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Slippery Concepts in Context

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Abstract

The importance of developing and maintaining enduring relationships with suppliers and customers is a key tenet of relationship marketing. The application relationship marketing has been advocated for public services. However, successful transfer requires understanding of what relationship marketing actually is and how it can be applied to public services. This paper identifies two problems for research designs. The first is the conceptual ambiguity around relationship marketing. The second problem is the diversity of public services. The paper proposes two analytical shifts in research designs: changing the unit of analysis to services and using typologies based on continua.

Key words
Public services, relationship marketing, research design

SLIPPERY CONCEPTS IN CONTEXT

Relationship marketing and public services

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INTRODUCTION

Growth in expenditure on public services has been accompanied by restructuring of service delivery using a range of institutional approaches such as benchmarking, performance contracts, competition and competitive tendering (OECD, 2005). These reforms have changed relationships between funders, service providers and consumers and present new challenges for managing public services. Central and local government working in partnership with private and third sector providers has created mixed economies of service provision (Laing, 2003).

The potential contribution of marketing has been examined from different levels. For example, public administration (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2008; OECD, 1987), public sector (Walsh, 1994), public organisations (Crompton and Lamb, 1986), and public services (Walsh, 1995; Laing, 2003; McGuire, 2003). Laing (2003) argued there is a need for contextually anchored research exploring the experiences and behaviours of consumers and professionals within particular public service settings from a marketing, rather than public management, perspective. Wright and Taylor (2005) examined the potential of RM to transform the NHS from a predominantly supplier and product-driven service to one that is relationship orientated.

In a recent editorial essay in this journal, Osborne (2010) called for the research community to draw insights from the services management literature to start asking new questions about delivering public services. Osborne's editorial outlined the key tenets of services management and identified relationship marketing (RM) as 'a rich seam of literature upon which to build public management theory both about marketing of public services to users'. However, there is ambiguity surrounding the role of marketing for public services (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2008; McGuire, 2003; McLaughlin et al., 2009).

Relationship marketing (RM) is a partnership framework that shifts the emphasis from short-term transactions and contracts to long-term relationships and trust. A number of authors have argued that the relationship marketing literature offers potentially valid alternative frameworks for understanding public services (Laing, 2003; Rees and Gardner, 2003) and governance of public organisations (McLaughlin et al., 2009). In contrast to McLaughlin et al. (2009) the focus in this paper is on service delivery rather than governance. The contribution of the paper is methodological, to assist in developing robust research designs for investigating RM in public service contexts. Applying RM to public services requires systematic thinking about transfer (Rose, 1993). However, transfer is a complex process involving a number of stages, each with potential pitfalls (Pollitt, 2004).

Robust design requires careful thinking about both the 'what' and 'where' of RM in public service contexts. The 'what' is different theories of RM and the 'where' is the heterogeneity of public services. This paper examines the conceptual ambiguity that originates in different theories of RM and confuses the transfer of RM concepts and associated techniques to public services. There are three main parts in the paper.

The following section examines RM theory. A review of literature identified different conceptualizations of RM and typologies of relationships. As a philosophy of marketing exchange, RM changes the focus from transactions to trust-based partnerships. As a strategy, RM highlights commitment and trust as the foundation of partnerships and relational capabilities. Customer relationship management (CRM) emphasizes information processes and IT applications for data base management. The second part of the paper considers transfer and two debates that frame thinking about marketing in public services contexts. Public versus private is an old debate in public management but structural reform has changed the focal point from mode of exchange to concepts of value. Goods versus service is an old debate in marketing that is not as widely recognized in public management, and service logic changes the focal point to interactions and processes. The next section considers the issue of public service contexts drawing insights from services management and public management. The key constructs of interactions and processes are the focus of services marketing research. A focus on value in use links RM and services management. However, value is recognized as a significant point of departure in thinking about relationships for public services. The third part of the paper considers the implications for research designs. A requirement for systematic study of how RM works in practice for public services is identifying the dimensions that are significant for relationships for public services. The paper identifies classifications that are useful for this purpose.

Transfer is affected by the generic attributes of RM and the specific context of public services (Rose, 1993). Therefore, the next section considers the generic attributes of RM that affect the transfer of techniques from business services to public services.

