

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

An ongoing and pervasive debate among social scientists during the last two decades of the twentieth century has been taking place between naturalists, antinaturalists, critical theorists, and pluralists regarding the issue of how social phenomena should be studied (Martin and McIntyre, 1997). Naturalists argue that the study of social and of natural phenomena should be approached in the same way using objectivist epistemology, ontological belief in realism, and experimental methodology. Antinaturalists disagree with naturalists, believing that differences between natural and social phenomena mandate that a different approach should be used to study social phenomena. Contrary to “hard” natural sciences, the “soft” social science approach should be based on subjectivist epistemology, relativist ontology, and qualitative methodology. Critical theorists partially agree with naturalists and antinaturalists, accepting naturalists’ methodology and antinaturalists’ subjectivity. At the same time, critical theorists partially disagree with naturalists’ and antinaturalists’ approaches, rejecting naturalists’ ontological beliefs in relativity of truth and naturalists’ epistemological belief in the objectivity of a researcher. Finally, pluralists advocate equality of all approaches arguing that all these approaches have a right to co-exist because they are generating different types of knowledge, motivated by various research interests, and guided by distinct scientific ideals.

Different responses to the issue of how social phenomena should be studied have shaped alternative philosophical orientations in the contemporary philosophy of social science. These diverse philosophical orientations are founded on dissimilar assumptions about the nature of reality (ontology), the nature of relationships between the knower and the known (epistemology), and approved ways to conduct investigations (methodology). Combinations of these ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions are often referred to as alternative research paradigms. Paradigms predetermine a specific approach to the study of social phenomena (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Four major research paradigms are widely recognized by researchers: (1) the logico-positivist/empiricist paradigm; (2) constructivism; (3) critical theory; and (4) the pluralist paradigm (Braybrooke, 1987; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Gultung 1990; Little, 1991). These are reviewed in the first section of this chapter.

Logico-Positivist/Empiricist Paradigm

Advocates of the logico-positivist/empiricist paradigm, which Martin and McIntyre (1997, p. 533) identified as being derived from the naturalist approach, suggest that the study of social phenomena by social scientists should be approached in the same way as the study of natural phenomena are approached by those working in the natural sciences. They perceive the goals of science to be prediction, control, and nomological explanation. The task of the researcher is to uncover and formulate time-and-context free cause-effect laws, which are often expressed in rigorous mathematical terms. Although there are several schools of thoughts within the naturalistic approach (e.g. empiricism, falsificationism, postpositivism, etc.), there are common denominators among them. These include: (1) the ontological belief that apprehensible reality exists and is governed by invariant laws (realism); (2) the epistemological assumption that subjective values of the researcher can be excised from the research process through proper research design, sample choice, and validity and reliability checks (objectivism); and (3) the methodological approach that relies heavily on quantitative methods, statistical measures, and empirical verifications of propositional hypotheses (experimental

methodology) (Arndt, 1985; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Martin and McIntyre, 1997).

Arndt (1985) notes that although the origin of the naturalist approach is attributed to the French philosopher Auguste Comte who defended positivism as a scientific method, naturalism is part of the Anglo-American philosophy of science tradition. It is the most dominant orientation in modern American social science thought, which includes the park and recreation and the marketing fields (Arndt 1985; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). This hegemony is maintained by pressures to conform through the narrow empiricist perspective which is characteristic of most Ph.D. programs; the prevalence of this model in most articles in major journals; preferred access to funding by proposals using this model; and the conservative approach adopted by promotion and tenure committees (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Arndt (1985, p. 19) noted that each new generation of researchers is “born into” the naturalist approach, rather than consciously selecting it, and if a dissident researcher decides to pursue a different approach then he or she would likely be condemned “.... to suffer the slow burnout of never emerging from the journals’ revision purgatories.” In the marketing literature, the naturalist approach has been rigorously defended and advocated by Hunt (1983).

Constructivism

A major tenet of the constructivist paradigm is a shift from the ontological belief that reality exists and that it is driven by eternal laws, to the ontological assumption that reality is more or less comprised of informed multiple constructions held by social actors and that these constructions are alterable. While Martin and McIntyre (1997) refer to the constructivist orientation as an antinaturalist approach, Morrow and Brown (1994) designate the same orientation as a humanistic orientation in the social sciences. Antinaturalists or humanists contend that there are substantial differences in the subject matter of the natural and social sciences, which demand there be different approaches to the study of social and natural phenomena. Antinaturalists deny nomological explanations and argue that causality, generalizations, predictions, and mathematical laws have little or no importance in the social sciences.

According to constructivists, social phenomena are intrinsically meaningful. They are shaped by the mental constructions that social actors hold and attach to them. Hence, the antinaturalist approach suggests that the goal of science should be unraveling, understanding and reconstructing the meanings held by individuals or groups (relativism) and the method of science should be interpretation (hermeneutics) from the point of view of the social actor (*verstehen*). Constructivism challenges the distinction between ontology and epistemology, assuming an interactive linkage of the researcher and the object of investigation (subjectivism) so that the findings of an inquiry are themselves a literal creation or construction of the inquiry process. Historical roots of constructivism derive from the literary interpretation and criticism of poets practiced in ancient Greece and the religious exegesis—an attempt to interpret disputed or hidden meanings of authoritative religious texts. Modern constructivism has been influenced by phenomenological and ethnomethodological traditions and has had a strong effect on European philosophy (Bleicher 1980; Little 1991; Martin and McIntyre 1997; Rabinow and Sullivan 1987). According to Monieson (1988), in the marketing literature the constructivist orientation is rather underdeveloped and the hermeneutic ideal is only beginning to be appreciated (Hirschman 1986).

