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**USING TEMPLATE AND MATRIX ANALYSIS:  
A CASE STUDY OF MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION  
HISTORY RESEARCH**

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**USING TEMPLATE AND MATRIX ANALYSIS:**

**A CASE STUDY OF MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION HISTORY RESEARCH**

**Abstract**

Despite assertions that ‘history matters’, and calls for an ‘historic turn’ and plurality in research methods in management and organisation research, in-depth elaborations of new research methods suitable for handling historical data remain few and far between. This paper presents a qualitative research method using oral history interview data that may advance new types of methodological inquiry in management and organisation history research – and we highlight the potential for extending this approach to handling other types of qualitative temporal data. The method we present combines matrix and template analysis using oral histories from unstructured interviews with thirty-one senior managers in the UK individual personal pensions product market to illuminate how the construction of ‘matrices’ and ‘templates’ can then be compared and contrasted across different time periods, and at different units of analysis, to analyse complex and interdependent processes of organisational and industrial change.

Keywords: Template analysis, Matrix analysis, Personal Pensions, Management history

## Introduction

In this paper, we address a cluster of methodological issues in the study of management and organisation history by showing how a specific method of inquiry – combining matrix and template analysis - can help to resolve issues associated with analysing complex historical data featuring multiple and interdependent units of analysis across sequential time periods.

We situate our discussion and contribution in an initial review of the management and organization history literature, and highlight that the emergence of new methods of inquiry in management and organisation history research have been slow to emerge (Kipping & Usdiken, 2014), despite calls for an ‘historic turn’ (Booth & Rowlinson, 2006; Clark & Rowlinson, 2004) and for methodological plurality (Decker, Kipping & Wadhvani, 2015). As Decker, et al., (2015) and Mills, et al., (2016) highlight, given the historic turn, heterogeneity in research methods in management and organization history research are increasingly necessary to engage in and shape inter-disciplinary academic debates. Historical research often seeks to illuminate sequences or processes through time and space, and synthesise complex phenomena through rich and detailed narration. However, such ambitions have faced epistemological and methodological challenges, concerns around how to deal effectively with ‘time’, and how to account for complex historical phenomena at multiple ‘vertical’ and ‘horizontal’ levels of analysis and the interconnectedness between those levels through time (Booth & Rowlinson, 2006; Decker, Kipping & Wadhvani, 2015; Rowlinson, Hassard & Decker, 2014). As we demonstrate in this paper, phenomena in management and organisation intersect in many ways across multiple units of analysis and across time. For example, changes in industry structure in one time period may be associated with changes in the organisation level and/or the product/service level characteristics in sequential or future time periods. The changes are variously affected by the economic, political or social contexts in which the change phenomena occur. How then can methods of inquiry in the study of management and organisation history do justice to the interdependence and connectedness of various ‘change’ phenomena