RELATIONSHIP MARKETING CHANGES THE FOCUS TO RELATIONAL EXCHANGE AND INTERACTIONS

Relationship marketing developed from early research on cooperation between buyers and sellers in industrial and services marketing contexts (Berry and Parasuraman, 1993; Grönroos, 1997). This research was primarily in the context of high value, high involvement and high risk industrial sectors (Wright and Taylor, 2004). There has been a phenomenal growth in publications in RM, and one side effect has been semantic confusion in the field that makes it difficult to define the elements and scope of RM (Baron, 2010; Godson, 2009). This poses challenges for research and for public sector managers looking for guidance on what works in practice.

Seminal reviews have identified the parameters of the field, notably in *Management Decisions* 1997, Sheth and Pavartiya's (2000) *Handbook of Relationship Marketing* and the first edition of the *Journal of Relationship Marketing* in 2001. More recently, Baron (2010) and Godson (2009) provide overviews that explain the evolution of RM and identify different theoretical approaches. The term RM is generally attributed to Berry (1993,

25) who, from a services marketing perspective, provided the first formal definition of RM as 'attracting, maintaining and enhancing customer relationships'. Gummesson (1997) identified RM as an extension of the Nordic School approach to services marketing and management, and of the network approach to industrial marketing developed by the IMP Group. The Nordic School views marketing as 'an interactive process in a social context' (Grönroos, 1997). Promises are mutually given and fulfilled and trust is a key element in reducing relationship costs. RM is defined by Grönroos (2000, 98) as:

> the process of identifying and establishing, maintaining, enhancing and, when necessary, terminating relationships with customers and other stakeholders, at a profit, so that the objectives of all parties are met, where this is done by a mutual giving and fulfilment of promises.

Grönroos (1997) locates relationship marketing at one end of a strategy continuum, in opposition to transaction marketing. Relationships rather than market transactions become the focus of strategy. In RM, interactive marketing becomes the dominant part of the marketing function, in contrast to traditional external marketing and the 4Ps marketing mix. Interactive marketing is used to monitor customer satisfaction directly, rather than indirectly, through market research (Grönroos, 1997; Gummesson, 2002). Grönroos (1997) extended the definition to managing relationships with customers, suppliers, distributors and other network partners, financial institutions and other parties. This had the effect of extending the potential for relationship marketing to all stakeholders. Gummesson (1997) identified thirty relationships in marketing and called for a systemic view named 'total relationship marketing'. However, the focus has been on managing profitable customer relationships. Another strand of research is networks. Moller and Halinen (2000) argue that RM does not form a general theory of marketing, and that two types of relationship theory exist: market-based RM is consumer-oriented and network-based RM is interorganisationally oriented. The key dynamics in this network view of markets are trust, commitment, interdependency, mutual exchange of promises and collaboration (Laing, 2003). RM can be understood at different levels as a philosophy about relational exchanges; strategies for customer retention, loyalty and lifetime value; and, techniques for relationship management.

RM philosophy relational exchanges

The core concept of RM is co-creation of value in exchange based on partnerships. Gundlach and Murphy (1993) recognized the importance of trust and commitment in the development of relational exchanges and identified a 'continuum of exchange' that contrasted transactional, contractual and relational types. Norms are social mechanisms for controlling exchange and shared norms are the hallmark of relational exchanges (Brown *et al.*, 2000 cited in Ferguson *et al.*, (2005)). From a marketing strategy

perspective, but explicitly linking to resource advantage theory, Morgan and Hunt (1994) defined RM as encompassing 'all marketing activities directed towards establishing, developing and maintaining successful relational exchanges'. Hunt (2002) developed an integrative model of business alliance success by linking resource-based and competence-based relational factors to competitive advantage. Hunt contends that a fundamental proposition of RM strategy is that a firm needs to identify and develop a relationship portfolio to achieve competitive advantage and superior financial performance for shareholders.

Morgan and Hunt (1994) identified ten forms of relational exchanges between four groups: supplier and buyer partnerships, and lateral and internal partnerships. Drawing on social exchange theory (Bagozzi, 1975), Morgan and Hunt (1994) isolated relationship commitment and trust as the two key mediating variables in successful partnerships which in turn explain effective cooperation in networks. Commitment is central to all relational exchanges and that trust decreases conflict and decision-making uncertainty. Relational exchange is contrasted to compliance based on coercive power which, over time, destroys trust and commitment and will result in conflict.