Critical Theory

Critical theory occupies a niche in social philosophy that is dissimilar to both the naturalist and the antinaturalist approaches. In terms of the nature of reality it seems closer to positivism since it also accepts realism as an ontological belief. However, in terms of relationships between the knower and the known it leans closer to constructivism, since it also advocates subjectivist epistemology. At the same time, critical theory is distant from positivism, criticizing it for objectification of human subjects; and stays far away from constructivist relativism, arguing that social phenomena are a sociohistorical reality that have reified over time. In spite of these ontological and epistemological differences, critical theory to some extent depends on naturalistic and antinaturalistic methodologies, although they are used to attain different goals (Braybrooke 1987; Lakatos and Musgrave, 1970).

Critical theory rejects explanation as a scientific goal. Rather, the goal of critical science is to reveal anti-democratic oppressions, and to liberate humans from prejudices, ignorance, and ideologically frozen conceptions. To achieve these goals, critical theory employs a dialogic/dialectical methodology which attempts to understand the intersubjective meanings, values, and motives of social actors. It attempts to disclose contradictions in social structure caused by hegemony of dominant meanings that are enforced by ideology (Comstock, 1997). Critical theory rejects the positivistic 'objective' picture of social reality and cuts through surface appearances by locating social phenomena in specific historical contexts and by analyzing their inner interrelated relations. Similarly, critical theory goes one step further than constructivism by studying action rather than behavior, and seeking change in addition to interpretation of meanings (Harvey, 1990).

The historical roots of critical theory stem from the works of Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Saint-Simon, Weber, and Marx. The roots of modern critical theory stem from the works of a group of German scholars in the 1920s (Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse) who are commonly referred to as the Frankfurt School. In the 1960s, postulates of the Frankfurt School were radically revised by Jurgen Habermas and Anthony Giddens whose ideas have strongly influenced philosophers and social scientists in many countries including North America (Fay, 1987). Three major contemporary academic journals, *Telos*, *Dissent*, and *Theory, Culture & Society*, are oriented towards publishing results of critical studies. In the park and recreation and marketing literatures, the critical tradition seems weak and appears to be represented mainly by scholars with non-American ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Monieson, 1988; Wish, Dholakia, and Rose, 1982).

Pluralist Paradigm

Finally, there is a perspective in the philosophy of social science that advocates an holistic and pluralist approach to conducting social science. This "multivaried" perspective stems from the arguments of some philosophers who believe that naturalistic, antinaturalistic, and critical theory approaches are compatible, complementary, and legitimate ways of studying social phenomena. They argue that none of these approaches should have a monopolistic hegemony on representing the ultimately correct science. They have to co-exist in a dialogical position of supplementing rather than competing with each other (Braybrooke, 1987; Gultung, 1990; Israel, 1971; Rabinow and Sullivan, 1987).

Israel's (1971, pp. 343-347) discussion of Habermas' (1967) complex philosophy is one of the best available in the English speaking literature for better understanding this pluralist perspective. It is summarized in Figure 1. Israel interprets Habermas as identifying three types of social scientific ideals:

the natural science ideal, the hermeneutic ideal, and the ideal of a critical social science. These three types of scientific ideals have shaped three major research orientations: positivism, structuralism, and critical theory. These three research orientations are stimulated by three different research interests that stimulate production of three different types of knowledge. Positivism produces the informative type of knowledge and is motivated mainly by technical interest; structuralism produces the interpretative type of knowledge and is motivated by hermeneutic/interpretative interest; finally, critical theory produces criticism and is motivated by emancipatory interest. The three types of interests and three types of knowledge are targeted on three main media--work, language, and power--which, according to Habermas, are necessary for the maintenance of a social system (Figure 1). The major premise of the pluralist paradigm is that "all social acts should be understood from three different constituent conditions: language; the basic process of production by which 'nature is transformed;' and social power relations." (Israel, 1971 p. 345, italics from the original).

In broad terms, the pluralist paradigm states that positivism (naturalist) approaches are effective for conducting social science. However, by focusing exclusively on what is truth and what is false causes this approach to ignore the role of values, which contributes to the conservation of existing social conditions. Therefore, there is a need to supplement this positivistic approach with critical social science, which uncovers and reveals dominant values by analyzing whether or not they are acceptable in the context of a healthy and democratic social system. However, to achieve this goal, critical social science, in its turn, should be accompanied by hermeneutics, which seek a deep and rich understanding of meanings held by social actors and to identify the ways in which these meanings influence their behavior (Gultung, 1990).

Figure 1: Habermas' Pluralist Paradigm

In the marketing literature the pluralist tradition has been represented by the work of Monieson (1982; 1988), and Arndt (1985) whose philosophical orientation relies heavily on the work of Gutlung (1990). Pluralists seek to break free from the paradigmatic provincialism which they perceive characterizes current marketing science. To achieve this goal, advocates of pluralism suggest that: (1) the dominant naturalist approach in marketing should be diluted by adopting alternative research orientations such as criticism and constructivism (Arndt, 1985; Hirschman, 1986); (2) marketing scholars should practice their right to dissent, to understand, and to be simple (Monieson, 1982); (3) a diverse array of research paradigms to better reflect subjective experiences, values, criticism, and conflicts should be brought into marketing science (Arndt, 1985); and (4) different metaphors within alternative research paradigms (e.g. alienated man, victimized consumers, language and text, experienced man, irrational man, political economies, and the political marketplace) should be recognized by marketing scholars (Arndt, 1981; 1985; Pandya and Dholakia, 1992). Although their approach has been debated (Hunt, 1983), the voices of pluralists have ignited a philosophical rethinking both of general marketing theory and of the conceptualization of public sector marketing in the context of public sector management (Walsh, 1994).

