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**PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDING FOR LOCAL PUBLIC PARK AND RECREATION**

**SERVICES: ATTITUDES, IDEOLOGIES, AND VALUES**

A Dissertation in

Recreation, Park and Tourism Management

by

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation was to better understand the factors that drive acceptance of or opposition to traditional and alternative funding strategies for local public park and recreation services. Traditionally such services are financed primarily through tax-based allocations. Recently however, the public funding model for these services has become increasingly inadequate and inconsistent. Following a “golden era” spanning the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, support for local public parks and recreation fell dramatically. Overall funding for parks and recreation fell, funding decreased relative to other public services, and full-time jobs were lost at a hitherto unprecedented rate. As a result, alternative funding strategies have garnered increased attention as a potential method of retaining service quality and delivery.

Privatization, any activity that reduces the public’s role in the financing and delivery of public services, is one such alternative strategy, and the focus of this dissertation. Although privatization may indeed mean selling public lands and facilities to the highest bidder, it is more likely to be a matter of degree. Individual practices such as corporate sponsorship, outsourcing, and increased reliance on volunteers are all examples of specific privatization practices. Just how “public” and how “private” any agency actually is may be a matter of debate, but implementing these practices is part of an incremental process moving an agency along a spectrum from fully public to fully private. Understanding constituent support for or opposition to these practices, as well as the factors that shape those attitudes, is of critical concern to practitioners who wish to explore privatization as a funding mechanism while maintaining public support and goodwill.

Chapter One serves as an introduction to the concept of privatization, as well as an overview of the current public funding situation. Chapter Five provides key findings, implications for practitioners within parks and recreation, and potential future research directions. The body of this dissertation consists of three individual studies, which comprise the second, third, and fourth chapters.

The first study (Chapter Two) provides an overview of attitudes towards privatization as a whole, towards individual privatization practices, and the factors that shape those attitudes. Attitudinal structure, as well as the level of ambivalence felt by respondents are also assessed. Within group differences are then presented, allowing for an understanding of how members of certain groups perceive the suite of privatization activities.

Study two (Chapter Three) consists of a contingent valuation analysis, which calculates the relative percentage of tax-funding respondents would allocate to parks and recreation and nine competitive local public services. The role of values and attitudes in explaining net allocations to parks and recreation is then explored using a model based on the cognitive hierarchy of human behavior.

The final study (Chapter Four) explores the role of values, ideology, and attitudes in shaping support for the implementation of privatization practices. A model based on the cognitive hierarchy of human behavior is presented and tested.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Introduction**

As public funding for local park and recreation agencies becomes increasingly scarce (Barrett, Pitas, & Mowen, 2017; Pitas, Barrett, & Mowen, 2017), alternative financing strategies are receiving increased attention and scrutiny. One such alternative approach to the funding and management of local public park and recreation services is the introduction of privatization practices: any activity that reduces the role of the public in the financing, delivery, or management of services (Crompton, 1998). Although this may refer to the whole-scale transfer of ownership of parks or recreation facilities to private companies, privatization in the public park and recreation context is more likely a matter of degree. Various practices such as corporate sponsorship, solicitation of philanthropic support, reliance on volunteers, and outsourcing of services are all examples of privatization. Although privatization is not new in the delivery of public services, it may be that the economic difficulties associated with the Great Recession have increased the interest in, and prevalence of, such practices.

Past research on privatization in the park and recreation context has focused on linking acceptability of specific practices to managerial, contextual, and individual traits, often in the context of a single municipality or region. Existing research has provided insight into how acceptable various privatization practices are, and to a limited extent, why such practices are acceptable or unacceptable. Despite this increasingly in-depth understanding, this dissertation applies a novel approach, values theory, to the issue of privatization. This dissertation will examine how values and attitudes interact with and influence acceptability of privatization, and how those attitudes interact with support for the traditional public funding model. Because decisions makers in the park and recreation context must consider the public as an

important stakeholder group, a sample tailored to generally match the demographic profile of the American population will be used.

This introductory chapter serves to orient the reader by providing background literature on the state of public funding for park and recreation services, as well as privatization as an alternative strategy. Examples of privatization within the park and recreation context, as well as in other public services, will be discussed. This chapter also introduces values theory and the cognitive hierarchy, both of which will serve as the overarching theoretical foundation for much of this dissertation. Background information, as well as a description of values and their potential relationship to acceptability of privatization practices will also be discussed.

This chapter will conclude with a brief description of the three individual studies that will form the body of this dissertation. The first study details attitudes and attitude ambivalence towards privatization as a whole, as well as towards several specific privatization practices. Several demographic and individual factors are examined for their relationship to acceptability or opposition. The second study involves a contingent valuation analysis of spending allocations among local public services, including parks and recreation. The role of values and attitudes in shaping those allocations is explored. The third study examines the role of values, ideology, and attitudes in shaping support for privatization. A thorough description of each individual study will be provided in subsequent chapters, including specific literature and methods.

### **Public Funding for Parks and Recreation**

Maintaining an adequate and reliable source of funding has long been cited as a major challenge to the operation of public parks and recreation agencies (e.g. Barrett, Pitas, &

Mowen, 2017; Crompton, 1999; Walls, 2009). As with other public services, parks have traditionally been funded through the use of tax-based general funds, often supplemented to a limited degree by other revenue sources such as user fees and concessions sales. Under this arrangement, parks must convince stakeholder groups that their services are worthy of receiving taxpayer money (Crompton, 1999). Because other public services are funded in a similar fashion, there exists the potential for significant competition between multiple agencies over a limited supply of funding (Kaczynski & Crompton, 2004).

Despite a growing awareness of their potential contributions, parks typically receive only a small proportion of the available public funding. In a 2006 analysis of local government spending on public agencies from 1989-2003, Kaczynski and Crompton found that parks and recreation received 2.2-2.6% of total annual spending. This placed parks and recreation at eighth of the ten services analyzed, ahead of only corrections and libraries. However, that over that period funding for parks and recreation increased by 63.2%, a greater rate than any other public service, possibly signaling an increased appreciation and understanding of the value of public parks over time by local governments and decision makers.

In a replication of the 2006 study, Barrett and colleagues (2017) found that parks and recreation accounted for approximately the same proportion of local government spending from 2003-2013 (2.29-2.55%). Once again, parks and recreation was eighth of ten services, ahead of only corrections and libraries. Unlike the previous analysis however, funding for parks and recreation increased by only 4.26% over this time period, ranking it seventh of ten services analyzed. The authors suggest that the cause for this shift was the period of economic instability and austerity caused by the housing crisis and subsequent Great Recession. Parks

and recreation experienced the highest percentage decrease in expenditures from 2009-2012, signaling the tenuous position of public funding for parks and recreation. It appears that greater public awareness of the benefits of parks and recreation does not necessarily translate into funding support in tough economic times; when funding is truly limited, parks and recreation are among the first services to be cut.

In a separate analysis, Crompton and Kaczynski (2003) tracked long-term trends in capital and operational funding for parks and recreation services, as well as employment trends from 1964-2000. The authors found that spending support for parks and recreation services during the late 20<sup>th</sup> century was at historic highs, and predicted that this would be considered the “golden era” of local park and recreation services. In another replication, Pitas, Barrett, and Mowen (2017) tracked the same trends from 2000-2013. The replication found that although high levels of spending support persisted until 2008, the economic crisis of the Great Recession impacted parks and recreation in a significant, negative fashion. In adjusted 2013 dollars, spending on parks and recreation fell annually from 2008 to 2013, and were reduced by a greater amount than competing services. Local parks and recreation was disproportionately cut full-time positions in response to the economic downturn, with more than 14,000 full-time positions lost in the post-recession period, while during the same period more than 9,000 part-time positions were added.

The recent financial squeeze experienced by public parks and recreation agencies comes in addition to persistent neo-conservative pressure to reduce government funding of public services. Whereas public funding of parks and recreation boomed in the post-war years of the 1940's (Runte, 1997), public preference began to shift towards small government and fiscal conservatism during the 1970's (Shultis, 2005). Although outside factors such as

globalization may have been to blame for the falling wages and economic stagnation of the period, governments from the local to federal level received the brunt of the public's anger, and as a result expenditure of taxpayer money continues to come under increasing scrutiny (More, 2005). Fiscal conservatism remains a prominent political paradigm, adding to the insecurity surrounding funding of public parks and recreation.

Nollenberger and colleagues (2012) analyzed respondents' willingness to trade between various public services, including parks and recreation. Respondents were asked to illustrate their preferences for tax based allocations to competitive services by allocating additional funding from a hypothetical budget surplus, and then removing funding during a hypothetical budget shortfall. The results illustrated that park and recreation services were near the bottom for allocations during the budget surplus, and among the most likely to be cut during the budget shortfall. Although 72% of respondents felt that park and recreation services were of either *excellent* or *good* quality, they were simultaneously perceived as the least important among the services measured, a group which included police, fire, transport, and waste management. These results illustrate a common concern for public park and recreation agencies. Although their services may be conceived of as high quality, they compete for limited public funding with other services that are often conceived of as more important. As noted by Rubin (2005), "parks and recreation are often at the bottom of the list-nice to have if there is plenty of money but the first to be cut if there is a dip in revenues."

Unfortunately, it would appear that this uncertainty regarding public funding of parks and recreation is here to stay. It is likely that the effects of the housing crisis and Great Recession will be felt long after the American economy recovers according to conventional measures (Martin, Levey, & Cawley, 2012). The new normal for local governments may

involve providing the same level of service, or possibly being asked to provide even more services, with fewer financial and other resources. As a result of significantly higher long-term unemployment and sluggish wage growth, public services may be forced to cut costs through a leaner workforce and more streamlined service delivery (Mathers, 2010). In the face of continued uncertainty, this potential new normal, and in preparation for future economic downturns, additional or even alternative funding strategies must be considered for public parks and recreation.

### **Privatization in Public Services**

Privatization of public services is not a novel idea in the United States or abroad. Widespread academic support for the practice in the United States became evident in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Bel, Hebdon, & Warner, 2007), and the United Kingdom has enforced a policy of competitive bidding or “tendering” since 1988 (Lorrain & Stoker, 1997). In the United States, public services including solid waste, water, and education have experimented with varying degrees of privatization as a means of achieving cost savings or raising additional funds. For example, in the primary and secondary education context, privatization and commercial activity often comes in the form of snack or beverage sales, sponsored extracurricular activities, and even branded curriculum (Molnar, 2002). Universities have a longer track record of pursuing private money through avenues such as athletics, naming rights for buildings, and producing patents and goods based on their research (Bok, 2009).

These activities are particularly controversial in the realm of public education. Since the Great Recession and accompanying period of recovery, the pace of school privatization in the United States has increased, thanks to greater pressure to engage in cost cutting and

deregulatory behavior (Saltman, 2014). Critics of these arrangements question whether privatization and commercialization undermine the mission of the American education system (Bok, 2009; Molnar, 2002), and argue that practices such as charter schools, vouchers, and tax subsidies for private schools have all served to chip away at the autonomy and efficacy of the public school system. Instead of investing additional resources in struggling schools, an increasingly business oriented culture has used underperformance on standardized testing as a justification for funding cuts; for this reason districts that are already financially distressed are the most likely to suffer from reduced support (Saltman, 2014). Conversely, proponents of school privatization point to the need for additional funding, accountability among teachers and students, and additional choice for parents who do not wish to utilize public school options (Bok, 2009; Molnar, 2002; Saltman, 2014).

Regardless of the pros or cons of such an approach, most services at the local level remain largely publicly provided in the United States (Bel, Hebdon, & Warner, 2007). The fact that governments across the United States are reluctant to implement privatization practices may be due to the political influence of interest groups that oppose privatization, as well as uncertainty regarding possible cost savings (Bel & Fageda, 2007). This uncertainty among local decision makers persists despite early support for the cost saving potential of privatization (e.g. Domberger & Jensen, 1997). Recent research using more sophisticated econometric methods has yielded mixed results regarding cost savings however (Bel, Fageda, & Warner, 2009). Meta-analyses conducted by multiple researchers indicate savings as a result of privatization in some cases, but not others (e.g. Boyne, 1998; Hirsch, 1995; and Graeme, 1999). In a 2009 meta-analysis of research regarding privatization of water and solid

waste, Bel and colleagues found little support for any systematic cost savings because of privatization.

Numerous factors have been suggested as potentially undermining costs savings from privatization: transaction costs (Brown & Potoski, 2003, 2005), a lack of competition (Bel & Costas, 2006), negotiation costs (Grant, 2013) and a failure to realize economies of scale or density (Bel & Warner, 2008). This lack of support for real world cost savings as a result of privatization of public services has led some authors to refer to the “myth of efficiency” when weighing the merits of privatization of public services (Grant, 2013). With ongoing uncertainty regarding the efficacy of privatization to deliver actual cost savings, and concerns about the influence of private interests on public services, the debate is far from settled. Ongoing research, including this dissertation, continues to work to understand this complex issue.

### **Privatization: Alternative Funding for Parks and Recreation**

In response to a number of factors, public-sector park and recreation agencies have been forced to take an increasingly entrepreneurial approach to their funding (Mowen, Kyle, Borrie, & Graefe, 2006; Walls, 2009). Enterprise revenue generation strategies which do not rely on public tax support, have received particular interest (Kerstetter et al., 2010; Walls, 2009). Privatization practices have emerged as one such promising approach, and have received increasing attention from a growing body of research and public interest. Even prior to the Great Recession an increasing number of public recreation agencies were exploring some form of privatization of their operations (Van Slyke & Hammons, 2003), and it may be that the pace of privatization has increased since that point.



Privatization is any activity that reduces the role of the public in the financing, delivery, or management of services (Crompton, 1998). The overarching goal of privatization is to achieve costs savings relative to the public delivery of goods and services through increased efficiency. Privatization is a set of strategies rather than a single action, and involves the introduction of competition into the process (Priest, 1988). At the heart of privatization practices is the assumption that private production and delivery of goods is more efficient than public delivery, and that competition leads to cost savings. While public services are traditionally delivered by public monopolies, privatization introduces competitive bidding into the process, ostensibly increasing efficiency, decreasing costs, and passing savings along to municipalities and individual taxpayers.

This larger assumption is based on a number of smaller suppositions (Priest, 1988). First, proponents of privatization argue that the profit motive of private enterprise provides clearer direction than the amorphous motivations of government bureaucracy. With a more clearly defined objective, it is presumed that private entities are more likely to operate effectively than their public counterparts. Second, it is assumed that private entities can take advantage of economies of scale in the production and delivery of goods and services that are not available to public providers. For example, waste management may be costlier for a park agency than a third party contractor that already provides equivalent services to other organizations. Third, individual employees of private entities often specialize in the delivery of services that public employees do not. Whereas a government worker may need to be trained for a specific position, outsourcing specialized duties to a private contractor ensures that the appropriate skill set is brought to bear quickly and flexibly. Finally, the presence of

competitive bidding for contracts is assumed to lower costs to market levels and ensure the wise distribution of limited public funds (Bel & Warner, 2008).

Rather than a single decision, privatization is a multidimensional process that exists in varying degrees. As a means of conceptualizing this process in the context of parks and recreation, More (2005) proposes a five-point model, arranging privatization activities along a spectrum. At one end is the fully public model, which has already been described as the traditional tax-based approach. Under such an arrangement, public parks and recreation providers receive their money from a municipal general fund and are operated as entirely public agencies. Next is the public-utility model, wherein recreational services are delivered by a para-statal government corporation. This model draws its name from public services such as water or solid waste collection, where it is prevalent. Next is the outsourcing model, within which recreation agencies outsource functions and duties to private contractors, oftentimes concessions or maintenance providers. The next model involves ownership and operation of parks by not-for-profit organizations. This model may be seen in public spaces that are under the control of organizations such as a public land trust or conservancy. Finally, the fully private model involves the ownership and operation of parks by private entities. Eagles (2009) builds on and extends this framework specifically to the management of tourism destinations, retaining a similar set of management model.

### **Why Privatization Occurs in Parks and Recreation**

Park and recreation agencies pursue privatization for a variety of reasons. The motivation for individual agencies may vary, and be contingent on the unique context that agency operates in. Crompton (1998) identified four distinct forces which drive implementation of privatization, which together form a cohesive framework: a lack of tax-

based support, political ideology and agendas, a drive for efficiency, and a desire for services that fall beyond what is traditionally provided by public park and recreation agencies.

**A Lack of Tax-Based Support.** The primary force driving the adoption of privatization practices identified by Crompton (1998) is a lack of sufficient tax-based support. Without sufficient tax-based appropriations, agencies are forced to turn to alternative strategies such as privatization to bridge the gap. A timely example of the inherent instability of tax-based appropriations is seen in the proposed tax plan of President Donald Trump. The tax cuts proposed by President during his campaign are projected to reduce government revenue by approximately \$10 trillion over the coming decade. In order to avoid increasing the national debt by nearly 80%, concomitant government spending cuts must also be imposed (Nunns, Burman, Rohaly, & Rosenberg, 2016). As parks and recreation services are often at the bottom of the list in terms of perceived importance and funding support (Kaczynski & Crompton, 2006; Rubin, 2005), these spending cuts would likely impact public recreation service providers and the communities that they serve. Although this plan may change, or never be put into practice, as an example it showcases the vulnerability of public services to shifts in the larger national political and economic landscape.

Parks and protected areas are also subject to what is known as “park barrel politics” (LeRoy, 2005, p. 34). Because elected officials tend to reap the rewards of favorable public opinion through the establishment of new parks more so than the maintenance of existing ones, parks and protected areas are often expanded at the expense of their existing operations (Doern & Conway, 1994; Stroup, 2008). In these situations, funding is generally set aside to procure the land in question, as well as make a public announcement, but not necessarily for continued and consistent operation of the park. The problem is compounded by the fact that

the most essential funding priorities of parks are the least glamorous. Basic maintenance and management operations are relegated to a secondary position behind more prestigious and headline grabbing actions.

A timely example of this occurred in the United States in 2016, when President Obama designated three new national monuments encompassing nearly 1.8 million acres in the California desert: Mojave Trails NM, Sand to Snow NM, and Castle Mountains NM. Although the designation was hailed by a wide spectrum of media outlets and conservation organizations, the three new monuments add to the challenges faced by the already overburdened NPS. In such situations, privatization practices may be a useful tool in bridging the gap between what is demanded, and what is possible given current resources and revenue streams. The concept remains the same at the local level, where public-private partnerships may be a necessary form of revenue generation in such situations.

**Political agendas.** Second is the political agenda of elected and appointed decision makers, both on the left and right. Neo-conservatives seek privatization in order to shrink the size of government, whereas progressives seek to enhance the quality of recreation services in the name of improving the lives of constituents; privatization practices are a potential method of achieving both of these goals. The proposed policies of President Donald Trump may once again serve as a timely example. In addition to the tax and spending cuts detailed in his tax proposal, President-elect Trump has stated that his goal is to shrink the size of the federal government (Rein, 2016). Ideologically motivated actions such as this reduce the capacity of public agencies to deliver services, and increase reliance on various privatization practices to bridge funding and personnel gaps.

**Drive for efficiency.** Third is a general acceptance that government monopolies are inefficient, and that improvements in the delivery of services can be made by the private sector. Parks and recreation is a blanket term for an agency that may provide a wide variety of facilities and services ranging from open natural areas to highly developed and heavily programmed fitness centers. With such a range of facilities and services, expertise in a variety of fields is required of decision makers and individual staff members. Outsourcing of non-core services such as maintenance, waste management, and grounds keeping may allow agencies to maintain a smaller staff, as well as avoid purchasing and maintaining potentially expensive equipment. Outsourcing also allows parks and recreation agencies to bring in experts in areas of concern without maintaining those individuals as permanent staff members. Finally, outsourcing may provide a more flexible and responsive work force, allowing agencies to quickly respond to shifting public demand and provide services that constituent value (Johnston & Seidenstat, 2007; Prager & Desai, 1996; Van Slyke & Hammons, 2003).

Outsourcing to third party vendors is highly compatible with the provision of concessions and other support services offered in many parks and public areas. Outsourcing of services is the most common form of privatization of government operations; for example, in 1993 78% of state agencies utilized outsourcing as their primary privatization practice (Johnston & Seidenstat, 2007). Outsourcing of concession services such as food and beverages, equipment rental, marinas, and retail operations are the most common form of privatization in the park and recreation context (Mowen, Kerstetter, Trauntvein, & Graefe, 2010). Outsourcing of concessions allows the agency to collect a rental fee from concessionaires, and relieves the agency of the responsibility of running multiple operations

within the boundaries of a park. Although visitors generally favor park operation of a variety of services, privatization is actually preferred in the case of some services such as food and beverage and watercraft rental (Mowen et al., 2010).

**Demand for non-traditional services.** Finally, there is the recognition that some services, that constituents need or want, cannot be delivered effectively by a park agency. Wilson (2011) argues that the role of public recreation service providers has changed in contemporary American society, and that it will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Wilson contends that a growing segment of the population desires public places that function in ways that traditional parks do not. Dynamic spaces that provide access to retail, food and beverage vendors, and a range of built and natural features are increasingly in demand by contemporary park users. Often these places occur in urban areas, and combine elements of public parks and commercial retail spaces. In situations where this is the case, park agencies are often unable to meet these demands satisfactorily, and must turn to the private sector in some way. For these hybrid public-private places, the private sector essentially bridges the gap between what is desired, and what public agencies are capable of delivering on their own.

### **Privatization of Public Park and Recreation Services: Examples**

Although park and recreation services are often labeled as *public*, there exists a great deal of variety in how public spaces are financed, realized, and managed. Much like the various management models proposed by More (2005), many public spaces are financed through a combination of multiple funding streams, including privatization practices. Privatization activities occur at every level of park in the United States, ranging from National Park Service sites, to state parks, to local and municipal agencies; until recently however, it has been a relatively minor and inconspicuous form of funding. In response to various

economic (i.e. housing crisis and Great Recession) and political (i.e. the continued prominence of the neo-conservative paradigm) factors however, the use of privatization and other alternative funding strategies has become more common over time in the parks and recreation context. The growing use of privatization as a means of funding parks and recreation comes despite a lack of empirical evidence regarding whether or not potential costs savings are realized

**National level.** Throughout its history, the National Park Service (NPS) has explored various forms of privatization in an effort to supplement its congressionally allocated budget and revenue generated by user fees. Traditionally privatization is seen in the form of private contracts for concessions within parks such as food, equipment rentals, and lodging. Increased privatization may be necessary however in order to continue to meet rising pressure on NPS sites. Today the agency faces nearly \$12 billion worth of deferred maintenance, in contrast to the \$2.85 billion budget set by Congress (NPS, 2016a). In order to bridge this gap, and in conjunction with the agency's centennial, the NPS has recently allowed for expanded privatization, including recognition of corporate sponsors through temporary naming rights to some park buildings, and the use of corporate logos on temporary signage, printed materials, exhibits, and other media (NPS, 2016b).

Although the recent order stops short of allowing corporate naming rights to actual parks, a Washington Post story reporting erroneous information to that effect resulted in a considerable public backlash questioning the changes in policy (Tkaczyk, 2016). Previously, the NPS had not recognized philanthropic donations made to individual parks or to the agency itself. The changes come as the NPS attempts to increase the amount of money funneled to the agency through philanthropic donations and sponsorship. The NPS already relies heavily on

the help of non-profit organizations such as the National Park Foundation at the institutional level (the “official charitable partner of the National Park Service” [National Park Foundation, 2015]), and various “friends groups” at the park specific level (e.g. Friends of Acadia [friendsofacadia.org]). While corporate sponsors such as L.L. Bean, Subaru, and REI may not surprise park visitors, Budweiser and Coca-Cola may be less well aligned with the mandate of the NPS.

An example of unsuccessful privatization at the national level can be found in the Golden Gate Bridge. Although the Golden Gate Bridge is not a traditional park, it is a protected historical landmark managed by the National Park Service that also serves to link two portions of Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Hoping to make up an \$80 million budget shortfall, in 2007 bridge authorities developed a potential partnership with a variety of private entities to sponsor and maintain visitor centers and interpretive features at the north and south end of the bridge. Although there were never any plans for sponsor recognition on the span, or alteration to the iconic bridge, public sentiment towards the project was negative from the outset. Eventually bridge authorities were forced to abandon the plan in the face of stiff opposition from individuals, and organized groups in the community and nationally (IEG, 2007).

**State level.** At the state level, parks and recreation agencies leverage sponsorship for the same reasons, in order to bridge gaps in their budget, or to improve the services available to their visitors. Like local park and recreation providers, state level recreation agencies were negatively impacted by the Great Recession and resulting period of recovery, with the hardest hit states including Washington and California. In 2011 Washington state parks lost all of their general fund support, and the agency was forced to turn exclusively to user fees to



support operational and capital expenditures (Baker, 2011). Meanwhile, the California Department of Parks and Recreation threatened to close 70 parks in response to an ongoing California budget crisis (Van Oot, 2011). Such closures were avoided largely through the efforts of private donors, and to a lesser extent, increased funding allocations in subsequent California state budgets (Behrens, 2014).

In response to financial pressure imposed by the Great Recession, states such as Arizona, California, New York, and Virginia turned to corporate sponsorship as a potential revenue source. Towards this end, between 2005-2010 Virginia raised approximately \$5 million from corporate sponsors, while California raised \$6.5 million between 2007-2010 (Beitsch, 2016). In response to the same crisis, many states attempted to increase revenue generated by concessions contracts. For example, between 2008 and 2013, California increased the rent paid by concessionaires from \$11,993,366 to \$18,849,560; in 2012-2013 alone 30 new or renewed contracts were executed (California State Parks, 2013).

**Local level.** Examples of privatization at the local level abound, although because of the variability in local parks nationwide, it may be difficult to draw generalized conclusions. Waterfront Park in Louisville, Kentucky represents a highly successful public-private partnership at the local level. Waterfront Park occupies approximately 15 acres of land adjacent to downtown Louisville, along the banks of the Ohio River. In this case, the Louisville Waterfront Development Corporation (LWDC), a government controlled development corporation, owns and operates the park separately from the Louisville Parks and Recreation Department. The land that the park occupies, formerly an underutilized industrial strip, was purchased using a combination of philanthropy, private investment, and public support. Currently the park covers expenses through fees generated by the private

operation of two restaurants, a bike rental concessionaire, and a touring paddleboat based in the park. Private and public events are often hosted in the park, which also features a variety of public access playground equipment and playing fields (Louisville Waterfront, n.d.).