Relationship marketing strategy

Strategy development and value creation start from an economic perspective on the value of relationships. The objective of RM is the delivery of results for shareholders. Customer and supplier relationships are key drivers of performance. The incentive for RM is the profit potential of customer relationships and markets are segmented, based on relationship profitability potential (Grönroos, 2000). From a strategic perspective, relationships are intangible resources and developing and maintaining relationships is a distinctive capability and a source of sustainable competitive advantage for firms (Hunt, 2002). The resource-based view of strategy has been applied to identify the capabilities necessary to develop and maintain good customer relationships (Day, 2000). Boulding et al. (2005) demonstrate and explain the importance of relational information capabilities. Jayachandran et al. (2005) identified five relational information processes for the dual creation of value: reciprocity, information capture, information integration, information access, and information use.

Customer relationship management

CRM is a customer retention strategy based on the economics of customer retention and loyalty. The focus is on supplier–buyer exchanges and is an economic perspective on value. The objective of CRM is to increase the life-time value of a customer to the business. Customer value is created by fulfilling needs, and relationships are sustained

by exchange value (Boulding *et al.*, 2005). Berry (1995) identified three levels of customer relationships depending on the type of bond used to secure loyalty: financial incentives for repeat purchase (Level 1), social links through personalised service (Level 2), and structural linkages that tie customers to the business (Level 3). Payne and Frow (2005) identified three perspectives on a CRM continuum from a narrow definition based on a specific technology solution at one end, to a holistic approach to managing customer relationships and creating shareholder value at the other end. From interviews with an expert panel and executives working in CRM, Payne and Frow (2005) identify five CRM processes: strategy development, value creation, multi-channel integration, information management, and performance assessment.

CRM techniques emerged from IT applications and the practitioner community (Parvatiyar & Sheth 2001 cited in Payne and Frow (2005)). CRM techniques are designed to increase the strength and depth of relationships. These are the techniques consultants are applying to public services (Accenture, 2001, 2003). However, as the available evidence demonstrates, CRM is difficult to implement and does not always improve performance (Boulding *et al.*, 2005). In practice, CRM has encountered implementation problems, and experience demonstrates that firms do behave opportunistically in relationships with buyers and suppliers. An essential component of CRM is a good measurement process, but the drivers and measures of customer relationship profitability are not well understood (Boulding *et al.*, 2005). Consequently, the metrics to measure and monitor CRM performance are not well developed (Payne and Frow, 2005).

This selective review is nevertheless sufficient to highlight different theories that explain the ambiguity in the RM concept. Is also demonstrates that RM is more than CRM and associated data base techniques. In summary, three elements link the different perspectives on RM for business: a process view of relationships; the collaborative nature of relationships; and the concept of customer value maximisation. A fundamental insight from RM is that managing interactions is the key to relational exchanges. Relational information capabilities (Boulding *et al.*, 2005), CRM processes (Payne and Frow, 2005) and relational processes (Jayachandran *et al.*, 2005) are RM 'attributes' that invite transfer to public services.

Laing (2003) identified the potential for RM in the public sector, arguing that networked-based models of relationship marketing are relevant and transferable public services. However, as Pollitt (2003) explains, transfer is a complex process, commonly involving a number of stages and potential pitfalls, and therefore 'we have to look carefully at contexts each time we are thinking of borrowing a good management idea from somewhere else'. This paper is concerned with RM in public service contexts. Chandler and Vargo (2011) define a particular context as a set of unique actors with unique reciprocal links among them and recognize the heterogeneous nature of marketing contexts. They argue this heterogeneity affects value co-creation through its influence on resources and on services. The next section considers the issue arising from the diversity of public services.

Two debates frame thinking about the transfer of RM to public services

Two debates have implications for the study of the transfer of business techniques to public services. Public versus private is generally recognized in public management but structural reform has changed the focal point from mode of exchange to concepts of value. Goods versus services is an old debate in marketing that is not as widely recognized in public management, and service logic changes the focal point to interactions and processes.

Public and private

Public–private similarities and differences is an old debate about the transfer of concepts and techniques from business to the public sector that originated in the public management literature (Allison, 1979; Boyne, 2002; Rainey and Bozeman, 2000; Walsh, 1995). This led to early typologies such as Stewart & Ranson's public and private sector models of provision (cited in Pollitt, 2003). Restructuring means the simple public/private dichotomy that underpins this debate is obsolete and sector is the wrong level of analysis. Public services marketing practice has been dominated by transactional approaches (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2008; Laing, 2003). There is an extensive literature transfer of management techniques to the public sectors. However, the focus of research is generally on sectors and agencies, and not services.