Choice of Research Orientation

Arndt (1985) suggested that the emergence of the broadening of marketing paradigm, and the consequent emergence of the transactional concept of public sector marketing was attributable to dominance of the naturalist (positivist) research orientation in the marketing literature. Such an approach rests on three major foundations: monism, physicalism, and reductionism. Monism means that all scientific disciplines are part of a higher order discipline. Thus, soft and hard science are unified and should use the same hypothetico-deductive method. Physicalism postulates that the same single hypothetico-deductive method practiced by both soft and hard sciences should be accompanied by the same ideals of unified science (e.g. those commonly accepted in physics should be accepted in recreation and parks and in marketing). These ideals are a drive for objectivity, a focus on prediction and control, and a search for eternal, time-space-context-value free, axiomatic, generic, and universal laws. These ideals of unified science give rise to the logic of reductionism which studies human, recreation and marketing behavior like a physical entity. Behavior is reduced to its parts and these parts are reified- "treated like things manipulable in the experimental laboratory and measured by interval or ordinal scales." (Arndt, 1985 p. 14).

Kotler's (1972) generic concept of marketing; Bagozzi's (1975) typology of marketing exchange; and Hunt's (1976) elaboration of the scope and nature of marketing are major studies in the context of public sector marketing that can be identified as lying between the logico-positivist/empiricist and the hermeneutic/interpretative paradigms. Kotler (1972) used the fundamental theorem of economic exchange, and a neutral approach to business and public sector organizations, to develop the generic concept of marketing expressed in positivistic terms which was defined by four axioms with 15 corollaries. Kotler's perspective was advanced further by Bagozzi (1975) who developed a typology of marketing exchange based upon a deeper understanding and interpretation of exchange processes, using insights drawn from the anthropological and sociological literatures. Hunt (1976) cemented this perspective of marketing as an exchange process by establishing the scope and nature of generic marketing with positive-normative, micro-macro, and profit-nonprofit dimensions. Marketing academia generally accepted and recognized these positivistic intellectual ideas as objective truth, and contended that controversy about the validity of extending the marketing concept to nonprofit and government organizations was over (Nickels, 1974; Lovelock and Weinberg, 1978).

Once that widespread acceptance and recognition had been achieved, the next logical steps in the domain of public sector marketing studies should have included: a search for additional empirical support for the concept; further improvement and refinement of public sector marketing theory; additional investigation of the complexities of exchange in the public sector context; and cross comparison of public and private agencies and their managers who accept or reject the marketing concept as part of management actions. However, these follow-up studies have failed to consolidate the ongoing premise. The failure is exemplified by: (1) little empirical evidence emerging during the last two or three decades to support the concept, and a strange reluctance of researchers to engage in such studies (Hirschman, 1986; Monieson, 1988); (2) overwhelming acceptance of the concept among marketing scholars, and explicit rejection of the same concept by a substantial proportion of public administrators, including park and recreation professionals (Hunt, 1976; Schultz et al., 1988; Vandeen Heede and Pelican, 1991); and (3) confusion as to the meaning of standard exchange terminology, resulting often in mutually exclusive interpretations of exchange forms and structures (Carman, 1980; Bagozzi, 1975; Pandya and Dholakia, 1992).

These discrepancies suggest that among the three major research approaches discussed above, both the logico-positivist/empiricist and the hermeneutic/interpretative paradigms are poorly equipped to address the study problem. In accordance with its philosophical tenets, the logico-

positivist/empiricist research paradigm would involve searching for empirical data using experimental methodology, rigorous research design, sampling procedures, ordinal or nominal scales, and extensive statistical analysis. In contrast, the hermeneutic/interpretative research paradigm would concentrate on production of knowledge through interpretation, denying objectivity and focusing on developing a deeper understanding of exchange processes within the public sector context. The literature offers several arguments which challenge the appropriateness of such approaches to the problem of concern in this study.

The current conceptualization of public sector marketing does require extensive empirical testing. During the last two decades it has flourished in the academic literature without adequate empirical support, according to Monieson (1988). However, results of such studies may produce biased results reflecting the expectations of the researcher. Rosenthal (1968) showed in a series of studies that expectations of researchers can bias their research results and his works challenged assumptions about objectivity in the research process. The philosophical literature seems to support this conclusion (Marshall, 1990; Zeller, 1987). This suggests that researchers can find confirmatory or disconfirmatory support for the existing conceptualization of public sector marketing depending on the intellectual traditions of a preferred school of thought. Within the marketing discipline alone there are twelve schools of thought (Sheth et al., 1988). Public sector marketing embraces the public administration field, which includes park and recreation, and within it there are also several schools of thought (e.g. rational choice school, managerialism). The theoretical traditions of a particular school of thought can easily bias the conclusions of a study.

Even though some consensus or parallel can be found between schools of thought in the public administration and marketing fields, there are some methodological difficulties associated with the choice of the logico-positivist/empiricist research orientation. For example, it is likely to be challenging to compare groups of public administrators and marketing practitioners, and to draw conclusions from their responses. This problem is referred to in the social science literature as a Lord's paradox (Levine, 1974). Lord (1967) showed that there were two logically consistent statistical procedures for comparing differences between groups in a selected data set. However, these two procedures when used on the same data set yielded completely opposite conclusions and there were no commonly accepted criteria to guide when to use which method of analysis. As Lord (1967, p. 305) concluded: "The usual research study of this type [analysis of differences between groups] is attempting to answer a question that simply cannot be answered in any rigorous way on the basis of available data." Besides philosophical criticism of positivism (Feyerabend, 1962; Toulmin, 1972), the popular literature seems to support Lord's conclusion, arguing that with manipulation of statistical procedures it is possible to camouflage the truth (Huff 1954).