Whereas Waterfront Park represents a single privately owned and operated park, entire parks departments often utilize privatization in some form. For example, the Cleveland Metropark Zoo is supported by a combination of public funding, user fees, and philanthropic support from a private friends group, the Zoological Society (Cleveland Metroparks, 2016). Miami-Dade Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces makes more extensive use of public-private partnerships throughout the system. In 2012 the non-profit friends group Parks Foundation of Miami-Dade raised over \$800,000 through philanthropic donations and corporate sponsorship. Private sector money is used to finance special events such as the Noches Tropicales Concert Series Presented by Target, programmatic efforts such as swimming lessons for lower income children, and facilities construction such as the expansion of the Crandon Tennis Center solely through revenue and private funds (Parks Foundation of Miami-Dade, 2013).

These examples provide only a very limited description of the privatization activities that are now becoming increasingly commonplace within public parks and recreation. Although privatization has long been the norm in the realm of professional and amateur sports, it is a relative newcomer to the context of public parks and recreation (Gladwell, Anderson, & Sellers, 2003). The increased incidence of privatization has raised concerns among academics (e.g. More, 2005; Wade, 2005), as well as the popular press and members of the public (see Tkaczyk, 2016). The following section will provide an overview of existing

research regarding the acceptability of various privatization practices, and the factors that contribute to or detract from acceptability.

### **Acceptability of Privatization in Parks: Existing Research**

Existing research on privatization in the parks and recreation context has focused on identifying managerial, structural, and individual factors related to the acceptability of various specific privatization practices. This research has also been largely limited to a single park agency or geographic area. This has allowed for the development of a series of suggestions and proposed best practices that may be of use to decision makers and agencies that are considering privatization activities. Gauging the overall acceptability of privatization is difficult, given the complex nature of the process. In a 2006 study that asked respondents to rate their level of support for various funding options, privatization was the least favorable option (Mowen et al., 2006). Similarly, a majority (65%) of Seattle area residents were opposed to the outright sale of parks to private interests (McDonough, 2002).

However, specific practices may be more acceptable than wholesale privatization. In the same 2006 study of various funding options that found privatization to be the least acceptable option, corporate sponsorship was viewed as significantly more acceptable, and philanthropic support was the most acceptable of all funding options that were compared (Mowen et al.). A 2007 survey of Harrisburg, PA area residents supported this finding, indicating that 71% were supportive of sponsorship as a park funding mechanism, while only 10% were opposed (Mowen, Kyle, & Jackowski). Also specific to sponsorship, it appears that support has increased over time, as recreationists have become desensitized to a corporate presence in their public spaces (Mowen et al., 2016).

**Managerial practices.** Agencies that wish to pursue privatization as a funding mechanism must consider the management of such arrangements carefully. Because of the potentially contentious nature of privatization in the context of parks and recreation, transparency is an essential component (IEG, 2007). Because parks and recreation are public services, members of the public are entitled to be a part of the process. Further, such activity in parks and public spaces may elicit strong reactions, based on the special meaning that such places hold in many communities and the minds of many individuals (Pitas, Mowen, Graefe, & Kyle, in review). Soliciting feedback may help to ensure public support, or at the very least diminish resistance to such practices. Engaging members of the public must entail more than surface level lip service, and involve meaningful participation (IEG, 2007).

Managers should also be aware of the potential costs of privatization. The primary assumption underlying privatization is that it introduces cost savings relative to the public delivery of goods or services (Priest, 1988). The introduction of competitive bidding for contracts, rather than reliance on a public monopoly, is the mechanism for these presumed cost savings. Although proponents often tout the cost savings and efficiency of privatization, there exists a lack of empirical evidence documenting the efficacy of such practices within parks and recreation. Research examining privatization of other public services, specifically water and solid waste, has returned mixed results, or only marginal savings that are negated over time (Bel et al., 2009). Any potential cost savings as a result of privatization must be weighed against transactional costs that necessarily arise in the process: search and information, negotiation, and enforcement costs can reduce or eliminate any potential benefits (Bel & Warner, 2008).

**Contractual conditions.** Past research has identified a number of contractual conditions that play a role in determining the acceptability and success of privatization in the parks and recreation context. Because privatization is a complex process, rather than a single action, understanding various conditions and combinations is necessary in order to successfully implement any program. The type of park targeted for any privatization practice is an important factor. Urban parks may be more suited to privatization, as substantive competition for services that may be outsourced is more likely to be present, and potential providers can benefit from economies of density. Public opinion is also likely to favor projects that transform a liability (e.g. abandoned or underutilized property, marginal parcels or land, etc.) into a public asset such as a park, such as in the case of Louisville's Waterfront Park (Wilson, 2011). Privatization practices that involve properties that have a lengthy history, or are perceived as important to the collective consciousness of the public may face difficulty in the privatization process, as in the case of the proposed Golden Gate Bridge project (IEG, 2007).

The specific services or functions targeted by privatization represent another significant factor shaping acceptability. Park services or amenities beyond traditional purview of a park agency are prime candidates for privatization. This includes food and beverage sales (Kerstetter et al., 2010), retail, concerts, or other special events (Wilson, 2011). Highly specialized services such as watercraft rentals, or those tasks that are not traditionally the duty of park employees have also been seen as appropriate targets for privatization (Kerstetter et al., 2010). Conversely, recreationists appear less likely to accept privatization of services that are traditionally identified as core components of park operations such as conservation, education, campground operations, and maintenance (Mowen et al., 2010).

A number of best practices have been identified specific to corporate sponsorship in the parks and recreation context. When asked to rank order various sponsorship scenarios, respondents in a 2002 study rated off-site recognition, the use of local business, and a large cash payment as the most acceptable; conversely, on-site recognition of national corporations, with only a small cash payment was the least acceptable combination (Mowen & Havitz, 2002). In the same study, sponsorships that benefited disadvantaged populations, provided free programming, involved fewer sponsors, and involved temporary recognition at special events were generally more favorable. Natural, historic, or culturally sensitive areas will likely be an unpopular context for sponsorship. Allowing for naming rights has also been shown to meet with stiff public opposition (Mowen et al., 2016; Pitas, Mowen, Liechty, & Trauntvein, 2015; Mowen & Havitz, 2002). Agencies must also assess sponsor-agency fit carefully; sponsors who are perceived as at odds with the mission or image of an agency are less likely to be viewed as acceptable (Mowen et al., 2016; Pitas et al., 2015).

Working at the state level in Idaho and New Hampshire, Samnaliev, More, and Stevens (2006) found support for philanthropic donations and the use of volunteers as the most acceptable forms of alternative funding for recreation sites. Corporate sponsorship was highly acceptable at educational facilities and visitor centers, but was viewed as less acceptable in other settings such as hiking trails, scenic overlooks, and other natural areas. The outright sale of public lands to private companies was the least acceptable form of alternative funding, while contracting with private companies to provide management services was also viewed as unacceptable by a large portion of respondents.

**Constituent traits.** Certain individual or personal traits among key stakeholder groups have also been identified as factors in determining the acceptability of privatization as a

means of funding park and recreation services, although results from this research have been less compelling. Urban dwellers, and those with higher levels of formal education are more likely to agree that taxes should be used to support parks rather than privatization activities (Godbey, Graefe, & James, 1992). Those individuals who felt higher levels of commitment to an agency, and viewed it as competent in fulfilling its mission were also less likely to support privatization as opposed to tax-based support (Mowen et al., 2006). Conversely, politically conservative, older, wealthier individuals have been found to be more likely to support privatization in its various forms (Mowen et al., 2006, 2007). Despite the insights gained from these analyses, and an intuitive connection, research has yet to identify any significant link between motivations or recreational activity preference and perceptions of privatization (Mowen et al., 2016).

### **Dissertation Purpose and Theoretical Framework**

Whereas past research has focused primarily on the acceptability of various privatization practices, there remains a need to continue examining *why* these practices are acceptable or unacceptable. To deepen this understanding, theory of human values and the cognitive hierarchy of human behavior, will be applied. The role of values in determining acceptability of privatization, as well as support for various privatization practices, will be assessed. The interaction between attitudes towards privatization and support for the traditional public funding stream will also be examined. This research will provide much needed information for decision makers who are considering privatization as a means of funding, as well as set the stage for continuing research on the intersection of values, attitudes, and privatization in the public parks and recreation context. The following sections provide an overview of values theory and the cognitive hierarchy model of human behavior.

In order to build on and extend existing research, values theory will be used throughout this dissertation. Values are abstract, desirable goals that serve as core guiding principles in an individual's life (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992). Although values theory has roots in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Kluckhohn, 1951; Rokeach, 1973), recent years have seen resurgent interest in research on values among psychologists and other social scientists (Roccas & Sagiv, 2010). This renewed interest may be attributed to the increasing understanding of how values influence attitudes (Schwartz et al., 2012) and also behavior (Roccas & Sagiv, 2010; Schwartz & Butenko, 2014). Values serve as guiding principles for evaluation of personal actions, as well as actions of individuals and entities beyond the self (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). For this reason, values may be an appropriate lens through which to study questions regarding attitudes, behavior, and support or opposition to various privatization practices in the local public parks and recreation context.

Due to their abstract nature, values may not be directly related to attitudes and support. Especially in situations where a deeply seated value is not intuitively aligned with or against a given object or decision, their influence may not be readily apparent. In order to connect values to behavior, the cognitive hierarchy will also be used as a theoretical foundation for this research. The cognitive hierarchy theorizes that an individual's viewpoint of specific issues can be organized into a hierarchy consisting of elements such as values, higher order value orientations, attitudes, behavioral intentions, and behavior. Each element of the hierarchy builds upon one another, and increases in specificity through the various levels of the model. More general elements such as values influence behavioral intention and behavior through mediating elements such as higher order value orientations and attitudes, rather than directly (Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach, & Grube, 1984; Homer & Kahle, 1988; Rokeach, 1973).



Although numerous levels of the cognitive hierarchy have been identified (e.g. beliefs and norms, explained in greater detail in the following paragraphs), this dissertation focuses specifically on values and attitudes as particularly salient to the issue of support for private and public funding of parks and recreation. Future research must extend this perspective, and include a greater variety and number of constructs.

The term “value” has been applied in a multitude of different fashions, often contradicting one another and creating significant confusion regarding the nature of values in psychological research (Rohan, 2000). As Rokeach noted as early as 1973, “We will often say that a person ‘has a value’ but also than an object ‘has value’” (p. 4). Rokeach goes on to argue that viewing values in the former context is likely to be more useful in the study of human nature. By studying what is at the core of our nature, he states, we are more likely to uncover useful information regarding how we think, feel, act, and interpret the world around us. In addition to differentiating between the concept of values as a psychological phenomenon and an economic one, it is necessary to distinguish values from a series of related psychological constructs.

Although related to and often confused with other terms and constructs such as attitudes, traits, norms, beliefs, and needs (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004), values are distinct and more deeply situated in an individual’s psyche. Whereas an attitude is a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of an object (Fishbein & Raven, 1962), values are more abstract in nature, and apply across situations and may involve any number of objects (Rokeach, 1973). Values refer to desirable end states or goals, while attitudes are applied to objects that can be either tangibly observed, or are socially concrete (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). Values are also

enduring over time (Rokeach, 1973), and more central to the individual (Erickson, 1995). However, as will be explored in greater detail later, values inform attitudes.

Traits are seen as aspects of personality, which act as identifying characteristics of individuals. Traits describe patterns of behavior, thoughts, and emotions which are relatively stable over time (McCrae & Costa, 2003), and are linked to behavior similarly to values (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). However, the two are distinct in a variety of important ways (Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, & Knafo, 2002): traits are dispositions, while values are goals; traits may be viewed positively or negatively, values are primarily positive; people use values to judge behavior, while traits do not necessarily justify behavior. Rokeach (1973) also makes the important observation that viewing people as made up of their traits denies them the possibility of personal control, while values allow for personal change and growth. Norms refer to socially determined guidelines for what should be, or what is the correct course of action in a given situation (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). Values conversely are trans-situation, meaning that they apply across various contexts, and are more individual in nature (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004; Rokeach, 1973). Like traits, needs also influence behavior, but do so in a different fashion than values: needs are influenced by biological factors, whereas values constitute a culturally acceptable way of articulating those needs (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004; Rokeach, 1973).

Like attitudes, beliefs differ from values in that they are tied to specific objects (Heberlein, 2012). Specific beliefs may have to do with information regarding an object. Specific beliefs are similar to knowledge, although they do not necessarily have to be true; what matters in the case of beliefs is that the individual who holds the belief believes it is true (Heberlein, 2012). A pertinent example may be climate change: different individuals hold

beliefs that it is currently happening, that it is not happening, that it is an anthropogenic phenomenon, etc. Although not all of these beliefs can be true in a factual sense, to the individuals in question, they are considered as such. Evaluative beliefs are similar, but address the relative quality of one object to another (Heberlein, 2012). An example would be the belief that climate change is a net negative for human populations, or conversely that climate change is a net positive.

Norms are formed based on the actions and attitudes of a social group or society, and relay what is considered acceptable within that group (Sherif, 1936). Individuals who violate norms often invoke informal social sanctions from peers and institutions, which helps ensure broad compliance with what essentially constitutes a cultural rulebook (Fehr & Fischbacher, 2004). As applied in the field of recreation, norms are standards for evaluating behavior or behavioral outcomes (Shelby, Vaske, & Donnelly, 1996). Researchers often use norms as the basis of management actions that ensure conditions do not exceed what is normatively defined as acceptable (Shelby et al., 1996). Individual behavior is influenced and constrained in recreation areas and contexts such that the impacts of that behavior results in acceptable conditions and satisfactory experiences for recreationists.

Attitudes are evaluations of individual objects, and are much more specific than values (Fishbein & Raven, 1962; Heberlein, 2012). Although attitudes are popularly conceived of as either positive or negative (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977), this dichotomous representation ignores the complex structure of human attitudes. Most attitudes involve both negative and positive appraisals of a given object (ambivalence), and attitudes may also vary in their relative strength. In general, attitudes that are stronger have greater predictive power than weaker

attitudes (Ajzen, 2001; Eagly & Chaiken, 1998). Conversely, greater attitudinal ambivalence often decreases the power of an attitude to influence behavior (Crano & Prislin, 2006).

Polarization around an attitude is also the “exception rather than the rule” (Kuentzel, Capen, Richards, & Higgins, 2012, p. 142). In most situations attitudes are normally distributed: some individuals strongly favor or oppose the issue, while the majority of respondents are situated towards the middle of the spectrum. Although it is extremely tempting for decision makers and researchers to simplify stakeholder attitudes into an agree/disagree dichotomy, this shortchanges their relevance. In situations involving complex issues that may involve controversial decisions a thorough understanding of both attitudinal strength and structure is important. Moving beyond the dichotomous conceptualization of attitudes may be helpful to managers who wish to predict and avoid conflict, and to make the most effective decisions possible (Kuentzel et al., 2012). For this reason, ambivalence and attitude structure regarding privatization will be examined in Chapter Two.

### **A Theory of Human Values**

The theory of human values evolved over time to reflect the work of multiple researchers and viewpoints. Earlier work by Kluckhohn (1951) and Rokeach (1973) laid the conceptual foundation for the approach, which Schwartz built upon to propose a comprehensive theory of human values and their content (1992, 1994). According to the Schwartz value theory, all human beings share common values, regardless of culture. Differences between individuals and cultures lie in how strongly individual values are expressed, and their importance relative to one another (Schwartz, 1994). Although Schwartz originally identified 10 universal human values (1992), the number was later expanded to 19 (Schwartz et al., 2012).

Schwartz's original and refined values theories operate according to the same central assumptions. Schwartz theorizes that basic values are shared between all individuals, and variance between individuals is in terms of how strongly different values are held and prioritized. The basic values are organized into a coherent system, and arranged within that system according to the motivational goals that underlay the individual values. This coherent system takes the form of a circular motivational continuum containing all the various individual values (See Figure 1.1). The closer to one another two values are, the more closely the motivational goals of those values align. Conversely, the further apart two values are in the circle, the less well aligned are their motivational goals (Schwartz et al., 2012).

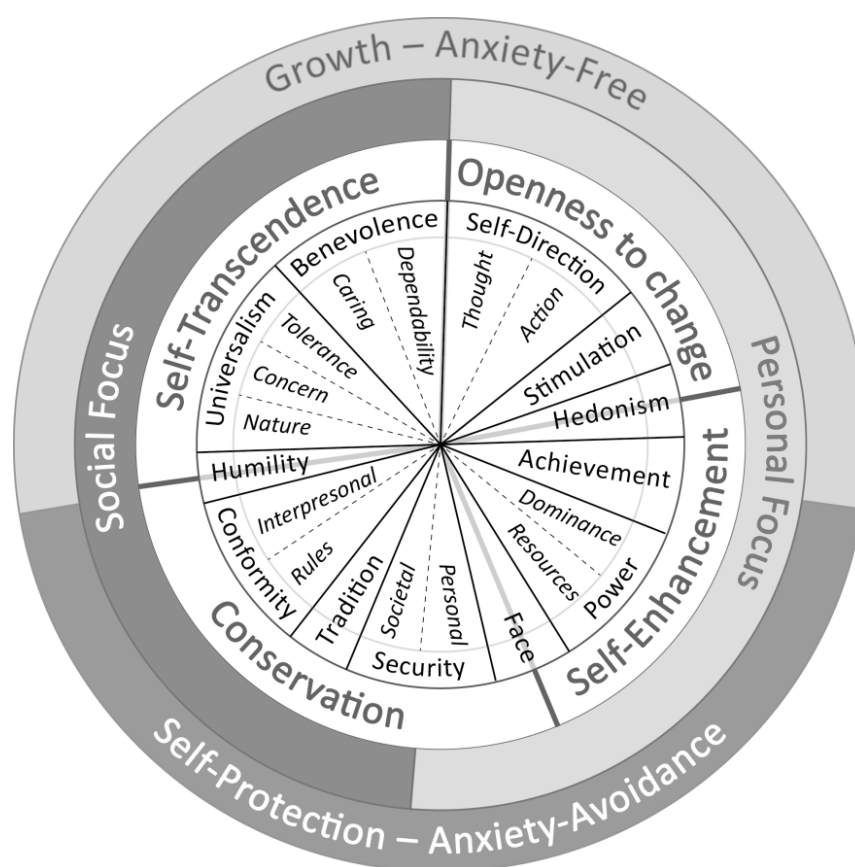


Figure 1.1 *Circular motivational continuum of 19 individual values and higher order value orientations (from Cieciuch et al., 2014)*

The 19 individual values in the circular continuum can be aggregated into several higher order value orientations that combine the motivational goals of the individual values they are comprised of (Schwartz & Butenko, 2014). The outermost circle separates those values that are devoted to coping with anxiety and protecting the self, and those that focus on growth and self-actualization. The second circle distinguishes between values that are focused on the self, and those that are concerned with outcomes for other individuals or institutions. The third circle defines four higher order value orientations, with self-transcendent (other-centered) and self-enhancement (self-centered), as well as openness to change and conservation of the status quo, opposite one another (Schwartz & Butenko, 2014).

Values are particularly attractive to social scientists in part because of their influence on attitudes and on behavior. Values may influence behavior directly, or indirectly through attitude formation. The 19 values described by the refined values theory have been demonstrated to influence both attitudes (Schwartz et al., 2012) and behavior (Schwartz and Butenko, 2014), and to be more powerful in this predictive capacity than the original 10 values. Values directly influence the attractiveness of various actions, and in turn individuals are more likely to act in ways that further the motivational goals of a given value. Similarly, individuals are less likely to act in ways which would inhibit a value that is prioritized (Sagiv & Schwartz, 1995). If values are conceptualized as guiding principles and desirable end points, their role in determining action is intuitive: there is no incentive to act in ways that violate those principles or make those desirable outcomes less likely. In this way, values influence the formation of attitudes, which play a role in behavioral intention and action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977).

The influence of a value over either an attitude or behavior is moderated by the level of importance that an individual assigns to that value. More important values, those that are more influential and closely held by an individual, are more likely to direct behavior or attitude formation (Schwartz et al., 2012). Individuals must also perceive that a value is relevant to a given attitude or behavior; this occurs when the consequences of the attitude or behavior is seen to either inhibit or promote the motivational goals underlying the value. Values are also relevant to self-concept. If an individual senses that a given situation threatens that self-concept, or that a given situation presents an opportunity to enhance the self-concept, they are more likely to act accordingly (Schwartz et al., 2012).

The influence of values on attitudes and behavior is also potentially asymmetrical. Whereas self-enhancement and self-transcendent values are opposite one another on the motivational continuum, their effect on actions that inhibit their motivational goals are not equal. Self-transcendent values inhibit self-enhancing behaviors; concern for the impact of one's behavior makes actions that promote personal benefit or achievement less likely. Conversely, self-enhancement values have little or no inhibiting effect on behaviors that promote the welfare of others; self-centered values show little capacity to inhibit actions that promote the welfare of others, especially in situations where those actions also provide personal benefits (Schwartz et al., 2012).

Just as values influence an individual's own behavior, they also act as criteria to evaluate the actions of others, and gauge the acceptability of others' behavior (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). In this way, values may serve as a lens through which individuals judge the practices of a local public park and recreation agency. Agency practices that are seen as value congruent (more likely to advance important personal values), may be expected to be more

acceptable than practices that are expected to inhibit a certain goal. For the purposes of this dissertation, two higher order values will be assessed: self-transcendent and self-enhancement values. Self-enhancement values involve furthering the interests of the self at the expense of others. In contrast, self-transcendent values emphasize the good of others before the self (Schwartz et al., 2012).

The higher order self-enhancement and self-transcendent values are comprised of multiple individual values that correspond in self or other focus in their motivational goals. The self-enhancement higher order value is comprised of *power-dominance*, *power-resources*, and *achievement*. The self-transcendent higher order value is comprised of *benevolence-caring*, *benevolence-dependability*, *universalism-concern*, *universalism-nature*, and *universalism-tolerance* (Schwartz et al., 2012).

**Self-enhancement values.** The *achievement* value involves valuing achievement as defined by the normative standards of one's culture, with the underlying motivation of being judged as successful by others. The motivational goal of the *power-dominance* value involves the power to constrain others to do what one wants, and exerting influence over others. The motivational goal of the related value *power-resources* is to be able to control the course of events through the possession and use of material assets (Schwartz et al., 2012).

**Self-transcendent values.** The motivational goal of *benevolence-caring* involves being helpful, and a devotion to the welfare of members of the group. *Benevolence-dependability* is related, and involves being a reliable and trustworthy member of the group. *Universalism* values involve concern for others, and the world around oneself. *Universalism-concern* is motivated by a commitment to equality and justice for all people. *Universalism-tolerance* is motivated by open-mindedness, and understanding of those who are different



from oneself. *Universalism-nature* shifts this focus to preservation of the natural environment, and avoiding damaging or polluting actions (Schwartz et al., 2012).

### **Values in Recreation Research**

Accompanying the overall increase in popularity of values based research, values theory has become more common in recreation based research. Because of the potential of values research to provide insight into attitudes and behaviors, this is an intuitive connection with significant potential for useful application by researchers and practitioners.

Understanding the values of recreationists, and how these values influence their attitudes and behaviors, allows for policies and practices that are perceived as more acceptable and effective by key stakeholders. The ability to structure management actions such that they do not precipitate opposition will be especially important for potentially controversial topics such as privatization and alternative funding sources for public park and recreation services.

Much of the existing values based research in recreation management is focused on outdoor recreation and human dimensions of natural resources and the environment. In the context of behavior and the natural environment, this often involves higher order value orientations that emphasize human benefit (anthropocentric) presented in opposition to value orientations that emphasize environmental conservation and protection (biocentric or ecocentric). Steele, List, and Shindler (1994) used such an approach to examine the values that members of the public express regarding federal forest land in the Pacific Northwest of the United States. The authors found that strong biocentric values were related to policy preferences and attitudes, but stopped short of examining actual behavior or behavioral intention.

Vaske and Donnelly (1999) built on the work of Steel and colleagues (1994) by incorporating behavioral intention. Using a similar value orientation continuum, Vaske and Donnelly found that an individual's relative value orientation regarding the natural environment predicted their attitude towards wildland preservation. Further, these attitudes were found to partially mediate the relationship between value orientation and behavioral intention. The authors interpreted these results as support for the cognitive hierarchy. Similarly, Fulton, Manfredo, and Lipscomb (1996) examined value orientations regarding wildlife and wildlife based recreation (e.g. hunting and fishing). Their analysis employed the cognitive hierarchy, and found that values regarding wildlife predicted specific attitudes, which in turn acted as mediators in the relationship between values and behavioral intention.

van Riper and Kyle (2014) again applied values to the context of pro-environmental behaviors among recreationists at a national park that features a sensitive and protected ecoregion. The authors measured altruistic-biospheric values that emphasized protecting the natural environment, and egoistic values that were related to self-interest and advancement. Altruistic-biospheric values were categorized as self-transcendent due to their emphasis on the well-being of humanity and the environment over individual wellbeing; egoistic values were categorized as self-enhancement due to their primary concern with power and authority over nature. The results once again supported the cognitive hierarchy model, as values indirectly influenced self-reported behaviors through mediating elements of the hierarchy. Those individuals with stronger biospheric-altruistic values were more likely to report pro-environmental behavior, while those with stronger egoistic values were less likely to do so.

Although values have become increasingly common in recreation research, their application is inconsistent in two specific ways. First, values have been largely limited to

outdoor and nature based recreation, focusing largely on behavior in environmentally sensitive natural areas. There has been, to the knowledge of the author, no use of values (in the sense described in this dissertation) in the context of local public parks. Although the term “value” often appears, it commonly refers to monetary value (e.g. property values in the case of Crompton, 2001), or what users feel are the important contributions of parks (e.g. Burgess, Harrison, & Limb, 1988).

The confusion in terms extends to the existing literatures on values in the context of outdoor recreation as well. In the case of Fulton and colleagues (1996) (and a variety of other research situated in the context of outdoor recreation), although the terminology of values is used, their application is often more focused and specific than the wider definition developed by in the theory of human values. For example, Needham (2009) reports on value orientations regarding coral reefs, but uses statements specifically tailored to preferences regarding coral reef protection to evaluate those values. In this way, the value orientations reported by Needham more closely resemble evaluative beliefs. This potential confusion of terms within park and recreation research regarding values echoes the wider confusion among social scientists noted by Rohan (2000). The current study aims to avoid this ambiguity in terminology, and specifically utilizes the values defined and validated by Schwartz’s revised theory (Schwartz et al., 2012). Based on previous recreation based research supporting the cognitive hierarchy, values are examined in their role as predictors of attitudes, and support for or opposition to both public and private means of funding park and recreation services.

