides are exaggerating their claims (Lindbom 2010).

Sweden is traditionally thought of as a welfare state with strong aspects of collectivism and public ownership yet is today considered a pioneer when it comes to introducing private

alternatives in the education sector (Arreman Erixon & Holm 2011). The changes towards more market oriented education policies in Sweden started in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Blomqvist & Rothstein 2000, Fredriksson 2010). The policy change transferred the financial responsibilities for schools from the national government to the municipalities and made it possible for parents to choose schools, both privately and publicly managed, and also in other municipalities than where they lived, through school vouchers (Fredriksson 2010). With school vouchers any student can choose any charter school since the voucher is connected to the student and financed by the municipality they live in. The social democratic ideas of public ownership and centralization have a strong foundation in the Swedish debate (Blyth 2001). Still there has been significant change in the school market and the structures of it in Sweden. The Swedish National Agency for Education recently published a report showing that between 2005 and 2009 the increase of charter schools was roughly 350 new schools which was a 45 percent increase. The largest increase has been charter schools that are owned by medium (2-4 schools) and large (at least 5 schools) principals (*Huvudmän*) and this stands for 60 percent of the increase. The increase is largest among principals with corporate connections such as venture capitalists. During this time period there has been a decrease of schools managed by municipalities with 318 schools (Skolverket, 2012). Venture capitalists making money from the vouchers might be one of the reasons for the strong feelings about this issue as well as the indication that charter schools has created a larger segregation (Vlachos 2011). Charter schools are today widely accepted among parties in Sweden, and the major party on the left side, the Social Democrats, has over time accepted this development and that the charter schools are here to stay (Lindbom 2010).

The fact that the idea of these market oriented policies has been so widely accepted main stem from the fact the ideas taken hold of society and made it difficult to hold opposing views. Blyth (2001) points to intellectual path dependency as an explanation of certain choices made within Swedish politics. Intellectual path dependency is when ideas introduced in a society creates what Blyth (2001, p 4) calls “Cognitive Locks”, certain ideas becomes accepted and must be considered when formulating policy while other ideas becomes impossible and cannot be considered. This thesis seeks to investigate whether these ideas of privatization has become increasingly dominant in the Swedish society outside the political sphere.

Previous research hints that these ideas do indeed have a strong standing in Swedish society, however they usually refer to specific discourses such as policy documents which gives the

view of the elite and may not reflect the ideational climate in general. In order to investigate whether these ideas have a broader base than just politicians we will look at debate articles published in three major Swedish newspapers during 2011 and compare them with debate articles from the same papers during 2003.

Since we wish to see how the debate looks like today as well as if it has changed with the current government it is necessary to compare at least two points in time. To avoid seasonal inconsistencies (such as an increased number of articles during the start of school in the fall) we choose to select entire years. To find a good point of time to compare we have selected 2003 since it was a year with similar properties in that a sitting government had been re-elected the year before. Since 2010 Sweden is run by a minority center-right government with the Moderate Party (Moderata Samlingpartiet) in a leading role. In 2002 the voters re-elected a social-democratic minority government. We do not want to compare election years since a lot of the space in the debate is taken by politicians and the main goal is to see if the ideas have changed among a broader base of actors than just politicians. Therefore we choose 2003 and 2011. In order to understand the school market for each of these years it is interesting to view the statistics and the differences between them. The most recent statistics shows that during the school year 2010/2011, 88 percent of the students went to schools managed by municipalities in the grades 1-9 compared with 94.3 percent in 2003, and almost 10 percent of the students went to charter schools in the grades 1-9 compared with 5.7 percent in 2003. During 2011 there were 741 charter schools in the grades 1-9 compared with 528 in 2003. The greatest change has occurred in high school where there in 2010/2011 were 489 charter schools compared to only 194 in 2003. 24 percent of the students in high school went to charter schools the school year 2010/2011 and in 2003 the number was 8 percent, and for high schools managed by municipalities it was 75 percent in 2010/2011 compared to 90 percent in 2003 (For 2003 see Skolverket 2003 and for 2010/2011 see Skolverket 2011).

As stated earlier we seek to investigate if the ideas of privatization have become increasingly dominant in Swedish society. Furthermore it is interesting to see in what direction the debate is heading. The general aim of this thesis is therefore to see if there is a difference between how actors portray the issue of privatization of education and if there has been a change over time. Which ideas has been prone to survive and has some ideas gained ground in the debate. Finally, has the debate shifted in any direction and where is the ideational climate heading in this particular issue.

The thesis is divided into seven different chapters. The first chapter introduces the reader to the subject that is being researched and the general aim of the thesis. The introduction is followed by a literature review that shows the previous research done related to privatization of education and identifies a scientific gap , the need to look at more actors than just politicians, that will be further developed in the third chapter, the theory chapter. The theory chapter deals with the theories regarding privatization of education and the implications of these. It also deals with the constructivist approach, framing theory and the role of ideas. The theory chapter leads to the fourth chapter where a more specific aim and the research questions are stated. The fifth chapter shows the case study design and the mixed method used, as well as the structure for the ideal type analysis. The result chapter answers the research questions asked. The seventh chapter finishes the thesis by discussing the implications of the findings and the analysis combined, as well as recommendations for further research in the subject.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will present previous literature regarding privatization of education. The literature can be divided into two different research fields, studies regarding education policy (for example Ball 2009) and studies regarding the economic effects of privatization of education (for example Sandström & Bergström 2005). The trend is that scholars focusing on education policy lean towards a negative position on privatization of education whereas economists tend to be more positive towards the idea of privatization. Furthermore this review looks at the research done in Sweden regarding privatization of education. There is no clear consensus on privatization of education among scholars in Sweden and they tend to look at different aspects and arrive at different results. This review concludes that there is a gap in the literature that consists of the Swedish public debate regarding privatization of education.

Privatization as a policy change and its relation to ideas has been studied extensively (for example Blyth 2001). When looking at the privatization of education specifically there are quite a few studies, some regards the results of privatization of the school system in Sweden specifically (Blomqvist & Rothstein 2000, Vlachos 2011), while some compare various countries in order to study differences in school systems (Johanesson et al 2002, Daun 2004, Jackson et al 2011).

Scholars have found that there has been a change in discourse regarding marketization of education in policy language (Ball 2009, Arreman Erixon & Holm 2011) The role of the school is changing from being portrayed as a societal institution whose role it is to foster and educated the youth of the country into being portrayed more in terms of costs and measurable results (Ahonen 2000, Johanesson et al 2002, Bagley 2006). Traditional statements such as equal opportunities in education have been replaced by market oriented statements, such as competition between schools and education as a product. Scholars attribute this change in part to politicians who are unable to resist neo-liberal ideas about privatization and unable to see a purpose for the school beyond measurable results (Ball 2009).

Studies regarding the different arguments used in the debate about privatization of education can be divided into studies of normative arguments (for example Chaput 2009) and studies of more practical arguments (for example Gibelman & Lens 2002). Normative arguments deal with things such as the appropriate role of the state (or regional body) and what is a proper

use of taxpayers' money. One such argument is that taxes should not go to schools whose values do not reflect those of society and the loss of the states' ability to control which values are being taught. A counterargument is that the parents should be able to choose school without being penalized for choosing a school which reflects their own values (Bassett 2008, Chaput 2009).

Studies of the more practical arguments have to do with measurable results of privatization in terms of changes in results and/or costs and whether the theoretical assumptions of those in favor of privatization applies in practice, things such as whether parents and students can make the best decisions based on the information supplied to them. Freedom to choose school may not have intended effects (reduced segregation, efficiency through competition) based on numerous reasons. For one geographical issues may inhibit parents to choose the school that would be best for them, particularly parents in lower socio-economic strata. The geographical location of good schools might be affecting parents' choices and making economic abilities such as access to transportation a major factor in determining which school to choose (Ahonen 2000). Another aspect possibly inhibiting choice from working as intended is knowledge deficiency (asymmetric information), parents may lack the proper information they need to make the best decision for their child. If freedom of choice is to have the intended effect of optimizing school performance parents have to choose the school that is really best for their child, not the one perceived to be the best which may not be the same school (Lauder et al. 1999, Vlachos 2011).

Scholars studying Sweden have tended more towards studying things such as costs and results and how these aspects were affected when private alternatives have been introduced. Some scholars claim that the introduction of charter schools and the voucher system has had positive effect for the results of not just students in the charter schools but for the students in public schools as well (Sandström & Bergström 2005). Other scholars find potential negative effects such as increased segregation (Lindbom 2010) or lowered quality as measured by factors such as the number of teachers per student (Vlachos 2011). Another problem mentioned is the inability of students (or parents) to properly evaluate different schools and make an informed decision about which one to attend, something that is necessary in order for the competition aspect of the system to work properly (Fredriksson 2010). There is however no wide agreement on the effects of privatization of education in Sweden, as many scholars

disagree about effects such as how the introduction of private schools affects the performance of students in general (Lindbom 2010).

While the language of privatization becomes more and more accepted in policy language (Ball 2009, Arreman Erixon & Holm 2011) the amount of research critical of the current state of privatization and vouchers is also growing. One such critique is the value shift from traditional education values as individual need and the collective good with cooperation between schools to promote education (Ball 2006). Scholars claim that the shift is due to the idea that education is a product that will be connected to economic values rather than institutional. This value shift toward individualization creates a survivalism that is more concerned with the well-being of members of the schools or institution than the benefits of society (Ball 2008).

Scholars have found that policy language have drifted more towards market-oriented ideas than more traditional social-democratic values even in Sweden where such ideas have traditionally been very strong. However the question remains of whether the ideas emphasized in policy have also gained ground in society at large.