Kotler and Levy's (1969a), Kotler's (1972), Hunt's (1976), and especially Bagozzi's (1975) studies to some extent reflect hermeneutic tradition, since all of them were intended to offer deeper understanding and interpretation of exchange processes in nonbusiness organizations. However, the explicit axiomatic and lawlike conclusions drawn from these studies, clearly separate them from ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning the hermeneutic tradition. Relatively recent studies targeted on deepening the understanding of exchange processes in social organizations, and which therefore might be considered as being positioned within the hermeneutic perspective, have reached less axiomatic and generic conclusions. Carman's (1980, pp. 12-13) extension of his earlier work (1973) on the universality of marketing recognized that existing conceptualizations of exchange structures in the marketing literature were "confusing" and "controversial." Almost two decades, Kerin (1996, p. 6) used the same word, "controversial," when discussing the marketing broadening

proposition and nontraditional applications of marketing. Robin (1978) returned to the original debate on the broadening marketing proposition and tested both Luck's (1969) apologist approach based on the notion of *quid pro quo* and Bagozzi's (1975) "marketing as exchange" approach against four normative criteria: abstraction, correspondence, pragmatism, and simplicity. He found that that the Bagozzi's approach failed to satisfy all four criteria, while Luck's approach failed to satisfy only one of them. Robin suggested replacing Bagozzi's approach with specific definitions relating to general marketing and social marketing. Pandya and Dholakia (1992) echoed Robin's conclusions and offered an institutional theory of marketing exchange.

These studies suggest that a hermeneutic research orientation designed to interpret public sector marketing might be preferable for the current study. However, there are several arguments which cast doubts on the appropriateness of such a choice. These arguments relate to the general criticism of hermeneutics as a research orientation, rather than to specific studies. First, interpretative type of knowledge has been criticized by both positivists and critical theorists for producing the so called paradox of the hermeneutic circle which represents an endless process of interpretation (Morrow and Brown, 1994). This paradox stems from epistemological assumptions about relative truth which exclude ultimate and "correct" interpretation, and makes findings from previous interpretative studies tentative since there is no ultimate truth to be found according to the postulates of relativism. This nihilistic disbelief in genuine knowledge implies that it will never be known if the earth revolves around the sun, if the Holocaust occurred during World War II, and if Great Britain's drive in the nineteenth century to abolish slavery in cultures around the world was right (Hunt, 1994). Thus, there is a danger that a study that attempts to interpret exchange relationships, and is intended to enhance understanding of public sector marketing, would be lacking in worth and meaning. It would never be known if the results and conclusions of this study (as well as the three decades of attempts to interpret exchange relationships in the marketing, public administration, and parks and recreation literatures) are correct and final.

The second argument for selecting a hermeneutic research orientation stems from the history of hermeneutics itself. The hermeneutics approach still seems loyal to the traditions of the religious exegesis, in which disputed or hidden meanings of authoritative religious texts were interpreted over time without challenging the authoritative position of the text itself. In other words, the interpretation process within the hermeneutics tradition is limited to polishing the sacred text rather than to evaluating its authoritative status. While every new interpretation brings new meanings or replaces disputed or previous ones, the interpretation process maintains the authoritative status quo of the text. Morrow and Brown (1994) refer to this as "post-structuralism" that promises everything but requires no engagement in the polity. For example, most interpretative studies that have attempted to interpret nonprofit marketing and refute the Kotler-Bagozzi-Hunt transactional interpretation of generic and nonprofit marketing, challenge the forms and types of exchange rather than the concept of exchange itself. Pandya and Dholakia's (1992) institutional theory of exchange in marketing, Carman's (1980) paradigms for marketing theory, and Robin's scope of marketing, all offer some form or type of exchange rather than replacing the authoritative notion of exchange itself. As a result, the marketing literature offers numerous forms and types of exchange concepts rather than a conceptual alternative which could have been accepted not only by marketing scholars but also by public administrators. These forms and types of exchange processes are often confusing, controversial, inconsistent, and sometimes even mutually exclusive though all of them are based on almost the same literature sources.

For these reasons, Habermas (1967), who advocated a pluralist approach espoused a major crucial objection to pure reliance on the hermeneutical or interpretative tradition in approaching the study of social phenomena. He argued that the language and meanings held by individuals are affected

by "inner" and "outer" forces, such as the law and power relations which exist within every society. It is possible to discuss meanings without asking their source, just as it is possible to talk a language without knowing its grammatical rules (Israel, 1971). Hence, the choice of a hermeneutic research orientation seems to be of limited value for studying the problem of interest in the current study. It would avoid discussion of the authoritative position espoused in existing marketing texts and follow the paths of linguistic science--studying meanings without affecting their authoritative status. The outcome of such a study would likely be further semantic terminology distinctions that would only add to the prevailing confusion in terminology. Moreover, the study could not claim to be a final solution of the problem, since any thick interpretation is never final according to the relativist ontological postulates that underlie the hermeneutic tradition.

These reservations suggest that choice of paradigm for the current study should lie either within the pluralist tradition, or within the most neglected paradigm in the parks and recreation and marketing literatures--critical theory, which includes considerations of power relationships. Although choice of the pluralist tradition is a plausible option, it is technically more difficult. In the author's judgement it would likely require implementation of at least three independent and methodologically different studies, conducted by a team consisting of three researchers with three different types of academic training and philosophical beliefs. The magnitude of resources needed to implement this approach caused the author to discard it from consideration for this study.

Selection of the Critical Theory Orientation

The nature of the study problem discussed in Chapter I, suggests that the prevailing conceptualization of the public sector marketing concept needs to be strategically and conceptually repositioned, re-situated, and reformulated before it will be widely accepted and recognized by park and recreation and other public administrators. Thus, the current study does not seek to enhance depth of understanding of the existing public sector marketing concept. Rather, its concern is on emancipation, which involves revealing, analyzing, criticizing, rejecting or modifying those tendencies that limit wider acceptance of the concept. These tasks are congruent with the goals of critical theory which seeks to understand conceptual content and the historical context of distorted meanings, identifies progressive tendencies, develops alternative understandings, and offers educative programs and transformative actions (Comstock, 1997; Fay, 1987; Harvey, 1990; Morrow and Brown, 1994).