### **Dissertation Structure**

This dissertation will be constructed of three standalone studies, which will constitute chapters two, three, and four. Subsequent chapters will provide in-depth descriptions, and

include literature and methods specific to each study. Chapter Two details the first study, which describes attitudes towards privatization as a whole, as well as towards individual privatization practices. The role of several factors in shaping those attitudes will be examined, as will differences between respondents within several different groups, and attitudinal ambivalence. Chapter Three consists of study two, which involves a contingent valuation analysis. Respondent's preferred budgetary allocations among a set of 10 public services in the case of a large budgetary increase, and a large budgetary decrease is calculated. The role of values and attitudes towards privatization on this net allocation figure will be explored. Chapter Four details the third and final study, which examines the role of values, ideology, and attitudes in shaping support for or opposition to the implementation of privatization in local park and recreation agencies. Chapter Five will synthesize the results from all three studies, and provide implications for policy, practice, and future research.

### **Data Collection**

The use of online respondent recruitment and data collection has spread rapidly in recent years, with interest in the technique growing with the increased prominence of the internet in modern society (Solomon, 2001). Despite early concerns regarding data quality and generalizability, research indicates that "the data provided by Internet methods are of at least as good quality as those provided by traditional paper-and-pencil methods" (Gosling, Vazire, & Srivastasa, 2004, p. 102). Multiple online survey sampling services exist, such as Amazon Mechanical Turk, which uses human respondents to complete tasks that artificial intelligence is currently unable to process (Amazon, 2016). Other services include the use of online panel data, which involves purchasing access to a pre-screened group of individuals who have indicated their willingness to participate in surveys. Services such as Survey

Sampling International (SSI) and Qualtrics offer panel sampling services, which can be tailored to meet a specific demographic, or to be nationally representative in nature.

Data for all three studies were derived from a nationally representative panel sample, purchased from Qualtrics. The panel sample purchased from Qualtrics was specifically tailored to roughly represent the demographic profile of the United States' adult population in terms of age, gender, and racial/ethnic identity. A total of 603 complete surveys were returned, from the approximately 1,570 surveys that were started (2.3% of those who received an invitation finished the survey; 38.4% who started the survey finished it, with 61.6% screened out through the use of attention checks), which was sufficient to utilize the statistical techniques detailed in subsequent chapters (e.g. t-tests, ANOVA, multiple regression). Qualtrics panel data has been used in a variety of diverse research contexts, including public health (e.g. Guillory et al., 2016), behavioral economics (e.g. Cardella, Ewing, & Williams, 2016), and religious studies (e.g. Richardson & Pardun, 2015), and is widely regarded as being of high quality.

Qualtrics ensures that respondents are real people rather than a computer algorithm, and also performs a variety of identity screening procedures including LinkedIn profile matching, and phone calls to an employer. Qualtrics panel sampling utilizes a double opt-in design in order to increase the quality of the data being provided. In the first step, potential panel participants are recruited through a variety of methods, including targeted emails, website advertisements, and peer-referral. The initial opt-in occurs when an individual agrees to become a panel research participant. After this panel participants are referred to studies for which they are eligible, based on profile data provided to Qualtrics. The second opt-in occurs when panel participants agree to complete an individual study. A double-opt in process

ensures that respondents really want to give feedback, and are more likely to provide quality data (Anderson, 2015).

Qualtrics rewards survey participants through a variety of incentives. For each survey respondent, Qualtrics quoted a price of \$5.00. Participants' preferred method of compensation varies (e.g. points redeemable for flyer miles, shopping points, cash rewards, etc.). Therefore, the amount of compensation per participant is not a simple dollar amount or even direct percentage of the per-response charge. Rather, researchers receive a randomized sample of a mixture of participants with different compensation values and types. On average around 30% of the \$5.00 value is paid out to participants. For IRB purposes, the payment is small but proportionate to the brief duration of the survey, and is not large enough of an inducement to constitute a form of pressure on the respondent. Qualtrics handles compensation directly, and the research team has no role in providing incentives to respondents. This project has been reviewed and approved by the Penn State IRB.

The use of an online sample for this dissertation is justified for a variety of reasons. Online panel sampling is time efficient compared to traditional distribution methods; Qualtrics originally estimated that a period of three to five days would be sufficient to gather 600 completed surveys; final data collection took place over the course of nine days in January 2017. Online distribution is also cost effective compared to traditional methods, which involve multiple rounds of mailings and a significant investment in physical resources (e.g. envelopes, postage, paper) to complete. Online sampling also allows a wider distribution to a more diverse set of respondents than traditional pen and paper methods (Gosling et al., 2004), which will provide for the recruitment of a nationally representative sample. Finally, this approach will allow a test of online panel sampling for research in the parks and

recreation context, and may provide insight into the viability of this technique for future research. Specific demographic data are provided in subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

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## CHAPTER 2

### **Attitude Strength and Structure Regarding Privatization in the Local Public Park and Recreation Context**

#### **Abstract**

As tax-based funding for local public park and recreation services becomes increasingly scarce, alternative funding strategies have received increased attention. Privatization, any activity that reduces the public's role in the financing and delivery of such services, has garnered particular scrutiny. Privatization is simultaneously a promising tool for public park agencies, and a potentially controversial and contentious issue. However, existing research has provided an incomplete picture of privatization in the local public park and recreation context. Previous studies are limited by their local focus, as well as a dichotomous approach to attitudes that does not fully address attitude strength and structure. To address these gaps, this study uses a nationally representative sample to examine attitudes towards park privatization as a whole, attitudes towards specific privatization practices, and attitude structure and ambivalence. Specific demographic and individual characteristics will be evaluated as potential drivers of attitude formation.

Results indicate only a modest level of attitudinal ambivalence among respondents, which does not support the narrative that park privatization is a highly controversial topic among the general public. Attitudes towards privatization as a whole were found to be moderately positive across the entire sample, however there were significant variations in acceptability among individual practices. Social ideology, Hispanic/Latino status, income, and knowledge about privatization were shown to be significant predictors of attitudes towards

privatization. Hispanic/Latino individuals, social conservatives, higher income individuals, and those with greater knowledge of privatization were more positive towards privatization as a whole, and towards individual privatization practices.

As privatization and other alternative funding strategies for public park and recreation services are likely to be part of the new reality for some providers, a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence their acceptability will be crucial. This study illustrated that several factors significantly influence attitudes towards privatization. Many of these characteristics are available at the community level through publically available data (e.g. census, municipal voting results), and may be of use to decision makers who are considering implementing one or more of these practices. Moreover, the results from this study do not support the narrative that privatization is a highly controversial topic among many respondents. Future research must continue to refine measures of attitude ambivalence, and apply these to individual privatization practices. Further, based on the influence of social ideology, future research must also examine additional factors that influence attitudes and support for privatization, including personal values.

## Introduction

Similar to other public services, local public park and recreation services have traditionally been funded by tax-based general funds, supplemented to a limited degree by revenue generated through concessions and user fees. Under this model, parks and recreation must vie with other public services (e.g., police, transportation, fire) and convince relevant stakeholder groups (i.e. decision makers, the public), they are worthy of receiving taxpayer money (Crompton, 1999). Because other services are typically funded through the same revenue source, there exists the potential for significant competition between multiple agencies within the same municipality for the limited supply of funding available. Despite a growing recognition of the contribution that park and recreation services may make at the community and individual level, securing adequate funding under the system has long been considered a primary constraint and challenge for park and recreation professionals (Crompton, 1999; Mowen, Graefe, Elmendorf, & Barrett, 2015).

During the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and in to the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, local public parks and recreation experienced what Crompton and Kaczynski (2003) dubbed the “golden era” of the field. During this time park and recreation services grew at a greater rate than any other competitive public service, in terms of relative annual growth in capital, operational, and total expenditures (Kaczynski & Crompton, 2006). Overall local government expenditures were also at historically high levels during this period, accompanied by job growth (Crompton & Kaczynski, 2003). Unfortunately the golden era for parks and recreation came to an end with the onset of the sub-prime mortgage crisis and the resultant Great Recession. Although local government spending was adversely effected as a whole (Pitas, Barrett, & Mowen, 2017) parks and recreation suffered disproportionately relative to other public services, experiencing

the most severe relative decline in funding from 2008 to 2013 (Barrett, Pitas, & Mowen, 2017). Overall expenditures on park and recreation services at the local level fell annually from 2008 to 2013 by more than \$6 billion (Pitas et al., 2017).

Unfortunately, it would appear that this uncertainty regarding public funding of parks and recreation is here to stay. It is likely that the effects of the housing crisis and Great Recession will be felt long after the American economy recovers according to conventional measures (Martin, Levey, & Cawley, 2012). The new normal for local governments may involve providing the same level of service, or possibly being asked to provide even more services, with fewer financial and other resources. In the face of significantly higher long-term unemployment and sluggish wage growth, public services may be forced to cut costs through a leaner workforce and more streamlined service delivery (Mathers, 2010). Indeed, more than 14,000 full-time positions were cut from local public park and recreation agencies nationwide in the post-recession time period (Pitas et al., 2017).

Enterprise revenue generation strategies that do not rely on tax support, such as user fees and concessions, are one approach that has been more widely applied (Kerstetter et al., 2010). Privatization- any activity that reduces the public's role in the financing, delivery, or management of these services (Crompton, 1998) - is another strategy that has been the focus of particular scrutiny. While privatization may refer to the wholesale transfer of public lands and facilities to private interests, it is more likely to be a matter of degree. Corporate sponsorship, outsourcing of management duties, solicitation of philanthropic support, and increased reliance on volunteers are all examples of privatization. Implementing one of more of these practices is part of an incremental shift from the fully public funding model along a

spectrum, the far end of which represents the fully private financing and management model (More, 2005).

Privatization and a general shift away from reliance on public financing in public recreation was already taking place prior to the Great Recession (Van Slyke & Hammons, 2003), and it is possible that the pace of implementation has increased during the intervening time period. In light of this, public park and recreation agencies have been forced to take an increasingly entrepreneurial approach to their funding (Mowen, Kyle, Borrie, & Graefe, 2006; Walls, 2009). Although a growing body of research examines these practices, there remain significant gaps in knowledge that this study may help address. First, although privatization is often conceived of as controversial, little or no empirical evidence exists to substantiate this claim. Second, the factors that influence attitude formation regarding privatization have not been adequately explored. Finally, there is a lack of nationally representative data examining attitudes towards privatization as a whole, and towards individual privatization practices. The present study seeks to address these issues, and provide direction for future research and practice.

### **Background**

Although past research has examined the intersection of various demographic and personal characteristics with attitudes towards privatization in the public park and recreation context, there remains a need to understand the factors that drive attitude formation. Ideology, one such potential factor, has not been adequately explored as a potential predictor. Whereas attitudes are evaluations of specific objects (Fishbein & Raven, 1962), ideologies are more general, and may be considered the link between sub-conscious values and attitudes (Rohan, 2000). Because values often operate at the sub-conscious level without being felt or



recognized, their influence on specific situations may be limited when the actions in question do not clearly align with or against a value. In these circumstances, ideology helps translate sub-conscious values to real world attitudes and behavioral decisions (Rohan, 2000).

Ideology represents a useful concept in the context of privatization in public park and recreation services for a variety of reasons, not least of which is their aforementioned potential to influence attitude formation. As described above, an individual's ideology informs how they see the world, and influences their actions such that they are more likely to be consistent with deeply seated values (Rohan, 2000). How conservative or liberal an individual is may therefore influence their attitudes towards privatization. Specifically, more liberal individuals have been shown to be more likely to support economic policies that help others and emphasize benefits to the community (Graziano, Bruce, Sheese, & Tobin, 2007). Overall, more liberal individuals are "prosocial and communal in orientation," (John & Srivastava, 1999, p. 121) and likely to respond negatively to activity that upsets functioning communal relationships (Gerber, Huber, Doherty, Dowling, & Ha, 2010). In this way, alternative strategies such as privatization that represent a change to the traditional financing model for public park and recreation services may be viewed as less acceptable by more liberal individuals. Previous research has indeed found more conservative individuals to be more accepting of privatization overall within the park and recreation context (Mowen, Kyle, & Jackowski, 2007).

Ideology may also help researchers frame the privatization debate within the context of park and recreation services. When measuring ideology researchers often rate individual respondents from liberal to conservative on separate economic and social domains. The use of separate economic and social domains is recommended because a single item measure of

ideology may erroneously categorize respondents as liberal or conservative; moderate individuals often split naturally along these two dimensions (Everett, 2013; Feldman & Johnston, 2013). The relative influence of these two ideological domains in shaping attitudes towards privatization may indicate whether the issue is perceived of as a social issue or an economic one in the minds of respondents, and determine directions for future research and practice.

Past research has typically examined the acceptability of various privatization practices, largely in the context of a single municipality or region. Mowen and colleagues (2006) for example asked residents of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania their support or opposition to various cost saving and revenue generation practices. Their results indicated that outright privatization of services was the least acceptable of any option. Residents of Seattle provided a similar response in 2002 (McDonough, 2002). Specific practices have shown significant variability in terms of their acceptability however, with sponsorship and philanthropic support viewed significantly more positively (Mowen et al., 2006; Mowen et al., 2007). Specific to sponsorship, it appears that acceptability may be growing over time as recreationists become desensitized to the presence of commercial interests in their public spaces (Mowen et al., 2016).

Although privatization is often popularly conceived of as controversial based on issues of equity and moral grounds (see for example the 2005 special edition of the *George Wright Forum*, "Privatization: An Overview"), there has been little evidence to support this claim among members of the general public. Specific to sponsorship, it appears that acceptability may even be growing over time as recreationists become desensitized to the presence of commercial interests in their public spaces (Mowen, Trauntvein, Potwarka, Pitas, & Duray,

2016). It may be that a small group of individuals with strong attitudes for or against privatization are simply the most vocal, and that a larger segment of the population feels less strongly one way or another about the issue. Because those with stronger opinions are more likely to be represented in past research, a perception of controversy has built around this issue.

Research examining the issue has unfortunately failed to adequately assess attitudes regarding park privatization. Too often attitudes are dichotomized into an agree/disagree or support/oppose structure, ignoring the nuance such a complex issue may present. This is a direct result of what Macnaghten and Urry (1998) called *polling culture*, wherein issues are presented in an oversimplified fashion. This is especially attractive in situations with greater controversy or polarization surrounding an issue. Because the level of controversy surrounding the issue of privatization is largely unknown however, it is inappropriate to follow such an approach. To address this gap in knowledge and to measure the level of controversy surrounding this issue, attitude structure and ambivalence will be assessed in the current study. Attitudinal ambivalence refers to the presence of both positive and negative feelings towards an object (Priester & Petty, 1996).

Most attitudes involve a certain degree of ambivalence; polarization around an issue is the “exception rather than the rule” (Kuentzel, Capen, Richards, & Higgins, 2012, p. 142). In most situations attitudes are normally distributed: some individuals strongly favor or oppose the issue, while the majority of respondents are situated towards the middle of the spectrum. Highly controversial issues often have greater levels of ambivalence, as respondents struggle to reconcile the positive and negative aspects of an object (Newby-Clark, McGregor, & Zanna, 2002), and a measure of ambivalence will be used to assess this in the case of

privatization. If privatization is as controversial as many sources within the academic and popular press would portray it, then ambivalence should be high; conversely, a lower level of ambivalence may indicate that the issue is not highly controversial.

### **Study Structure and Aim**

Understanding attitudes towards privatization practices, as well as the factors which help form those attitudes, is of critical concern to decision makers. To this end, attitudinal structure and ambivalence will be assessed to better understand the level of controversy surrounding privatization, and to present a more complete overview of attitudes surrounding this issue. The role of several demographic and individual characteristics as potential predictors of attitudes will then be examined. In addition to the connection between conservatism and attitudes towards privatization (Mowen et al., 2007), wealthier individuals have been found to be more accepting of privatization (Mowen et al., 2007), while greater formal education has been linked to greater support for the use of taxes to finance park and recreation services (Godbey, Graefe, & James, 1992). Instead of formal education, knowledge of privatization will be considered as a predictor of attitudes towards privatization. This may answer the question of whether more education individuals in previous studies knew more about privatization specifically, or if those higher levels of education were potentially confounded with other variables such as political liberalism.

Hispanic/Latino identity will also be assessed as a potential predictor of attitudes towards privatization, given the growing prominence of this group in American society. With Hispanic and Latino individuals accounting for 54% of total population growth in the United States since the year 2000 (Krogstad, 2016), the views of this stakeholder group must be considered moving forward. Finally, group comparisons of attitudes towards privatization as a

whole, and towards specific practices, will be conducted. The analysis and information presented may be of substantial use to decision makers (e.g. park managers, elected and appointed officials) at the local level who wish to explore alternative financing strategies, and also serve to inform future research in the realm of privatization and alternative funding for local public park and recreation agencies. Three specific research questions will be addressed:

**RQ1:** To what degree does ambivalence exist towards privatization in parks and recreation?

**RQ2:** What is the role of the following demographic and individual characteristics on attitudes towards privatization in the park and recreation context: social ideology, economic ideology, income, Hispanic/Latino status, and knowledge of privatization?

**RQ3:** What differences in attitudes towards privatization, and specific privatization practices, exist between members of the specific groups defined in question two?

This study will expand on existing privatization research in three primary ways. First, the current body of research is limited by the local nature of past studies. The present study draws from a nationally representative panel sample, expanding the scope and generalizability of the data. Second, although existing research has examined individual privatization practices such as corporate sponsorship (e.g. Mowen et al., 2016), this study will examine attitudes towards privatization as a whole, and also towards a range of individual privatization practices. Finally, this study presents a more nuanced view of respondent attitudes surrounding privatization than has previously been employed, incorporating attitudinal ambivalence and structure.

## **Method**

### **Sample and Data Collection**

The study sample and data collection procedures for the present study is described in detail in chapter one of this dissertation. An abbreviated description is included here. A nationally representative panel sample was purchased from Qualtrics, a survey sampling and software company. A total of 603 completed surveys was returned, from the approximately 1,570 surveys that were started. Accounting only for completed surveys (not those who started but were screened out), 2.3% of those individuals who received an invitation finished the survey; 38.4% of those who started the survey completed it, with the remaining 61.6% screened out. Respondents were specifically tailored to represent the demographic profile of the United States' adult population in terms of age, gender, and racial/ethnic identity. The use of an online sampling method such as this was highly efficient in terms of financial, time, and human resources. Online distribution also allowed for a wider and more diverse set of respondents than traditional pen and paper methods (Gosling, Vazire, & Srivastava, 2004). Use of this approach will allow a test of online panel sampling for research in the parks and recreation context, and may provide insight into the viability of this technique for future research.

## **Measures**

**Attitudes.** The dependent variable in the regression and between group analyses, attitudes towards privatization as a concept were assessed through a series of items that were developed based on past research into privatization (e.g. More, 2005; Mowen et al., 2016) and as well as current privatization practices taking place in the local public park and recreation context. Specifically, corporate sponsorship, the use of volunteers, outsourcing of services to private contractors, soliciting charitable gifts, and selling local public park and recreation facilities to for-profit companies were assessed (see Table 2.3). Overall attitude towards

privatization was measured through an index created using the mean scores of the individual practices. All items were measured on a seven-point scale ranging from one (“extremely negative”) to seven (“extremely positive”).

**Ambivalence.** Attitude ambivalence was assessed using three items based on those used by Priester and Petty (1996) to measure subjective attitudinal ambivalence regarding an object. Respondents were asked to what extent they felt indecisive regarding the implementation of privatization practices in public park and recreation services, to what extent their feelings regarding privatization were conflicted, and to what extent they had mixed feelings regarding privatization. Like Priester and Petty (1996), all items were measured on an 11-point scale from 0 (not at all) to 10 (the maximum). See Table 2.2 for specific wording and results.

**Demographic measures.** Respondent socio-demographic information was compiled. Characteristics assessed included sex, education, income, race/ethnicity, community type, political views, and age. Race/ethnicity was assessed through two items, asking if they were Spanish/Hispanic/Latino or not, and to indicate the race or races that best describe them: White, Black/African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or Other. Thus, an individual respondent can fall into multiple combinations of racial/ethnic categories. Education was assessed by asking respondents to indicate their highest level of schooling or degree completed, with responses ranging from “less than a high school degree” to “Doctoral degree.” Community type was assessed by asking respondents to select the response that best described where they live (rural area, town/village, small city, urban area, suburban area). See Table 2.1 for respondent demographic information.

**Ideology.** Ideology was assessed using two response items wherein respondents were asked to answer the following question: “on a scale of 1 (very liberal) to 7 (very conservative), how would you rate your views on social (*item 1*)/economic (*item 2*) issues?”. Social and economic issues were chosen to represent applicable portions of individual ideology because of their connection to both privatization practices, and public park and recreation services. As privatization practices are designed to reduce the economic burden on the taxpayer in delivering a socially beneficial service, these two domains were considered salient to attitudes towards privatization. The use of separate items for social and economic ideology is also recommended because it more effectively captures the level of conservatism that an individual possesses than a single item; moderate individuals are often split between these two dimensions, and a single item would artificially categorize these individuals as either more liberal or more conservative (Everett, 2013; Feldman & Johnston, 2013). Separate social and economic items have also been shown to have similar predictive power to longer, multiple item scales (Everett, 2013).

**Knowledge.** Knowledge of privatization was assessed through a series of factual and false statements about privatization in the parks and recreation context. Figure 2.1 contains the individual items used. Correct answers were scored positively, while incorrect responses were scored negatively. An overall knowledge score for each respondent was created by combining the correct and incorrect responses. Items were created to test knowledge about privatization as a whole, about certain specific practices, and the current application of privatization practices in local public park and recreation agencies. Item design and data analysis procedures were based off the work of Kuentzel and colleagues (2012), who used a similar procedure to test knowledge among residents of the Lake Champlain area regarding



cormorants. Cormorants represent a controversial issue in the Lake Champlain area because of their potential to harm natural resources, and a similar knowledge assessment was used in this case because of the potentially controversial nature of privatization.

- K1. *Privatization practices aim to save money by creating efficiencies* (TRUE)  
 K2. *Privatization involves a variety of different practices* (TRUE)  
 K3. *Only large park and recreation agencies currently engage in privatization practices* (FALSE)  
 K4. *Privatization practices do not have the capacity to generate enough money to really help public park and recreation agencies* (FALSE)  
 K5. *Privatization is currently taking place in public parks and recreation* (TRUE)  
 K6. *Corporate sponsorship has no real benefits for sponsors* (FALSE)

Figure 2.1 *Knowledge items*

### **Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics (means, frequencies, measures of central tendency) were used to assess respondent demographic characteristics, attitudes, attitudinal ambivalence, ideology, and knowledge. Scale reliability was assessed for attitudes towards privatization and attitude ambivalence through Cronbach's alpha. Regression analyses was used to determine the influence of demographics, ideology, and knowledge on the privatization attitudes index. Independent samples t-tests were then used to make within group comparisons for significant predictors from the regression model, which were recoded as dichotomous variables. Group differences were measured for overall attitude, as well as attitudes towards individual privatization practices.

### **Results**

Demographic data for respondents is presented in Table 2.1, and compared here to United States Census data (Census.gov, 2017). Respondents were approximately 46 years of age, and split between males (45.9%; 49.2% in the United States general population as of 2015), females (52.7%; 50.8% in the United States general population as of 2015), and

transgender or other (1.3%). Whites (79.6%; 77.1% in the United States general population as of 2015) made up the largest single racial ethnic group, and 17.2% of respondents identified as either Hispanic or Latina of any racial background (17.6% in the United States general population as of 2015). The majority of respondents had achieved at least an associate degree, and lived in urban/suburban areas. Ideology measures showed moderately conservative responses for both social issues (mean = 4.02, SD = 1.79), and economic issues (mean = 4.36, SD = 1.73). The mean knowledge score was .29 (SD = .52), with a range of -1.33 to 2.0.

### **Research Question 1**

Respondents experienced a moderate amount of attitude ambivalence (Mean = 5.42). Reliability for the three-item scale was within acceptable range, with a Cronbach's alpha value of .816. Results are summarized in Table 2.2. A histogram displaying frequencies of values for the attitude index is included in Figure 2.2, illustrating a lack of polarization among respondents, and a generally normal distribution of respondent attitudes. Attitudes towards privatization as a whole were moderately positive with an index mean of 4.47. However, there was considerable variation between specific attitude items. For example, the use of volunteers was perceived most favorably (Mean = 5.59), while the outright sale of park and recreation facilities to private interests was perceived most negatively (Mean = 3.11). Mean values for philanthropy (Mean = 5.25), corporate sponsorship (Mean = 4.8), and outsourcing (Mean = 4.01) were also above the mid-point. Cronbach's alpha for the attitude scale was within acceptable range, with a value of .776. These results are summarized in Table 2.3.

