Buying Guns and Butter
Comparing public procurement in military and non-military contexts

INTRODUCTION
• Institutional theory suggests organisations, economic sectors, and societies have specific guidelines and belief systems (logics) that guide their behavior.
• Distinctive institutional logics may face pressures to conform and become homogenous (institutional isomorphism). Or they may resist (isomorphic paradoxes).
• Public procurement guidelines (or logic) confronts both military and non-military government departments and can be a potential isomorphic pressure that affects distinctive institutional logics.

RESEARCH QUESTION
What are the similarities and differences between military and non-military public procurement?

METHODOLOGY
• Comparative case studies of four major UK government procurement projects.
• Documents & texts analysed qualitatively using NVivo.

RESULTS

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<tr>
<th>Source of data</th>
<th>QEC</th>
<th>Armoured vehicles</th>
<th>Thameslink</th>
<th>InterCity Programme</th>
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<td>Govt. Major Projects Portfolio</td>
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<td>Parliamentary select committee</td>
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<td>Hansard (parliament debates, written responses)</td>
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<td>Interviews</td>
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* Data not yet collected

CONCLUSION
• Military procurement is a response to very different public policy requirements, although the regional economic and political discourse can be similar in the military and non-military sector.
• Technological biases adversely affecting procurement performance and specifications limiting competition desired by public procurement may or may not occur in military as well as non-military procurement.
• Accountability and decision-making is dispersed and distinctive in the military procurement organisation.

Possible implications:
• The institutional logic of the military sector has resisted the conforming pressures of public procurement to some extent (the accountability logic).
• Non-military public procurement can also express resistance to certain aspects of public procurement logics.
• Perhaps a new logic is required to reconcile beliefs and guidelines on public procurement of complex product systems.

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