Although Harvey (1990, p. 2) acknowledges that "there is no simple methodic recipe for doing critical social research," some general characteristics of critical research orientation and methodology can be identified. First, many critical studies stem from the central assumption underlying critical theory methodology, which is that knowledge is structured by existing sets of social and power relations (Harvey, 1990). This assumption determines the primary goal of critical methodology--to generate knowledge that penetrates the prevailing social and power structures. These structures are seen as oppressive mechanisms with a diversity of patterns. For example, forms of oppression studied by critical researchers can be based on gender, class, and race (Harvey, 1990); age, disability, and sexuality (Morrow and Brown, 1994); dominance of the positivistic paradigm in the methodological literature (Arndt, 1985); and further penetration of microeconomic concepts into the social sciences (Monieson, 1988). Such diversity of oppression forms in social life determines the primary mission of critical theory--to identify oppression forms by getting beneath the surface of meanings that are taken for granted, generating knowledge that reveals the roots and sources of oppressive mechanisms, and liberating

perspectives and understandings through education and enlightenment programs (Comstock, 1997; Fay, 1987).

A second characteristic of many critical studies appears to be related to the notion of contradiction. A critical study usually begins with observation, concern, frustration, or doubt that provokes inquiry. In the methodological literature these concerns have been characterized as myths, consisting of taken-for-granted meanings, which often incorporate anomalies or contradictions (Harvey, 1990). Contradiction is encoded in the logic of thesis-antithesis-synthesis that is the core of most critical studies. This logic implies that explanations of social phenomena (thesis) may have opposite explanation (antithesis) that should be integrated into a progressive superior explanation (synthesis). Contradiction (or rebelian antithesis to the dominant or oppressive thesis) is a some kind of anomaly or an abnormal state of affairs observed by critical scientists in the social world. McMurtry's (1997) excellent summary of contradictions inherent in Frederich A. Hayek's laissez-faire free market ideology serves as a good example of contradiction. Thus, Hayek's popular thesis suggests that "deregulation," "privatization" and "public sector cutback" to "develop the free markets" is a move toward "more democracy". McMurtry (1997, p. 650) challenges this view, and suggests a counterargument (antithesis) which he supports with empirical evidence. He argues that according to United States Congressional statistics, the top 1% of population controls more private wealth than the bottom 90% in the U.S. More privatization of public sector means greater transfer of power to a very small minority who already possess most of the power. According to McMurtry, such a transfer of resources from an electorally responsible and accountable public sector to the wealthiest 1% of the population, reduces rather than increases the democratic process. The paradox between the claimed increase of democracy through privatization of the public sector and the actual decrease in the democratic processes when this is done is perceived by McMurtry to be a contradiction. This contradiction serve as a driving force for using the critical research process in his study.

The presence of contradiction suggests at least three major lines of critical study in an inquiry. The first line of concern relates to the task of finding out "what is essentially going on." The second line of concern is to find out why this particular contradiction, anomaly, or myth has "historically been the case." Finally, a third line of concern focuses on identifying and analyzing oppressive structures that have contributed to perpetuation of the anomaly and to answer the question "what structures reproduce this state of affairs" (Harvey, 1990, p. 209).

A third characteristic of many critical studies is that discussion of contradiction leads to formulation of an educational program seeking change and suggesting actions to correct the contradiction. Many critical studies usually end with recommendations, a reconstructed alternative concept, a theory or a program designed to change the situation. Such educational programs are intended to reveal, enlighten, or convince the public of the inherent weaknesses of the contradictions, and the study results are treated as testimony. For this reason, the work of critical researchers is often compared to investigations of detectives and reporters. Like them, critical researchers seek out clues, follow trails and leads, make a case, and finally present testimony to the jury (research community) and the juror (the editor of a professional journal) for cross-examination (Douglas, 1976; Harvey, 1990; Levine, 1974). The act of accepting the results of critical research for publication or as the focus for professional discussion and debate, suggests that a meaningful case was made.

A fourth characteristic of critical studies is the format of critical research reports and the language that critical researchers use. Since the ultimate goal of critical research is communicating change to a public, the language should be understandable to those publics. Hence, critical researchers

tend to avoid "overscientific" numeric language which is often employed in positivistic studies, in favor of natural language which better facilitates understanding. Critical researchers try to eschew neo-scholasticism in which research conclusions are packaged in complex theories and jargon that sometimes obscure the main point (Morrow and Brown, 1994). Accordingly, the style of language often is passionate and is in the subjective form, similar to the language style used by newspaper journalists and columnists, attorneys and prosecutors, or by "101 introduction to a discipline" text-book writers.

Critical researchers tend to avoid the "traditional" structure of positivistic reports and employ a report format that Harvey (1990) termed "a story with a plot." A critical study report presents a central question that is being addressed. The core argument is present in skeleton form throughout the study, but is gradually supported by data as the study proceeds. Critical reports typically present evidence in the form of analogies, use references to commonly known and observed facts, offer citations of previously published works in academic journals, and collect original empirical data from key informants (Etzioni, 1988). Recent examples of "story with a plot" study formats, include Kuttner's (1997) critique of laissez-faire capitalism; McMurtry's (1997) work on the contradictions of free markets; Monieson's (1988) work on intellectualization forces in the marketing science; and Capon and Mauser' (1982) review of nonprofit texts.

A fifth general characteristic of critical research relates to the overall research design of critical studies. Critical theory rejects the quantitative-qualitative distinction of differentiating methodologies. Critical theorists argue that the quantitative-qualitative distinction focuses attention on techniques through which social life is represented, rather than upon the process of representing social reality. Such a distinction between qualitative and quantitative methods hides a fundamental distinction between approaches to recognizing a set of individuals as a social group, and defining those individuals as a sociological aggregate (Morrow and Brown, 1994).