Table 2.1  
*Demographic data*

<b>Social ideology</b>	4.02 (SD = 1.79) <sup>1</sup>
<b>Economic ideology</b>	4.36 (SD) = 1.73) <sup>2</sup>
<b>Knowledge</b>	.29 <sup>3</sup>
Variable	N (%)
<b>Age (years)</b>	
18-25	55 (9.1)
26-35	142 (23.5)
36-45	116 (19.2)
46-55	90 (14.9)
56-65	101 (16.7)
66+	93 (15.4)
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	277 (45.9)
Female	318 (52.7)
Transgender or other	6 (1)
Choose not to disclose	2 (.3)
<b>Race and ethnicity</b>	
Hispanic or Latino	104 (17.2)
White	480 (79.6)
Black or African American	84 (13.9)
Asian	37 (6.1)
American Indian or Alaska Native	4 (.7)
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1 (.2)
Other	10 (1.7)
<b>Education</b>	
Less than HS	6 (1)
HS graduate	102 (16.9)
Some college but no degree	147 (24.4)
Associate degree	78 (12.9)
Bachelor's degree	178 (29.5)
Advanced degree	92 (15.3)
<b>Income (\$)</b>	
<10,000	34(5.6)
10,000-29,999	107 (17.7)
30,000-49,999	124 (20.6)
50,000-69,999	121 (20.1)
70,000-89,999	63 (10.4)
90,000-109,999	58 (9.6)
110,000+	94 (15.6)

<sup>1</sup>Social ideology measured on a seven point scale from 1 ("very liberal) to 7 ("very conservative)

<sup>2</sup>Economic ideology measured on a seven point scale from 1 ("very liberal) to 7 ("very conservative)

<sup>3</sup>Knowledge assessed through three true items, and three false items; correct responses positively scored, incorrect responses were negatively scored

Table 2.2  
Scale reliability and means for attitude ambivalence

Dimension/Items	Cronbach's $\alpha$	Mean	SD
<b>Attitude ambivalence</b>	.816	5.42	2.18
How conflicted are your feelings about the use of privatization practices in public park and recreation services?		5.68	2.48
How indecisive do you feel about the use of privatization practices in public park and recreation services?		5.07	2.59
How mixed are your feelings about the use of privatization practices in public park and recreation services?		5.48	2.64

\*Responses on an eleven-point scale ranging from 0 (“not at all”) to 10 (“the maximum”)

Table 2.3  
Attitudes towards privatization practices in the park and recreation context

	All Respondents				
	M <sup>1</sup>	SD	% Neg. <sup>2</sup>	% Neutral <sup>3</sup>	% Pos. <sup>4</sup>
Overall attitude* (Cronbach's $\alpha = .776$ )	4.47	1.14	28.5	10.2	61.3
Corp. sponsorship	4.80	1.53	18.1	17.6	64.3
Volunteers	5.59	1.25	5.5	12.2	82.3
Outsourcing	4.01	1.70	35.1	24.6	40.3
Philanthropy	5.25	1.41	9.6	18.4	72.0
Private sale of public asset	3.11	1.88	59.9	17.5	22.6

\*Index combining means for all individual privatization practices listed above, and a separate general privatization item, “Privatization as a funding source”

<sup>1</sup>All responses on a seven-point scale coded as 1=extremely negative, 2=very negative, 3=somewhat negative, 4=neutral, 5=somewhat positive, 6=very positive, 7=extremely positive

<sup>2</sup>Combination of responses ranging from 1 to 3

<sup>3</sup>Responses of 4

<sup>4</sup>Combination of responses ranging from 5 to 7

## Research Question 2

Multiple regression was used to determine the influence of ideology, income, Hispanic/Latino status, and knowledge of privatization on attitudes towards privatization.

Table 2.4 details the regression model, which was significant ( $p < .001$ ,  $F = 23.87$ ) and displayed a moderate level of predictive power ( $R^2 = .176$ ). Social ideology (Beta = .236,  $p < .001$ ), income (Beta = .109,  $p = .005$ ), Hispanic/Latino status (Beta = -.16,  $p < .001$ ), and knowledge (Beta = .202,  $p < .001$ ) were all significant predictors of overall attitudes towards privatization in the final model. Economic ideology was not a significant predictor (Beta = .079,  $p = .173$ ).

Table 2.4

*Regression analysis accounting for the influence of demographic and individual characteristics on attitudes towards privatization*

	R <sup>2</sup>	F-value	Variable Name	Beta	Significance
Attitudes Index	.176	23.87			<.001
			Social ideology	.236	<.001
			Economic ideology	.079	.173
			Income	.109	.005
			Hispanic or Latino*	-.160	<.001
			Knowledge	.202	<.001

\*Dichotomous variable coded as “yes” and “no”

### Research Question 3

Independent samples t-tests were run to determine group differences for social ideology, income, Hispanic/Latino status, and knowledge of privatization. Hispanic/Latino was compared to those respondents who identified as “non-Hispanic/Latino.” Social ideology, income, and knowledge were divided to create a high and low categories, as close to the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile as possible. Group differences were measured for not only the attitudes index, but also for the individual privatization practices. Because the stated goal of privatization is to save money for taxpayers through the creation of efficiency, economic ideology was included despite not being a significant predictor in the regression model. Results from these independent samples t-tests are detailed in Tables 2.5 through 2.9.

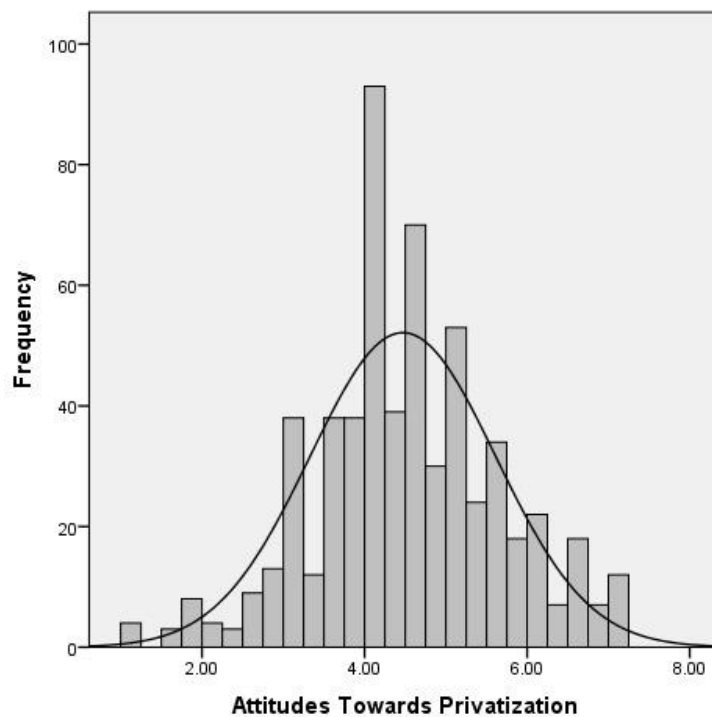


Figure 2.2 *Distribution of attitudes towards privatization index*

Those individuals who considered themselves to be more socially conservative were significantly more likely to have positive attitudes towards privatization as a whole ( $t = -6.41$ ,  $p < .001$ ), corporate sponsorship ( $t = -5.47$ ,  $p < .001$ ), the use of volunteers ( $t = -2.11$ ,  $p = .035$ ), outsourcing of management duties ( $t = -5.89$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and the sale of public parks or facilities to private companies ( $t = -5.31$ ,  $p < .001$ ). No significant differences were observed for the solicitation of philanthropic gifts.

Individuals who had an annual household income of greater than \$50,000 were significantly more likely to have positive attitudes towards privatization as a whole ( $t = -3.23$ ,  $p = .001$ ), the use of volunteers ( $t = -2.69$ ,  $p = .007$ ), outsourcing of management duties ( $t = -2.13$ ,  $p = .034$ ), and philanthropy ( $t = -3.26$ ,  $p = .001$ ). No significant differences were observed for corporate sponsorship and the sale of park and recreation facilities.

Those individuals who identified as Hispanic or Latino were significantly more likely to have positive attitudes towards privatization as a whole ( $t = 3.89, p < .001$ ), outsourcing of management duties ( $t = 3.78, p < .001$ ), and the sale of parks to private companies ( $t = 4.39, p < .001$ ). No significant differences were observed for corporate sponsorship, the use of volunteers, or the solicitation of philanthropic gifts.

Respondents with greater knowledge of privatization were significantly more likely to have positive attitudes towards privatization as a whole ( $t = -3.28, p = .001$ ), corporate sponsorship ( $t = -2.91, p = .004$ ), the use of volunteers ( $t = -2.9, p = .004$ ), and philanthropy ( $t = -2.75, p = .006$ ). No significant differences were observed for outsourcing of management duties or the sale of park and recreation facilities.

The same procedure was followed to test for group differences between more and less economically conservative individuals. More economically conservative individuals were significantly more likely to have positive attitudes towards privatization as a whole ( $t = -5.44, p < .001$ ), corporate sponsorship ( $t = -5.74, p < .001$ ), outsourcing of management duties ( $t = -4.43, p < .001$ ), and the sale of park and recreation facilities ( $t = -3.92, p < .001$ ). No significant differences were observed for the use of volunteers and the solicitation of philanthropic gifts.

Independent samples t-tests were used to check for differences among Hispanic or Latino respondents and non-Hispanic or Latino respondents in terms of income, knowledge of privatization, social ideology, and economic ideology. No significant differences were found between the two groups.

Table 2.5  
*Attitudes towards privatization in terms of social ideology*

	More Liberal Socially (n = 309)					More Conservative Socially (n = 280)					<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	M <sup>1</sup>	<i>SD</i>	% Neg. <sup>2</sup>	% Neutral <sup>3</sup>	% Pos. <sup>4</sup>	M	<i>SD</i>	% Neg.	% Neutral	% Pos.		
Overall attitude*	4.20	1.10	36.6	12.1	51.3	4.79	1.120	20.2	7.9	71.9	-6.41	<.001
Corp. sponsorship	4.50	1.57	22.3	22.0	55.7	5.18	1.39	12.4	12	75.6	-5.47	<.001
Volunteers	5.48	1.30	5.9	16.1	78.0	5.70	1.20	4.9	8.7	86.4	-2.11	.035
Outsourcing	3.62	1.67	42.6	28.4	29.0	4.44	1.65	27.6	19.8	52.6	-5.89	<.001
Philanthropy	5.19	1.45	11.0	20.6	68.4	5.29	1.37	8.5	15.6	75.9	-.81	.418
Private sale	2.74	1.75	67.1	16.9	16.0	3.57	1.94	50.7	18.3	31.0	-5.31	<.001

\*Index combining means for all individual privatization practices listed above, and a separate general privatization item, "Privatization as a funding source"

<sup>1</sup>All responses on a seven-point scale coded as 1=extremely negative, 2=very negative, 3=somewhat negative, 4=neutral, 5=somewhat positive, 6=very positive, 7=extremely positive

<sup>2</sup>Combination of responses ranging from 1 to 3

<sup>3</sup>Responses of 4

<sup>4</sup>Combination of responses ranging from 5 to 7



Table 2.6  
*Attitudes towards privatization in terms of income*

	Income Below \$50,000 (n = 265)					Income \$50,000 and Above (n = 336)					<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	M <sup>1</sup>	<i>SD</i>	% Neg. <sup>2</sup>	% Neutral <sup>3</sup>	% Pos. <sup>4</sup>	M	<i>SD</i>	% Neg.	% Neutral	% Pos.		
Overall attitude*	4.31	1.16	32.7	10.3	57	4.61	1.11	25	10.2	64.8	-3.23	.001
Corp. sponsorship	4.68	1.58	20.3	19.5	60.2	4.91	1.47	15.8	16.1	68.1	-1.76	.080
Volunteers	5.42	1.32	6.9	14.7	78.4	5.71	1.19	4.4	10.4	85.2	-2.69	.007
Outsourcing	3.84	1.71	37.6	27.1	35.3	4.15	1.69	33	22.4	44.6	-2.13	.034
Philanthropy	5.03	1.47	11.4	21.7	66.9	5.41	1.34	8.2	16	75.8	-3.26	.001
Private sale	2.99	1.77	60.4	18.5	21.1	3.22	1.96	59.2	16.8	24	-1.44	.150

\*Index combining means for all individual privatization practices listed above, and a separate general privatization item, "Privatization as a funding source"

<sup>1</sup>All responses on a seven-point scale coded as 1=extremely negative, 2=very negative, 3=somewhat negative, 4=neutral, 5=somewhat positive, 6=very positive, 7=extremely positive

<sup>2</sup>Combination of responses ranging from 1 to 3

<sup>3</sup>Responses of 4

<sup>4</sup>Combination of responses ranging from 5 to 7

Table 2.7  
*Attitudes towards privatization in terms of Hispanic/Latino status*

	Hispanic or Latino (n = 104)					Non-Hispanic or Latino (n = 496)					<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	M <sup>1</sup>	<i>SD</i>	% Neg. <sup>2</sup>	% Neutral <sup>3</sup>	% Pos. <sup>4</sup>	M	<i>SD</i>	% Neg.	% Neutral	% Pos.		
Overall attitude*	4.86	1.15	17.3	7.7	75	4.39	1.13	30.8	10.6	58.6	3.89	<.001
Corp. sponsorship	5.03	1.47	14.1	31.3	54.6	4.75	1.53	19	17.5	63.5	1.97	.095
Volunteers	5.77	1.09	2.1	13.4	84.5	5.55	1.28	6.3	11.9	81.8	1.57	.117
Outsourcing	4.58	1.69	24.8	20.8	54.4	3.88	1.69	37.3	25.3	37.4	3.78	<.001
Philanthropy	5.27	1.46	10.8	16.7	72.5	5.24	1.40	9.4	18.5	72.1	.21	.835
Private sale	3.86	2.03	46.5	14.1	39.4	2.96	1.81	62.6	18.1	19.3	4.39	<.001

\*Index combining means for all individual privatization practices listed above, and a separate general privatization item, "Privatization as a funding source"

<sup>1</sup>All responses on a seven-point scale coded as 1=extremely negative, 2=very negative, 3=somewhat negative, 4=neutral, 5=somewhat positive, 6=very positive, 7=extremely positive

<sup>2</sup>Combination of responses ranging from 1 to 3

<sup>3</sup>Responses of 4

<sup>4</sup>Combination of responses ranging from 5 to 7

Table 2.8  
*Attitudes towards privatization in terms of knowledge about privatization*

	Lower Knowledge (n = 280)					Higher Knowledge (n = 323)					<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	M <sup>1</sup>	<i>SD</i>	% Neg. <sup>2</sup>	% Neutral <sup>3</sup>	% Pos. <sup>4</sup>	M	<i>SD</i>	% Neg.	% Neutral	% Pos.		
Overall attitude*	4.31	1.28	37.4	10.4	52.2	4.61	.98	20.7	10	69.3	-3.28	.001
Corp. sponsorship	4.61	1.61	22.5	18.5	59	4.97	1.43	14.2	16.8	69	-2.91	.004
Volunteers	5.42	1.34	7.8	16.3	75.9	5.73	1.16	3.6	8.8	87.6	-2.90	.004
Outsourcing	3.90	1.91	38.3	21.9	39.8	4.10	1.50	32.4	26.9	40.7	-1.44	.151
Philanthropy	5.07	1.46	11.6	19.5	68.9	5.40	1.35	7.8	17.5	74.7	-2.75	.006
Private sale	3.14	2.02	60.7	13.6	25.7	3.08	1.75	59.2	20.9	19.9	.36	.722

\*Index combining means for all individual privatization practices listed above, and a separate general privatization item, "Privatization as a funding source"

<sup>1</sup>All responses on a seven-point scale coded as 1=extremely negative, 2=very negative, 3=somewhat negative, 4=neutral, 5=somewhat positive, 6=very positive, 7=extremely positive

<sup>2</sup>Combination of responses ranging from 1 to 3

<sup>3</sup>Responses of 4

<sup>4</sup>Combination of responses ranging from 5 to 7

Table 2.9  
*Attitudes towards privatization in terms of economic ideology*

	More Liberal Economically (n = 255)					More Conservative Economically (n = 325)					<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	M <sup>1</sup>	<i>SD</i>	% Neg. <sup>2</sup>	% Neutral <sup>3</sup>	% Pos. <sup>4</sup>	M	<i>SD</i>	% Neg.	% Neutral	% Pos.		
Overall attitude*	4.20	1.13	36.0	11.5	52.5	4.71	1.12	23.1	9.0	67.9	-5.44	<.001
Corp. sponsorship	4.42	1.62	25.1	23.5	51.4	5.16	1.35	11.3	12.9	75.8	-5.74	<.001
Volunteers	5.49	1.32	5.5	16.9	77.6	5.66	1.21	5.6	9.2	85.2	-1.57	.118
Outsourcing	3.66	1.74	41.2	28.2	30.6	4.30	1.65	30.0	21.6	48.4	-4.43	<.001
Philanthropy	5.20	1.39	9.1	20.7	70.2	5.30	1.43	10.0	15.8	74.2	-.83	.409
Private sale	2.78	1.78	64.7	18.5	16.8	3.40	1.93	55.6	16.4	28.0	-3.92	<.001

\*Index combining means for all individual privatization practices listed above, and a separate general privatization item, "Privatization as a funding source"

<sup>1</sup>All responses on a seven-point scale coded as 1=extremely negative, 2=very negative, 3=somewhat negative, 4=neutral, 5=somewhat positive, 6=very positive, 7=extremely positive

<sup>2</sup>Combination of responses ranging from 1 to 3

<sup>3</sup>Responses of 4

<sup>4</sup>Combination of responses ranging from 5 to 7

Table 2.10  
*Ideology, Income, and knowledge of privatization in terms of Hispanic/Latino status*

	Hispanic or Latino (n = 104)		Non-Hispanic or Latino (n = 496)			
	M <sup>1</sup>	SD	M	SD	t	p
Social ideology <sup>1</sup>	3.88	1.79	4.05	1.79	-.848	.397
Economic ideology <sup>2</sup>	4.18	1.76	4.4	1.72	-1.17	.241
Income <sup>3</sup>	4.72	2.84	4.37	2.68	1.21	.225
Knowledge <sup>4</sup>	.29	.53	.29	.52	.036	.972

<sup>1</sup> Social ideology measured on a seven point scale from 1 (“very liberal) to 7 (“very conservative)

<sup>2</sup> Economic ideology measured on a seven point scale from 1 (“very liberal) to 7 (“very conservative)

<sup>3</sup> Income measured categorically with seven response items ranging from 1 (“less than \$10,000) to 7 (“\$110,000 or more”)

<sup>4</sup> Knowledge assessed through three true items, and three false items; correct responses positively scored, incorrect responses were negatively scored

## Discussion

Because privatization and other alternative funding strategies are likely a part of the new reality for local public park and recreation services, a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that may influence their acceptability is needed for decision makers, practitioners, and researchers. The current study examined the impact of a variety of demographic and individual characteristics, specifically focusing on those that may be of greatest utility to decision makers weighing whether or not to implement one or more of these practices. Although a public park agency may not have the capacity to directly sample its constituency regarding privatization, the information collected and presented in this study may allow it to draw several inferences based on the demographic makeup of its community. Several characteristics that are readily available at the community level through publically available data (e.g. census data, general municipal voting results) are significant predictors of attitudes towards privatization, and as such managers may be able to use this information to guide their activity.

Although privatization is often referred to as a highly controversial practice, the results from this study tell a more nuanced story. Overall, ambivalence was moderate among respondents (Mean = 5.42). For a highly controversial topic, ambivalence values are expected to be high, indicating the presence of both positive and negative evaluations of the object (Newby-Clark, McGregor, & Zanna, 2002). Also, as shown in Figure 2.2, distribution of attitudes towards privatization were also relatively normal, with the largest grouping of respondents clustered around the middle. Such a distribution is not indicative of a controversial topic, and is consistent with the idea that polarization around issues is the exception rather than the rule (Kuentzel et al., 2012). The moderate level of ambivalence may

indicate that the general public does not consider privatization to be the controversial topic that members of both the popular (e.g. Tkaczyk, 2016) and academic (e.g. More, 2005) press do. These results support prior work examining corporate sponsorship of park and recreation services that showed higher relative levels of acceptability among specific sponsorship practices and conditions (Mowen et al., 2016; Samnaliev, More, & Stevens, 2006). Future research will be necessary to further explore this issue in more detail to better understand the sources of this ambivalence, and whether specific practices are more or less controversial than others. Measuring ambivalence toward specific privatization practices in addition to about privatization in general would provide a more nuanced understanding of ambivalence and would be appropriate given the differences in attitudes towards specific practices in this study.

Further calling into question the perceived controversy surrounding privatization, a majority of individuals reported positive attitudes towards privatization overall, as well as corporate sponsorship, the use of volunteers, and solicitation of philanthropy. Only the outright sale of public parks to private companies was viewed negatively by a majority of respondents; there was greater apathy or ambivalence among respondents regarding outsourcing, which was not assessed positively or negatively by a majority of respondents. Hispanic/Latino respondents had the most positive overall attitudes towards privatization as a whole, as three quarters of Hispanic or Latino respondents held positive attitudes about privatization as a whole. More socially and economically liberal respondents held the least positive attitudes towards privatization, but a majority of respondents still held positive attitudes towards privatization as a whole.

Among the individual practices, the outright sale of park and recreation facilities was viewed the most negatively. This is unsurprising, given the nature of parks as public places

with unfettered access for all. Past research at the state and local level examining the idea of selling public land to private companies to own and operate has reported similar results (i.e. Samnaliev et al., 2006). These attitudes may be shifting over time however. In their 2006 analysis, Samnaliev and colleagues found that only 6.6% of respondents supported selling some recreation areas to private companies, while in the current analysis, 22.6% had positive attitudes towards that practice. Although direct comparison cannot be made due to differences in sample and the exact wording/delivery of the question, this is an interesting and to some, alarming trend. Mowen and colleagues (2016) also observed this trend specifically in regards to corporate sponsorship. A 14-year follow up study indicated a positive shift in attitudes among residents of the same Virginia county, with a greater proportion of respondents reporting positive attitudes towards corporate sponsorship. It may be that this trend is a reflection of changing social norms, a less robust economic situation in the United States, and ongoing desensitization to private entities in public spaces.

The positive relationship between knowledge about privatization and a more accepting attitude towards privatization is particularly interesting considering past research linking overall education to support for the use of taxes to fund park and recreation services (Godbey et al., 1992). The fact that more knowledgeable respondents in the current study felt more positively about privatization may indicate that the relationship between education and attitudes towards privatization was confounded by other variables such as political liberalism. This relationship may also have implications for practitioners considering the implementation of any such program. A greater understanding of the potential benefits, and potential negatives, of privatization may defuse many of the concerns about such practices. “Privatization” is a loaded term which may conjure thoughts of the full-scale sale of public



parks and facilities to private interests, and potentially activate norms that increase resistance among park users. As such, a proactive educational campaign to dispel any misconceptions may be necessary to avoid conflicts before they materialize.

Interestingly, while more socially conservative respondents were generally more favorable towards privatization, economic ideology was not a significant predictor in the model. On the surface, this asymmetrical influence of ideology seems potentially counterintuitive. As the stated goal of privatization is to reduce the financial burden on taxpayers (Crompton, 1998), some relationship between economic worldview and attitudes towards privatization was expected. However, when independent samples t-tests were used to check for differences between more and less conservative individuals (while not controlling for other factors), several significant differences did emerge. Similarly to social ideology, those individuals who were more conservative economically were generally more favorable towards privatization.

Because Hispanic or Latino respondents were the most favorable of any group towards privatization as a whole, and towards a variety of individual practices (outsourcing, increased use of volunteers, and the outright sale of parks), independent samples t-tests were used to check for significant differences between Hispanic/Latinos and other respondents. As no significant differences were detected in terms of ideology, knowledge of privatization, or income, it does not appear that the generally favorable attitudes of Hispanic/Latino respondents can be attributed to the other demographic or individual traits analyzed in this study. Why Hispanic or Latino respondents were more favorable towards privatization may be due to a variety of reasons. A potential explanation may lie in the historical roots of public park and recreation services, which were often developed for the exclusive use of White

Americans. Because Hispanic/Latino users do not necessarily have a cultural attachment to park as public places, it may be that there is less resistance to privatization practices in this context. Future research must continue to examine this question, as Hispanic and Latino individuals account for a growing proportion of the American public (Krogstand, 2016), and potentially of parks users.

The moderate predictive power of the regression analysis may indicate that although privatization is grounded in the economic realm, it is a complex phenomenon. Opposition to or support of these practices may actually be a social values issue, wherein personal philosophy plays an outsize role in determining individual attitudes. Local public park and recreation services are more than an economic consideration, and this may be reflected in the relative importance of an individual's social worldview compared to their economic worldview. The importance of social values in the present analysis echoes past work specifically focused on corporate sponsorship, which ascribed a similar significance to individual philosophical views regarding the public nature of these services (Mowen et al., 2016). This should be taken as a cautionary note for park managers who are considering privatization, even in situations where other demographic/individual characteristics suggest the community may accept the implementation of such practices.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Although local public park and recreation agencies have traditionally been funded primarily through tax-based general funds, the financial landscape for these services has shifted seismically in recent years. The Great Recession and resultant period of recovery have seen declines in public expenditures both relative to other public services (Barrett, Pitas, & Mowen, 2017), and in absolute terms (Pitas, Barrett, & Mowen, 2017). To address the

growing disparity between public support and demand for these services, alternative funding strategies such as privatization may be becoming increasingly prevalent and necessary. To implement any such practice successfully, park and recreation decision makers must consider their key stakeholders, members of the public. As these services are provided for the benefit of the community, understanding attitudes amongst constituents is of utmost importance to decision makers.

The information provided in this study provides insight into whether or not a given community may be responsive to various privatization practices, or the overarching concept. Despite this, decision makers are cautioned to give proper weight to the role of personal philosophy in determining attitudes towards privatization, both their own and those of their constituents, over and beyond various individual and demographic characteristics. The question of whether or not such funding mechanisms are appropriate is a larger issue of values, and one that must be considered in the specific context of parks and recreation, with consideration to the very nature of these public spaces and the special role they play in the lives of individuals and communities. Future research should work to include deeply seated basic values as an important construct to better understand the role of personal values with respect the delivery of park and recreation services.

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## CHAPTER 3

### **The Role of Values and Attitudes in Determining Preferences for Relative Allocations to Park and Recreation Services**

#### **Abstract**

Local public park and recreation agencies, like other public services, are traditionally funded through tax-sourced allocations. In recent years, public funding for park and recreation services has been cut both in absolute terms, and disproportionately relative to other services. This has forced park and recreation agencies to become more entrepreneurial in their approach to securing adequate and reliable funding (Mowen, Kyle, Borrie, & Graefe, 2006; Walls, 2009). Privatization, any practice that reduces the public's role in financing and delivering a service, is one alternative funding approach that has come under greater scrutiny. Little is known however about how individual attitudes towards privatization impact attitudes towards a more traditional, public funding model. This study consists of a contingent valuation analysis, asking respondents from a nationally representative panel sample to allocate a limited amount of public funds to ten competitive public services during a hypothetical budget surplus, and a hypothetical budget shortfall. As these public services are financed primarily through personal taxes, assessing public preferences for spending is an important role for research. The role of values and attitudes in shaping those allocations is assessed through the use of multiple linear regression.

Results indicated that parks and recreation was ranked fifth of ten services in terms of net allocations. Attitude towards privatization, as well as perceived importance of park and recreation services significantly and directly influenced allocations. Self-transcendent and



self-enhancement value orientation indirectly influenced allocations through attitudes and perceived importance. Individuals with a more other-centered orientation were likely to consider local public park and recreation services important, and allocate more public money to them; individuals with a more self-centered orientation were more likely to hold positive attitudes towards privatization, and allocate less public money to local public park and recreation services. Implications for practitioners and decision makers, as well as potential future research directions are discussed.