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3 in the field? In particular, how should management and organisational researchers handle the vertical and  
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5 horizontal connections between and across phenomena in time and space?  
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8 In addressing these questions, we respond to the challenge of Decker, et al., (2015) that  
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10 heterogeneous methodologies are required if the historic turn in management and organization research  
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12 continues to gain traction. Thus, we highlight the utility of a method for handling large volumes of process-  
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14 based qualitative data across time and space. In fact, as noted by Decker, et al., (2015, 35), qualitative,  
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16 interpretative and process-based research methods are now important across a number of diverse  
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18 disciplines in wider management and organization research<sup>1</sup>. The method that we outline contributes to  
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20 the plurality debates in management and organization history in two distinctive and related ways. First,  
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22 we highlight the distinctive contribution and utility of a combination of template and matrix analysis to  
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24 the study of management and organisation history research. Our ‘analytically-structured history’  
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26 (Rowlinson, et al., 2014) is from a retrospective study in the UK individual pensions market using oral  
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28 history (interview) data, however, the method, as we suggest in our concluding remarks, has the potential  
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30 for broader application using other types of historical or longitudinal data. The method encompasses a  
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32 two-step approach that relies upon a realist epistemology to create multiple temporal brackets, followed  
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34 by interpretivist data analysis that recognises that past activities took place within particular social and  
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36 economic contexts. The template analysis is then able to be applied to these distinct time periods to  
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38 consider particular phenomena of interest. Thus, industries or firms where there are major technological  
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40 shifts or legislative/regulatory changes would be highly appropriate targets for such types of analysis. The  
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42 addition of matrix analysis is particularly powerful for considering research questions that span two or  
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44 more units of analysis. Hence, this research strategy would be well suited to answering questions that  
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46 consider changes at multiple levels, such as in our case, changes at the industry-level (such as changes to  
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55 <sup>1</sup> The authors cite entrepreneurship, organizational change, studies of institutions, institutionalism and  
56 categorization, and the history of management (p35).  
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3 industry structure and competitive dynamics), the firm-level (such as the scope of firms and how they are  
4 structured) and the product-level (such as changes in the technology and development or adherence to  
5 standards).  
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10 The second contribution we highlight is that this method is able to deal effectively with large  
11 amounts of qualitative data through both time and space, and, thus, may be particularly useful for  
12 management and organization history research. For example, Booth and Rowlinson (2006) noted how  
13 Pettigrew's (1985) study of corporate strategy at ICI posed a number of methodological challenges of how  
14 to handle both retrospective and real-time interview data, leading the author to "a presentation of  
15 findings that repeatedly transverses the same period of time and departs from conventional business  
16 history" (Booth & Rowlinson, 2006, 8-9). Our method – encompassing template analysis to interpret the  
17 data, and matrix analysis to structure and organise the data through time and space - may be useful to  
18 see the 'woods for the trees' in studies of industrial and organizational change with complex,  
19 interdependent data.  
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33 Our argument is structured as follows: first, we situate our method of enquiry within the recent  
34 and broader methodological debates within the management and organisation history literature. Second,  
35 we introduce matrix and template analysis highlighting how the approach can handle different  
36 epistemological positions. Third, we provide some brief context on the focal industry of our study. We  
37 then move on to an account of the unique features and practices of template and matrix analysis that  
38 enable it to do justice to the complexity of management and organisation history research by reference  
39 to research conducted in the UK financial services sector (mid-1980s to 2014). We conclude by showing  
40 that our proposed method of inquiry has wider application to other fields using temporal data.  
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### 53 **Studying management and organisation history**