Goods and services

There is less awareness of the second debate in the marketing literature about the significance of the similarities and differences between manufactured goods and services. This debate originated in the services management literature and is about the transfer of production process models from manufactured goods to services (McGuire, 2003). Manufacturing and services are different paradigms (Gummesson, 1991). Manufacturing is defined as a closed process in which the consumer has no role. In contrast, services are open and interactive processes, and this has implications for relationships and performance (Bowen and Ford, 2002; Johns, 1999). A different 'service logic' is a key tenet of services management theory, as production and consumption occur simultaneously, and the consumer has a direct role as co-producer of the service.

Another source of confusion is between service as activities and service as marketing logic (Grönroos, 2006, 2007). Service-dominant logic (SDL) is a recent turn in marketing theory that advocates a general move away from a goods-dominant logic of traditional marketing to an SDL of marketing (Vargo and Lusch, 2004, 2008). SDL is

underpinned by tenets of RM, namely intangible resources (service), co-creation of value by producers and consumers, and relationships (Baron, 2010). However, as Grönroos (2006) explains, there are some differences between the Vargo and Lusch's SDL and the Nordic School service logic. The common ground between SDL and the Nordic school of service logic is the focus on value in use (Grönroos, 2006). The main difference is that the research tradition of the Nordic School elevated context, as researchers took the phenomenon of service in its marketing context as a starting point (Grönroos, 2006).

The implications of the differences between manufacturing and service processes for management and marketing are not generally recognized in public management (McLaughlin et al., 2009; Osborne, 2010). A key tenet of services management theory is a different logic from manufactured goods as production and consumption occur simultaneously and the consumer has a direct role as co-producer of the service (McGuire, 2003; Osborne, 2010). The inseparability of production and consumption is a fundamental distinction between manufacturing and service processes. Inseparability, referred to as 'team production' in economics, is called 'coproduction' in services management (Grönroos, 2000; Gummesson, 1991; Normann, 1991). Coproduction signals that production and consumption are not entirely separate in time, and consumers participate to some extent as 'producers' in delivery. Co-production is a distinctive feature of all services, not just public services, and there has been substantial theoretical development of this concept in services management (Bowen and Ford, 2002; Johns, 1999). Co-production means that providers and consumers share responsibility for value creation. Services are characterized by process consumption (Grönroos, 2000), and this changes the nature of provider–customer relationships. However, services vary depending on the nature and extent of co-production (Silvestro, 1999).

INTERACTIONS AND VALUE IN PUBLIC SERVICE CONTEXTS

Shifting from a manufacturing-dominant to a service-dominant logic, that places ideas of co-creation and co-production at the centre of value creation and exchange, has been a missing link in public management research (McGuire, 2003; Osborne, 2010). The services management literature offers context-specific information to understand the management of public service relationships.

Service interactions and processes

The key constructs of interactions and processes are the focus of services marketing research. As Grönroos (2006) explains, the Nordic school defines services as processes. Given the process nature of services, it follows that the consumption and production of

services are at least partly simultaneous processes, and that the service provider at least partly enters the consumption sphere. A focus on interactions by the Nordic School researchers led to a new and different perspective on marketing. Services marketing research changed the focus from facilitating exchange to facilitating interactions between service providers and consumers during the consumption process. This in turn changed the focus from traditional external marketing (4Ps) to interactive and internal marketing.

Value for public services

Grönroos (1990, p3) argues: 'The expression service contexts implies all types of service activities, irrespective of whether they occur in so-called service firms or in public institutions, not-for-profit organizations, or manufacturers of goods.' Value is not embedded in services as products but is co-created with consumers in interactive processes (Grönroos, 2006). However, value is a point of departure for public services. This raises the difficult question of 'publicness' (Boyne, 2002, Pollitt, 2003). Structural reforms and market-type mechanisms have changed relationships between government and service providers and blurred the boundaries between public, private and not for profit sectors (Pollitt and Bouckaeart, 2004).