2.1 GAP AND CONTRIBUTION

Previous literature deals with the effect of privatization and the arguments for or against it. However these studies tend to be more concerned with measuring the actual effects of privatization and the arguments used in the debate tend to be secondary. Scholars identify a trend of increased acceptance of the logic of privatization. Sweden is an interesting country when it comes to privatization of education and the prevalence of ideas since it has both strong traditions of public ownership and a clear trend towards privatization (Vlachos 2011). What are missing are studies of arguments used among a wider array of people than just politicians and scholars. From such a study one could draw conclusion about which ideas are prevalent in Swedish society regarding privatization and if we have indeed moved more towards an ideational climate where more market oriented ideas has gained ground outside the political sphere.

3. THEORETICAL APPROACH

The purpose of this thesis is to examine if ideas of privatization have become more accepted in Sweden between 2003 and 2011 by examining the Swedish debate on privatization of education in three major newspapers. In this chapter the theories used in the thesis will be discussed.

3.1 PRIVATIZATION POLICY AND THE ROLE OF IDEAS

This part of the chapter will explain how we define the concept of privatization for the purposes of this thesis. Furthermore this part will discuss the constructivist approach to social science, the importance of ideas and how ideas are portrayed in order to take hold in society.

3.1.1 CONCEPT OF PRIVATIZATION

By "privatization of education" we mean the introduction of private alternatives in the Swedish school-system financed by public funds in the form of vouchers. Even though the schools are in effect financed by tax-money they are considered private in the sense that they are managed by private companies, organizations or individuals and not by the state or municipality. Purely private schools where the students (or parents) pay for the education with their own money are not very common in Sweden and will not be of consideration in this thesis.

3.1.2 CONSTRUCTIVISM AND THE FRAMING OF POLICY IDEAS

Framing theory is ultimately based on constructivism since it stipulates that people react differently to the same issue depending on how it is framed rather than having set preferences that are based only on what is most rational. Constructivism is the idea that reality is not there to be objectively perceived but rather is a constantly changing phenomenon that is only given meaning by people observing it. Social scientific issues do not simply exist but their meaning is dependent on how people see them (Bryman 2008). This can be applied to education policy not just in the way actors argue over what is right and wrong about privatization in schools. What is good education is itself a social construct. So if privatization reaches its goals or not is dependent not just on what the practical goals are but also how the goals are perceived.

There is no objective way to measure if a student upon graduation has received a good education it is entirely dependent upon how a good education is defined.

There is wide agreement among scholars that ideas play a role in shaping the outcome of public policy. Ideas are used to legitimize policy change (Stone 2000) but are also a key factor in deciding if there is a need for a policy change in the first place. Actors define their interests from ideas and then attempt to sell these ideas to the public so that they become widely accepted. The goal of policy is thus both defined and carried out through ideas (Blyth 2001). The ideas of privatization stem from both ideological and practical considerations and getting both of these across to the public while not sufficient in itself has nevertheless been effectual in allowing for privatization (Stone 2000). Ideas may be introduced by parties in a position of power in order to render the representation of reality more in their favor (Carstensen 2010). As such what government is in power can affect the ideational climate. However the ideas that are dominant in society should present themselves in the public debate whether by deliberate organized lobbying or simply due to the fact that the prevailing ideas will influence the participants of the debate (Blyth 2001).

To see which ideas are prevalent in the public debate, a theory is needed for classifying opinions expressed. In this thesis, framing theory will serve this purpose. Framing theory treats the presentation of current issues through framing. Namely the ways issues are presented have according to theory an effect on how people respond to them.

...a framing effect is said to occur when, in the course of describing an issue or event, a speaker's emphasis on a subset of potentially relevant considerations causes individuals to focus on these considerations when constructing their opinions. (Druckman 2001, p 1042).

For example privatization of state companies can be supported by appealing to the value of free entrepreneurship, especially if this is a value held in high esteem by the target audience. If the same issue is framed differently and instead talks about a different value such as greed the issue might seem less favorable. Associating the support of an issue with a certain value has the potential to make people support an issue they would otherwise oppose or vice versa (Brewer & Gross 2005). How issues are framed is thereby of a large importance when it comes to public debate, it is conceivable that actors are very aware of how they frame issues as to get the best response, however they can also be constrained in their framing by which

ideas are acceptable in society (Blyth 2001). As such the ideational climate in society should reflect itself in the framing of various issues in public debate.

When it comes to constructing frames Benford and Snow (2000) list some core tasks that what they call “Collective action frames” are meant to accomplish.

Collective action frames are constructed in part as movement adherents negotiate a shared understanding of some problematic condition or situation they define as in need of change, make attributions regarding who or what is to blame, articulate an alternative set of arrangements, and urge others to act in concert to affect change. (Benford & Snow 2000, p 615).

While Benford and Snow (2000) talks about frames used by social movements designed to inspire action we feel confident in adapting them for our research. While we will look at newspaper articles written by various actors not necessarily with the motive to inspire some radical action we feel that it is still possible to structure our frames according to the three aspects listed by Benford and Snow (2000): *Problem, Cause and Solution*.

Even if a frame does not change a person’s opinion of a subject or inspires action it can still focus their attention to a particular aspect of the issue (Brewer & Gross 2005). As such, framing can be a useful tool for actors not just to get people on their side but also to avoid discussing aspects they find unfavorable. When someone frames an issue as a case of a certain value their opponent may feel obligated to respond by appealing to the same value, this is referred to as counter-framing. For example if someone frames privatization of education as a problem because it leads to segregation and inequality the use of counter-framing would argue that privatization in fact reduces inequality rather than trying to frame it as a different issue, for example an issue of efficiency. While framing privatization as an issue of equality by opponents and an issue of efficiency by proponents people who hold equality as a more important issue would change their opinions more against privatization and people who held efficiency as a more important issue would change their opinion more in favor of privatization. If however counter-framing were used and only equality was focused on by both proponents and opponents the direction of opinion would not change much but the people exposed to the framing would tend to focus more on the issue of equality (Brewer & Gross 2005). Brewer & Gross (2005) classifies this as opponents and proponents using different frames dealing with the same value, however in this thesis we will put arguments

and counter-arguments dealing with the same issue under the same frame. This will make it obvious whether a shift has occurred and some frames are becoming more dominant, treating counter-arguments as separate frames could potentially lead to a large amount of different frames and make it difficult to get an overview. An alternative to framing theory would be to use discourse analysis to identify changes, however while discourse analysis is a good tool for identifying what types of arguments are used in text we will be more specifically focused on how much different arguments occur. As such framing theory offers the ability to clearly divide the data and look at changes in quantity between the different years which will more clearly show if there is a difference.

3.2 FRAMING OF PRIVATIZATION IN FORMER RESEARCH

Based on prior research, we have divided the arguments used in the debate into four different frames. The four frames introduced in this chapter are as follows: Efficiency, Equality, Freedom and Common Values. These four frames contain different arguments for and against privatization in education divided into the problem, cause and solution structure set up by Benford & Snow (2000). The efficiency frame deals with public and charter schools in terms of costs and results and also how the efficiency of the entire school system is affected by privatization. The equality frame deals with the issue of equality between different schools and different groups and how that is affected by privatization of education. The freedom frame deals with the normative aspects of the business side of education such as the importance of free entrepreneurship. The common value frame deals with schools as an instiller of values into students and whether schools should be required to teach their students the basic values of society or values held by the parents even when these conflicts with the values of society.

3.2.1 EFFICIENCY FRAME

An important justification for imposing privatization alternatives has been the idea that schools should run as efficiently as possible (Boykco et al 1996, Friedman 1997). There are several ways to measure the efficiency of schools; one is to look at operating costs. Another is to look at how schools are managed through things such as the number of teachers per student and access to various facilities such as gymnasiums. Yet another measure is the result, how well do students perform on national tests? How high are the grades? How satisfied are

parents and students with the school? Measuring the result could replace the measurement of the other factors, for example if students are satisfied and performing well then the number of teachers per student must be high enough. The problem in the efficiency frame is thus defined as the cost of running and the results in schools in a system of charter schools and vouchers versus a system with only public schools.

The cause of inefficiencies is framed as bureaucratic education system, Moe (2008) claims that the hierarchical structure of government within education with top to down steering is very inefficient. Friedman (1997) brings out another argument in the inefficient way of teaching, the way of conducting education has not improved as much as the technical progress in the rest of society. The reason is not necessarily a rejection of market-oriented principles but may be based on different agendas, such as politicians wanting to preserve an inefficient system because it has strong support with their voters (Boykco et al 1996, Moe 2008).

It is argued that the solution is a market-oriented system with competition as a way to force schools to act as efficiently as possible. The public schools need the competition from privately owned schools in order to improve. School vouchers are an economic incentive that will help with the transition from public schools to privately owned schools. The vouchers need to be universal, cost less than the government spend on education and be large enough to make it profitable to private enterprises in education. This is one way of creating a demand for privately owned schools and making it available for everyone (Friedman 1997).

3.2.3 EQUALITY FRAME

Equality in schools whether it is between different ethnic groups, students from different socio-economic backgrounds or religions is framed as something desirable. A society where students from different socio-economic classes, ethnicities or religions go to different schools is considered unjust. The problem is not just that not everyone has the same opportunity, if segregation occurs in spite of everyone having the same opportunity there is still a problem. Sometimes an argument is also made for the desire to reduce differences between the low and high performing students, so there is an equal distribution of grades (Ahonen 2000).

The cause is economic thinking which inevitably leads to inequalities rather than creating a situation where students, teachers, parents and government get more education for less

money. Inequalities are inherent in a market, some businesses succeed others fail. As Lauder et al. puts it:

The fundamental problem with education markets is that they are designed so that some schools will fail. In allowing some schools to fail, policy makers are also allowing the students in these schools to fail (Lauder et al. 1999, p 134).