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3 Since the 1990s, there have been various calls to reintegrate history in mainstream management and  
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5 organisation research (eg, Clark & Rowlinson, 2004; Kieser, 1994, Zald, 1993). Despite the emergence of  
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7 scholarly journals that focus on management and organisation history in the last decade or so, scholarly  
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9 research in top-ranked, peer-reviewed journals has often explicitly ignored the importance of history<sup>2</sup>,  
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11 resulting in calls to 'take history seriously' (Kipping & Usdiken, 2014), for an 'historic turn' (Booth &  
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13 Rowlinson, 2006; Clark & Rowlinson, 2004; Rowlinson, 2013), and for plurality in management and  
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15 organization history research methods (Decker, et al., 2015).  
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20 The dominant mode of historical enquiry has often used a realist epistemology and a quest to  
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22 produce accurate and 'truthful' representations based upon proper execution of research methods and  
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24 hypotheses-testing. As Durepos, Mills and Weatherbee (2012: 269) highlight, "realist historians see the  
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26 recovery of the past as equivocal to history". A number of scholars in the 1990s (eg, Zald, 1993; Kieser,  
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28 1994) eschewed the scientific paradigm associated with hypothesis-testing as a form of historical realism  
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30 that assumes history exists as a repository of facts that can be 'discovered' and re-told with 'epistemic  
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32 legitimacy' (Clark & Rowlinson, 2004). Such realist representations of history have, however, been  
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34 challenged. For example, Rowlinson, Hassard and Decker (2014: 252) argue that "...alternative strategies  
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36 for research and writing organisational history need to be located in relation to the range of ontological,  
37  
38 epistemological and methodological assumptions...". Furthermore, according to Bucheli and Wadhvani  
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40 (2014), research that is concerned with *a priori* assumptions may be conceptualised as even ahistorical  
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42 and unsuitable as a means to explain past management and organisational behaviour. In contrast, scholars  
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44 from the interpretivist tradition have tended to highlight openness and reflexivity in research methods  
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46 and disclosure of ontological and epistemological assumptions. Moreover, Durepos, et al., (2012), Kipping  
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48 and Usdiken (2014), and Maclean, Harvey and Clegg (2014) have argued that questions concerning how  
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54 <sup>2</sup> Although, Maclean, Harvey & Clegg (2014) highlight how history is implicit in much strategic and management  
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56 theorising, such as path dependence, the resource based view of the firm, and dynamic capabilities, and strategy  
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58 and strategic change, to highlight a few.  
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3 to represent the past continue to be frustrated by the realist versus interpretivist dualism, and each have  
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5 advocated 'research type' typologies that represent the range of different ontological, epistemological  
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7 and methodological approaches to historical research in management and organisation studies.  
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10 At the heart of this epistemological challenge is the conceptualisation of memory and, in the  
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12 case of this paper, how memories may be utilised in template and matrix analysis. The 'mechanical model'  
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14 in which memories are stored and then retrieved in the same way as something like a computer file (Rose,  
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16 2008) takes a realist perspective suggesting that facts can be recalled and presented. There may be some  
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18 validity to such a model in respect of particular types of memories. 'When' (dates), 'who' (specific  
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20 individuals or firms) and 'where' (physical location) types of questions may be able to be recalled from  
21  
22 the appropriate 'storage bin' (Walsh & Ungson, 1991), but deeper questions around 'why' and 'how' tend  
23  
24 to require recollection in respect of the context of the particular time and are potentially impacted by the  
25  
26 respondent's participation in the event (Schacter, 1997). In this respect it is important to recognise both  
27  
28 the collected and collective forms of memory. Collected memories are individually held (Nissley & Casey,  
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30 2002; Rowlinson, et al., 2010) whereas collective memories are embodied in a shared understanding  
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32 (Suddaby, Foster & Quinn-Trank, 2016). However, "given the recursive relationship between individual  
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34 memories and the shared contexts individuals draw upon to form them" (Do, Lyle & Walsh, 2018: 3) these  
35  
36 two forms of memories are likely to interact with each other.  
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42 Historical narratives have often adopted a realist ontology where the historians can "produce  
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44 accurate and truthful representations of the past, *as it happened*" (Durepos et al., 2012: 269, italics in  
45  
46 original). However, as memory involves the retrieval of information that is recollected both in the context  
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48 of a particular time and place (and relative to subsequent events) as well as the involvement of the  
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50 participant in the particular event (Schacter, 1997), it is clear that any retelling of history will contain at  
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52 least elements that are subjective rather than reflecting a singular truth. Thus the epistemological  
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54 assumptions concerning our treatment of history varies within management research.  
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Perhaps the other central concern in utilising history in management research is the treatment of time. Central to any approach to historical research – and for that matter, any other forms of temporal research – is how we explicitly address time or chronology, and an implicit understanding that the relevant context is constantly changing and evolving. Rowlinson, Hassard and Decker (2014) highlight the role that chronology plays in history – for historians generally, and especially for management and organisation scholars, it is not just that events follow each other, but that all actions have a distinct social and economic context without which cannot be easily understood. While historians tend to create their own periodisation, organisation theorists are interested in chronology where time is taken as constant and the sequence of events is important (Rowlinson et al., 2014). Chronology encourages the chunking of temporal data into manageable periods, known as ‘temporal bracketing’ (Langley, 1999), ‘periodization’ (Fear, 2014), or ‘temporal zones’ (Ancona, et al., 2001) that aim to identify meaningful time units within a stream of historical data. As Langley, et al., (2013: 7) highlight:

“...temporal brackets (which generally unfold sequentially over time) are constructed as progressions of events and activities separated by identifiable discontinuities in the temporal flow. They enable researchers to examine the recurrence and accumulation of progressions. This permits replicating theoretical ideas in successive time periods and also to analyzing how the changing context from previous periods impacts subsequent events in current periods”.