## **Introduction and Background**

Public services, such as parks and recreation, are traditionally funded through municipal general funds based on tax-based appropriations. Although the majority of funding for local public park and recreation services comes from taxed-based appropriations, such funding is often volatile and vulnerable to larger economic forces. Although local public park and recreation services received high levels of public support in the latter portion of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Crompton and Kaczynski, 2003; Kaczynski & Crompton, 2006), recent analysis has shown that the Great Recession and resultant recovery had a disproportionate impact on parks and recreation relative to other public services (Barrett, Pitas, & Mowen, 2017; Pitas, Barrett, & Mowen, 2017). Because of this volatility and the apparent drop in public support in recent years, understanding what factors drive support for, or opposition to, tax-based funding is of critical importance to officials and decision makers.

In addition to public funding, park and recreation agencies engage in a variety of privatization practices to either save money or generate additional revenue. In light of the recent trends discussed above, privatization has become increasingly relevant to any discussion regarding the provision of local public park and recreation services. Because public park and recreation services are responsible to a variety of stakeholders, including members of the community, attitudes towards privatization must be included as an important consideration for agency and community decision makers. For a variety of reasons, privatization practices have garnered significant controversy. The impact of attitudes regarding these specific practices on support for traditional public funding is unknown however, as is the potential role of values, core motivational constructs that shape individual

worldview across situations. The present study will examine these relationships in determining preferences for public funding of park and recreation services.

The current study attempts to answer these questions through the use of a contingent valuation analysis. Similar to Nollenberger and colleagues (2012), respondents were asked to allocate additional funds in the case of a hypothetical budget increase, and to remove funding in the case of a hypothetical budget decrease. Net allocations to a given service were calculated by subtracting the amount removed from a service from the amount allocated to that service. Higher order self-transcendent and self-enhancement values were measured, as well as attitudes towards privatization, perceived quality of the service offered, and perceived importance of the service offered. Individuals with more central self-transcendent values put the wellbeing of the community before their own, while those individuals with more central self-enhancement values place their own wellbeing first. The predictive power of values has been demonstrated on both attitudes (Schwartz et al., 2012; van Riper & Kyle, 2014; Vaske, 1999) and behaviors (Schwartz & Butenko, 2014). An individual's behavior is expected to reflect either an other-centered or self-centered orientation, based on the relative importance of either self-transcendent or self-enhancement values. The potential role of values, attitudes, importance, and quality as predictors of net allocations was then examined. This analysis may allow park and recreation professionals and researchers to more effectively argue for available public funding, and to understand the driving factors behind public support or opposition.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study utilizes values theory (Schwartz et al., 2012), and the cognitive hierarchy of human behavior (Homer & Kahle, 1988; Rokeach, 1973) as its overarching theoretical framework. Values theory examines the cognitive processes that influence an individual's

worldview and personhood (Schwartz et al., 2012). Values are guiding principles that endure over time, transcend situations, and represent desirable end states (Rokeach, 1973). Values form the base of the cognitive hierarchy, which theorizes that an individual's viewpoint of specific issues is informed by a number of increasingly specific psychological processes. The hierarchy consists of values, higher order value orientations, ideologies, attitudes, behavioral intentions, and behavior. Each element of the hierarchy builds upon one another, and increases in specificity. In this model, more general elements such as values influence behavioral intention and behavior through mediating elements such as higher order value orientations and attitudes (Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach, & Grube, 1984; Homer & Kahle, 1988; Rokeach, 1973). Given what is known about value theory and the cognitive hierarchy, the following model illustrating antecedents of allocations is proposed (see Figure 3.1), and the various elements of this model are described in the following sections.

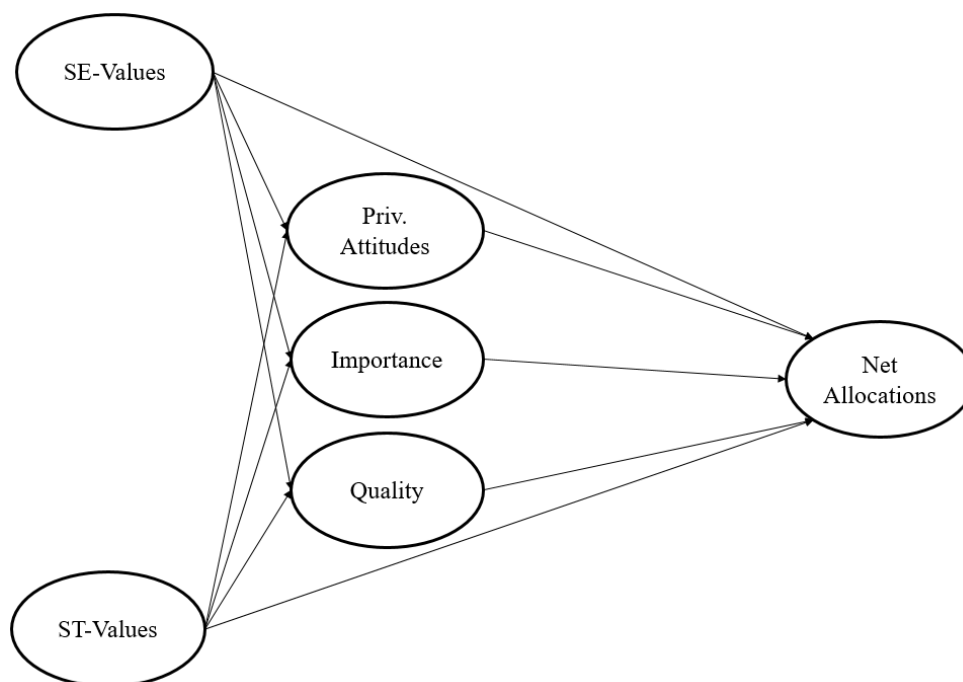


Figure 3.1 *Theoretical model to test*

## Values

Values represent deeply rooted, desirable goals that serve as core guiding principles in an individual's life (Rokeach, 1973). Values theory, described in detail in the first chapter of this dissertation, identifies a set of common values that all humans share and express in varying degrees (Schwartz et al., 2012). Personhood and worldview is based on the relative importance of these values. In the theory of human values, Schwartz and colleagues (2012) identify 19 universal human values, arranged along a circular continuum based on their motivational goals; values that are closer to one another are more similar in terms of their motivational goals, while those further apart share less in common (see Figure 3.2). The 19 goals that make up this circular continuum may be combined into higher order value orientations that include multiple goals with similar motivations (Schwartz & Butenko, 2014). Two higher order value orientations, self-transcendent and self-enhancement will be considered in the current study.

The self-enhancement value orientation is comprised of three individual values: *power-dominance* (motivated by the power to constrain others to do what one wants and to exert influence over others), *power-resources* (motivated by the ability to control the course of events through the possession and use of material assets), and *achievement* (motivated by the desire to be judged as successful by others according to the normative standards of one's culture. The self-transcendent higher order value orientation is comprised of five individual values: *benevolence-caring* (motivated by a desire to be helpful, and a devotion to the welfare of other members of the group), *benevolence-dependability* (motivated by the desire to be a reliable and trustworthy member of the group), *universalism-concern* (motivated by a commitment to equality and justice for all people), *universalism-nature* (motivated by a focus

on preservation of the natural world, and avoiding damaging or polluting the natural environment), and *universalism-tolerance* (motivated by open-mindedness and understanding of those who are different from oneself) (Schwartz et al., 2012).

Self-transcendent values emphasize the good of others before individual wellbeing, while self-enhancement values involve furthering the interests of the self before others are considered (Schwartz et al., 2012). Because of their conflicting motivational goals, the higher order self-transcendent and self-enhancement value orientations are opposite one another in the motivation continuum. The role of values as a predictor of net allocation will be measured directly, as well as indirectly through attitudes. The predictive power of values has been demonstrated in terms of both attitudes (Schwartz et al., 2012; van Riper & Kyle, 2014; Vaske, 1999) and behavior (Schwartz & Butenko, 2014). Based on the relative importance of either self-transcendent or self-enhancement values, individuals may be expected to behave in a fashion that makes their underlying motivational goals more likely. Similarly, individuals may be more likely to engage in actions that make the underlying motivational goals of the opposing value orientation less likely (Schwartz & Butenko, 2014).

However, the influence of values on attitudes and behavior is potentially asymmetrical. Whereas self-enhancement and self-transcendent values are opposite one another on the motivational continuum, their effect on actions that inhibit their motivational goals are not opposite and equivalent. Self-transcendent values inhibit self-enhancing behaviors; concern for the impact of one's behavior makes actions that promote personal benefit or achievement less likely. Conversely, self-enhancement values have little or no inhibiting effect on behaviors that

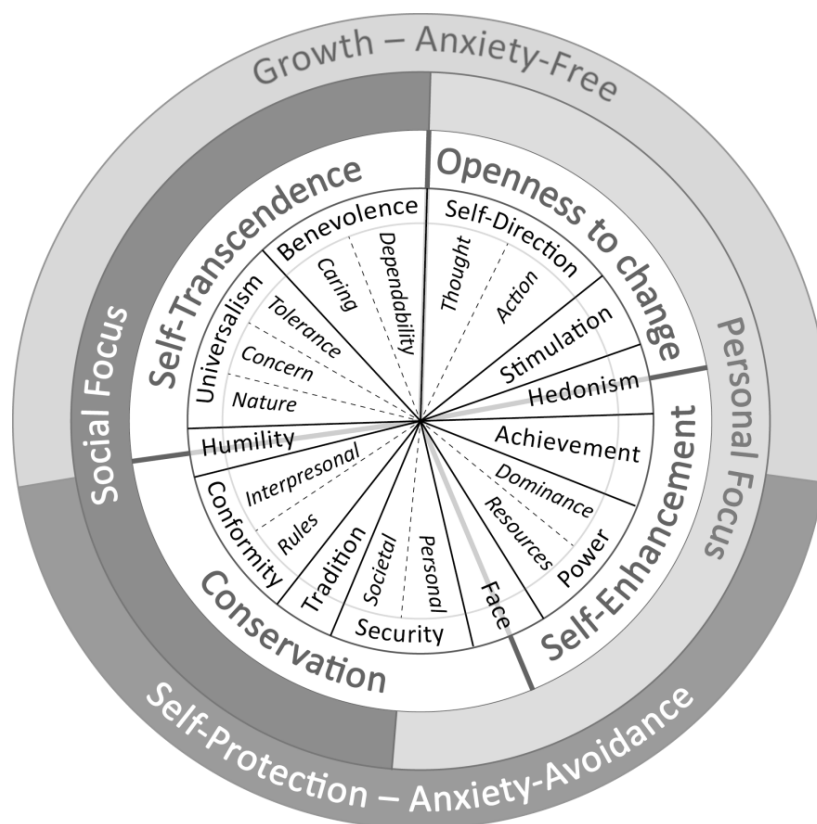


Figure 3.2 *Circular motivational continuum of 19 individual values and higher order value orientations (from Cieciuch et al., 2014)*

promote the welfare of others; a self-centered orientation may not inhibit actions that promote the welfare of others (Schwartz et al., 2012). In situations where furthering individual wellbeing also furthers the wellbeing of others, self-enhancement values would not inhibit such actions.

### **Attitudes**

Whereas values are enduring in nature and apply across situations, attitudes are evaluations of specific objects (Fishbein & Raven, 1962). The relationship between attitude and behavior has long been an object of study (Ajzen, 2001; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977). The theory of planned behavior positions attitudes as only one of a number of factors that influence behavioral intention, including perceived behavioral control and subjective norms

(Ajzen, 1991). The level of power an attitude has to predict behavioral intention is also influenced by a variety of factors. Attitudes that are more embedded in the psyche, more accessible, and stronger generally have greater predictive power regarding behavioral intention, and in turn behavior (Ajzen, 2001). Attitudinal ambivalence, the presence of conflicting positive and negative evaluations of the same object, generally decreases the strength of this relationship (Crano & Prislin, 2006).

According to the cognitive hierarchy model of human behavior, attitudes are influenced by more general psychological processes such as higher order value orientations, and the individual values that make up those orientations (Ball-Rokeach et al., 1984). Values and higher order value orientations such as self-transcendent and self-enhancement values influence attitudes as part of a chain of psychological processes. Attitudes in turn influence behavioral intention and behavior (Ajzen, 2001), and in this way values indirectly influence behavior. Prior research has demonstrated that values influence behavior indirectly through attitudes, both generally (Schwartz et al., 2012) and specifically in the context of recreation (van Riper & Kyle, 2014; Vaske, 1999). In addition to evaluating the direct influence of values, the current study will examine this indirect pathway.

### **Method**

Because individual citizens pay for public services through their income taxes, elected and appointed officials must answer to this important stakeholder group when making decisions regarding the allocation of funds. Unfortunately, because the budgeting process is not necessarily viewed as transparent or user friendly, public involvement is generally limited to those individuals who are most motivated and/or equipped to participate (Nollenberger, Maher, Beach & McGee, 2012; Robbins & Simonsen, 2002). For this reason, individuals with



higher levels of income, education, and motivation to participate are likely overrepresented in this process. Because citizens contribute to public services through their tax support, and are the primary stakeholders served by these agencies, this uneven pattern of participation and incomplete representation presents a significant problem for policy makers and researchers tasked with representing all voices.

To address this issue, previous research on public spending preferences has utilized a contingent valuation survey method. Contingent valuation encourages citizen participation in the budgeting process by removing barriers to participation such as expertise, and increasing the ease of participation relative to attending public meetings (Nollenberger et al., 2012). This is accomplished by tasking respondents with allocating a defined amount of money among a menu of public programs. Because the amount of money to be allocated in the experiment is limited, researchers are able to understand respondents' marginal willingness to trade between various services (Blomquist, Newsome, & Stone, 2004). Those services that receive greater allocation are perceived as more worthy than those that receive a smaller share of the funding.

Nollenberger and colleagues (2012) extended on this method by not only asking respondents to allocate funds, but more specifically to allocate additional funds after a hypothetical budget increase, and to remove funding from public programs in response to a hypothetical budget decrease. This technique is more realistic given the new reality facing many local governments in the post-Great Recession era, which asks local governments to provide the same (or even higher) levels of service with fewer resources (Mathers, 2010). Nollenberger and colleagues (2012) found that park and recreation services were near the bottom for allocations during the budget surplus, and among the most likely to be cut during the budget shortfall. Although 72% of respondents felt that park and recreation services were

of either *excellent* or *good* quality, they were simultaneously perceived as the least important among the services measured, a group which included police, fire, transport, and waste management, among others.

The current study extends the work of Nollenberger and colleagues in a variety of ways. First, whereas the analysis of Nollenberger and colleagues was localized to a single town in Wisconsin, the current research utilizes a nationally representative sample. Such a sample will allow a greater degree of generalizability of the results, and allow for the formation of policy and practice across geographic locations. Second, the current study assesses the role of values and attitudes as potential predictors of net allocations towards park and recreation services. Also worth noting, whereas Nollenberger and colleagues presented respondents with eight options, the current study presents the ten local government services defined by the US Census State and Local Government Finance Survey (Census.gov, 2014), and assessed by Kaczynski and Crompton (2006), and Barrett, Pitas, and Mowen (2016).

### **Sample and Data Collection**

Sample and data collection for the present study is described in greater detail in chapter one of this dissertation, and an abbreviated description is included here. A nationally representative panel sample was purchased from Qualtrics, a survey sampling and software company. A total of 603 completed surveys was returned, from the approximately 1,570 surveys that were started. Accounting only for completed surveys (not those who started but were screened out), 2.3% of those individuals who received an invitation finished the survey; 38.4% of those who started the survey completed it, with the remaining 61.6% screened out. Respondents were specifically tailored to represent the demographic profile of the United States' adult population in terms of age, gender, and racial/ethnic identity. The use of an

online sampling method such as this was highly efficient in terms of financial, time, and human resources. Online distribution also allowed for a wider and more diverse set of respondents than traditional pen and paper methods (Gosling, Vazire, & Srivastasa, 2004). Use of this approach will allow a test of online panel sampling for research in the parks and recreation context, and may provide insight into the viability of this technique for future research.

## Measures

**Demographic measures.** Respondent socio-demographic information was compiled, and is reported in Table 3.1. Characteristics assessed included sex, education, income, race/ethnicity, community type, political views, and age. Race/ethnicity was assessed through two items, asking if they were Spanish/Hispanic/Latino or not, and to indicate the race or races that best describe them (White, Black/African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or Other). Education was assessed by asking respondents to indicate their highest level of schooling or degree completed, with responses ranging from “less than a high school degree” to “Doctoral degree.”

**Values.** Values were measured using portions of the revised Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ-RR; Schwartz et al., 2012), specifically the subscales that make up the higher order self-transcendent and self-enhancement value orientations. The self-enhancement higher order value scales assess three individual values: *power-dominance*, *power-resources*, and *achievement*. The self-transcendent higher order value scales assess five individual values: *benevolence-caring*, *benevolence-dependability*, *universalism-concern*, *universalism-nature*, and *universalism-tolerance*. Each value is comprised of three individual items, which were computed into indices to provide a measurement for the individual value. Mean scores

for individual values were then used to compute an index score for the appropriate higher order value orientations (see Table 3.2).

The PVQ-RR asks respondents to compare themselves to a hypothetical individual. Each item begins with “it is important...” and portrays an individual engaging in a personally important behavior that corresponds to the value being measured. Items are gender-matched, and only consist of a single sentence. Respondents indicate how similar they are to the individual being described on a six-point scale: 1 – not like me at all, 2 – not like me, 3 – a little like me, 4 – moderately like me, 5 – like me, 6 – very much like me. Although both a six- and 11-point version of the PVQ-RR is available, the six-point version is recommended as it produces less missing data than the 11-point scale (Schwartz et al., 2012).

**Attitudes.** Attitudes towards privatization were assessed through a series of items that were developed based on past research into privatization in the park and recreation context (e.g. More, 2005; Mowen, Trauntvein, Potwarka, Pitas, & Duray, 2016), and actual privatization practices taking place in the local public park and recreation context. Overall attitude towards privatization was measured using a single item, then several items addressed specific practices such as corporate sponsorship, the use of volunteers, outsourcing of services to private contractors, soliciting charitable gifts, and selling local public park and recreation facilities to for-profit companies. These individual items were combined to form an index score for attitude towards privatization (see Table 3.3).

To measure perceived importance of park and recreation services to respondents, respondents were asked to rate each of the 10 competitive public services in terms of their importance to them personally and to their community. Respondents were then asked to rate the quality of each service in their community. All ratings were given on a seven-point scale,

ranging from “the lowest level of importance/quality,” to “the highest level of importance/quality.” Respondents were asked to select “NA” if their community did not offer the service in question.

**Net allocations.** Respondents were asked to consider two hypothetical situations in a local government context, a budget surplus, and a budget deficit. In the case of the budget surplus, respondents were asked to indicate what percentage of the extra money they would allocate to each of 10 possible public services, including parks and recreation, such that the extra money funds allocated totaled 100%. In the case of the budget shortfall, respondents were asked to indicate what percentage of the budget shortfall would come from the same 10 services, totaling 100%. In both instances, a running percentage total was automatically populated at the bottom of the response screen to reduce the burden on survey respondents.

### **Data Analysis**

The score for each individual value was calculated as the mean of the ratings of each item for that value. Individual values were then combined into higher order value orientations. A multi-item index was created for attitudes towards privatization in a similar fashion by calculating the mean of the ratings of each attitude item. Scale reliability was calculated for each individual value, and the attitude items.

Average allocations for each public service were calculated for both the hypothetical budget surplus and budget shortfall. Net allocations for each public service were calculated by subtracting the amount removed from a service from the amount allocated to that service. Standard deviation, as well as coefficient of variance was also computed for each public service for the surplus, shortfall, and net allocations. Coefficient of variance is a measure of the divergence in net allocations reported by respondents, and is calculated by dividing the

standard deviation for a service by its mean (Nollenberger et al., 2012). A smaller absolute value for coefficient of variance indicates that there is greater agreement among respondents for allocations to that particular service (Blomquist et al., 2004). Allocations to each of the 10 public services are reported in Table 3.4. Path analysis was performed to test the model presented in Figure 3.1. A series of multiple linear regressions were performed to determine the direct and indirect effects of higher order value orientations, as well as the direct effects of attitudes, perceived quality, and perceived importance.

### **Results**

A demographic profile of the respondents for the present study is presented here, and compared to general population of the United States (Census.gov, 2017a), with data included in Table 3.1. Respondents were approximately 46 years of age, and split between males (45.9%), females (52.7%; 50.8% in the United States general population as of 2015), and transgender or other (1.3%). Whites (79.6%; 77.1% in the United States general population as of 2015) made up the largest single racial ethnic group, and approximately 17% of respondents identified as either Hispanic or Latina of any racial background (17.6% in the United States general population as of 2015). The majority of respondents had achieved at least an associate degree, and lived in urban/suburban areas.

The overall mean for the self-transcendent value orientation was higher than the mean for the self-enhancement value orientation (4.9 and 3.37 respectively). Means for individual values within the self-transcendent value orientation were also higher than those within the self-enhancement value orientation. Benevolence-care (5.17) and benevolence-dependability (5.04) received the highest mean scores, while power-resources (2.76) and power-dominance (3.07) received the lowest mean scores. Overall attitudes towards privatization were

moderately positive (4.62), with considerable variation between attitudes towards specific privatization practices. For example, the use of volunteers was perceived most favorably (5.74), while the outright sale of park and recreation facilities to private interests was perceived most negatively (3.29).

Net allocations to all public services are recorded in Table 3.4. Overall five services reported positive net allocations, indicating they received more additional funding than was taken away: education (12.51% net increase), hospitals and health (3.84%), fire protection (3.58%), police protection (3.13%), and parks and recreation (.26%). The coefficient of variance was widely discrepant, with education receiving the greatest agreement regarding net allocations (COV=1.63), and parks and recreation receiving the least agreement (COV=71.12). Overall quality and importance, both measured on seven-point scales, are reported in Table 3.5.

Table 3.1  
*Demographic characteristics*

Variable	N (%)
<b>Age (years)</b>	
18-25	55 (9.1)
26-35	142 (23.5)
36-45	116 (19.2)
46-55	90 (14.9)
56-65	101 (16.7)
66+	93 (15.4)
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	277 (45.9)
Female	318 (52.7)
Transgender or other	6 (1)
Choose not to disclose	2 (.3)
<b>Race and ethnicity</b>	
Hispanic or Latino	104 (17.2)
White	480 (79.6)
Black or African American	84 (13.9)
Asian	37 (6.1)
American Indian or Alaska Native	4 (.7)
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1 (.2)
Other	10 (1.7)
<b>Education</b>	
Less than HS	6 (1)
HS graduate	102 (16.9)
Some college but no degree	147 (24.4)
Associate degree	78 (12.9)
Bachelor's degree	178 (29.5)
Advanced degree	92 (15.3)
<b>Community type</b>	
Rural area	86 (14.3)
Town or village	62 (10.3)
Small city	83 (13.8)
Urban area	155 (25.7)
Suburban area	216 (35.8)
<b>Income (\$)</b>	
<10,000	34(5.6)
10,000-29,999	107 (17.7)
30,000-49,999	124 (20.6)
50,000-69,999	121 (20.1)
70,000-89,999	63 (10.4)
90,000-109,999	58 (9.6)
110,000+	94 (15.6)



Table 3.2  
*Scale reliability and means for values items*

Dimension/Items	Cronbach's $\alpha$	Mean	SD
<i>Self-Transcendent Values</i>	.848	4.90	
<b>Universalism-Nature</b>	.875	4.47	
It is important for her to care for nature		4.63	1.07
It is important to her to take part in activities to defend nature		4.18	1.21
It is important to her to protect the natural environment from destruction or pollution		4.58	1.12
<b>Universalism-Concern</b>	.801	4.89	
It is important to her that the weak and vulnerable in society be protected		4.65	1.21
It is important to her that every person in the world have equal opportunities in life		4.86	1.16
It is important to her that everyone be treated justly, even people she doesn't know		5.13	0.95
<b>Universalism-Tolerance</b>	.846	4.94	
It is important to her to be tolerant towards all kinds of people and groups		5.06	1.01
It is important to her to listen to and understand people who are different from her		5.02	.97
It is important to her to accept people even when she disagrees with them		4.74	1.03
<b>Benevolence-Care</b>	.814	5.17	
It is important to her to take care of people she is close to		5.31	.89
It is very important to her to help the people dear to her		5.35	.87
It is important to her to concern herself with very need of her dear ones		4.85	1.07
<b>Benevolence-Dependability</b>	.802	5.04	
It is important to her that people she knows have full confidence in her		4.83	1.04
It is important to her to be a dependable and trustworthy friend		5.23	0.92
It is important to her that all her friends and family can rely on her completely		5.04	1.00
<i>Self-Enhancement Values</i>	.775	3.37	
<b>Achievement</b>	.787	4.30	
It is important to her to have ambitions in life		4.72	1.09
It is important to her to be very successful		4.31	1.28
It is important to her that people recognize what she achieves		3.86	1.43
<b>Power-Dominance</b>	.889	3.07	
It is important to her that people do what she says they should		3.53	1.53
It is important to her to have the power to make people do what she wants		2.87	1.53
It is important to her to be the one who tells others what to do		2.80	1.53
<b>Power-Resources</b>	.896	2.76	
It is important to her to have the power that money can bring		2.89	1.57
It is important to her to be wealthy		2.98	1.58
It is important to her to own expensive things that show her wealth		2.40	1.53

Path modeling was used to test the model detailed in Figure 3.1. An initial regression was run to test the impact of the self-transcendent value orientation, self-enhancement value orientation, attitudes towards privatization, perceived quality of park and recreation services, and perceived importance of park and recreation services on allocations to park and recreation services. Overall the model was significant, but had only weak-to-moderate explanatory power ( $R^2 = .08$ ,  $F = 9.642$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Only attitudes towards privatization (Beta =  $-.121$ ,  $p = .007$ ) and perceived importance of park and recreation services (Beta =  $.257$ ,  $p < .001$ ) were significant predictors of net allocations to park and recreation services. Because quality was not directly related to net allocations, it was dropped from the subsequent analyses. Two separate regressions were run to determine the impact of the self-transcendent and self-enhancement value orientations on attitudes towards privatization, and perceived importance of park and recreation services. Whereas attitudes were significantly and positively influenced by the self-enhancement value orientation (Beta =  $.394$ ,  $p < .001$ ), importance was significantly and positively influenced by the self-transcendent value orientation (Beta =  $.212$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Results are described in Tables 3.6 and 3.7. The final model with significant pathways is described in Figure 3.3.