As a critique of privatization scholars point not just to the fact that a market-oriented system does not care about equality but also that promoting equality becomes a burden for schools since admitting a wide variety of students gives lower aggregate test results than picking students who are potentially high performers. Parents as well are better off putting their children in schools with good students. This creates a circle of segregation where high performers are kept in the school in order to attract more high performers (Lauder et al. 1999).

The solution is for the government to place students in such a way as to develop a good mix between different groups in society and also to make sure that all schools produce good results (Lauder et al. 1999). Charter schools are to be shut down or at the very least forced to admit students in a way that guarantees equality between different groups.

3.2.2 FREEDOM FRAME

This frame deals with more value oriented aspects of privatization of education. As the name suggests it is about freedom, both freedom of choice for individuals and free entrepreneurship. It questions the right of the government to intervene and regulate the business aspect of privatization of education as well as the regulations against individual freedom of choice. It has a positive attitude towards privatization of education. The frame will be described within the structure of problem, cause and solution.

The problem in the freedom frame is the issue of rights and freedom for citizens. Friedman (2002) argues that the collectivist decision of education made by government is a limit to people's freedom. Furthermore the argument is that free enterprise is important in a free society, that everyone should be able to start their own enterprise such as a charter school (Friedman 2002).

The cause is regulatory, the government decides on whether starting a charter school is allowed or not. The reason for not allowing private individuals to start schools can be many but at the heart of the matter the cause is government (Friedman 1997).

The solution is then clear, get rid of the regulations and allow private individuals to start their own schools. In addition government has a responsibility to make sure that everyone can run their own school. A charter system with vouchers is a solution to the problem of limited freedom (Friedman 1997).

3.2.4 COMMON VALUES FRAME

The common value frame deals with the conflict of which values should be promoted in school. This frame is negative towards privatization of education and the right of charter schools to instill un-democratic or otherwise undesirable values in students. The frame will be structured according to problem, cause and solution of the issue of privatization of education.

There is a conflict between on the one hand social diversity, allowing various religious and philosophical ways of life to flourish in society, and on the other hand the basic liberties each person is entitled to. Charter schools may choose not to teach values that are considered essential to society such as democracy which can be considered a violation of children's liberties (Gutmann 1995).

The cause is the charter schools themselves, and the fact that they are allowed to shape their curriculum in a way which conflicts with basic democratic values. The government has given up their role as a provider of values (Gutmann 1995).

The solution may be either to get rid of charter schools completely or at least religious ones. The government has to take responsibility for educating its citizens in democratic and tolerant ways (Gutmann 1995).

3.4 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The analytical framework is derived from the theory and the ideal types of each frame. The four frames that have been identified is the efficiency frame, the freedom frame, the equality frame and the common values frame. The efficiency frame and the freedom frame are frames

that are positive towards privatization of education. The equality frame and the common values frame on the other hand are negative towards privatization. Table 1 lists the indicators for each of the frames according to the previously presented structure of problem, cause and solution. These are ideal types of the frames and it will work as the basis for the forthcoming analysis of the data gathered. The reason for using ideal types instead of using classification analysis is that some frames have the same cause and/or the same solution, with a classification design this would create problems of which category to put some articles in while with ideal types we can look at which frame an arguments is most similar to.

Table 1 Problem, Cause and Solution indicators for the four frames

| | Efficiency | Freedom | Equality | Common Values |
|-----------------|--|---|---|--|
| Problem | <i>-Public schools have low results and high costs</i> | <i>-The right to free entrepreneurship limited</i> | <i>-Segregation between different groups -Large differences in results</i> | <i>-Children are not taught basic democratic values</i> |
| Cause | <i>-Government monopoly in the school market</i> | <i>-Government monopoly in the school market</i> | <i>-Freedom of choice -Schools rejecting students -Imperfect information</i> | <i>-Charter Schools are free to set up their own curriculum</i> |
| Solution | <i>-Competition -Charter Schools -Voucher System</i> | <i>-Freedom of choice -Free entrepreneurship (Fria etableringsrätten)</i> | <i>-Regulation of the private sector and funds. -Equal results instead of equal opportunities</i> | <i>-Regulation of the private sector and funds. -Childrens rights instead of parents rights.</i> |

4. AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTION

The specific aim of this thesis is to explore the debate climate on privatization of education in Sweden by examining how proponents and opponents frame their arguments in Swedish newspapers during 2003 and 2011. More specifically we seek to answer:

1. Has there been a change in which frames are most commonly used by proponents and opponents respectively between 2003 and 2011?
2. Has there been a change in which aspects of the frames are emphasized by proponents and opponents between 2003 and 2011?
3. Do they use counter framing within the same frame or completely different frames?

5. DESIGN AND METHODS

The focus in this thesis will be to find out how proponents and opponents of privatization of education frame their views for or against privatization of education in newspapers in Sweden in 2003 and 2011, and if this has changed. This chapter will explain and discuss the method and design used in order to reach the purpose of the thesis. The chapter will show why we chose a case study design, and in what way we aim to generalize the results. Furthermore it will show how the data will be selected and what kind of data that will be used and the implications of that. We will use a mixed method with both a quantitative and qualitative elements which will be further explained in this chapter.

5.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis is a case study of the framing in the education debate in Sweden with a focus on the debate in three national newspapers. Another way to study this phenomenon would be to conduct a comparative study which would require a comparison between two different contexts as for example the privatization of education and privatization of healthcare. However with two contexts we cannot see if there has been an ideational change, what we would be able to say is how it looks at a certain point in time. Therefore we choose to use a case study since it is limited to one specific debate and we want to see if there has been a change. The comparison over time is required to be able to draw conclusions about change which will be needed to investigate the overall aim; if there has been change in which ideas are prevalent and whether market oriented ideas has taken hold in the Swedish public debate. Even though there is a comparison over time it is still a case study since there is one context (the debate) and two time periods (2003 and 2011)(Esaiasson et al 2012).

With this case study we aim to generalize to a larger population of media in which the debate about privatization in Sweden takes place. Our qualitative analysis will show how the frames are used and from that we will be able to draw some conclusions about how actors reason regarding privatization. The quantitative part of the thesis will show the amount of frames/potential counter frames used by proponents and opponents respectively for each year and will be an indicator of a possible change in the use of frames. With this we will be able to draw conclusions of the use of frames and counter frames. Education policy is a highly

debated subject in Swedish politics, therefore we believe that it will be a good case to study in order to generalize broader about ideational change in Sweden.

In order to see if there has been any change in the debate over time we had to choose different years. Since the debate about privatization of education has been a highly debated subject over the last years we wanted to see what it looks like now. As stated in the introduction the reason for choosing 2003 and 2011 is that we want to be able to see recent change, and did not want election years or years just prior to an election. It is likely that during such years a lot of the spaces on debate pages would be held by politicians, political parties and interest groups and thus not showing a broad picture of the debate. It was also important that the time difference was not too long in order to see if there has been a recent change. In order to choose a year close to the present and being possible to research it we choose 2011, since it was a year after election year. In 2011 it was a minority coalition government, a Centre-right wing government with the moderate party (*Moderata Samlingspartiet*) in a leading role. In order to find a year that is similar to that of 2011, we had to search for a year with the same description and we therefore choose 2003. In 2003 a minority government with the Social-Democrats (*Arbetarepartiet-Socialdemokraterna*) was in power. As stated in the theory chapter parties in power may influence what ideas are prevalent in society (Carstensen 2010), if there has been no change towards more market-oriented arguments in spite of Sweden switching to a government more in favor of charter schools it would be a strong indication that governments are not able to influence the ideational climate.

5.2 CHOICE OF DATA

The data we will use are editorials, letters to the editor and debate articles in three major Swedish newspapers. The three different newspapers that will be used are Aftonbladet (AB), Svenska Dagbladet (SvD) and Dagens Nyheter (DN). The reason for choosing these three newspapers is that they are widely spread in the country, and have a broad base of readers. There is also a wide ideological range between the different editorials at the newspapers, Aftonbladet being Social Democratic (Oscarsson & Gustavsson, 2012), Dagens Nyheter is independent liberal (Johansson & Sundin 2012) and Svenska Dagbladet is independent moderate (Sandlund 2012). SvD claims to have approximately 500000 readers per day (Svenska Dagbladet 2012), Aftonbladet have a reach of approximately a million readers per

day (Aftonbladet 2012) and DN have 824 500 readers a day (Dagens Nyheter 2012). These three newspapers also have websites that have a greater reach than their printed copies.

The reason for using newspapers rather than parliamentary debates is to have a broad base of different articles with more actors than only politicians. Newspapers are an important tool in a democracy and these three have well developed debate pages; it is therefore interesting to see what a broad debate looks like in a public forum where anyone can make their voice heard. The focus is not to determine the views different parties or politicians in Sweden have on privatization itself or privatization in education, but rather to get a broader picture of the debates in an open forum such as newspapers where different actors can debate. This thesis will not consider specific actors but rather focus on the debate itself, and the term actors will be used in broad way and be considering anyone who participates in the debate about privatization of education.

The aim of this thesis is to determine which frames are used and to what extent they are used by proponents and opponents of privatization of education and which arguments in each frame are used. Newspapers are a good source of data in order to investigate a broader debate among different actors. There are however some problems with newspapers. Since we are analyzing editorials the writers at the chosen newspapers might argue according to their beliefs and since we have one liberal, one conservative and one social democratic newspaper it can be more articles pro privatization. Since conservatives and liberals tend to be pro privatization. This is however not a major issue, since the main focus is to see the change over time. If opponents have changed frames it will still be an indicator for an ideational change. The same argument can be made for proponents. The amount of articles for or against is itself not important but rather the changes within proponents and opponents. This will answer if the ideas have changed or not, and in what way the debate is heading. If proponents adopt the frames that are normally against privatization of education and use counter framing that is an indication that there has been a shift and the ideas against privatization are those who steers the debate. On the other hand if opponents uses counter framing against frames that are for privatization of education those ideas has prevailed and are thus steering the debate.