Defining a set of individuals as a sociological aggregate assumes that individuals are independent from each other, and that society is a structured aggregate of externally related individuals and casual "factors." The focus of such research leads to a preference for casual modeling and statistical analysis integrated into "extensive research design," where a large number of cases are considered but the number of their properties is reduced in the analysis. (Morrow and Brown, 1994). In contrast, recognizing a set of individuals as a social group suggests studying individuals as participants in communities, classes, institutions, and cultural discourses. The locus of such research is social and incorporates a review of the systemic relations that constitute society. This leads to a preference for case studies and comparative analysis, integrated into "intensive research designs" that consider a small number of cases, but with a greater number of individual properties chosen for analysis (Morrow and Brown, 1994). Since critical social science accepts the premise that a set of individuals is a social group, it prefers intensive research designs that presume a small number of cases with broad characteristics studied by a wide diversity of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Critical theorists argue that it is not the methods that characterize social research, it is the way methods and data are used to evaluate the main argument.

A final crucial characteristic of critical studies relates to recognition of critique as a type of knowledge and defending it, along with empirical tools, and non-empirical reflexive research techniques, as a legitimate procedure for research. Morrow and Brown (1994, p. 229) summarize this: "there are important nonempirical, even "nonscientific" (in the usual sense), factors that have--and should--play a role in the rational development of science." Similarly, Harvey (1990, p. 196) in a review of prominent critical studies concluded:

Critical social research is clearly not constrained by its data collection techniques. The empirical studies analyzed above include the whole gamut of research tools: observation, both participant and non-participant; formal interviews with random samples; semi-structured, unstructured and in-depth interviewing; key informant testimonies, analysis of personal and institutional documents; mass media analysis; archive searching; examination of official statistics; and review of published literature. Furthermore, critical social research also uses a variety of analytic techniques: ethnographic interpretation, historical reconstruction, action research, multivariate analysis, structuralist deconstruction, and semiological analysis.

This is not an exhaustive list of data collection and analytic techniques used by critical theorists. Non-empirical, reflexive procedures practiced by critical researchers to generate critical type of knowledge also include such techniques as metatheoretical, deconstructive, historicist, existential, and normative argumentation; philosophical criticism; contextualization and discursive reading of research; personal or insider knowledge, and biographical method (Morrow and Brown, 1994; Smith, 1992).

Harvey (1990, p. 102) emphasized that critical social research is "an imaginative and creative process" that "cannot be summed up in a procedural recipe." Rather each critical study in some sense is unique, and choice of data collection and analytic techniques in each study is determined by the nature of the problem. What is general among critical studies that distinguishes them from other exploratory or interpretive approaches, is the way data are collected and the framework within which data are analyzed. Critical studies do not look for causes of observed social phenomena and do not limit themselves to interpretation of meanings. They get beneath the surface of apparent social reality to reveal the nature of dominant social structures and to shatter illusions (Harvey 1990). Wainwright (1997, p. 6) reached similar conclusions about the general characteristics of critical research:

To summarize, although critical social research is diverse and constantly developing, the following characteristics are essential to the approach: the application of dialectical logic which views the material and social world as in a constant state of flux; the study of phenomena over time to reveal their historical specificity; the critique or deconstruction of existing phenomenal forms and analytical categories that delves beneath the superficial appearances available to unaided common sense to reveal the network of social and economic relations that are the essential conditions of existence for a phenomenon; the exposure of previously hidden oppressive structures; and a praxiological orientation in which knowledge is considered to be inseparable from conscious practical activity.

Thus, these general specifics of most critical studies have determined the framework, language, format, and many other features of the current study. It is intended to get beneath the taken-for-granted beliefs held by most marketers (Nickels, 1974) regarding the concept of public sector marketing. It attempts to use simple language, and the story-with-a-plot format. It formulates a contradiction. It identifies oppressive or dominant structures. It develops an alternative concept of public sector marketing. It uses an intensive research design, focusing on a small number of cases with thick analysis and description of multiple characteristics. It employs both empirical and non-empirical data collection and analytical techniques to collect evidence and validate conclusions. Finally, it results

in recommendations on how to improve and reconsider the prevailing controversy over the public sector marketing concept.

An Overview of the Implementation of Critical Theory in This Study

Yin (1994, p. 64) recommended using a study protocol as part of a carefully designed research project. A study protocol is the document that summarizes all actions to be taken by a researcher during the study. Such a protocol includes: (1) overview of project objectives; (2) field data collection, and analytic procedures; (3) questions addressed during the study; and (4) guide for the report outline. A protocol may include information about sources of evidence, units of analysis, objectives, field procedures, and study questions. Additionally, a study protocol presents a generic analytic strategy which guides the decision regarding what will be analyzed, where, how, and for what reason. Miles and Huberman (1996) recommended the use of arrays, matrices, flowcharts, data displays, and cross-tabulations to facilitate overall presentation of a study design. A similar technique was suggested by Chenail (1997) who argued that in order to organize a general line of research decisions it is useful to address at least four components of study design: (1) area of curiosity; (2) mission question; (3) data to be collected; and (4) data analysis procedures. Taken together these recommendations are summarized into a protocol of the analytic strategy used in the present study (Table 1).

Description of Analytic and Data Collection Techniques

To achieve the objectives of the study, variety of empirical and non-empirical data collection and analytic techniques were used. These techniques included critique of texts, biographical methods, in-depth interviewing, philosophical criticism, deconstructive argumentation, contextualization and discursive reading of previously published research, interpretation of problematic meanings, the Internet search, and peer debriefing. Some of these methods were used together, complementing and supplementing each other. For the purpose of simplicity and ease of presenting findings, all data collection and analytic techniques were classified into two categories: empirical and non-empirical procedures.

Table 1: Protocol of the Study

Objectives 1. To identify the reasons and concerns of those public administrators and marketing scholars who do not accept the usefulness of marketing in the public sector (negativists).

2. To deconstruct, comprehend, interpret, and critically appraise the current conceptualization of public sector marketing from the viewpoint of negativists identified in step 1.