Table 3.3  
*Scale reliability and means for attitude items*

Dimension/Items	Cronbach's $\alpha$	Mean	SD
<b>Attitudes Towards Privatization</b>	<i>.776</i>	4.47	1.14
Privatization as a funding source in the local public park and recreation context		4.14	1.63
Corporate sponsorship as a funding source of local public park and recreation services		4.73	1.51
Volunteers as a way of delivering local public park and recreation services		5.54	1.26
Outsourcing local public park and recreation services to private contractors		4.02	1.64
Soliciting philanthropic (charitable) gifts as a funding source of local public park and recreation services		5.21	1.39
Selling local public park and recreation facilities to private companies		3.16	1.85

Table 3.4  
*Allocations to public services*

Budget Category	Allocation (%)	Std. Deviation	Coefficient of variance
Net Allocation (Equals Increase - Decrease)			
Education	12.51	20.33	1.63
Hospitals and health	3.84	15.6	4.06
Fire protection	3.58	12.66	3.54
Police protection	3.13	18.37	5.87
<i>Parks and recreation</i>	.26	18.49	71.12
Libraries	-1.99	15.03	7.55
Housing and community development	-2.64	16.39	6.21
Transportation	-4.41	15.59	3.54
Public welfare	-4.71	23.76	5.04
Corrections	-9.83	21.15	20.15

Table 3.5  
*Importance and quality of park and recreation services*

	Importance <sup>1</sup>	Std. Deviation	Quality <sup>1</sup>	Std. Deviation
Parks and recreation	5.74	1.77	5.92	2.03

<sup>1</sup>Responses recorded on a seven-point scale ranging from “the least important” to “the most important”

Table 3.6  
*Regression model accounting for influence of value orientations, attitudes, perceived quality, and perceived importance of parks and recreation services on net allocations to park and recreation services*

	R <sup>2</sup>	F-value	Variable Name	Beta	Significance
Net allocations	.08	9.942			<.001
			ST Values	.029	.49
			SE Values	.011	.814
			Attitude	-.121	.007
			Importance	.257	<.001
			Quality	.004	.927

Table 3.7

*Regression analyses accounting for influence of value orientations on attitudes towards privatization, and perceived importance of park and recreation services*

	R <sup>2</sup>	F-value	Variable Name	Beta	Significance
Attitudes	.206	77.012			<.001
			ST Values	-.024	.506
			SE Values	.455	<.001
	R <sup>2</sup>	F-value	Variable Name	Beta	Significance
Importance	.049	15.031			<.001
			ST Values	.212	<.001
			SE Values	.051	.206

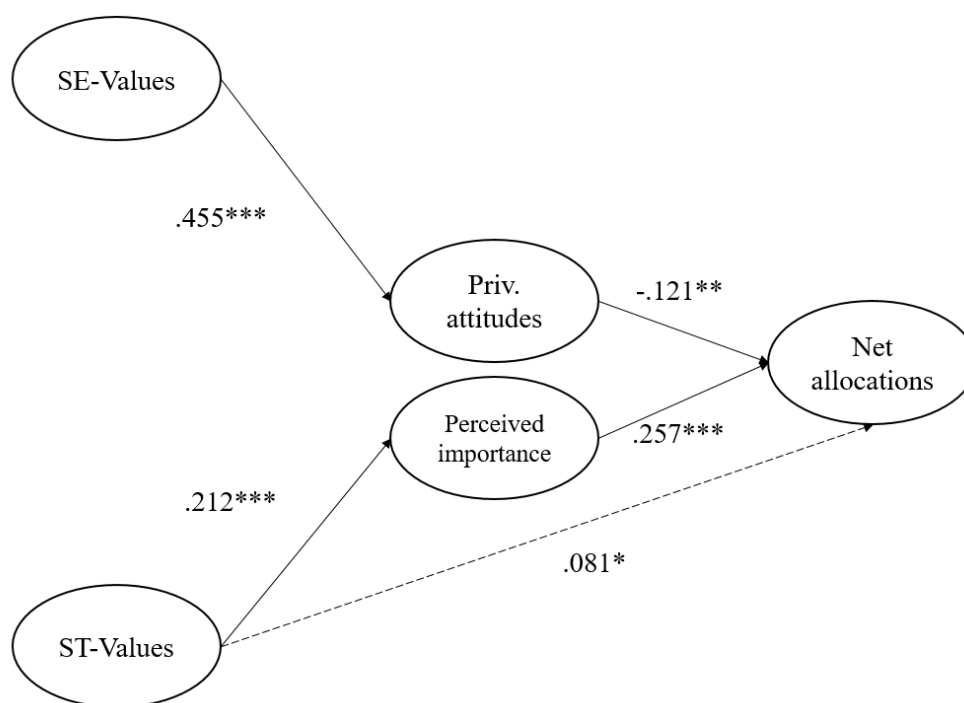
Because no direct relationship between value orientation and allocations emerged during the initial regression, a test for a mediation effect by importance or attitudes towards privatization on either value orientation was conducted. Mediation is tested for using regression analysis in four discreet steps (Baron & Kenny, 1986): first the direct effect of the predictor on the criterion is established (in this case value orientation is the predictor, and net allocation the criterion); second the effect of the predictor on the mediator (in this case either attitudes towards privatization or perceived importance) is established; third the effect of the mediator on the criterion is established; finally the effect of the predictor on the criterion while controlling for the mediator is measured. If the effect of the predictor on the criterion controlling for the mediator is less than the direct effect (step one), mediation has occurred.

In the separate mediation test no direct relationship was shown between the self-enhancement value orientation and net allocations. However, the self-transcendent value orientation was significantly related to net allocations (Beta = .081,  $p = .048$ ). Because the direct relationship was greater than the relationship when controlling for importance, this indicates that self-transcendent values were partially mediated by perceived importance (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Results are detailed in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8

*Regression model accounting for direct influence of value orientation on net allocations to park and recreation services*

	R <sup>2</sup>	F-value	Variable Name	Beta	Significance
Net allocations	.007	2.192			.113
			ST Values	.081	.048
			SE Values	-.033	.418

Figure 3.3 *Final model*

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

## Discussion

This study assessed the factors influencing intended net allocations to public park and recreation services. A contingent valuation method was used to determine intended net allocations to 10 competitive public services by measuring additional allocations during a hypothetical budget surplus, and negative allocations during a hypothetical budgetary shortfall. Park and recreation was one of five services to receive a positive net allocation,

although the actual figure was small (.26%), and the coefficient of variance (71.12) indicated low levels of agreement between individual respondents regarding this allocation. Those services that received the greatest net allocations, such as education (12.51%), had lower coefficient of variance values (1.63), indicating greater agreement among respondents.

The positive net allocation for park and recreation services is in contrast to past contingent valuation analyses, where it was among the lowest in relative net allocations (Nollenberger et al., 2012). The low relative position reported by Nollenberger and colleagues is consistent with a recent analysis of US Census data conducted by Barrett and colleagues (2017). According to Census data collected during the 2011-2012 fiscal year, parks and recreation was eighth of 10 public services in terms of total funding by local governments, and occupies the same place in the most recent data reflecting the 2013-2014 fiscal year (Barrett et al., 2017). The fact that parks and recreation ranks fifth of 10 services in the current analysis may be due to a number of factors. A necessary caveat is that these analyses consist of hypothetical allocations, representing respondent preferences but not necessarily their actions in a real world context. It may however be that increasing awareness of the benefits of park and recreation services (e.g. Pitas et al., 2017), or the improving economic situation in the United States may provide some explanation, as parks and recreation tend to fare better in times of economic certainty (Crompton & Kaczynski, 2003; Pitas, Barrett, & Mowen, 2017). This may also reflect the samples used in the analyses in question, as Nollenberger and colleagues specifically examined the town of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, which is significantly whiter (90.5%; 79.6% in the current study), not as Hispanic or Latino (2.7%; 17.2% in current study), and less educated (24.4% bachelor's degree or higher; 44.8% bachelor's degree or higher) (Census.gov, 2017b).

Although values have been widely applied in social science research, their application to recreation based research is relatively recent. Because the influence of values is often unobserved, their potentially important contributions to recreational behavior and preferences have been underappreciated to this point. Given the nature of park and recreation services as publically beneficial, the self-enhancement and self-transcendent higher order value orientations discussed in this study may be of particular interest to researchers and decision-makers. Understanding the latent, unobserved cognitive processes that guide behavior can be a valuable tool in the creation of management policies, especially for potentially controversial topics such as privatization practices. The ability to understand sources of conflict, and to proactively avoid or defuse controversy in the park and recreation context through scientifically informed management decisions is a powerful tool.

The higher order self-enhancement value orientation had no direct effect on net allocations, but the self-transcendent-value orientation was positively and significantly related to net allocations (although this relationship was partially mediated by perceived importance; Beta = .081,  $p = .048$ ). Those individuals who were more centered on the wellbeing of others before themselves generally allocated a greater amount of public funding to parks and recreation services. Because park and recreation services provide wide ranging benefits to the community as a whole, such a connection is intuitive. Spending public tax dollars on a service that benefits others is consistent with a self-transcendent value orientation.

It may be that this relationship was not more robust because respondents perceived that other public services also provided public benefits, and were in fact more beneficial than parks and recreation. This argument is supported by the fact that the direct effect of self-transcendence on net allocations was partially mediated by perceived importance. The direct

effect between self-transcendence and allocations disappeared in the presence of perceived importance, to which it was positively and significantly related (Beta = .212,  $p < .001$ ). The level of importance placed on park and recreation services explains the relationship between self-transcendence and net allocations. For those individuals who are higher in self-transcendence, but perceive other public services as more important contributors to the welfare of others, park and recreation services would receive fewer allocations. Conversely, highly self-transcendent individuals who perceive park and recreation services as an important mechanism for improving the lives of others would likely allocate a greater share of available public money, and protect parks and recreation during times of fiscal stress.

The asymmetrical influence of the self-transcendent and self-enhancement value orientations is consistent with past research examining the interactions between the higher order value orientations and action (Schwartz et al., 2012). Whereas self-transcendent values often inhibit actions that are self-serving, the same is not always true for self-enhancement values: a self-centered orientation does not necessarily inhibit other-serving behavior when it also benefits the individual (Schwartz et al., 2012). When other-serving behaviors also further individual wellbeing, there is no inhibiting effect of self-enhancement values. For example, a self-oriented individual who personally uses and benefits from local park and recreation services may not feel any reluctance to allocate public dollars to this area, even though such services benefit others. It may be that there was no direct relationship between self-enhancement values and net allocations because those individuals who were higher in self-enhancement values did not perceive any personal benefit from park and recreation services.

Similar to Nollenberger and colleagues (2012), quality did not have a direct impact on net allocations and was dropped from the model in subsequent analyses. Attitude towards



privatization had a significant, negative direct effect on net allocations (Beta =  $-.121$ ,  $p = .007$ ), while perceived importance had a significant, positive direct effect on net allocations (Beta =  $.257$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Those respondents who felt more positively about privatization as an acceptable alternative funding source for park and recreation services were likely to allocate fewer public dollars, while those who regarded park and recreation services as important were likely to allocate a greater proportion of the available public funding. The impact of privatization attitudes on support for public funding may be viewed as an alarming finding. As privatization practices become more prevalent, and potentially more acceptable to residents over time, this may potentially translate to fewer public dollars being allocated to parks and recreation. With tax-based funding for parks and recreation already at historically low levels in both relative (Barrett et al., 2017) and absolute (Pitas et al., 2017) terms, park advocates may wish to avoid any additional reduction in public support for these services.

In addition to the relationship between the self-transcendent value orientation and importance described above, the self-enhancement value orientation was significantly and positively related to attitudes towards privatization (Beta =  $.455$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Those individuals who were more likely to emphasize their own wellbeing rather than the wellbeing of others had more positive attitudes towards privatization, and in turn allocated a smaller proportion of public funding to parks and recreation. It may be that these individuals did not feel the benefits of parks and recreation applied to them personally, and as such were unlikely to support paying for those services with public dollars. Using personal resources to further the wellbeing of others at the expense of individual wellbeing is inconsistent with a self-enhancement value orientation, and privatization practices represent a means of shifting the burden for financing and delivering these services from the individual to other parties.

Evidence of the direct effect of self-transcendence on net allocations supports past research linking value orientation to behavior (e.g. Schwartz & Butenko, 2014). As values are deeply rooted core principles, their influence on actual behavior is intuitive. However, although the relationship was significant, it was relatively weak and partially mediated by the presence of perceived importance in the final model. The indirect influence of values through attitudes and perceived importance was much more robust, and lends credence to the idea of the cognitive hierarchy (Ball-Rokeach et al., 1984): values influenced attitudes and perceived importance, which in turn influenced net allocations. In this model, behavior is at the end of a causal chain, and is the result of a series of more specific and narrowly focused cognitive processes. The strength of this pathway is consistent with past work indirectly linking higher-order values to behavior in general (Schwartz et al., 2012), and recreational behavior specifically (e.g. van Riper & Kyle, 2014; Vaske, 1999).

Because of the relative lack of model specificity present in this analysis, much of the variation in allocations to park and recreation services remains unexplained. Future research must continue to examine the direct and indirect role of values in the recreational context, and specifically in the area of alternative funding strategies. It is possible that other higher order value orientations not explored in this analysis account for some of this variation, or that individual values may be more powerful than when combined to form a value orientation. The role of importance of other services must also be considered as a potential mediating factor. Even if respondents view parks and recreation as consistent with their value priorities, if other services are viewed as more important or efficacious in achieving those priorities, funding for parks and recreation may reflect this.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Park and recreation services are provided for the benefit of their community, and as such, understanding community sentiment regarding their funding and operation is essential to the faithful execution of their mandate. As public funding for park and recreation services becomes increasingly difficult to secure in an adequate and reliable fashion, assessing the influence of various factors on intended net allocations is an important research function. The current study examined the impacts of deeply rooted value orientations, as well as attitudes towards privatization and perceptions of importance and quality on net allocations. Results provided support for the indirect influence of values through attitudes and perceptions, as well as mixed support for the direct influence of values on intended allocations. Future research must continue to investigate the role of values and other psychological constructs in determining support for or opposition to various funding strategies for park and recreation services. Building on this understanding of preferences for public versus private funding approaches will help decision makers sustain these public places, and continue to deliver benefits into the future

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## **CHAPTER 4**

### **The Role of Values, Ideology, and Attitudes in Support for Privatization Practices in the Provision of Local Park and Recreation Services**

#### **Abstract**

As tax-based funding for local public park and recreation services becomes increasingly scarce, alternative funding strategies such as privatization have become increasingly relevant. Although privatization is a promising alternative funding mechanism, it is simultaneously a potentially contentious and divisive issue. As such, understanding the factors that drive acceptance of or opposition to such practices is of great interest to practitioners and researchers. This study uses data from a nationally representative sample of Americans to test a model based on the cognitive hierarchy of human behavior, the goal being to better understand the influence of values, ideology, and attitude on support for privatization. Both direct and indirect influence of values and ideology on support was observed, while attitudes were the strongest individual predictor. Relevant findings and implications for practitioners as well as future research are discussed.



## **Introduction and Background**

Local public park and recreation services have historically been funded primarily through tax-based municipal general funds. As a result of a variety of factors, alternative methods of funding these public places and services have recently garnered increased attention. In particular, privatization practices- any activity that reduces the public's role in financing, delivery, or management of services (Crompton, 1998)- are being given increased scrutiny as potential methods for generating much needed operational and capital funding. Although privatization may indeed refer to whole-scale ownership and operation of parks or recreation facilities, its implementation in the park and recreation context is more likely to be a matter of degree. Various practices such as corporate sponsorship, solicitation of philanthropic support, reliance on volunteers, and outsourcing of services are all common examples of privatization. Use of one or more of these practices is part of an overall shift from the fully public management model along a spectrum, the far end of which represents fully private management (More, 2005).

Privatization practices are a potentially complex and controversial issue for managers and decision makers in the public park and recreation context. The current study examines the determinants of acceptability of such practices, in order to help inform the decision making process. Specifically, the following questions will be asked: what is the role of respondents' (1) value orientations, (2) ideologies, and (3) attitudes towards privatization in determining support for privatization practices? This research will provide important information regarding the psychological antecedents that determine support or opposition to such practices, and may be useful in the creation of the most effective and acceptable management policies. As privatization practices become increasingly visible and potentially important to

the provision of local public park and recreation services, greater understanding of their acceptability and applicability is crucial. Because parks and recreation are public services financed through tax-payer dollars, decision makers are accountable to constituents and must consider such information as they seek to best serve the communities they are a part of.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The revised values theory (Schwartz et al., 2012) and the cognitive hierarchy of human behavior (Homer & Kahle, 1988; Rokeach, 1973) form the theoretical framework of the present study. Values theory examines the guiding principles that influence who an individual is, and how they perceive and navigate the world around them (Schwartz et al., 2012). Individual values endure over time, are resistant to change, transcend situations, and act as guiding principles in how an individual thinks and acts (Rokeach, 1973). Because of their non-specific, trans-situational nature, values form the base of the cognitive hierarchy, which organizes psychological processes into a chain of increasing specificity (Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach, & Grube, 1984; Homer & Kahle, 1988; Rokeach, 1973). The hierarchy consists of values (which can be organized into higher order value orientations centered around a specific unifying trait) and an increasingly specific series of processes such as ideologies, attitudes, and eventually behavioral intention. In this way the cognitive hierarchy conceptualizes the role of values in influencing behavior through a series of mediating processes (Rohan, 2000; Schwartz et al., 2012).

### **Values**

As described above, values are the foundational cognitive processes that make up the base of the cognitive hierarchy. Individual values may be combined into higher order value orientations, which are centered on a consistent motivational goal. Two higher order value

orientations, self-transcendent and self-enhancement, are included in the current study. The self-transcendent higher order value orientation is comprised of five individual values: *benevolence-caring* (motivated by a desire to be helpful, and a devotion to the welfare of other members of the group), *benevolence-dependability* (motivated by the desire to be a reliable and trustworthy member of the group), *universalism-concern* (motivated by a commitment to equality and justice for all people), *universalism-nature* (motivated by a focus on preservation of the natural world, and avoiding damaging or polluting the natural environment), and *universalism-tolerance* (motivated by open-mindedness and understanding of those who are different from oneself). The self-enhancement value orientation is comprised of three individual values: *power-dominance* (motivated by the power to induce others to act in a certain fashion, and to exert influence over others), *power-resources* (motivated by the ability to control events through the possession and use of wealth or material goods), and *achievement* (motivated by the desire to be judged as successful by others according to the normative standards of one's culture. (Schwartz et al., 2012).

Because of their conflicting motivational goals, the higher order self-transcendent and self-enhancement value orientations are opposite one another in the motivation continuum (see Figure 4.1). The predictive power of values has been demonstrated in terms of both attitudes (Schwartz et al., 2012; van Riper & Kyle, 2014; Vaske, 1999) and behavior (Schwartz & Butenko, 2014). Based on the relative importance of either self-transcendent or self-enhancement values, individuals may be expected to behave in a fashion that make their underlying motivational goals more likely. Similarly, individuals may be more likely to engage in actions that make the underlying motivational goals of the opposing value orientation less likely (Schwartz & Butenko, 2014).

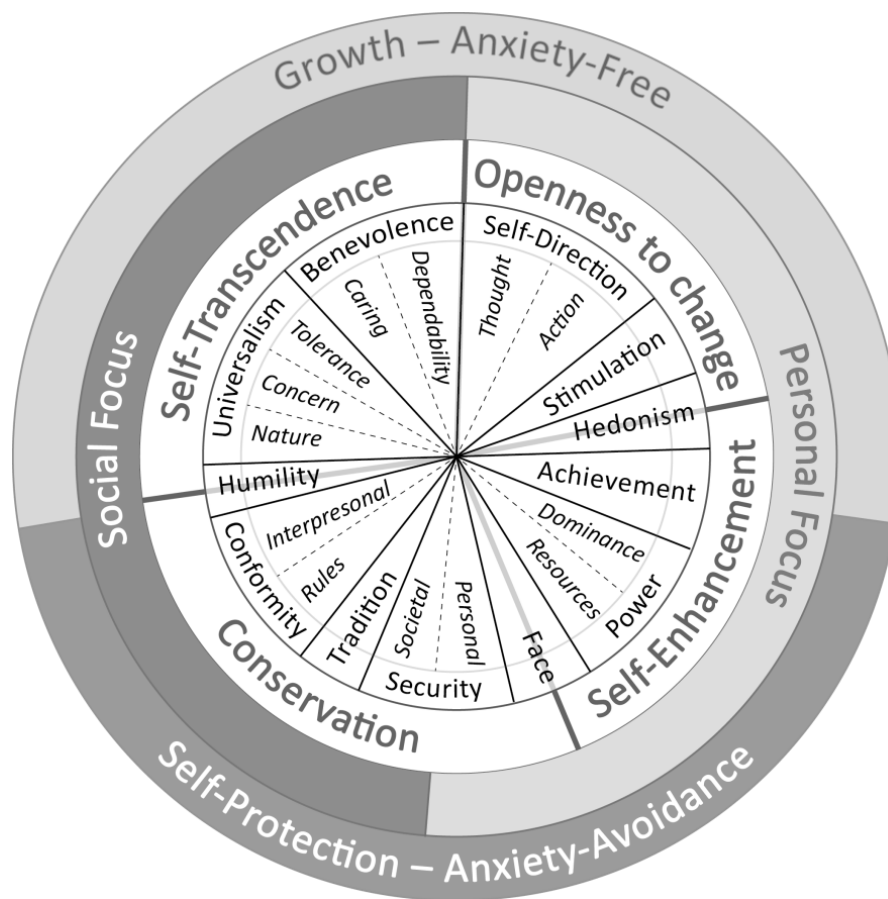


Figure 4.1 *Circular motivational continuum of 19 individual values and higher order value orientations (from Cieciuch et al., 2014)*

The influence of values on attitudes and behavior is not necessarily symmetrical however. Whereas self-enhancement and self-transcendent values are opposite one another on the motivational continuum, their effect on actions that inhibit their motivational goals are not equal. Self-transcendent values inhibit self-enhancing behaviors; concern for the impact of one's behavior makes actions that promote personal benefit or achievement less likely. Conversely, self-enhancement values have little or no inhibiting effect on behaviors that promote the welfare of others; person-focused values show little capacity to inhibit actions that promote the welfare of others (Schwartz et al., 2012). For example, an individual with a stronger self-transcendent orientation may feel their tax dollars are wisely spent on parks and

recreation, regardless of whether they personally use these services; because others receive benefits from parks and recreation, supporting them is consistent with a self-transcendent orientation. Conversely, a non-user with a stronger self-enhancement orientation may see their tax dollars as wasted on parks and recreation; because they experience no personal benefit, the positive value to the community is unimportant to such an individual. However, if such an individual used park and recreation services and perceived a personal benefit, allocations would be consistent with a self-enhancement orientation. The direct effect of these higher order value orientations on support for privatization will be measured, along with their indirect effect through ideology, and attitudes towards privatization.

### **Ideology**

Within the cognitive hierarchy, ideology occupies a space in the chain between values and attitudes (Rohan, 2000). According to Rohan, values should influence attitude and behavioral intention through ideology. Although values influence how an individual sees the world around them, that influence is often at the subconscious level without being felt (Rohan, 2000). However, many situations require conscious thought and effort in the decision making process, as various courses of action may not always be easily discriminated between as beneficial or harmful based on value orientation. For example, allocations to park and recreation services may not intuitively be connected to a tolerance of diversity, and determining a course of action would be a conscious decision. Other situations may involve deciding between multiple options that satisfy an individual's value orientation (e.g. in deciding whether to volunteer at a hospital or a park event, both options provide benefits to the community, and thus a conscious choice must be made), or may involve multiple value orientations that are opposed to one another (e.g. choosing to support or oppose hydraulic

fracturing, which may damage the environment, but provide economic benefits to local communities). In these situations, decisions may be guided by an individual's ideology, which translates sub-conscious value orientations to real world situations and behavioral decisions (Rohan, 2000).

Because ideologies are formed in reference to value orientation, acting according to ideology across situations allows individuals to make decisions that satisfy their need to act in a way that is in accordance with deeper seated cognitive processes. For the purposes of this analysis, social and economic ideology will be included. As privatization practices are designed to reduce the economic burden on the taxpayer in delivering a socially beneficial service, these two domains were considered salient to the issues of attitudes towards privatization, and privatization practice support. The use of two domains is also recommended to more effectively categorize the level of conservatism or liberalism present in a respondent, as a single domain may oversimplify the concept and mis-categorize respondents as a result (Everett, 2013; Feldman & Johnston, 2013). The role of these ideological domains as a link between values and attitudes, as well as any direct influence of ideology on attitudes and privatization support will be tested.

### **Attitudes**

Whereas values are enduring in nature and apply across situations, attitudes are evaluations of specific objects (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1974). According to the cognitive hierarchy model of human behavior, attitudes are influenced by more general psychological processes such as ideology and higher order value orientations (Ball-Rokeach et al., 1984; Rohan, 2000). These processes influence attitudes as part of a causal chain, with attitudes in turn influencing behavioral intention and behavior (Ajzen, 2001). Prior research has

demonstrated support for the indirect influence of values on behavior through attitudes both generally (Schwartz et al., 2012) and specifically in the recreation context. For example, van Riper and Kyle (2014) found that environmental worldview and pro-environmental behavior were influenced positively by biospheric and other-centered values among visitors to Channel Islands National Park. Understanding the factors that drive attitude formation, as well as their relationship to support for specific practices may help in the formulation of more effective and acceptable alternative funding strategies for park and recreation practitioners. The direct influence of attitudes on behavior will be measured, and the role of attitudes as an indirect pathway for ideology and attitude will also be evaluated.

Specifically, this chapter will ask the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between the self-enhancement and self-transcendent value orientations, ideology, attitudes towards privatization, and privatization support?
2. What is the relationship between social and economic ideology, attitudes towards privatization, and privatization support?
3. What is the relationship between attitudes towards privatization, and privatization practice support?

Path modeling of the following model (Figure 4.2) will be used to answer these specific research questions.