The data collecting will be conducted by reading all debate articles, editorials and letters to the editor from the newspapers Aftonbladet, Svenska Dagbladet och Dagens Nyheter during the selected years. The reason for not using search words is that it would require a lot of

words in order to ensure that we do not miss relevant articles, and since we do not know how the debate looks like or the arguments in the debate it will be hard to find words suited for finding all the relevant articles. With the use of framing theory search words are not a necessary tool since the words in itself are not as important as in discourse analysis. There are several other ways to gather data, however the simplest way for us to gather data about the debate is to read the selected parts of the chosen newspapers. Since it might be hard to find all the printed copies of the newspapers for each year we have chosen to use micro film to find the articles. By scanning through microfilms of the chosen newspapers we will have a good chance of finding every article related to our research. The database “The Media Archive” (*Mediarkivet*) will later be used to access the articles and also to find related articles that might only have been published on the internet.

We started by going through each newspaper for the two years by viewing microfilm. The first step was to identify articles that clearly relate to privatization of education as for example an article about charter schools, but to discard articles that for example relates to meals in schools which has nothing to do with privatization of education. The articles that we included also had to have an argument of privatization of education to be included in the data and at least one indicator from the analytical framework. The mentioning of privatization of education itself is not sufficient to be included in our data. The third step was to read articles carefully and divide the articles into certain frames based on the analytical framework using the indicators. The analytical framework is the base for which data that should be included in the analysis and since the framework shows ideal types there are some degree of interpretation that has to be made by the authors. The ideal types in our analytical framework are not based on reality but rather on theoretical concepts that have been developed in the theory chapter (Esaiasson et al 2012). By using indicators we are able to categorize the articles into certain frames.

5.3 METHODS FOR ANALYSING DATA

We will use a mixed method in our thesis in order to answer our research questions 1) *has there been a change in which frames are most commonly used by proponents and opponents respectively between 2003 and 2011?* 2) *Has there been a change in which aspects of the frames are emphasized by proponents and opponents between 2003 and 2011?* 3) *Do they use counter framing within the same frame or completely different frames?*

To answer the first question we will use a quantitative research method and in order to answer the second and third question we will use a qualitative research method.

The quantitative content analysis is a good tool in order to study different concepts appearing in for example newspapers. The concepts are clearly categorized so that the researcher can eventually see a pattern from the data. The gathering of data is carried out through coding. This means deciding on certain things that are to be counted in the texts. In this case we will count frames, in order to see if these arguments are different during the different times in the study and if they have change in quantity. By counting frames we will be able to get good data on the change over time as well as the frequency of certain frames. The content analysis is considered a method with high replicability and high ecological validity. However the process of coding is subject to some degree of bias from the researchers (Bryman 2008).

In the theory chapter we identified four different frames: Efficiency, Equality, Freedom and Common values. In our analytical framework these frames were defined as ideal types in relation to the structure of problem, cause and solution. We have identified indicators for what the problem, cause and solution are. These indicators are used in order to identify the frames in the articles. In order to be counted it is sufficient that the article has one of the indicators in any part of the structure, problem, cause and solution. Potential counter framing will be identified in the articles as an indicator to be countering one or several of the indicators and thus be classified under the same frame. For example a counter frame against the efficiency frame will be classified under the efficiency frame, thus we do not make a difference between counter frames and regular frames in our statistical data.

The qualitative content analysis is based on the theoretical framework developed in the theory chapter, and the indicators of the different frames. In the qualitative analysis we will classify the data based on the ideal types in the analytical framework (Esaiasson et al 2012). The classifications will be an interpretation of the frames and the potential use of counter framing in the articles. This will be conducted by showing how opponents and proponents frame privatization of education according to the problem, cause and solution structure. There is a possibility that there can be the same solutions and causes for different frames, and in that case the problem framed will define which frame it counts as. It is also possible for an article to contain multiple frames. With the qualitative content analysis we aim to analyze the text in order to see how the frames are used and how the use of framing has changed, as well as the

emergence of possible counter framing. The purpose of the quantitative analysis is to show which frames that are most commonly used. By using this method we will be able to see not only which frames are most commonly used and how it has changed, but also in what sense they have changed and if the argumentation has changed.

The results will be presented by quotations and an analysis of the content from the articles. By quoting the articles we are also showing how we interpret and analyze the texts. This will make it easier for the reader to see how we interpret the frames. As stated earlier we will use ideal types in order to categorize the frames and potential counter frames, and this is therefore subject to some degree of interpretation by us in deciding to what degree the certain frames suits the ideal types. The use of indicators is a way of showing how the articles are categorized into a certain frame and analyzed in the qualitative part of the thesis. It is therefore a tool to ensure the reliability and the future possibility of replicating the study. The comparison will be between the two years and analyze a potential change in the argumentation between proponents and opponents respectively. The potential use of counter framing will be used as a tool to see how proponents and opponents counter each other's frames. It is important to state that the potential use of counter framing is analyzed to be able to make a comparison between the proponents and the opponent's way of arguing.

6. RESULTS

We have found 34 articles for 2003 and 43 articles for 2011 regarding privatization of education in the chosen newspapers. This chapter will answer the research questions, the first part will answer the first question, *has there been a change in which frames are most commonly used by proponents and opponents respectively between 2003 and 2011?* The second part will answer the two remaining questions: *Has there been a change in which aspects of the frames are emphasized by proponents and opponents between 2003 and 2011? Do they use counter framing within the same frame or completely different frames?* The second part will end with a comparison between the two years in order to find out if there has been a *change over time* in how they use different frames.

6.1 WHICH FRAMES ARE MOST COMMONLY USED?

This chapter will show which frames were *most commonly* used, by both proponents and opponents of privatization of education and if there has been a *change* over time between 2003 and 2011. Even though we found 34 articles for 2003 and 43 articles for 2011 regarding privatization of education it can be more than one frame in one article and thus it will be more frames than articles in the tables.

Table 2 shows the relative use of each frame in 2003 compared with 2011.

Table 2 Changes in framing between 2003 and 2011 (Percent)

(Numbers rounded to the closest percentage)

| | 2003 | 2011 | Balance (2003-2011) |
|------------------|------|------|------------------------|
| Efficiency frame | 29 | 44 | +15 |
| Equality frame | 29 | 25 | -4 |
| Freedom frame | 10 | 31 | +21 |
| Common values | 31 | 0 | -31 |
| Total (%) | 99 | 100 | |
| Total (n) | 48 | 52 | |

There was a slight increase in the use of the efficiency frame (44 percent of the total frames used in 2011 compared with 29 percent in 2003) but the most significant changes were those within the Freedom and Common Values frames. The Freedom frame went from being largely insignificant in 2003 where just one in ten used the freedom frame to almost one in three for 2011. The Common Values frame on the other hand completely disappeared from the debate in 2011 never being used after having been used almost one in three times during 2003.

To analyze why this shift occurred we need to break down the data further and look at what frames were used by both proponents and opponents.

Table 3 shows the total amount of frames used by proponents and opponents respectively in percent for 2003. The parenthesis shows the percentage of the frame used by proponents and opponents. For example 40 percent of the frames used by proponents were efficiency frames and when the efficiency frame was used, it was used 86 percent of the time by proponents and 14 percent of the time by opponents.

Table 3 The use frames by proponents and opponents during 2003 (Percent)

(Numbers rounded to the closest percentage)

| | Proponents | Opponents |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Efficiency frame | 40 (86) | 11 (14) |
| Equality frame | 23(50) | 39(50) |
| Freedom frame | 17 (100) | 0 (0) |
| Common values | 20(40) | 50(60) |
| Total (%) | 100 | 100 |
| Total (n) | 30 | 18 |

As table 3 shows the most commonly used frame for proponents in 2003 was the efficiency frame (40 percent) followed by equality frame (23 percent) and common values (20 percent). This indicates that proponents were prone to use efficiency arguments and wanted the debate to be about efficiency. The other three frames were not as important and were used almost the same amount of times. For opponents the common values frame dominated (50 percent) followed by the equality frame (39 percent). These two frames were in the theory typical

frames for actors arguing against privatization of education and it seems like opponents used it according to the theory. The freedom frame was not used at all by opponents in 2003.

The use of counter framing is evident when one looks at the total use of each frame, and the shares of proponents and opponents. Proponents clearly dominate the efficiency frame with 86 percent against opponents 14 percent of the total amount of efficiency frames, which indicates that they did not make much use of counter framing. The use of the equality frame was equal distributed between the two and this suggests that counter framing was used by proponents, even though it was not a prioritized issue for them since only 23 percent of proponent frames were equality frames. Opponents on the other hand used the common value frame more than proponents with 60 percent against 40 percent by proponents. As stated earlier the freedom frame was not used at all by opponents and proponents clearly dominated this frame, which indicates that opponents did not use counter framing against the arguments made by proponents within the freedom frame.

Table 4 is the same as table 3 with the difference of showing the year 2011.

Table 4 The use frames by proponents and opponents during 2011 (Percent)

(Numbers rounded to the closest percentage)

| | Proponents | Opponents |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Efficiency frame | 54 (61) | 35 (39) |
| Equality frame | 19 (38) | 31 (62) |
| Freedom frame | 27 (44) | 35 (56) |
| Common values | 0 | 0 |
| Total (%) | 100 | 101 |
| Total (n) | 26 | 26 |

As table 4 shows the efficiency frame was the most used frame by proponents in 2011 (54 percent) followed by the freedom frame and the equality frame (27 percent and 19 percent respectively). Opponents used the freedom frame (35 percent) and the efficiency frame (35 percent) slightly more than the equality frame (31 percent). The efficiency frame and the freedom frame were the frames most used by opponents and this indicates that they have used counter framing against arguments from proponents.