3. To reconstruct, redefine, reinterpret, and reoperationalize the current controversial conceptualization of public sector marketing into a new conceptualization in the context of park and recreation services.

Research Questions What are the major concerns and reasons for non-acceptance of the public sector marketing concept among reluctant public administrators and marketing scholars? What are the assumptions, conceptualizations and disciplinary perspectives underlying the concept? Can a superior conceptualization be developed which is likely to be acceptable to a large proportion of public park and recreation administrators?

Analytic and Data Collection Techniques Non-empirical procedures: Investigative Research.
Non-empirical procedures:

Investigative Research &

Negative Case Analysis. Non-empirical procedures: Theoretical Triangulation. Empirical procedures: Peer debriefing, In-depth Interviews. Presentations, Discussions.

Sources of Evidence Studies and works published in the Park and Recreation, Public administration, and Marketing literatures. Marketing textbooks and studies; studies published in the social science literature, The Internet, WWW. Pool of concepts found during investigative research and negative case analysis.

Peer, scholars, practitioners, experts.

Report Format Chapter I-III: narrative.

Chapter IV: narrative with figures and tables. Chapters IV-VII: narrative with figures, tables and conceptual development

Non-empirical procedures were grouped into three major subsections: investigative research, negative case analysis, and theoretical triangulation. Empirical procedures were grouped into two major subsections: interview and peer debriefing.

Non-Empirical Procedures

Investigative Research. The investigative research was undertaken because the concept of public sector marketing is accepted by a majority of marketing scholars but, at the same time, rejected by many public administrators. The notions of investigative research (Douglas, 1976) and an underlying adversary research paradigm (Levine, 1974), emerged in response to limitations identified in the statistical analysis and cooperative research paradigm. Levine (1974, p. 669) noted:

By an adversary model, I mean that we are dealing with a situation in which there are claims and counterclaims, and arguments and counterarguments, each side advanced by an advocate who attempts to make the best possible case for his position. The scientific community, in the form of an editor, a referee, or a program committee, acts as a judge does in a preliminary hearing, deciding whether there is a sufficient case made in the particular study to take it to trial before the scientific community.

Douglas (1976, p. 57) maintains that the work of researchers who use the adversary model is similar to the work of detectives, investigative journalists, judges, and prosecutors. All of them are confronted with the same type of problems: misinformation, evasions, lies, fronts, taken-for-granted meanings, problematic meanings, and self-deceptions.

Investigative research, along with biographical methods, was comprised of several steps. First, through a literature review the views of the original authors who contributed to development of the public sector marketing concept were identified. Second, using publicly available interactive media resources, such as the Internet, authors' affiliations were reviewed and their professional biographies analyzed. Third, social science disciplines that have influenced the development of public sector marketing were identified. Fourth, concepts borrowed by marketers from the social science disciplines identified in step three have been reviewed and analyzed. Fifth, the meaning of concepts identified in step four were defined and compared with their interpretation in the marketing literature. Sixth, if discrepancies in interpretations were found, disconfirmatory data were recorded and their original meanings as postulated by the original authors were summarized. In summary, the investigative research reported in Chapter IV, identified disciplinary and conceptual sources of the public sector marketing concept, comparing them with original and postinterpretation by marketers.

The rationale for choosing investigative research included a need to test the extent to which the current concept of public sector marketing is objective and values free. Morrow and Brown (1994) contend that circumstances of theory production (e. g., contract research) or characteristics of the theory producer (e. g., political party associations, sexual orientation) may affect the conclusive arguments of research. Similarly, Harvey (1990) argues that researchers may experience "pressures" from such sources as research funders, academic administrators, and the business or political establishments during the research process. For example, Ekeh's (1974) critical appraisal of social exchange theory showed how political, philosophical, and ethical beliefs of the theory's author affected overall development of the theory. The task of investigative analysis in this study was to find out whether any of the "pressures," "circumstances of production," or "characteristics of the theory producer" were present in the development of the public sector marketing concept.

Negative Case Analysis. Because several opponents of public sector marketing have persistently identified additional conceptual data that has been ignored in discussion of the public sector marketing concept, the negative case analysis was chosen. Kidder (1981, p. 244) compares procedures of negative

case analysis with statistical tests of significance. A goal of both methods is "to handle error variance." During negative case analysis all existing propositions, null hypotheses, or assumptions underlying theories or concepts, are tested and refined against alternative explanations until no or a minimum possible number of alternative explanations are left. Kidder (1981, p. 241) notes: "negative case analysis requires that the researcher look for disconfirming data in both past and future observations. A single negative case is enough to require the investigator to revise a hypothesis." This method is consistent with the Hegelian method of dialectic, which suggests that any proposed thesis should be countered by an antithetical proposition in order to achieve synthesis.

Application of negative case analysis in this study included two major elements. The first element dealt with results of the investigative research and included a search for alternative concepts or disconfirming data. For example, if investigative research found that some concepts from the social science disciplines were borrowed to develop the public sector marketing concept (e. g. the concept of formal organizations from organizational theory, or the concept of social exchange from sociology), then these concepts (the concepts of formal organization and social exchange in our example) were analyzed and the existence of alternative conceptualizations was investigated in the organizational theory or sociological literatures. If alternative conceptualizations were found then they were studied and analyzed in the context of their usefulness for the public sector marketing discussion.

The second step in negative case analyses was to investigate the potential for conceptual consistency among and between the existing and the revealed alternative concepts. For example, if alternative conceptualizations of both social exchange theory and formal organizations were found, they could be compared with each other looking for possible consistency, connections, or links among them. For instance, were they developed by the same authors, in the same university, at the same period of time? Do they share something in common, for example, the same fundamental premises. If links were found, they could be recorded and analyzed. In summary, the investigative research procedures were focused on "vertical" search and identification of disciplinary and conceptual sources, and the negative case analysis supplemented this analysis by investigating a "horizontal" search of alternative conceptualizations within a particular social science discipline.