'Public' characteristics exacerbate the ambiguity in the marketing concepts and strategy for public services (McGuire, 2003). Funding, purpose and exchange relationships are the variables most frequently used to identify similarities and differences. Demand for public services is derived from decisions made in political processes of representation and deliberation. Public value is decided and finds expression in the allocation of public funds for public purposes (Walsh, 1994). An economic perspective on relationships does not fit easily with public services. The imperative for RM in competitive markets is retaining valuable customers. There is agreement in RM that fairness is a precursor to trust, which is important in developing relationships, but fairness is about process, not outcome (Boulding *et al.*, 2005). The motivation for fair treatment is consumer sovereignty. Equity in customer relationship profitability models is marketing equity based on the ability to pay (Crompton and Lamb, 1986). This is problematic for public services where clients with needs are not usually customers who pay. Alford (2002) argues that a private sector customer model has limited validity in the public sector and that a social exchange perspective (Bagozzi, 1975), characterized by a broader set of values and generalized or collective exchange, is necessary. A social exchange perspective starts from different assumptions about motives and incentives, and offers a broader definition of equity. In contrast to a customer focus based on economic exchange value, this conceptualizes relationships between service providers and clients as citizens, based on public value. However, the performance metrics for social exchange are not well developed.

USING CLASSIFICATIONS TO DEVELOP SYSTEMATIC RESEARCH DESIGNS

Classification is a way of understanding diversity (Hunt, 2002), and a classification scheme is a prerequisite for thinking systematically about transfer from one context to another. Public/private and manufacturing/services are simple taxonomies. The forward slash signals a dichotomy that presents as mutually exclusive groups. These dichotomies are a start in developing suitable typologies for research and in guiding practitioners thinking about local context. However, dichotomies are archetypes, and there is as much diversity between services within the public sector as there is between the public and private sectors (Boyne, 2002; Carter *et al.*, 1992; Rainey and Bozeman, 2000). Public services elude precise classification and the diversity of public services is not captured in a public/private dichotomy. Changing from dichotomous typologies to continua shifts the focus in analysing context. A continuum signals a more diverse range of possibilities – shades of grey rather than black and white.

Existing classifications and typologies from the public management offer insights into the sources of variability between public services. Managerial classifications highlight organisational variables and identify differences in funding and purpose (Boyne, 2002; Perry and Rainey, 1998; Pollitt, 2003) which has implications for performance assessment (McGuire, 2003). However, an organisational focus does not capture the variability in services arising from the nature and extent of co-production.

A better understanding of this diversity is gained by shifting the focus, as Osborne (2010) suggests, from sectors and agencies to services. Typologies are helpful in making this analytical shift. Services management typologies are useful in highlighting dimensions with implications for RM and CRM. For example, Silvestro's (1999) service process matrix is useful in understanding differences in roles and encounters in service delivery. Process consumption and the intangibility of services explain information asymmetry in service provider–client relationships and information problems that can lead to service failure. Normann (1991) differentiates relieving and enabling logic, which has implications for the roles of service providers, users and information in service delivery. These typologies highlight sources of variability between services that are not captured in a public/private dichotomy.

Public services are not defined by the mode of exchange and there is a variety of relationships with users. A number of existing typologies are useful in identifying sources of this variety. From a social exchange perspective, Alford's typology (2002) of public sector organization–client interactions distinguishes customers, beneficiaries and obligatees. Jos and Tompkins (2009) offer a typology that differentiates four 'distinctively public relationships': professionals and clients; guardians and wards; facilitators and citizens; and regulators and subjects. These typologies highlight variability in the role and motives of public service clients and that could be used to investigate interactions. A premise of RM is that collaborative relationships encourage information sharing, thereby mitigating the information asymmetry to which contracts are prone (Alford, 2002). However, as discussed, incomplete or asymmetrically

distributed information is one explanation of implementation failure. Laing's (2003) 'spectrum of public services' draws explicitly from RM and is potentially very useful in investigating relational capabilities discussed previously. The typology has two dimensions, benefits and judgment, and Laing (2003, 439) argues:

> It is this distinction between the focus of benefit and judgement, rather than whether services are formally delivered in the public or private sectors (the balance of which is dynamic and is largely shaped by ideological considerations), that ultimately determines the extent to which marketing is relevant and the appropriateness of alternative conceptualizations of marketing to public services.