Proponents dominate the amount of efficiency frames with 61 percent. Opponents dominate the equality frame with 62 percent. The freedom frame is also dominated by opponents with 56 percent of the total amount of freedom frames. These numbers indicate that counter framing was used often in the debate in 2011. In the efficiency frame and the freedom frame opponents used counter framing against proponents. The most interesting finding is the use of the freedom frame by opponents and that they dominate a frame that according to the theory would be used by proponents (as it was in 2003).

Table 3 and table 4 shows that 86 percent of the use of the efficiency frame in 2003 was by proponents while in 2011 they only had a share of 61 percent. This shows a large increase of the use of counter framing in the efficiency frame among opponents of privatization of education. The tables also shows that out of the total amount used of the equality frame opponents went from a share of 50 percent in 2003 to 62 percent in 2011. Opponents increased their share of the total amount of the freedom frame from 0 percent in 2003 to 56 percent. The use of the common value frame was drastically changed because neither the proponents nor the opponents used the frame in 2011.

The most interesting finding is the difference between which frames opponents used in 2003 compared to 2011. There has been a clear shift in their use of framing, from using the common value frame the most in 2003 and then using counter framing within the freedom frame the most. It was followed by counter framing within the efficiency frame and use of the equality frame in 2011. The efficiency frame was in 2003 dominated by proponents and that seen to have forced opponents to use it as well. And the same goes for the freedom frame.

The presence of counter framing in both the efficiency frame and the freedom frame by opponents indicates a change in the ideational climate. It is an indication that new issues have become more important, and that opponents have changed their argumentation according to proponents. That in turn indicates that proponents are the ones steering the debate, and sets the agenda on which issues that should be discussed. Further evidence for this is the disappearance of the common value frame. Even though much of that use can be due to the exposure made by a Swedish TV-channel regarding irregularities in religious schools in 2003. However religious schools still exists. The question is then if opponents have changed their mind about religious schools, or if they are forced to follow the argumentation laid out by proponents. The only thing we can be certain of is that there has been a change in ideas.

6.2 THE FRAMING OF PRIVATIZATION IN THE EDUCATION DEBATE

The purpose of this chapter is to answer research question number two and three, *has there been a change in which aspects of the frames are emphasized by proponents and opponents between 2003 and 2011? Do they use counter framing within the same frame or completely different frames?* The focus will be on *how* they are framing their arguments, and we will show that by analyzing the articles. This chapter will also present the use of counter framing and how it is used. The chapter will be divided into the two different years, 2003 and 2011, and into the four different frames under each year. The common value frame was not used in 2011 and will therefore not be a part of the analysis for 2011. Each frame will contain the arguments of both proponents and opponents of privatization of education. In the end of the chapter there will be a comparison between the years and proponents/opponents.

6.2.1 2003

This part of the chapter answers the second and third research questions for 2003.

6.2.1.1 Efficiency frame

The problem with the School system that came most into focus in 2003 within the efficiency frame was the alleged poor quality in schools, particularly public schools. Proponents of charter schools and the voucher system pointed to students choosing to go to charter schools rather than public ones as proof there was a problem with the quality of public education.

Responsible politicians should instead look at why a large number of students have opted out of a certain school. If they find that this is due to poor quality of the school they should draw the right conclusions. Sub-standard schools should be shut down. Not driven by artificial respirationⁱ (Friborg 2003-02-21, p 2).

Efficiency were not held against some normative model of how well schools should work, rather it was usually compared between charter schools and public schools and the better performance of charter schools was held as evidence that there was a problem with the public school system. Opponents did employ some degree of counter-framing, however rather than challenge the claim that charter schools were more efficient they claimed that “...*the introduction of charter schools leads to increased costs for the municipalities in certain parts of the country*”ⁱⁱⁱ (Wennemo &Fransson 2003-05-15, p 4).

The cause is the presence of charter schools or more specifically the system where the charter schools receive money that could otherwise go to public schools. Opponents were thusly more focused on costs from the point of view of the municipalities while proponents saw things through the eyes of parents or students who preferred charter schools over public ones. However their previous restriction to public schools was not problematized as an issue of rights being violated but rather as a problem of quality not reaching its full potential.

Proponents pointed to the inflexible way in which politicians control the school system as the cause of low quality in education. In the old system with only public schools principals had been guaranteed a certain number of students and thus had no incentive to increase quality.

Schools threatened with student flight cannot go on pretending nothing is happening, as they could before when the number of students was guaranteed. Schools will fade away if they do not quickly deal with their problems. Free choice exposes schools that are not up to parⁱⁱⁱ (DN Editorial 2003-04-17, p 2).

There is no detailed argument about the failures of public schools but rather the basic logic of market-thinking is at work, proponents have absolute faith in students when it comes to choosing the school with the highest quality. Opponents, being focused on costs pointed to the new system as a cause for efficiency loss instead, and that *“The public schools are obligated to offer schooling to all students in their area. This makes it significantly more difficult to plan in an economically efficient way”*^{iv} (Wennemo &Fransson 2003-05-15, p 4).

Opponents thus point to the school system as the cause of low efficiency as well, however they obviously referred to the system in place rather than the old system as proponents did.

The solutions framed by proponents were charter schools and the voucher system. Charter schools were portrayed as more flexible and creative than public ones and trough the introduction of new ideas efficiency was said to be rising.

Since the introduction of the voucher system there has been many good examples of how charter schools solve problems and develop ideas in ways public schools never have. In many places charter schools serve as a source of inspiration for public schools and the presence of competition creates healthy demands^v (SvD Editorial 2003-08-15, p 4).

But the main argument proponents framed as a solution was competition, both between different charter schools and between charter schools and public schools.

On the same theme the alternative schools work to promote variation and are in combination with vouchers also an important tool for increasing the overall performance level of the school system through competition^{vi} (SvD Editorial 2003-05-10, p 4).

The presence of Friedman-style market thinking is evident here. Having freedom of choice in which school to go to combined with freedom for anyone to start their own school will lead to a state of competition where the good schools will prevail and the bad ones will fail. While proponents favored the voucher system as a solution to problems of inefficiency opponents called for a change in the system.

We believe that today's voucher system must change. The payment to the charter schools erodes the finances of the public school and the municipal functions which are held back by the cost-inducing financing of the charter schools^{vii} (Wennemo &Fransson 2003-05-15, p 4).

No clear solution was formulated, however one can interpret a desire to get rid of the voucher system completely or at least severely change it in a way as to reduce the financial obligations of municipalities.

The efficiency frame in spite of being focused on issues of results and costs did not contain much in the form of statistics from the point of view of proponents. Opponents did use a statistical basis for their critique of the costs caused by the system, however only cost was measured, not results. In spite of the lack of references to tests and grades both proponents and opponents agreed implicitly that there was a problem with the effectiveness in the school system. Proponents pointed to the system as a whole and claimed that competition had and would continue to improve the quality of both public and charter schools while opponents focused only on the costs of public schools and how these were affected by the system of charter schools.

6.2.1.2 Equality frame

The problem framed by both proponents and opponents was inequality in the school system and that not every student had equal opportunities for a good education. Things such as socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicity or living situations affected the way students received education and the performance of students. The consensus was that *“All Children, regardless of where they live or what their social background looks like, have the right to an equal*

education”^{viii} (AB Editorial 2003-05-20, p 2). This statement were not called into question by anyone, both opponents and proponents formulated their framing with this basic problem as a template.

The cause according to opponents was that market thinking does not take the equality aspect into consideration. They question the open market policies that are applied in education and view it as a cause to the problem.

Compulsory schooling is the foundation of the education system. All children, regardless of where they live or what their social background looks like, have the right to an equal education. Ultimately the responsibility lies with the municipalities who unlike private enterprises cannot choose which needs to cater to.^{ix} (AB Editorial 2003-05-20, p 2).

Proponents on the other hand frame the cause as the old system with only public school and no ability for most people to choose. In the old system only wealthy persons could chose schools. Students that lived in poor areas with bad schools were forced to go to them and that only increased the segregation in society since “*Wealthy families have always been able to live in attractive areas, in the vicinity of respectable schools^x*” (Friborg 2003-02-21, p 2). Since placement in schools in the old system was decided by which school you lived closest to, residential segregation replicated in the schools.

Solutions as framed by opponents were not a complete abolishment of the charter school system; however the responsibility was put on the government to ensure equal treatment. One author argues that “*the Swedish National Agency for Education must immediately acquire knowledge and methods which makes it possible to effectively reveal anomalies. Otherwise the charter school system is at risk of becoming a closed world and an obstacle to integration*”^{xi} (AB Editorial 2003-05-10, p 2).

Another author uses the same type of argument and that we should question the amount of the vouchers:

The costs for the municipalities cannot be a main argument in the discussion about charter schools and freedom of choice. The central issue must be the needs of the students. However when the system threatens the goal of an equal education one has to be able to question both the requirements for starting a charter school and the amount of the vouchers^{xii} (AB Editorial 2003-05-20, p 2).

The solution according to proponents was clear, the charter school reform and the voucher system reduced segregation through free choice. By making it possible for every student to choose whichever school they want without regards to where they live it had become possible for students in poor areas with bad schools to choose good schools in other areas. One such example of this solution framing is:

Today students from worn-down suburbs also have the opportunity to apply to these. Children of immigrants have the opportunity not to go to schools where they are not able to learn Swedish properly. But schools in burdened areas also have a chance to develop a profile and increase the quality of their education, something there are also several examples of ^{xiii}(Friborg 2003-02-21, p 2).