## **Method**

### **Sample and Data Collection**

Sample and data collection for the present study is described in detail in chapter one of this dissertation. An abbreviated description is included here. A nationally representative panel sample was purchased from Qualtrics, a survey sampling and software company. Respondents

were specifically tailored to represent the demographic profile of the United States' adult population in terms of age, gender, and racial/ethnic identity. A total of 603 completed surveys were returned, from the approximately 1,570 surveys that were started. Accounting only for completed surveys (not those who started but were screened out), 2.3% of those individuals who received an invitation finished the survey; 38.4% of those who started the survey completed it, with the remaining 61.6% screened out. The use of an online sampling method such as this was highly efficient in terms of financial, time, and human resources. Online distribution also allowed for a wider and more diverse set of respondents than traditional pen and paper methods (Gosling, Vazire, & Srivastasa, 2004). Use of this approach will allow a test of online panel sampling for research in the parks and recreation context, and may provide insight into the viability of this technique for future research.

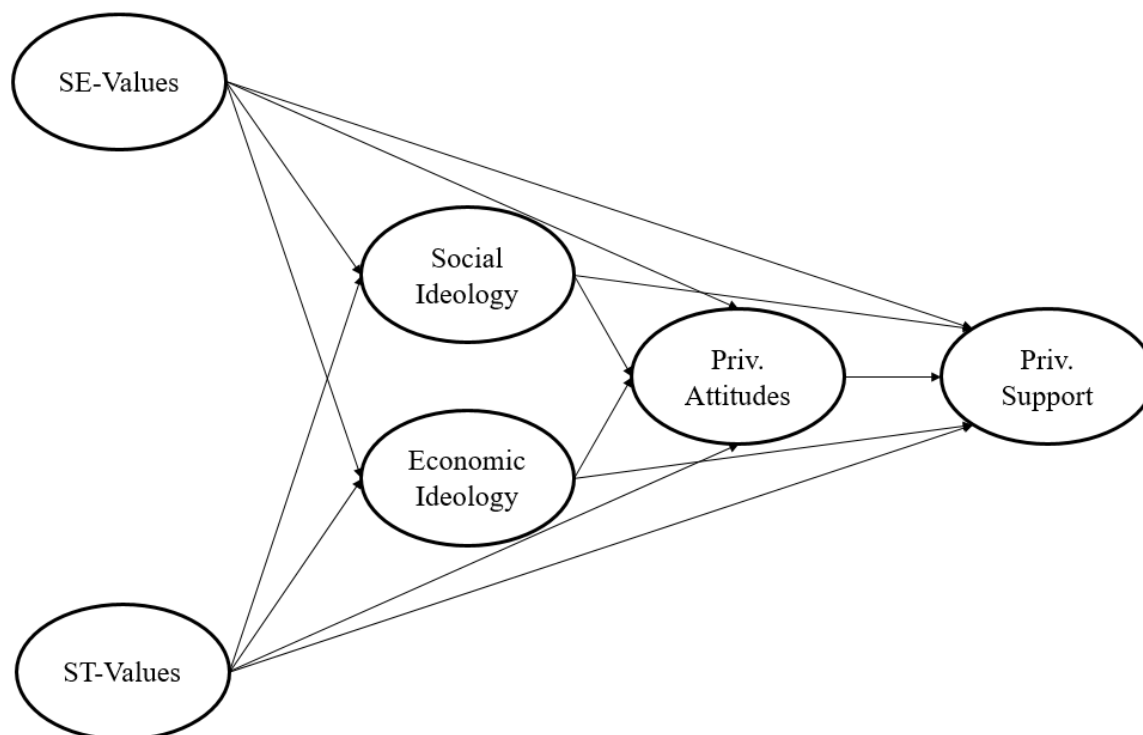


Figure 4.2  
*Hierarchical model to be tested*



**Demographic measures.** Respondent socio-demographic information was compiled. Characteristics assessed included sex, education, income, race/ethnicity, community type, political views, and age. Race/ethnicity was assessed through two items, asking if they were Spanish/Hispanic/Latino or not, and to indicate the race or races that best describe them (White, Black/African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or Other). Education was assessed by asking respondents to indicate their highest level of schooling or degree completed, with responses ranging from “less than a high school degree” to “Doctoral degree.”

### **Measures**

**Values.** Values were measured using portions of the revised Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ-RR; Schwartz et al., 2012). Specifically, the subscales that make up the higher order self-transcendent and self-enhancement value orientations were used. The self-enhancement higher order value is comprised of *power-dominance*, *power-resources*, and *achievement*. The self-transcendent higher order value is comprised of *benevolence-caring*, *benevolence-dependability*, *universalism-concern*, *universalism-nature*, and *universalism-tolerance*. Each value is comprised of three individual items, which were indexed to provide a measurement for the individual value. Individual values were then further combined into an index score for the applicable higher order value orientations.

The PVQ-RR asks respondents to compare themselves to a hypothetical individual. Each item begins with “it is important...” and portrays an individual engaging in a personally important behavior that corresponds to the value being measured. Items are gender-matched, and only consist of a single sentence. Respondents indicate how similar they are to the individual being described on a six-point scale: 1 – not like me at all, 2 – not like me, 3 – a

little like me, 4 – moderately like me, 5 – like me, 6 – very much like me. Although both a six- and 11-point version of the PVQ-RR is available, the six-point version is recommended as it produces less missing data than the 11-point scale (Schwartz et al., 2012).

**Ideology.** Ideology was assessed using two response items wherein respondents were asked to indicate their approach to social and economic issues. Responses were recorded on seven-point scales ranging from one (“very liberal”) to seven (“very conservative”). Social and economic issues were chosen to represent applicable portions of the individual ideology because of their connection to both privatization practices, and public park and recreation services. The use of separate items for social and economic ideology is also recommended because it more effectively captures the level of conservatism that an individual possesses than a single item: moderates often split between these two dimensions, and a single item would artificially categorize them as either more liberal or more conservative than they actually are (Everett, 2013; Feldman & Johnston, 2013). The use of separate social and economic items has also been shown to have similar predictive power as longer, multiple item scales of conservatism, while placing less burden on survey respondents (Everett, 2013).

**Attitudes.** Attitudes towards privatization as a concept were assessed through a series of items that were developed based on past research into privatization (e.g. More, 2005; Mowen, Trauntvein, Potwarka, Pitas, & Duray, 2016) and actual privatization practices observed in the local public park and recreation context. Overall attitude towards privatization was measured using a general item, then several items addressed specific practices such as corporate sponsorship, the use of volunteers, outsourcing of services to private contractors, soliciting charitable gifts, and selling local public park and recreation facilities to for-profit companies. All items were measured on a seven-point scale ranging from one (“extremely

negative”) to seven (“extremely positive”). Individual items were combined to form an index score for overall attitude towards privatization.

**Privatization support.** Whereas attitudes describe the evaluation of an object, support measures were specifically created to gauge whether or not respondents would support or oppose the implementation of such practices. Although attitude and support are similar, they are separate constructs, and have been treated as such in past recreation research (e.g. Kyle, Absher, & Graefe, 2003; Pitas, Mowen, Graefe, & Kyle, in review). Support for the implementation of privatization practices was measured through 10 items which were combined into an index value. Each of the individual items described practices that could be implemented at a local park and recreation agency, and asked respondents to rate their level of support on a seven-point scale ranging from one (“extremely opposed”) to seven (“extremely supportive”). Two items describing public support through taxes were included and reverse coded in the creation of the index value.

### **Data Analysis**

The score for every individual value was calculated by taking the mean of the individual items that constitute that item. Scores for the higher order self-transcendent and self-enhancement value orientations were calculated as the mean of the applicable individual values. Similar multi-item indices were created for attitudes towards privatization and support for privatization by calculating the mean of the ratings for each attitude item. Scale reliability was calculated for each individual value, and the attitude items. Cronbach’s alpha for values, attitudes, and practice support are reported in Tables 4.2 through 4.4.

Path analysis was performed to test the model presented in Figure 4.2. Multiple regression analyses were performed with self-transcendent and self-enhancement value

orientations, social and economic ideology, and attitudes as predictors of implementation support. Sequential regression analyses were run with attitudes, social ideology, and economic ideology inserted as the dependent variable; predictors in each subsequent regression analyses only included those variables preceding the dependent variable in question in the empirical model.

## Results

Demographic data for respondents is presented in Table 4.1, and compared here to the demographic profile of the United States (Census.gov, 2017). Adult respondents were approximately 46 years of age, and split between males (45.9%), females (52.7%; 50.8% in the general United States population as of 2015), and transgender or other (1.3%). Whites (79.6%; 77.1% in the general United States population as of 2015) made up the largest single racial ethnic group, and approximately 17% of respondents identified as either Hispanic or Latina of any racial background, compared to 17.6% in the general United States population as of 2015). The majority of respondents had achieved at least an associate degree, and lived in urban/suburban areas. Ideology measures showed moderately conservative responses for both social issues (mean = 4.02, SD = 1.79), and economic issues (mean = 4.36, SD = 1.73).

The overall mean for the self-transcendent value orientation was higher than the mean for the self-enhancement value orientation (4.9 and 3.37 respectively). Individual values within the self-transcendent value orientation were also higher than those within the self-enhancement value orientation. Benevolence-care (5.17) and benevolence-dependability (5.04) received the highest mean scores, while power-resources (2.76) and power-dominance (3.07) received the lowest mean scores. Attitudes towards privatization were moderately positive (4.62), with considerable variation between specific attitude items. The use of

volunteers was perceived most favorably (5.74), while the outright sale of park and recreation facilities to private interests was perceived most negatively (3.29). Mean support for the implementation of privatization practices (4.05) was lower than the overall attitudes towards privatization, and once again, substantial variation was seen between support/opposition for individual items

Regression analysis was used to test the empirical model detailed in Figure 4.2. An initial regression was run using self-enhancement value orientation, self-transcendent value orientation, social and economic ideologies, and attitudes as predictors of support for privatization. Overall the model was significant, and displayed a moderate-to-high degree of explanatory power ( $R^2 = .432$ ,  $F = 85.51$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Attitudes towards privatization (Beta = .541,  $p < .001$ ) accounted for the majority of the predictive power, with social ideology (Beta = .114,  $p = .018$ ) and the self-enhancement value orientation (Beta = .125,  $p = .001$ ) also contributing significantly. Self-transcendent values and economic ideology did not contribute significantly to support for privatization practices. In a subsequent analysis, social ideology (Beta = .114,  $p = .037$ ), economic ideology (Beta = .134,  $p = .013$ ), and self-enhancement values (Beta = .412,  $p < .001$ ) significantly predicted attitudes. Social ideology was predicted by both self-enhancement values (Beta = .193,  $p < .001$ ) and self-transcendent values (Beta = -.145,  $p < .001$ ); similarly, economic ideology was predicted by both self-enhancement values (Beta = .167,  $p < .001$ ) and self-transcendent values (Beta = -.139,  $p = .001$ ). See Tables 4.2 through 4.5, and Figure 4.3.

Table 4.1  
*Demographic characteristics*

Variable	N (%)
<b>Age (years)</b>	
18-25	55 (9.1)
26-35	142 (23.5)
36-45	116 (19.2)
46-55	90 (14.9)
56-65	101 (16.7)
66+	93 (15.4)
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	277 (45.9)
Female	318 (52.7)
Transgender or other	6 (1)
Choose not to disclose	2 (.3)
<b>Race and ethnicity</b>	
Hispanic or Latino	104 (17.2)
White	480 (79.6)
Black or African American	84 (13.9)
Asian	37 (6.1)
American Indian or Alaska Native	4 (.7)
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1 (.2)
Other	10 (1.7)
<b>Education</b>	
Less than HS	6 (1)
HS graduate	102 (16.9)
Some college but no degree	147 (24.4)
Associate degree	78 (12.9)
Bachelor's degree	178 (29.5)
Advanced degree	92 (15.3)
<b>Community type</b>	
Rural area	86 (14.3)
Town or village	62 (10.3)
Small city	83 (13.8)
Urban area	155 (25.7)
Suburban area	216 (35.8)
<b>Income (\$)</b>	
<10,000	34(5.6)
10,000-29,999	107 (17.7)
30,000-49,999	124 (20.6)
50,000-69,999	121 (20.1)
70,000-89,999	63 (10.4)
90,000-109,999	58 (9.6)
110,000+	94 (15.6)

Table 4.2  
*Scale reliability and means for values items*

Dimension/Items	Cronbach's $\alpha$	Mean	SD
<i>Self-Transcendent Values</i>	.848	4.90	
<b>Universalism-Nature</b>	.875	4.47	
It is important for her to care for nature		4.63	1.07
It is important to her to take part in activities to defend nature		4.18	1.21
It is important to her to protect the natural environment from destruction or pollution		4.58	1.12
<b>Universalism-Concern</b>	.801	4.89	
It is important to her that the weak and vulnerable in society be protected		4.65	1.21
It is important to her that every person in the world have equal opportunities in life		4.86	1.16
It is important to her that everyone be treated justly, even people she doesn't know		5.13	0.95
<b>Universalism-Tolerance</b>	.846	4.94	
It is important to her to be tolerant towards all kinds of people and groups		5.06	1.01
It is important to her to listen to and understand people who are different from her		5.02	.97
It is important to her to accept people even when she disagrees with them		4.74	1.03
<b>Benevolence-Care</b>	.814	5.17	
It is important to her to take care of people she is close to		5.31	.89
It is very important to her to help the people dear to him		5.35	.87
It is important to her to concern herself with very need of her dear ones		4.85	1.07
<b>Benevolence-Dependability</b>	.802	5.04	
It is important to her that people she knows have full confidence in her		4.83	1.04
It is important to her to be a dependable and trustworthy friend		5.23	0.92
It is important to her that all her friends and family can rely on her completely		5.04	1.00
<i>Self-Enhancement Values</i>	.775	3.37	
<b>Achievement</b>	.787	4.30	
It is important to her to have ambitions in life		4.72	1.09
It is important to her to be very successful		4.31	1.28
It is important to her that people recognize what she achieves		3.86	1.43
<b>Power-Dominance</b>	.889	3.07	
It is important to her that people do what she says they should		3.53	1.53
It is important to her to have the power to make people do what she wants		2.87	1.53
It is important to her to be the one who tells others what to do		2.80	1.53
<b>Power-Resources</b>	.896	2.76	
It is important to her to have the power that money can bring		2.89	1.57
It is important to her to be wealthy		2.98	1.58
It is important to her to own expensive things that show her wealth		2.40	1.53

Table 4.3  
*Scale reliability and means for attitudes towards privatization*

Dimension/Items	Cronbach's $\alpha$	Mean	SD
Attitudes towards privatization	.776	4.47	1.14
<i>Please indicate your feelings about the following practices in local public parks and recreation*:</i>			
Privatization as a funding source in the local public park and recreation context		4.14	1.63
Corporate sponsorship as a funding source of local public park and recreation services		4.73	1.51
Volunteers as a way of delivering local public park and recreation services		5.54	1.26
Outsourcing local public park and recreation services to private contractors		4.02	1.64
Soliciting philanthropic (charitable) gifts as a funding source of local public park and recreation services		5.21	1.39
Selling local public park and recreation facilities to private companies		3.16	1.85

\*Responses on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 ("extremely negative") to 7 ("extremely positive")



Table 4.4  
*Scale reliability and means for support for privatization practices*

Dimension/Items	Cronbach's $\alpha$	Mean	SD
<i>How supportive or opposed would you be to a local public park agency where*:</i>	.740	4.05	.79
All members of the community share the burden of paying for parks through their taxes, regardless of their personal use**		2.78	1.39
Park management is a government function that is fully funded through taxes**		2.75	1.32
Only park users cover the costs of parks through user fees		3.61	1.66
Corporate sponsorship agreements help fund park and recreation services		5.21	1.32
Financial independence and sustainability are primary goals of park management		4.68	1.42
Public funding is used to pay private contractors to deliver park management services		4.40	1.43
Private contractors bid in a competitive process for the right to provide park management services		4.63	1.53
Non-profit organization own and operate park and recreation facilities		4.68	1.46
Non-profit organization purchase land for parks using funding from members and charitable contributions		4.71	1.48
Private companies own and operate park and recreation facilities on a for-profit basis		3.52	1.81
Recreational programming is provided by private companies on a for-profit basis		3.56	1.76

\*Responses on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (“extremely opposed”) to 7 (“extremely supportive”)

\*\*Responses reverse coded

Table 4.5  
Regression results

	R <sup>2</sup>	F-value	Variable Name	Beta	Significance
Privatization Support	.432	85.51			<.001
			Attitude	.541	<.001
			Economic Ideology	.01	.827
			Social Ideology	.114	.018
			ST Values	.048	.136
			SE Values	.125	.001
Privatization Attitudes	.259	49.28			<.001
			Economic Ideology	.134	.013
			Social Ideology	.114	.037
			ST Values	.007	.852
			SE Values	.412	<.001
Social Ideology	.054	16.85			<.001
			ST Values	-.145	<.001
			SE Values	.193	<.001
Economic Ideology	.044	13.23			<.001
			ST Values	-.139	.001
			SE Values	.167	<.001

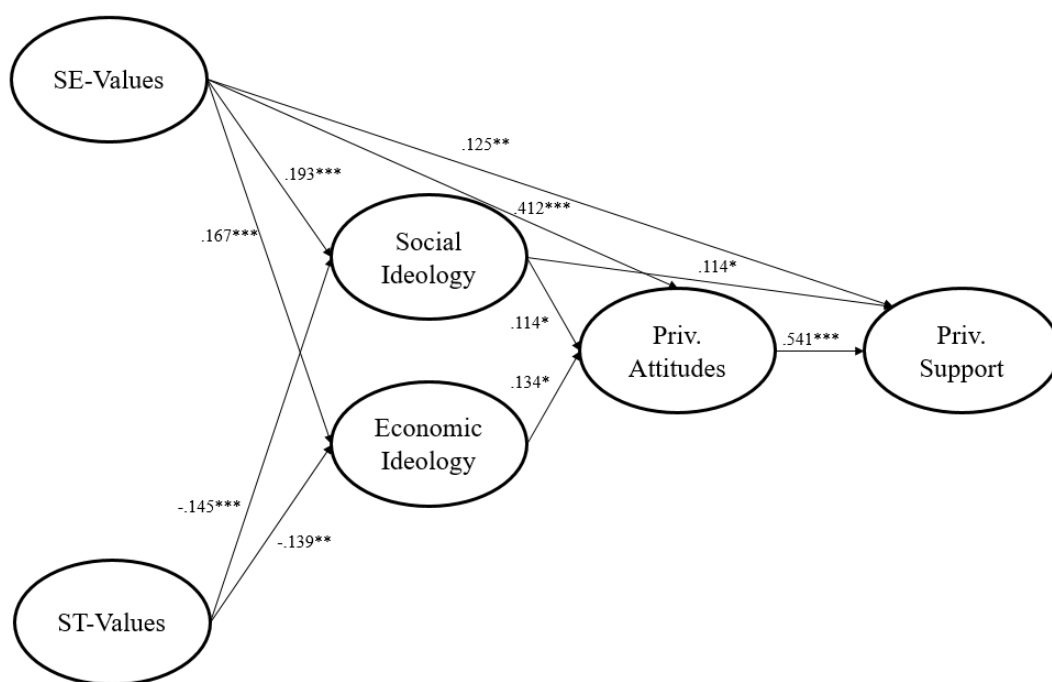


Figure 4.3 Final path model illustrating significant direct and indirect relationships  
\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

## Discussion

Using the revised values theory (Schwartz et al., 2012) and the cognitive hierarchy of human behavior (Homer & Kahle, 1988; Rokeach, 1973), this study modeled the antecedents to support of or opposition to the implementation of privatization practices in the local public park and recreation context. The issue of adequate and reliable funding for local public park and recreation services is a pressing concern for a number of reasons. As demands on public park and recreation agencies continue to rise in the face of decreasing public tax support (Barrett, Pitas, & Mowen, 2017; Pitas, Barrett, & Mowen, 2017), alternative funding strategies such as privatization practices are of increasing interest to decision makers and researchers. Values, with their holistic impact on ideology, attitudes, and support represent an appropriate lens through which to approach these practices. In this chapter alternative strategies (i.e. privatization) were explored, while in the previous chapter a traditional approach (i.e. public support through tax based allocations) was the focus.

Results provided support for the indirect influence of values on support for privatization, through ideology and attitudes towards privatization, as well as for the direct influence of the self-enhancement value orientation. The hierarchical model tested illustrated a chain, wherein psychological processes of increasing specificity were predictors of support for the implementation of privatization practices. Higher order value orientation influenced respondents' ideologies, which in turn influenced attitudes, which had a large direct effect on privatization practice support. Individual social ideology, as well as the self-enhancement value orientation also directly influenced privatization support, while economic ideology and self-transcendent value orientation had no direct effect on support.

As in the second chapter of this dissertation, self-enhancement values had a direct impact on attitudes, while no such relationship existed between self-transcendent values and attitudes. Self-enhancement values also directly influenced support for privatization practices. Those individuals who placed their own wellbeing above the wellbeing of others were more likely to express positive feelings about privatization as a concept, and also to express greater support for the implementation of those practices. It may be that such individuals do not feel they personally benefit from park and recreation services, and as privatization reduces the tax burden on these individuals, they were more willing to accept private involvement in the provision of these services. Although self-transcendent values were not directly connected to attitudes or support, their indirect effect through ideology was negative, indicating a preference for public support of these services. Such a perspective is consistent with a more powerful other-centered value orientation, which prioritizes the good of others over personal wellbeing. As park and recreation services are community goods which provide benefits to the larger group, preferences for public provision of these services prioritizes the wellbeing of all members of society.

The asymmetrical influence of the opposing higher order value orientation is consistent with previous values research. Self-transcendent values have been shown to inhibit self-focused behaviors, while self-enhancement values have little or no impact on other-focused behaviors (Schwartz et al., 2012). Although self-transcendent values did not directly negatively influence an individual's support for privatization practices, their indirect influence through social and economic ideology, and attitudes towards privatization was negative. As other-centered values increased, social and economic ideology became less conservative, which was inversely related to attitudes towards privatization, and support for implementation

of privatization practices. Self-enhancement values behaved in an opposite fashion, and were positively related to both social and economic ideologies.

Given their position in the cognitive hierarchy, the role of ideologies in the current model is intuitive. Ideologies serve as the link between values, which are non-object specific and may not be consciously experienced, and everyday decisions (Rohan, 2000). Individuals apply their ideology, which is influenced by their value system, to problems and decisions and select actions that are in accordance with their overarching value orientation. This relationship was observed in the current model, as both self-transcendent and self-enhancement values were significantly related to both social and economic ideology; self-enhancement was positively related to both, while self-transcendence was negatively related to both. Interestingly, social ideology was directly related to privatization practice support, while economic ideology was not. This may indicate that respondents considered their support for privatization more on social grounds than economic ones; supporting or opposing these practices was based on social principle, not any perceived economic impact. This is a somewhat surprising result, given that arguments made in favor of the implementation of privatization practices are often couched in terms of efficiency and dollars saved.

For both social and economic ideology, a greater degree of conservatism was positively related to more positive attitudes towards privatization; in the case of social ideology there was also a direct effect on support for privatization. Past research has linked conservatism to a variety of different psychological variables, some of which are consistent with the higher order self-enhancement value orientation: intolerance of ambiguity, fear of threat or loss, and a tolerance of inequality (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003). More liberal economic ideology has also been associated with a more prosocial and

communal orientation towards others, and greater altruism (Gerber, Huber, Doherty, Dowling, & Ha, 2010). These linkages and findings are consistent with the current analysis, which found more conservative economic ideology positively related to attitudes towards privatization and privatization practice support. As public support of park and recreation services represents an appreciation for the community wide value of these services, this relationship is intuitive.

This study builds on the small body of research incorporating basic human values into the parks and recreation context. Although the theory of human values has long been applied across a number of social science disciplines, its application to the park and recreation context is much less common. Previous research on values in the park and recreation context has primarily focused on either monetary value (a homophone with a very different meaning), or values that explicitly describe how respondents view the relationship between humans and the natural world (e.g. Rossi, Byrne, Pickering, & Reser, 2015; van Riper & Kyle, 2014, Vaske & Donnelly, 1999). As parks provide benefits beyond conservation and ecosystem services, exploring beyond environmental values holds significant promise for researchers in the recreation and parks context. Because of their position as the foundation of the cognitive hierarchy, basic values and higher order value orientations may be a driving factor behind any number of recreational behaviors or preferences. Future research must recognize this potential and work purposively to apply this approach.

### **Concluding Remarks**

As the issue of privatization in local public park and recreation services becomes increasingly common, understanding potential alternative funding strategies becomes crucial to researchers and decision makers. Because these services are provided for the benefit of the

community, and predominantly funded through public tax dollars, any decision regarding their provision must carefully consider public sentiment. Using the cognitive hierarchy, the present study has shown that cognitive processes including values, ideologies, and attitudes are important antecedents to the support for or opposition to such practices. To successfully implement these alternative funding strategies, it is imperative to first understand *why* individuals feel or behave the way they do. Crafting effective and acceptable privatization practices requires support from key stakeholder groups, in this case the general public, and securing buy-in may be contingent on the understanding provided by research such as the current analysis. These results may be used to help guide policy creation and management interventions in a way that satisfies both the need for increased funding support, while protecting and maintaining the public spaces and the benefits they provide to individuals and communities.

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## CHAPTER 5

The purpose of this dissertation was to better understand both traditional and alternative funding strategies for local public park and recreation services. Although such services have historically been funded primarily by tax-based allocations, this funding model has become increasingly inadequate in recent years. Although Crompton and Kaczynski (2003) identified the period spanning the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries as a “golden era” for public parks and recreation, the Great Recession and resultant recovery changed the landscape dramatically. Overall funding for parks and recreation decreased, funding fell relative to other public services, and full-time jobs were lost at an unprecedented rate (Barrett, Pitas, & Mowen, 2017; Pitas, Barrett, & Mowen, 2017). As a result of this situation, examining the factors that drive support for or opposition to both traditional and alternative funding strategies is of significant value to both practitioners and researchers.

This dissertation focused specifically on privatization, a suite of activities that reduce the public sector or governmental role in the financing and delivery of public services (Crompton, 1998). Even prior to the Great Recession privatization was becoming increasingly relevant to the funding debate (Van Slyke & Hammons, 2003), and it has only become more important in the current climate. Although privatization may indeed involve selling public lands and facilities to the highest bidder, in practice it is more likely to be a matter of degree. Individual activities such as corporate sponsorship, outsourcing, and increased reliance on volunteers are all examples of specific privatization practices. Just how “public” and how “private” any agency actually is may be a matter of debate, but implementing these practices is part of an incremental process moving an agency along a spectrum from fully public, to fully private (More, 2005).