The first dimension is a continuum from social benefits dominant to private benefits dominant that reveals variability in measures of value. The second dimension is a continuum from professional judgment dominant to consumer judgment dominant that would enable comparative analysis of relational information processes. An example of the application of RM typologies to public services is Rees and Gardner's (2003) use of Gummesson (2002) and Moller and Halinen (2000) to develop a model to investigate partnerships in the context of best value in local government in the UK.

CONCLUSION: INVESTIGATING RM IN PUBLIC SERVICE CONTEXTS

Systematic research to identify and explain implementation success and failure is required to build the necessary evidence-based practical knowledge. This paper has identified two sources of complexity that explain confusion in the transfer of RM to public services. The first is the lack of clarity about RM theory resulting in confusion about what is being transferred. As literature reviews demonstrate, there is more than one theory of RM and there are different approaches to the conceptualization of relationships. RM is not a single theory or technique, but a broad range of approaches. The second source of complexity is the context in which RM is being applied. There is considerable variability and diversity in public services. The related research design problem is identifying the salient features of context by analysing the variety and diversity of public services (Pollitt, 2004). Therefore, researchers need to think carefully about the level of analysis and recognise the diversity of public services. This paper has shown how existing classifications and typologies can be used to do this.

Service delivery systems are complex and relationships between funders, service providers and users are central to the effective working of these networks. The discussion has identified two problems for both researchers and practitioners: ambiguity that surrounds RM and the diversity of public services. Theoretical debates about concepts have practical consequences. Inappropriate or incomplete transfer is recognized as an important source of implementation failure (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000). The argument here is that different definitions of RM and the diversity of service contexts lead to muddled thinking about public services and offers an explanation of

implementation failure. Confusion about relationships for public services may exacerbate rather than overcome problems of information asymmetry. Asymmetry for public services occurs in the two strategic relationships: funder–provider relationships and provider–client relationships. Funders and providers have different information on outputs and the value of outcomes. Service providers and clients have different evidence of performance. The problem of provider–client asymmetry, inherent in services, exacerbates the purchaser–provider asymmetry that characterizes public services. The RM literature on information processes and capabilities offers insights into managing provider–client information asymmetry.

The suggestion to avoid the pitfalls of indiscriminate transfer of RM concepts and associated techniques is to elevate the analysis of context. This is a difficult task. A significant practical issue is identifying the salient features of context that are likely to affect the success of RM. As Pollitt (2003) argues, the problem is 'there is no Big Guide to Contexts', or even a 'very good theory of contexts'. The idea that conceptual ambiguity leads to confusion in practice is well understood. However, there is less recognition of the idea that the complexity of transfer is not captured in a private/ public dichotomy.

The approach suggested for research designs is to shift the focus of analysis from sectors and agencies to services, and to use service typologies rather than simple public– private dichotomies in comparative studies. Classifications are useful in identifying relationship types and service contexts for researchers investigating the transfer of RM to public services, and for practitioners in thinking about where and how to apply techniques. However, a transactional/relational exchange dichotomy does not capture the variety of relationships.

There is growing recognition that insights from RM can inform our understanding of how to improve the performance of public service systems (Laing, 2003; Osborne, 2010). However, a generic view of RM ignores conceptual ambiguity in theory and underestimates the complexity of transfer to public services. The language of 'value creation' and 'trust relationships' suggests a clarity that does not exist in theory or in practice. Context is recognized as central to services (Grönroos, 2006) and needs more investigation in public management (Pollitt, 2004) and marketing (Chandler and Vargo, 2011).

This paper has suggested two analytical shifts in designing research to investigate the application of RM to public services. Public services are not confined to the public sector or public organisations. Therefore, the first modification, following Osborne (2010), is to change the level or unit of analysis from the public sector and public organisations to public services. RM is a key tenet for services which includes public services (Grönroos, 1990). However, public services are a very broad class and there is considerable variation in the nature of relationships that is not captured in simple dichotomies such as economic/social exchange (Alford, 2002) or market-based/ networked-based relationships (Moller and Halinen, 2000). Therefore, the second modification, following Pollitt (2009), is use continua instead of dichotomies in

developing typologies to investigate RM in public contexts. These two modifications are mutually supportive and this paper has shown how typologies for public service and RM can be used to frame comparative research designs. Whilst RM has been the focus of this paper, these observations apply more generally to research designs to investigate the transfer of other phenomena to public services.

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