If we compare proponents and opponents we find that they were both concerned with segregation identifying it as a major problem within the school system. However their solution was the exact opposite, while proponents claimed that public schools were unable to break the segregation already present in society since students would be assigned to the nearest school. Opponents made the opposite claim that charter schools striving for high results would deliberately select better performers as students, students that tended to be ethnic Swedes with well-educated parents that is.

6.2.1.3 Freedom frame

The problem implied here was the issue of rights being violated due to the inflexible nature of public schools where students were forced into the same education.

An increased number of charter schools and expanded opportunities for students to choose between different public schools have served to make the Swedish school less uniform. There are more ways to work in today than before ^{xiv}(Åman 2003-11-27, p 2).

This statement implies an inherent value of choice. The implied cause framed by proponents was the old system with only public schools, however this was not mentioned clearly in the articles and it is an underlying point of view. This is implied by stating that it is better today and the inherent value of choice.

The solution stressed was not merely the introduction of charter schools but also the ability for students to choose between different public schools. Within the freedom frame arguments were based less on strict market thinking but more on a general idea of the value of plurality

and normative values. The general argument being that “*when politicians hand over the steering of the schools to entrepreneurs it opens doors for more diversity*”^{xv} (Schulte 2003-05-22, p 16).

6.2.1.4 Common values

The problem framed by opponents was that children would not learn the common values that are promoted by society. As one author states: “*The program revealed how religious charter schools rejects the duty of schools set up by society and Swedish law*”^{xvi} (AB Editorial 2003-05-10, p 2). Furthermore they argue that with schools being religious and children also being taught the same values at home would therefore cement the cultural and religious beliefs. This would not give children a chance to develop their own values and beliefs.

SSU supports religious freedom. Therefore we are opposed to religious charter schools. Children should have the right to find their own faith. If the home and school environments are affected by the same religion it reduces the Childs chances of finding their own way^{xvii} (Damberg 2003-06-28, p 4).

Proponents counter framed the problem with the emphasis on students’ rights to their own culture and religion, and that these rights were not met in public schools where all children were taught the same values. They argued that the existence of religious schools was a prerequisite for children to exercise their right to their own culture, language and faith.

He writes that the Swedish government shall respect and realize the human rights of the children, but forgets that all children have the rights to their own language, culture and faith! [...]The Religious schools have a role to fulfill in this respect. Review, transparency and inspection are needed, but do not reject the good with the bad!^{xviii} (Dunér 2003-05-24, p 39).

Opponents framed the cause as more of a practical issue. The cause according to them was the legal right to start religious charter schools and that it is impossible for religious charter schools to combine the curriculum with the religion. As stated by one of the debaters:

According to the curriculum all education shall therefore be non-confessional. However SSU believes that it is a practical impossibility to respect the curriculums demand of universal and unpartisan education while running a religious charter school^{xix} (Damberg 2003-06-28, p 4).

The solution to the problem for opponents was that religious schools should be abolished. There were several arguments why. Learning the value of equal rights was one of the main arguments, and this connects to the inequalities being emphasized by religious schools.

Religious schools are not regular schools that strive for modernism and the development of society but rather work towards gender discrimination, segregation and alienation. Girls and boys are often not allowed to play together or sit next to one another. If you are not taught from the school bench or from childhood to have respect for each other, how will you then learn equality?^{xx} (Moloudi 2003-05-17, p 39).

The fact that religious charter schools are segregated in that they are only attended by students of a certain faith is assumed here and the solution suggested is directed at all children learning the basic values of society rather than there being a good mix of ethnicities and religions in schools.

The solution argued by proponents was that religious charter schools should be allowed. One proponent argued for more religious schools, and especially that municipalities should manage some of them since the only option at that time was religious charter schools managed by private enterprises.

If you want your children to go to a school that teaches the faith and culture you are a part of you are mostly required to let them attend a charter school. With a public alternative you would be able to receive such an education but still know that the school has no affiliation with any particular congregation^{xxi} (Fransson 2003-06-24, p 27).

Religious schools managed by municipalities would thus give parents and children more options and the schools would be more independent.

6.2.2 2011

This part of the chapter answers the second and third research questions for 2011.

6.2.2.1 *Efficiency frame*

The problem framed by proponents was the implied inefficiency of the public schools.

The charter schools also improve the public schools. My children go to a public school. If it were to be surrounded by charter schools we would still keep them there: it is very good.

And it is obvious that it has been inspired by the ideas and commitment of charter schools.
^{xxii}(SvD Editorial 2011-05-23, p 4).

Since charter schools were able to make a profit they were seen as superior to public schools because the profits work as an incentive. One author argues that *“many of the country’s best schools are charter schools^{xxiii}”* and goes on to state that *“In many cases the opportunity to make a profit has contributed to the success^{xxiv}”* (SvD Editorial 2011-06-30,p 4)

The fact that charter schools produced better results also received some attention and was used as another argument for the fact that there was a problem with public schools. As one author states: *“A recent study conducted by the Institute of Economic Affairs in London showed that Swedish charter schools reaches better results than the public schools^{xxv}”* (Coulson 2011-07-10, p 6).

Opponents were mainly concerned with results rather than costs. Swedish education both in the form of public and charter school were seen as losing ground internationally.

The program showed how the charter school expansion had created -besides profits in the billions and tax evasion- grade inflation, reduced amount of teachers per student and worse service^{xxvi} (Hall 2011-12-19, p 6).

Aside from results opponents pointed to other factors such as the amount of teachers per student and the competence of teachers. Costs in schools were not mentioned.

The cause was framed by proponents as the lack of profit as a motivational tool for public schools which used ineffective systems but had no reason to stop doing so.

But the offensive part is not the profits, but that the public schools which receives the same amount of money does not run better. What the charter schools collect in profit is wasted by the public schools^{xxvii} (Gudmundson 2011-02-20, p 5).

Once again free-market thinking was the basis of this framing, there is no conflict between profit and quality, and they go hand in hand.

Opponents identified the cause as competition which trough grade inflation leads to lower quality, high grades rather than a high quality was used to attract students.

The competition for students is considered the reason for principals pushing for higher grades. A school with many students receives much money while a school with few students receives little. Proponents of free choice in schools say that the freedom to choose favours the quality. However the free school choice and competition for students between charter schools and public schools have contributed to grade inflation^{xxviii} (Thulin 2011-11-28, p 6).

Competition was seen as a cause of problems rather than a solution since it forced schools offer high grades easily to make students want to go to them.

The solution for proponents was profit as an incentive; market-thinking would lead to more efficient schools.

The desire to make profit has a tendency to deal with bottlenecks and lackluster solutions that otherwise would persist. Often the better school may indeed be the one that is collecting profit. The basic idea that the best school is the one that is favoured by the market, by the students who make their choice, is correct^{xxix} (SvD Editorial 2011-06-30, p 4).

The solution for proponents was not to impose restrictions on charter schools but rather to make public schools work more like charter schools. However no proponent made a clear suggestion for this, most implied that public schools in the current system needed a change.

Opponents did not necessarily want to abolish charter schools but rather to increase the amount of regulation from the central authorities.

The quality demands for both new schools and existing schools must be increased. In order to be allowed to start a school the school has to meet clear and concrete quality demands supported by the school law. It could be such a thing as really giving a student that does not meet the knowledge requirements proper support. It can also be that the school keeps the number of teachers per student, teacher competence or the time spent teaching too low and systematically forces the responsibility over to the individual student or his/her family^{xxx} (Damberg 2011-06-29, p 6).

Opponents did not call for a regression to the old system at all but once again called for more regulation.

6.2.2.2 Equality frame

The problem framed by opponents in 2011 in the equality frame was segregation. The privatization of education had created a problem with segregation between rich and poor, between high performing students and low performing students and between people with different backgrounds.

Instead of conducting policy in a way as to make sure all schools are equally good a system is preserved where poor are separated from rich, educated from uneducated, Swedes from immigrants ^{xxxii}(Swedin 2011-05-17, p 2).

Proponents framed the problem as segregation as well.

They show that the charter school reform has not enlarged the inequalities between low and high performing students. However the segregation between schools have increased since the early 90s, they attribute this in part to residential segregation... ^{xxxiii} (DN Editorial 2011-05-18, p 2).

The cause of the problem for opponents was privatization of education, and more specifically the emergence of charter schools. Some authors claimed that the charter schools were entirely to blame for this development and some argued that it was part of a greater cause to the problem.

The uninhibited expansion of private schools, or charter schools as they are called these days, is part of the explanation. It has led to increased differences between high and low performing students while the social segregation in schools have increased significantly ^{xxxiii}(Silfverstrand 2011-03-14, p 6).

This author is more moderate in his approach and is only stating that charter schools are part of the cause. But some go further in their explanation of the cause to the problem of segregation in the school system.

The school investigation conducted by Aftonbladet reveals how the free school choice made the school into a sorting machine where poor is separated from rich, educated from uneducated, Swedes from immigrants. The winners, at least financially, are the charter schools and the losers are the public schools ^{xxxiv}(Swedin 2011-05-14, p 2).

The blame here lies with the system itself and freedom of choice which leads to inequalities, and that the only ones to gain from this system are the owners of charter schools.

The solution was not clearly stated among opponents of privatization of education. One author is suggesting that by adjusting the voucher system according to the abilities of the student, instead of having a fixed amount for each student, would create more equality.

Too few municipalities connects the amount of the vouchers to the students' abilities-the girl with two highly educated parents gives the same amount of money to the school as the recently arrived immigrant boy with a mother who has not gone to school.^{xxxv} (Fridén 2011-04-22, p 2).

The main idea for the solution is that the need for each student should be weighted in. If this became the norm in the system, the school system would become more equal.

The solution to segregation due to living situation is according to proponents the charter school system. Students that live in areas with bad schools had received the opportunity to go to other schools in other areas. This was due to freedom of choice system which *“unlike previous systems where only a few had the opportunity and ability to choose school, the reform has made it possible for everyone to choose, regardless of background and status*^{xxxvi} (Ludvigsson 2011-11-29, p 4).