This chapter synthesizes the three individual studies that make up the second, third, and fourth chapters of this dissertation. First, a brief recap of the three studies will be provided. Next, an overview of the key findings will be presented. Finally, implications for practitioners and suggestions for future research into the public-private paradigm will be discussed. This dissertation consisted of three separate but interrelated analyses. The first study (Chapter Two) provided an overview of attitudes towards privatization as a whole, towards individual privatization practices, and the factors that shape that attitude. Attitudinal structure, as well as the level of attitude ambivalence felt by respondents was also assessed. Within group differences were then presented, allowing for an understanding of how members of certain groups perceived the suite of privatization activities. Study two (Chapter Three) consisted of a contingent valuation analysis, which calculated the relative percentage of funding respondents would allocate to parks and recreation and nine competitive local public services. The role of values and attitudes in explaining net allocations to parks and recreation was then explored. The final study (Chapter Four) explored the role of values, ideology, and attitudes in shaping support for the implementation of privatization practices.

### **Key Findings**

1. Although privatization in the public park and recreation context is popularly conceived of as highly controversial, there was no clear support for this idea from the current analyses. The popular and academic press often report on issues regarding potential privatization of public parks and recreation in alarmist or overtly negative terms. Overall, a majority of respondents reported positive attitudes towards privatization in general (Chapter Two, 61.3%), as well as towards corporate sponsorship (64.3), expanding the use of volunteers (82.3), and expanding the solicitation of philanthropy

(72%). While only a minority of respondents reported positive attitudes towards outsourcing (40.3%), that was still more than reported negative feelings (35.1%); 24.6% reported feeling neither negative or positive attitudes. Only the outright sale of parks to private interests generated a majority negative response (59.9%). The moderate level of ambivalence reported (Mean = 5.42), and the concentration of respondents clustered around the neutral point also lend credence to the idea that privatization of parks and recreation is not as controversial among a more general population as often portrayed in media and scholarly dialogue. A caveat may lie in the coefficient of variance, a measure of agreement among respondents, regarding allocations to park and recreation services observed in Chapter 3. Parks and recreation experienced the highest coefficient of variation, indicating that there was a lower degree of agreement regarding net allocations than for any other service.

2. Significant within group differences existed among respondents in various categories in terms of attitudes toward privatization in general, and towards specific privatization practices. Social ideology, income, Hispanic/Latino status, and knowledge of privatization all acted as significant predictors of attitudes towards privatization. Overall, those who were more socially and economically conservative, made more money, identified as Hispanic/Latino, and had greater knowledge of privatization felt more favorably towards the concept and various practices.
3. Hispanic/Latino respondents were the most favorable towards privatization, with a majority reporting positive attitudes towards the idea in general, as well as every practice except the sale of public parks to private interests. No significant differences in terms of ideology, income, or knowledge were detected between Hispanic/Latino

respondents and other respondents however, indicating that Hispanic/Latino respondents were actually different than other respondents. A potential explanation may lie in the historical roots of public park and recreation services, which were often developed for the exclusive use of White Americans. Because Hispanic/Latino users do not necessarily have a cultural attachment to park as public places, it may be that there is less resistance to privatization practices in this context. Similarly, Hispanic/Latino park users may value these spaces for different reasons. Hispanic/Latino park users are more likely to visit in large family and/or friend groups, and to value parks for their social potential rather than the natural environment (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1995). It may be that the presence of private interests in parks is less disturbing to Hispanic/Latino users because there is less potential interference with their preferred experiences. Whereas a corporate sponsor or commercial vendor may detract from the natural feel or aesthetic beauty of the park, there may be little impact on the social capacity of the park.

4. Park and recreation services received a slight, but positive net allocation (.26%) in Chapter three, and were ranked fifth of 10 competitive public services in terms of net allocation. Parks finished below education (12.51%), hospitals and health (3.84%), fire protection (3.58%), and police protection (3.13%). Parks fared better than libraries (-1.99%), housing and community development (-2.64%), transportation (-4.41%), public welfare (-4.71%), and corrections (-9.83%). This diverges from prior contingent valuation analyses (Nollenberger, Maher, Beach, & McGee, 2012), as well as from actual relative allocations to public services (Barrett et al., 2017), where parks and recreation sits at or near the bottom. However, as indicated by the coefficient of

variance, there was greater disagreement among respondents regarding funding for parks and recreation than any other service.

5. The self-transcendent and self-enhancement value orientations had little direct influence on public support for parks (allocations) or support for the implementation of privatization practices. In both cases, indirect pathways to support were more robust than any existing direct relationship. In the case of net allocations (Chapter Three), the direct influence of self-transcendent values was partially mediated by perceived importance. This supports past research demonstrating the influence of values through mediating cognitive processes such as ideology and attitude (e.g. Schwartz et al., 2012; van Riper & Kyle, 2014).
6. The current analyses largely supported the cognitive hierarchy model of human behavior. Although the cross-sectional data does not allow for any inference regarding causation, it does support a relationship between the various levels of the cognitive hierarchy. In Chapter Three values influenced attitudes, which in turn influenced net allocations towards parks and recreation. In this model, the direct influence of the self-transcendent value orientation was partially mediated by perceived importance of parks and recreation (an attitude). In Chapter Four, values influenced ideology, which then influenced attitudes, which then influenced support for privatization. The indirect pathways of support in both models was more consistent, and often more powerful, than any direct relationships across different levels of the model.
7. Overall self-enhancement values had a greater influence on both public (i.e. allocations) and private (i.e. privatization support and attitudes) support than self-transcendent values. In both Chapters Three and Four self-enhancement values had a

greater influence on the subsequent levels of the models being tested. In Chapter Four self-enhancement values directly influenced both attitudes and support for the implementation of privatization, while self-transcendent values only indirectly influenced subsequent levels of the model. This asymmetrical influence is in line with past research showing that self-transcendent and self-enhancement values differ in their influence on behavior (Schwartz et al., 2012).

8. Overall, those individuals who are more other-centered (greater self-transcendent value orientation) are less positive towards privatization and more positive towards public support for park and recreation services. Overall, those individuals who are more self-centered (greater self-enhancement value orientation) were more positive towards privatization and less positive towards public support for park and recreation services. This relationship is borne out through both direct and indirect influence. How to best capitalize on this information from the perspective park and recreation practitioners must be a continuing emphasis moving forward, and represents a potentially significant contribution from this area of research.

### **Implications for Practice**

As competition for public money at the local governmental level becomes more extreme, services such as parks and recreation must continue to explore every available funding strategy. Privatization represents one such alternative funding strategy, one that has considerable potential, but which comes with serious caveats. Privatization is widely considered to be a highly controversial topic, with a body of popular and academic literature treating it as such. With this in mind, the information in this dissertation may be of



considerable help for practitioners hoping to implement privatization practices successfully, and without a negative impact on the recreation experience or public sentiment.

For practitioners considering the implementation of privatization, Chapter Two may provide useful information about their constituents and their communities. Ideally any public park agency considering such a course of action would conduct an in-depth and rigorous survey of its key stakeholder groups assessing attitudes and support for the privatization practices in question. The reality is that many agencies do not have the resources to conduct such a survey, while others simply do not possess the necessary expertise. However, publically available data (e.g. Census and voting records) may allow for comparison with the results in Chapter Two. For example, a socially and economically conservative municipality with a higher than average level of income may be more receptive to privatization practices than a more socially liberal area.

Practitioners must also consider the significant differences in acceptability shown between various privatization practices. Expanding volunteer programs and asking for increased charitable support may be more acceptable to key stakeholders than outsourcing key duties or selling parks and facilities. The term “privatization” may also come with a negative connotation and a certain stigma that can be avoided through careful marketing, presentation, and implementation. Avoiding the use of the term may not activate some of the negative attitudes associated with privatization, and instead allow attention to be focused on the need for additional revenue, and on any positive outcomes.

It may also be that privatization is not a particularly controversial idea (although the word itself may in fact be highly unpopular). The moderate levels of ambivalence measured, the overall positive attitudes towards many practices, and the distribution of respondent

attitudes in a semi-normal fashion all support the idea that privatization is not nearly as hot a topic as it is often portrayed. The fact that privatization is already present in many public services, including parks and recreation, may also indicate that many individuals find it acceptable. Past research has also shown that public opinion towards privatization in public parks, in this case corporate sponsorship, has become significantly more accepting over time (Mowen, Trauntvein, Potwarka, Pitas, & Duray, 2016). The shifting demographic makeup of the United States may also have a role to play in this regard: Hispanic/Latino respondents were far more accepting of privatization than non-Hispanic/Latino respondents. Gaining acceptance for privatization practices at a particular agency may be more a matter of when, rather than if.

Knowledge about privatization was also positively related to a more accepting attitude towards privatization. Educating the public about what any potential privatization program actually entails may allay potential fears and resistance to such changes. This recalls the negative experience of the Golden Gate Bridge officials who ran into stiff opposition from community members and groups without direct knowledge of the proposed plan (IEG, 2007). A more proactive educational program may have saved time, heartache, and allowed successful implementation.

In both Chapter Three and Four, the direct influence of values was less common and generally less powerful than their indirect influence through mediating variables. As values are deeply seated and resistant to change (Rohan, 2000; Schwartz, 2012), this may be useful for practitioners who wish to shift public opinion regarding any potential privatization practice. Other factors such as social ideology, economic ideology, and attitude towards privatization, were far more influential in determining support for the implementation of

privatization practices. In general however, those individuals with a more other-centered value orientation were more likely to perceive parks as important, and to allocate greater public funding to parks and recreation; respondents with a more self-centered value orientation allocated less public funding and had more positive attitudes towards privatization. As such, a certain group of individuals may always be opposed to such practices, and highly resistant to any efforts to change their opinion. Mowen and colleagues (2016) observed this phenomenon, as the proportion of respondents opposed to corporate sponsorship stayed relatively constant over time, while the proportion supportive grew at the expense of the neutral category. Seeking to change the hearts and minds of all stakeholders may be a waste of limited time and resources for a park agency.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

The most important driving force behind privatization in the local public park and recreation context is likely the amount of public funding that is directed toward these services. Ongoing trend analysis of financing and employment in local public parks and recreation is needed to monitor how parks and recreation fares over time, and relative to other public services. The current wave of interest in privatization and other alternative funding strategies may be due in part to the decreased financial support received by parks and recreation in the period following the Great Recession. Trend analysis will indicate whether the current period of reduced support is temporary, or a new normal for local parks and recreation, and allow researchers to understand the impact on of these trends on privatization.

Although the present research does not necessarily support the idea that privatization is as controversial as popularly portrayed, further research should continue to explore this area. A limitation that must be addressed in future work is that the attitude item did not

correspond to a specific park or system. Asking respondents about the park system in their own town may provide greater context than the nationally representative sample use in this study. The measure of ambivalence included in the current analysis was also relatively simple, consisting of an index calculated using three items. Further, the ambivalence measures applied only to privatization as a whole, not to any specific practices. Future research must improve on the measures of ambivalence used, and given the differences that were observed between specific privatization practices, differentiate accordingly. Once again, consistent analysis of this concept at regular intervals will allow researchers to see whether or not ambivalence and attitude shift over time in regards to privatization.

Overall, values and attitudes explained only a very small proportion of the variance observed in net allocations to parks and recreation. Future research must seek to understand what drives the public's net allocations to parks and recreation beyond these factors, and what can be done to positively influence stakeholder attitudes towards public support for parks and recreation. Although privatization may become increasingly relevant over time, local public parks and recreation are still primarily tax funded (Pitas et al., 2017). Protecting this funding stream, and working to increase the relative and overall amount allocated to parks and recreation will be crucial to ensuring the long-term vibrancy and viability of these public services.

As the current analyses showed, there are significant differences in attitudes among members of various groups, as well as between the individual privatization practices. Future research must continue to explore these differences, specifically the different practices that may be considered privatization. It may be that in addition to their place as a part of the overarching concept of privatization, these individual practices are separate constructs that

can be explored on their own. Such an approach may be especially appropriate for researchers who hope to directly influence practice. Agencies exploring these alternative funding strategies are likely more interested in a single practice than the abstract idea of privatization as a whole.

In working to understand why specifically certain individuals are opposed to privatization, the social values/interpersonal conflict framework may be a useful approach. Understanding whether park users are opposed to the very concept of privatization, or whether they perceive a negative impact on their recreation experience as a result of actually encountering it would be a useful distinction. In much the same way that Vaske and colleagues (1995) approached conflict between hunters and non-hunters, the conflict framework could be applied to privatization. Individuals who experience goal interference as a result of encountering privatization are experiencing interpersonal conflict (Jacob & Schreyer, 1980), while those who do not encounter privatization but are opposed to it are said to feel a social values conflict (Williams, 1993). Corporate sponsorship, with its tendency for visible sponsor recognition seems especially suited for such an analysis.

Stated choice analysis represents another possible tool for analyzing preferences in privatization in public parks and recreation. Allowing individuals to choose between scenarios representing different levels of privatization, tax burden, and service quality would allow for a better understanding of what respondents find important, and what they are willing to trade off. Stated choice modeling can take the form of both written (e.g. Schroeder & Louviere, 1999) and visual (e.g. Newman, Manning, Dennis, McKonly, 2005) scenarios. Once again, corporate sponsorship would seem to be an ideal candidate for such an analysis thanks to its emphasis on visible sponsor recognition. This type of analysis may provide information that is

of great utility for agencies considering a sponsorship program, as it would provide direct guidance as to what constituents find acceptable and unacceptable.

Philanthropy, another promising form of alternative funding, must also be explored in greater deal. There appears to be a relative lack of research specifically addressing the solicitation of philanthropic donations to parks and other protected areas (Alpizar, Carlsson, & Johansson-Stenman, 2008; Bekkers & Wiepkin, 2011). As non-profit friends groups are an increasingly common partner for many public park and recreation agencies, understanding how to best drive donations to these organizations will be of great value. Existing research in philanthropic studies provides a set of best practices for a variety of causes, but parks and recreation has yet to receive the same level of analysis. Future work could include quasi-experimental design studies of various methods of solicitation, as well as various marketing and branding strategies.

Finally, the cognitive hierarchy and the role of values in this context must continue to be explored. Attitudes have long been the focus of much of the research in the park and recreation context. Whereas values have long been present in a variety of social sciences, their application in parks and recreation has been much more recent and less comprehensive. A particular challenge for researchers who apply values in their work will be to provide tangible benefits for practitioners, educators, and other researchers. As values are deeply rooted, largely beyond conscious understanding, and resistant to change (Rohan, 2000; Schwartz et al., 2012), they are difficult to measure and difficult to translate to real world application. However, because of their influence over other factors such as beliefs, ideologies, attitudes, and behaviors, values hold significant potential as a research lens.

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## **Appendix: Data Collection Instrument**

This is a study to understand your use of and opinions about local public park and recreation services. The researchers would like to know about your recreational behavior, and your support for a variety of funding methods for these local public services. Local public park and recreation services include parks, playgrounds, trails, fitness/sports facilities, open space, and other locations managed by a local park and recreation agency. Even if you do not use these services your opinions matter.

Specifically, this survey will collect your thoughts and opinions regarding privatization practices as a way of funding local public park and recreation services. Traditionally, these services are financed through public funding based on taxes. Privatization practices are an alternative method of funding, or a supplement to, this tax-based model.

For the purposes of this study, privatization is any activity that reduces the role of public money in the delivery of park and recreation services. This could include a range of activities, including ownership of parks by for-profit companies, corporate sponsorship, the use of charitable donations, the outsourcing of services to third-party contractors, and partnerships with non-profit groups.

You may decide not to participate in this research. You may withdraw from this survey at any time. If you agree to take part, we expect it will take about 15 to 20 minutes to complete. Your participation in this survey serves as consent to participate in this research project. At no time will personally identifying information be collected, and every effort will be made to maintain your anonymity.

First, we would like to collect some information about your recreational behavior and your use of parks.

1. In the past 12 months, how often have you visited a local park for recreational purposes? This includes any public trail, playground, sport facility, open space, or other location managed by a local park and recreation agency.
  - a. Not at all
  - b. Seldom
  - c. Occasionally
  - d. Frequently
  
2. Please indicate how important each of the following experiences are for you during your typical park visit: (1) not important to (7) extremely important.
  - a. To get away from the usual demands of life.
  - b. To avoid everyday responsibilities for a while.
  - c. To rest a while from the feeling of being overloaded at home or work.
  - d. To have your mind move at a slower pace.
  - e. To give your mind a rest.
  - f. To recover from your usual hectic pace
  
3. In the past 12 months, how often have you participated in organized programming sponsored by your local park and recreation agency? This would include such things as sports leagues, educational or instructional classes, and artistic or cultural events in your community.
  - a. Not at all
  - b. Seldom
  - c. Occasionally
  - d. Frequently
  
4. Please indicate how important each of the following experiences are for you when you participate in recreational programming: (1) not important to (7) extremely important.
  - a. To get away from the usual demands of life.
  - b. To avoid everyday responsibilities for a while.
  - c. To rest a while from the feeling of being overloaded at home or work.
  - d. To have your mind move at a slower pace.
  - e. To give your mind a rest.
  - f. To recover from your usual hectic pace

5. In this next section, we'd like to understand your support or opposition to different ways of paying for and managing local public park and recreation agencies. How supportive or opposed would you be to a local public park agency where:

	Extremely opposed	Very opposed	Somewhat Opposed	Neither opposed nor supportive	Somewhat supportive	Very supportive	Extremely supportive
All members of the community share the burden of paying for parks through their taxes, regardless of their personal use.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Park management is a government function that is fully funded through taxes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Only park users cover the costs of parks through user fees.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Corporate sponsorship agreements help fund park and recreation services	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Financial independence and sustainability are primary goals of park management.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Public funding is used to pay private contractors to deliver park management services.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Private contractors bid in a competitive process for the right to provide park management services.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Non-profit organizations own and operate park and recreation facilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Non-profit organizations purchase land for parks using funding from members and charitable contributions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Private companies own and operate park and recreation facilities on a for-profit basis.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Recreational programming is provided by private companies on a for-profit basis.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6. This section deals specifically with privatization as a means of paying for local public park and recreation services. We are interested in knowing your thoughts and beliefs about privatization. Please tell us the extent to which you believe with the following statements are true.

	Definitely not	Maybe not	Maybe yes	Definitely yes
Privatization practices aim to save money by creating efficiencies. (TRUE)	1	2	3	4
Privatization involves a variety of different practices. (TRUE)	1	2	3	4
Only large park and recreation agencies currently engage in privatization practices. (FALSE)	1	2	3	4
Privatization practices do not have the capacity to generate enough money to really help public park and recreation agencies. (FALSE)	1	2	3	4
Privatization is currently taking place in public parks and recreation. (TRUE)	1	2	3	4
Corporate sponsorship has no real benefits for sponsors. (FALSE)	1	2	3	4

7. Next we would like to assess your attitudes towards specific privatization practices. Please indicate your feelings about the use of the following practices in local public parks and recreation.

	Extremely negative	Very negative	Some what negative	Neutral	Some what positive	Very positive	extremely positive	Not sure
Privatization as a funding source in the local public park and recreation context.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Corporate sponsorship as a funding source for local public park and recreation services.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Volunteers as a way of delivering local public park and recreation services.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Outsourcing local public park and recreation services to private contractors.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Asking for charitable gifts as a funding source for local public park and recreation services.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Selling local public park and recreation facilities to private companies.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

8. What do you feel are the potential positives of privatization in the public park and recreation context? (open ended)
9. What do you feel are the potential negatives of privatization in the public park and recreation context? (open ended)

10. Next we would like to understand how concerned you are about the current level of privatization, and about any future privatization practices implemented in local park and recreation services.

	Not at all concerned			Neutral			Very concerned
How concerned are you that there is <i>currently</i> too much privatization in local parks and recreation services?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How concerned are you that there will be too much privatization in local parks and recreation services <i>in the future</i> ?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

For the following questions, please answer on a scale of 0 (not at all) to 10 (the maximum):

11. How conflicted are your feelings about the use of privatization practices in public park and recreation services?
12. How indecisive do you feel about the use of privatization practices in public park and recreation services?
13. How mixed are your feelings about the use of privatization practices in public park and recreation services mixed?

We want your opinions regarding how much privatization you would expect to encounter, and how much you would prefer to encounter, at your local public park and recreation agency.

14. First, have you ever personally encountered privatization in the local public park and recreation context?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Unsure

15. Please rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement:

*"Just knowing that privatization is happening in local park agencies bothers me."*

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Somewhat disagree
- c. Neither disagree or agree
- d. Somewhat agree
- e. Strongly agree

16. Thinking about your local public park and recreation agency:

	None	A little bit	A moderate amount	A lot
What amount of privatization would you <i>expect</i> to encounter in your <i>local parks</i> ?	1	2	3	4
How much privatization would you <i>prefer</i> to encounter in your <i>local parks</i> ?	1	2	3	4
What amount of privatization would you <i>expect</i> to encounter in local <i>recreational programming</i> ?	1	2	3	4
How much privatization would you <i>prefer</i> to encounter in local <i>recreational programming</i> ?	1	2	3	4



## 17. Thinking about your local park and recreation agency:

	Very negative	Moderately negative	Slightly negative	No impact	Slightly positive	Moderately positive	Very positive
What kind of impact does <i>the current level</i> of privatization have on the quality of your recreation experience?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
What kind of impact <i>would more</i> privatization have on the quality of your recreation experience?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

18. In this section, we briefly describe some people. Please read each description and think about how much each person is or is not like you. Circle the number to the right that shows how much the person in the description is like you.

So that we can tailor the statement to you, please indicate which gender you identify with:

- Male (following example includes male pronouns)
- Female
- Prefer not to disclose

	Not at all like me	Very unlike me	Somewhat not like me	Somewhat like me	Very like me	Entirely like me
It is important to him to care for nature.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important to him to take part in activities to defend nature.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important to him to protect the natural environment from destruction or pollution.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important to him that the weak and vulnerable in society be protected.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important to him that every person in the world have equal opportunities in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important to him that everyone be treated justly, even people he doesn't know.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important to him to be tolerant toward all kinds of people and groups.	1	2	3	4	5	6

It is important to him to listen to an understand people who are different from him.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important to him to accept people even when he disagrees with them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important to him to take care of people he is close to	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is very important to him to help the people dear to him.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important to him to concern himself with every need of his dear ones.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important to him that people he knows have full confidence in him.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important to him to be a dependable and trustworthy friend.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important to him that all his friends and family can rely on him completely.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important to him to have ambitions in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important to him to be very successful.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important to him that people recognize what he achieves.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important to him that people do what he says they should.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important to him to have the power to make people do what he wants.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important to him to be the one who tells others what to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important to him to have the power that money can bring.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important to him to be wealthy.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important to him to own expensive things that show his wealth.	1	2	3	4	5	6

19. The next questions deal with funding sources for local park and recreation services. On average, people in the United States pay about \$70.00 per year in local taxes for park and recreation services. The amount you pay may be more or less, but \$70.00 is the national average. Do you feel that your local park and recreation services are worth at least \$70.00 per member of your household each year?
- a. Yes
    - i. If yes: Would you be willing to pay more than \$70.00 in local taxes annually to avoid privatization practices in the delivery of your local park and recreation services? Yes/No
      - i. If yes: how much more? \$\_\_\_\_\_
  - b. No
    - i. If no: how much are these services worth to you? \$\_\_\_\_\_
20. Do you think that privatization practices should be pursued as a means of reducing the amount you pay for these services through local taxes? Yes/No

The following situations are purely hypothetical. Please consider the budget categories below.

21. If you were making the choices for your local government, and the existing budget was increased, what percentage of the extra money would you put in each of the following program areas? If you put more money into a given area, the program in that area will be expanded. If no money is allocated to a given area, programs will be kept at current levels. The total percentage of money distributed should equal 100%.

Service	Percent Added
Education	
Libraries	
Public Welfare	
Hospitals & Health	
Police Protection	
Corrections	
Fire Protection	
Housing & Community Development	
Transportation	
Parks and Recreation	

22. Why did you allocate the extra money this way (open ended)?

23. Next, if the existing budget was decreased, what percentage of that amount would you take away from each of the following program areas? If you take money from a given area, the program in that area will be reduced. If no money is taken from a given area, programs will be kept at current levels. The total percentage of money taken away should equal 100%.

Service	Percent Taken Away
Education	
Libraries	
Public Welfare	
Hospitals & Health	
Police Protection	
Corrections	
Fire Protection	
Housing & Community Development	
Transportation	
Parks and Recreation	

24. Why did you take away the money this way (open ended)?

25. Next, please rate the following program areas in their importance to you personally, as well as their quality within *your* community. A rating of “1” indicates the lowest level of importance and quality, while a rating of “7” indicates the highest level of importance and quality. If your community does not offer one of the services listed, please select “NA.”

<b>Service</b>	<b>Importance</b>		<b>Quality</b>		<b>NA</b>
Education	1	7	1	7	
Libraries	1	7	1	7	
Public Welfare	1	7	1	7	
Hospitals & Health	1	7	1	7	
Police Protection	1	7	1	7	
Corrections	1	7	1	7	
Fire Protection	1	7	1	7	
Housing & Community Development	1	7	1	7	
Transportation	1	7	1	7	
Parks and Recreation	1	7	1	7	

In this final section, we would like to collect some information about you. This will help us compare your answers to other members of the American public. This information is strictly confidential.

26. What is your year of birth?
27. On a scale of 1 (very liberal) to 7 (very conservative), how would you rate your views on:
- a. Social issues?
- |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>6</b> | <b>7</b> |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
- b. Economic issues?
- |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>6</b> | <b>7</b> |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
28. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?
- a. Less than high school degree
  - b. High school graduate
  - c. Some college but no degree
  - d. Associate degree in college (2 year)
  - e. Bachelor's degree in college (4 year)
  - f. Master's degree
  - g. Doctoral degree
  - h. Professional degree (JD, MD)
29. Are you Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino/a?
- a. Yes
  - b. None of these
30. Choose one or more races that you consider yourself to be:
- a. White
  - b. Black or African American
  - c. American Indian or Alaska Native
  - d. Asian
  - e. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
  - f. Other
31. What best describes the type of community you live in?
- a. Rural area
  - b. Town or village
  - c. Small city
  - d. Urban area
  - e. Suburban area
32. Please indicate the answer that includes your entire household income last year before taxes.
- a. Less than \$10,000
  - b. \$10,000-\$29,999

- c. \$30,000-\$49,999
- d. \$50,000-\$69,999
- e. \$70,000-\$89,999
- f. \$90,000-\$109,000
- g. \$110,000-\$129,999
- h. \$130,000-\$149,999
- i. Over \$150,000

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