Supplemented by investigative research, the negative case analysis attempts to find out if researchers who developed the concept of public sector marketing suppressed evidence. Kahane (1973, p. 233) contends that such actions can occur when a researcher "conceals evidence unfavorable to his own position." It does not necessarily mean that a researcher on purpose hid or omitted evidence or alternative concepts. As suggested by Douglas (1976) a researcher may have a diversity of reasons for suppressing evidence. Negative case analysis assists in avoiding the suppression of evidence by checking if alternative conceptualizations were considered and consequentially incorporated.

Maxwell (1996, p. 90) noted that: "the most serious threat to the theoretical validity of an account is not collecting or paying attention to discrepant data, or not considering alternative explanations or understandings of the phenomena you are studying." The conceptualization of public sector marketing cannot be generic and universal if its originators purposefully or mistakenly ignored alternative explanations. The issue is analogous to public hearings and legal proceedings, where both offensive and defensive parties are given the right to be heard. In order to be fair, the negative case analysis focused on the evidence available and reported prior to, and not after, development of the concept of public sector marketing.

Theoretical Triangulation. Because some researchers have challenged the appropriateness of the marketing concept based on the voluntary exchange paradigm in the public sector context, the method

of theoretical triangulation was adopted. Triangulation involves validating conclusions by using multiple observers, theories, methods and data sources in order to overcome biases associated with a single method, observer, theory, or data source (Patton, 1990). Triangulation is closely associated with the modus operandi of detectives, and it partly overlaps investigative research and negative case analysis procedures (Scriven, 1974). Implementation of this method is, in the words of Miles and Huberman (1996, p. 267), mere "analytic induction"--seeing or hearing multiple instances from different sources and reconciling the findings of the different approaches.

Levine (1974, p. 669) suggested that theoretical triangulation could be compared with a cross-examination test:

... the particular position asserted in a paper is subject to cross-examination or further probing. Attempts by others at replication, new experiments, and inclusive logical critiques of experiments, or of an area of study, may all be viewed as attacks on a particular position by advocates of another position. In legal proceedings, the cross-examination is considered the essential safeguard to the accuracy and completeness of testimony. The cross-examination tests the credibility of the direct testimony, or it brings out additional related facts that may modify the inference one draws from some bit of testimony.

In this study, theoretical triangulation was undertaken in the form of cross-examination of findings identified by investigative research and negative case analysis. One of the goals of theory triangulation, according to Patton (1990), is to understand how different assumptions and fundamental premises held by various stakeholders affect conclusions. Therefore, implementation of theoretical triangulation in this study included not only reconciling, cross-examination, and evaluation of existing null assumptions of public sector marketing with alternative assumptions; but also included an attempt to understand how premises held by the originators of public sector marketing affected their final conclusions, and why some concepts (negative cases) were neglected or significantly reworked. The reason behind choosing theoretical triangulation was an attempt to find out if alternative concepts (negative cases) had potential and usefulness for the conceptualization of public sector marketing in the specific context of the recreation and park field.

Empirical Procedures

Non-empirical procedures provided the researcher with the data and a pool of alternative concepts that emerged from a critique of the current conceptualization of public sector marketing and an analysis of its deficiencies. Moreover, the pool of alternative concepts permitted formulation of an alternative conceptualization of public sector marketing based, on fundamentally different premises. This alternative conceptualization is presented in Chapter V. To evaluate the alternative conceptualization several data collection and analytical techniques were adopted.

Peer debriefing. First, an alternative conceptualization of public sector marketing were discussed with colleagues in the form of debriefing. Colleagues debriefing, which is more commonly termed peer debriefing, is a technique similar to interview, expert evaluation, or receiving feedback from others. It is used in qualitative studies and naturalistic inquiries to validate conclusions. Peer debriefing was deemed necessary because discussion of an alternative concept, and a critique of the existing concept, require

the existence of some level of expertise and training in the fields of marketing, public administration, and parks and recreation.

Interviews with managers. Evaluation techniques included in person and telephone interviews with three senior park and recreation practitioners. Because few studies have attempted to test the existing public sector marketing concept especially among public administrators, in-depth telephone interviews with park and recreation administrators were used to collect empirical data and evaluate alternative assumptions. Issues addressed during preparation for the interview included: selecting interviewees; obtaining permissions to conduct and record the interviews; selecting the recording equipment; designing the question pattern; and determining the length of the interview.

The reason for using in-depth interviews was to obtain first-hand perceptions of public park and recreation directors and academics about the public sector marketing concept. The interviews involved three steps. First, an abstract with illustrative figures summarizing the alternative conceptualizations of public recreation marketing, and a cover letter requesting the recipient to prepare feedback on this material was sent out to eight public park and recreation managers and scholars. These materials are shown in Appendix A. Second, two weeks after the letters were mailed the researcher contacted each informant by phone or in person requesting feedback on the conceptualizations and asking permission to record the interview. Third, the interviews were transcribed and the data were analyzed (Appendix B).

In summary, the author believed that the chosen analytical and data collection techniques would best address the three minimum lines of critical inquiry suggested by Harvey (1990). The concern with "what is essentially going on" was addressed in Chapter II, where the researcher attempted to find out what is going on with the "marketing to nonmarketing" problem in the park and recreation, marketing, and public administration literatures. The concern of why the state of affairs has "historically been the case" is addressed in Chapter IV, which explains the historical persistence of the "marketing to nonmarketers" problem. The third concern, "what structures reproduce this state of affairs," also is addressed in Chapter IV which identifies the dominant structures contributing to the persistence of the "marketing to nonmarketers" problem. Chapter V delineates tendencies and alternative concepts and evaluates empirical support for them among academicians and practitioners. On the basis of these empirical results, an alternative conceptualization of public recreation marketing is developed in Chapter VI. Finally, Chapter VII conclusions and an educational program to diffuse the alternative conceptualization is suggested.