Proponents believed that the privatization of education that has occurred in Sweden has been the solution to many of the equality problems in the school system. The changes had according to them been successful and created more equality among students with different backgrounds and abilities. The idea with the Swedish charter school system is that everyone has equal right to choose a school and that it is not due to financial capabilities or background, and this system is the essence of equality according to proponents as stated by the author above. Proponents argued that segregation in schools occurred due to residential segregation rather than the charter school system. They claimed the changes in the Swedish school system had created a more equal school system *“...that does not differ between those who can pay for their education and those who cannot”*^{xxxvii} (Engström 2011-06-05, p 6).

The equality frame as used by both proponents and opponents presumed a strong support for equality and inclusion. The fact that any type of segregation occurred was considered a problem for both sides, only the causes and solutions were different.

6.2.2.3 Freedom frame

The problem framed by proponents in 2011 was the lack of choice in the previous system and the fact that some people wanted to go back to this system. What was mostly focused on was the choice for students.

Before the reform a student was more or less stuck with a certain school, even with certain classmates. Now the opportunity came for students and parents to break free. It became a tool for finding new friends, a better school environment, better teachers. Motivated students gained whole new opportunities to find an environment where their thirst for knowledge was encouraged, not suppressed^{xxxviii} (DN Editorial 2011-11-29, p 4).

The practical aspects of choice were mentioned and an increased efficiency was slightly implied however the core of the argument was that choice had an inherent value.

In 2011 opponents had started to use counter-framing within the freedom frame as well, they pointed to the right for taxpayers not to have their money go to private profits. The framing of the problem focused on the very fact that profits were extracted and stated that this was wrong.

Stop profits in the school sector. Surplus should be reinvested in the schools. It is completely unreasonable that scarce tax money is used to enrich the owners of the school groups^{xxxix} (Svallfors 2011-04-04, p 2).

While opponents sometimes stated that money should be reinvested in the schools rather than go towards profits there were usually no detailed arguments about the lack of quality in the schools, the focus was on the profits themselves.

The cause for proponents was a difference of opinion and the fact that some people did not value freedom of choice as much.

What is most tragic is that it is not only the left who casts suspicion on the charter schools. The right-wing parties who once initiated the charter school reform have yielded for an irrelevant and ideologically motivated campaign against people's right to choose a school. Because the criticism is not about individual aspects, it is fundamental. In practice whether free school choice even has a value is questioned^{xl} (Uvell 2011-03-04, p 6).

The debate is called ideologically motivated which is implied as a bad thing which in turn implies that the arguments in favor of freedom of choice are more reasonable.

While opponents framed the cause as *“Sweden is the only country where tax money are allowed to go straight into the pockets of charter school owners”*^{xli} (Hall 2011-12-19, p 6).

The implied cause to the problem was that the government was allowing profits to be collected. While the owners of charter schools were often depicted in an unfavorable manner the government was given full blame for allowing their behavior. There is no moral statement regarding how people behave when running charter schools here just a simple statement giving the government full responsibility.

Following on the cause the solution is logically to prohibit profits from being collected; sometimes a complete abolishment of charter schools was even called for.

Free entrepreneurship in the school sector should be abolished. The right to start a new charter school cannot be considered more important than the municipalities’ responsibility to make sure the school system really works^{xlii}(Swedin 2011-05-14, p 2).

Here the freedom values of proponents are being questioned, it is not the fact that freedom of choice is a bad thing, just that other values are more important. Proponents on the other hand continue to celebrate the freedom of choice and the diversity created by charter schools. The underlying argument is that charter schools should be allowed. That it is something inherently good and a question of freedom for students and parents. The SNS report published in 2011 sparked the debate about privatization of education and a lot of comments. A charter school proponent comment the report like this: *“Secondly, the researchers miss that the aim of the reforms was not cost efficiency but rather increased freedom of choice and diversity”*^{xliii}(Johnson 2011-09-11, p 5).

6.2.3 COMPARISON

The main difference in the efficiency frame between 2003 and 2011 was the introduction of results as a measure of efficiency by opponents. In 2003 opponents only looked at the costs for the municipalities when arguing within the efficiency frame while in 2011 claims that charter schools led to an overall reduction in the quality of education measured through results

emerged. Grade inflation was cited as proof that there was a problem of quality in the school system and competition was to blame both in 2011 and 2003 when costs were framed as the problem. For proponents the framing looked very similar in 2003 and 2011.

Equality was the frame that changed the least between years. Both in 2003 and 2011 proponents and opponents agreed that segregation was a problem. However they disagreed on the impact of charter schools, proponents held them up as a solution while opponents claimed they were the cause of the segregation.

The main change occurring within the freedom frame was the fact that opponents started to use it as well as proponents. While proponents use of the frame remained constant with an emphasis on the inherent value of choice opponents introduced a debate about profits and claimed that this was an improper use of taxpayer money. Proponents did respond to this but mostly within the efficiency frame where they claimed that profit was an incitement for increased efficiency.

The common value frame which had been used both by proponents and opponents in 2003 had completely disappeared from the debate in 2011. The debate in 2003 started due to a TV-program which exposed irregularities within religious charter schools, in 2011 this debate had ended and common values were no longer discussed in relation to charter schools.

7. CONCLUSION

According to Blyth (2001) the introduction of ideas creates an intellectual path dependency which steers the ideational climate in a certain direction. Looking at our data we can see some support for this. Whether these ideas or the election and re-election of a right wing government in Sweden during the 2000s is the independent variable is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss, however we do find some support that an ideational shift is occurring.

Looking at our data we find that there has been a change in which values that are emphasized in the debate by both proponents and opponents. The values favored by opponents in 2003 occurred less in 2011, most notably the common value frame which was the most favored by opponents in 2003 (50 percent of opponent frames where common value frames). This frame had completely disappeared in 2011. But the adaptation to the arguments used by proponents can also be seen within the frames. When discussing efficiency in 2003 opponents focused solely on the issue of cost through the perspective of the municipalities. In 2011 they were no longer able to hold up normative issues such as common values as the sole argument against privatization but had to accept the efficiency logic of proponents which focused on measurable results, to counter these arguments they had to appeal to the same values but use different causal claims (charter school reduces efficiency rather than charter schools teaches wrong values).

The emergence of the freedom frame within the opponents' arguments can be seen as further evidence for this shift; in 2003 opponents did not bother with the freedom frame giving the arguments about the inherent value of choice no heed. In 2011 however opponents had started using the freedom frame and claiming that free entrepreneurship led to taxpayer money being misused in the form of collecting profits from charter schools. This can be seen as a use of counter framing and in combination with the disappearance of the common values frame in 2011 lends some support to Brewer & Gross' (2005) assertion that counter-framing works to narrow the focus to certain issues.

The debate has focused towards more market oriented issues, such as efficiency and freedom (free entrepreneurship, freedom of choice). More traditional education values such as equality (equal results, equality among students, segregation) did not disappear from the debate completely however, the equality frame is a strong presence during both years and did not

change significantly in its usage indicating a continued strong presence of ideas of equality in the Swedish debate climate.

Looking at the use of counter-framing during both years there is some cause to believe that government has an effect on the ideational climate in society. In 2003 when a Social-democratic government was in power 48 percent of proponent frames were counter-frames compared to 11 percent for opponents. While in 2011 when a Centre-right government was in power proponents used 21 percent counter frames compared to 72 percent for opponents. There is thus empirical support for a correlation between which government is in power and which ideas are dominant in the debate.

We cannot say if the shift occurred because proponents as actors were successful in setting the agenda of the debate about privatization of education, or if ideas of privatization have been widely accepted in the Swedish society and the actors in the debate has responded to this.

This thesis has found how the debate regarding privatization of education looks like and that an ideational shift has occurred in the wider Swedish debate as well as among the policymakers as found by previous research. It has also found empirical support of the correlation between which government is in power and which ideas are dominant in the debate. It is also clear that market oriented ideas has become more important in the debate, and are thus some evidence for an ideational shift. Due to limited data and scope this thesis has not been able to draw any conclusions about the cause to this shift. The direction of causality can also not be established with our design. We cannot know whether governments cause an ideational shift or an ideational shift causes governments to change. In order to research those issues there would be a need to consider more variables and a larger amount of data to determine if the ideational climate changes as a result of an election or vice versa. Or if perhaps there is some third variable which affects both.

The questions that future research should ask is whether the shift is due to actors (government, interest groups, think tanks, etc.) or that the values in society has become more neo-liberal since this thesis cannot exclude either of the possibilities. For example by looking at whether the framing changes back if a left-wing government is next elected, or by comparing more points in time to see if the use of framing is consistently changing in the direction of more acceptance for privatization or if it fluctuates over time.

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ⁱ ”Ansvarskännande politiker bör i stället granska varför ett stort antal elever valt bort en viss skola. Finner de att elevflykten beror på att skolan inte är bra nog bör de dra de rätta slutsatserna. Undermåliga skolor ska läggas ned. Inte drivas med konstgjord andning”.

ⁱⁱ ”... tillkomsten av fristående skolor leder i vissa delar av landet till ökade kostnader för kommuner”.

ⁱⁱⁱ ”Skolor som hotas av elevflykt kan inte fortsätta att låsas som ingenting, såsom de kunde förr då eleverunderlaget var garanterat. Om problemskolor inte snabbt vidtar åtgärder tynar de bort. Det fria skolvalet avslöjar skolor som inte håller måttet”.

^{iv} ”De kommunala skolorna är skyldiga att omgående erbjuda alla elever som bor i upptagningsområdet en plats i skolan. Detta leder till att det blir betydligt svårare att planera verksamheten på ett ekonomiskt effektivt sätt.”

^v ”Det finns sedan skolpengs reformen många goda exempel på hur friskolor själva löser problem och utvecklar idéer som kommunala skolor aldrig gjort. Friskolan fungerar på många platser som en inspirationskälla för den kommunala skolan och konkurrensen ställer också sunda krav”.

^{vi} ”De alternativa skolorna främjar variationer på samma tema och är i kombination med skolpengen dessutom viktiga för att genom konkurrens höja den allmänna nivån inom skolväsendet”.

^{vii} ”Vi anser att dagens ersättningssystem till friskolan måste förändras. Ersättningen till friskolan urholkar ekonomin för den kommunala skolan och för de kommunala verksamheter som får stå tillbaka på grund av den kostnadsdrivande finansieringen av friskolorna.”

^{viii} ”Alla barn, oavsett var de bor eller hur deras sociala bakgrund ser ut, har rätt till en likvärdig utbildning”

^{ix} ”Skolplikten är utbildningssystemets grundbult. Alla barn, oavsett var de bor eller hur deras sociala bakgrund ser ut, har rätt till en likvärdig utbildning. Annars riskerar friskolesystemet att bli en sluten värld och ett hinder för integrationen”

^x ”I alla tider har rika familjer kunnat välja att bosätta sig i attraktiva områden, i närheten av ansedda skolor.”

^{xi} ”Skolverket måste omedelbart bygga upp kunskap och metoder som gör det möjligt att effektivt avslöja missförhållanden. Annars riskerar friskolesystemet att bli en sluten värld och ett hinder för integrationen”.

^{xii} ”Kommunernas kostnader kan inte vara ett huvudargument i diskussionen om friskolor och valfrihet. Det är elevernas behov som måste stå i centrum. Men när systemet hotar målet om en likvärdig utbildning måste både villkoren för att få starta en friskola och ersättningsnivåerna kunna ifrågasättas”.

^{xiii} ”I dag har även elever från nedslitna förorter möjlighet att söka sig dit. Invandrabarn har möjlighet att välja bort skolor där de inte har en chans att lära sig svenska ordentligt. Men också i belastade bostadsområden har skolor en chans att profilera sig och lyfta kvaliteten på undervisningen, vilket det också finns flera exempel på”.

^{xiv} ”Ökat antal friskolor och vidgade möjligheter för eleverna att välja mellan olika kommunala skolor har gjort den svenska skolan mindre enhetlig. Det finns i dag flera olika sätt att arbeta på än tidigare”.

^{xv} ”När politiken lämnar över styrningen till entreprenörer öppnas dörren för en bredare mångfald i undervisningen”.

^{xvi} ”Programmet avslöjade hur konfessionella friskolor ställer sig utanför samhällets uppdrag till skolan och den svenska lagen”.

^{xvii} ”SSU är för religionsfrihet. Just därför är vi emot religiösa friskolor. Barn ska ha rätt att hitta sin egen tro. Om både hemmiljön och undervisningen i skolan präglas av en och samma religion minskar det barnets möjlighet att finna sin egen väg.”

^{xviii} ”Han skriver att den svenska regeringen ska respektera och förverkliga barnens mänskliga rättigheter, men han glömmer att varje barn har rätt till sitt eget språk, sin egen kultur och sin egen tro! [...]De konfessionella skolorna har en roll att fylla i detta avseende. Översyn, insyn och granskning behövs, men förkasta inte det goda med det onda!”

^{xix} ”Enligt läroplanen ska därför all undervisning i skolan vara ickekonfessionell. SSU tror dock att det i praktiken är en omöjlig kombination att driva en konfessionell skola och samtidigt respektera läroplanens krav på allsidig och opartisk undervisning”.

^{xx} ”Religiösa skolor är inte vanliga skolor som strävar efter modernism och samhällets utveckling utan arbetar för könsdiskriminering, segregation och utanförskap. Flickor och pojkar kan ofta inte leka tillsammans eller sitta bredvid varandra. Om man inte lär sig från skolbänken eller från barndomen att ha respekt för varandra, hur ska man då lära sig jämlikhet och jämställdhet?”

^{xxi} ”Vill man låta sina barn gå i en skola som ger undervisning i den tro och kultur man tillhör är man i stort sett hänvisad till en friskola. Med ett kommunalt alternativ skulle man kunna få en sådan undervisning men samtidigt veta att skolan inte är knuten till en viss församling”.

^{xxii} ”Dessutom lyfter friskolorna de kommunala skolorna. Mina barn går i en kommunal skola. Skulle den omringas av friskolor kommer vi ändå att låta dem gå kvar: den är jättebra. Och det är uppenbart att den inspirerats av friskolornas idéer och engagemang.”

^{xxiii} ”Många av landets bästa skolor är friskolor.”

^{xxiv} ” I många fall har chansen att driva skolan med vinst bidragit till framgångarna.”

^{xxv} ”I en studie utförd av Institute for Economic Affairs i London visades nyligen att svenska friskolor når betydligt bättre akademiska resultat än de offentliga skolorna.”

^{xxvi} ”Programmet visade hur friskoleexpansionen förutom miljardvinster och skatteflykt skapat betygsinflation, minskad lärartäthet och sämre service”.

^{xxvii} ”Men det stötande är inte vinsterna, utan att de kommunala skolorna, som får lika mycket bidrag per elev, inte går bättre. Det friskolorna gör i vinst, det slösar kommunerna bort.”

^{xxviii} ”Orsaken till rektorernas påtryckningar anses vara konkurrensen om eleverna. En skola med många elever får mycket pengar, en skola med få elever får lite pengar. Förespråkare för det fria skolvalet säger att valfriheten

gynnar kvaliteten. Men det fria skolvalet och konkurrensen om elever mellan friskolor och kommunala skolor har bidragit till en betygsinflation.”

^{xxix} ”Vinstintresset har en tendens att ta tag i flaskhalsar och bristfälliga lösningar som annars hade fått bestå. Många gånger kan den bättre skolan mycket väl vara den som drivs med vinst. Grundidén att den bästa skolan är den som premieras av marknaden, det vill säga eleverna som ska göra sitt val, är riktig.”

^{xxx} ”Kvalitetskraven för både befintliga skolor och nya skolor måste skärpas. För att få starta en skola ska skolan uppfylla tydliga och konkreta kvalitetskrav som har stöd i skollagen. Det kan handla om att skolan verkligen sätter in ordentliga stödsatser när en elev inte uppnår kunskapsmålen. Det kan också handla om att skolan inte håller nere på lärartätheten, lärarkompetensen eller undervisningstiden och systematiskt tvingar över ansvaret på den enskilde eleven eller dennes familj.”

^{xxxi} ”I stället för att föra en politik där man ser till att alla skolor är lika bra konserveras ett system där fattiga skiljs från rika, högutbildade från lågutbildade, svenskar från invandrare.”

^{xxxii} ”De visar att friskolereformen inte skapat större ojämlikhet mellan låg- och högpresterande elever. Däremot har segregationen mellan skolor ökat sedan början av 90-talet, något som enligt utredarna delvis beror på boendesegregation...”

^{xxxiii} Den ohämmade expansionen av privatskolor, eller friskolor som de benämns numera, är en del av förklaringen. Den har lett till att klyftorna mellan hög- och lågpresterande elever har ökat samtidigt som den sociala segregationen i skolan har ökat markant.”

^{xxxiv} ”Aftonbladets skolgranskning berättar om hur det fria skolvalet gjorde skolan till en sorteringsmaskin där fattiga skiljs från rika, högutbildade från lågutbildade, svenskar från invandrare. Vinnarna, åtminstone ekonomiskt, är friskolorna och förlorarna de kommunala skolorna.”

^{xxxv} ”Alltför få kommuner kopplar skolpengen till elevernas förutsättningar-flickan med två akademikerföräldrar innebär samma pengar för skolan som den nyanlända flyktingpojken med en mamma som inte gått i skolan.”

^{xxxvi} ”Till skillnad från tidigare system där endast ett fåtal hade möjlighet och förutsättning att välja skola, blev valet i och med reformen en möjlighet för var och en, alldeles oavsett bakgrund och status.”

^{xxxvii} ”ett gemensamt skolsystem som inte gör skillnad på de som kan betala för utbildning och de som inte kan det.”

^{xxxviii} ”Före reformen var en elev mer eller mindre fastlåst vid en viss skola, till och med vid vissa klasskamrater. Nu kom möjligheten för elever och föräldrar att bryta sig loss. Det blev ett verktyg att söka nya vänner, en bättre skolmiljö, bättre lärare. Studiemotiverade elever fick helt andra möjligheter att hitta en omgivning där deras kunskapsörst uppmuntrades, inte trycktes ned.”

^{xxxix} ”Stoppa vinstuttagen i skolsektorn. Överskott ska återinvesteras i verksamheten. Det är helt orimligt att knappa skattepengar används för att berika skolkoncernernas ägare.”

^{xl} ”Det mest tragiska är att misstänkliggörandet av friskolorna inte är begränsat till vänstern. De borgerliga partier som en gång genomdrev friskolereformen har lagt sig platt för en osaklig och ideologiskt motiverad kampanj mot människors rätt att själva välja skola. För kritiken handlar inte om enskildheter eller skönhetsfläckar, den är fundamental. I praktiken ifrågasätts huruvida fritt skolval över huvud taget har ett värde.”

^{xli} ”Sverige är det enda land som accepterar att skattemedel till friskolor går rätt ner i ägarnas fickor.”

^{xlii} ”Den fria etableringsrätten på skolområdet borde avskaffas. Rätten att starta en ny friskola kan inte anses viktigare än kommuners ansvar för att skolsystemet verkligen fungerar.”

^{xliii} ”För det andra missar forskarna att huvudpoängen med reformerna inte var kostnadsjakt utan ökad valfrihet och mångfald”