These periods may simply relate to a convenient chunk of time, but for analytical purposes they are often likely to be characterised by an important change event. In management and organisation history research, change events may relate to the macro-environmental context (such as economic, political or social changes) or the micro-environmental context (such as changes associated with industrial, regulatory, or competitive change). Alternatively, periods of change may be associated with organisation-specific change events such as, for example, a company re-organisation, merger and

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3 acquisition, or the period of tenure of a particular CEO. Further, histories are often presented as periods  
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5 running between two particular change points which act as 'bookends', or research may focus on a  
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7 particular change point as the phenomena of focus.  
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10         Deciding on an approach to periodization is, however, not without its difficulties. Aldrich (1999:  
11  
12 206) recognised the problems of identifying temporal periods given that "different observers view the  
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14 same events from diverse perspectives on their significance" and Rowlinson, et al., (2014: 259) highlight  
15  
16 that, "...historians face the continual problem of devising criteria for partitioning the past into manageable  
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18 chunks". How the researcher formulates the relevant bookends of the chronological period may also be a  
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20 decision with epistemological or methodological concerns. For example, is the period 'imposed' upon the  
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22 research design *a priori*, or does it 'emerge' from the data in some meaningful way? These are non-trivial  
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24 questions that pose methodological challenges, which we will elaborate on further in this paper.  
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29         Despite the growing recognition of the importance of incorporating history into contemporary  
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31 management and organisation research, methodological advances often remain slow (eg, Ancona, et al.,  
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33 2001; Kipping & Usdiken, 2014), due to epistemological and methodological challenges (Jacques, 2006;  
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35 Lorenz, 2011). For instance, Lorenz (2011) has highlighted that historical research suffers from  
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37 epistemological problems associated with how narrative and time are treated, and what counts as  
38  
39 'evidence', necessitating a more rigorous approach to methodology. Kipping & Usdiken, 2014: 537-552)  
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41 similarly highlight that "...in-depth elaborations of historical approaches and methodology remain  
42  
43 marginal within the core of organisation and management theory" and "process studies examining mainly  
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45 changes in organisation and strategy ... has – somewhat surprisingly – only been realised to a very limited  
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47 extent". What is needed, according to Clark & Rowlinson (2004: 346) is "... an approach to the past as  
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49 process and context, and not merely as a variable".  
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3 In the following section, we next introduce template and matrix analysis as a methodological  
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5 advance that can help address some of the challenges associated with epistemology and methodology,  
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7 that proposes an approach to handle 'time', and accounts for historical phenomena at multiple vertical  
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9 and horizontal levels of analysis and their interdependence and interconnectedness.  
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### 16 **Template and matrix analysis**

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18 Data analysis methods using textual data are often categorised into those methods that are  
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20 epistemologically-committed such as Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) or those that are  
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22 'generic' methods such as thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2013), template analysis (King, 2004;  
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24 King & Brookes, 2017), matrix analysis (Nadin & Cassell, 2004) and framework analysis (Ritchie & Spencer,  
25  
26 1994). Template analysis is a distinctive and epistemologically-flexible type of thematic analysis, first  
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28 described by Crabtree and Miller (1992), and later developed by King (1998; 2004), gaining traction in  
29  
30 psychology, sociology, healthcare and management and organisation studies (Anonymous, 2018; Waring  
31  
32 & Wainwright, 2008)<sup>3</sup>.  
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37 During template analysis, King (2004) highlights that the researcher produces a list of codes (the  
38  
39 'template') that represents themes in the data relevant to the research question. Template analysis  
40  
41 emphasises hierarchal coding but balances structure in the process of analysing textual data with the  
42  
43 flexibility to adapt it to the needs of a particular research study (Brookes, et al., 2015). The method centres  
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45 around the construction of a 'template' or set of templates, usually on the basis of an initial subset or  
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47 sample of the data, which is then applied and reapplied to the remaining data, through a process of  
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53 <sup>3</sup> Anonymous (2018) uses matrix and template analysis to analyse oral history data in the UK individual personal  
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55 pensions sector in the late-1980s to provide new insights on the financialization agenda on the Conservative  
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57 government led by Margaret Thatcher. Waring and Wainwright (2008) use template analysis to analyse innovation  
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59 and project management in the NHS in the North-East of the UK  
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3 continual revision. As King and Horrocks (2010: 166) point out, the “reiteration of applying, revising and  
4 then reapplying the template continues until the analyst feels it is clear and thorough enough to serve as  
5 a basis for building an account of the findings”. Although there is an emphasis on hierarchical coding of  
6 themes, template analysis does not impose a particular set sequence of coding levels. This means that  
7 researchers using template analysis often develop particular themes more extensively, enabling them to  
8 capture the richest and most detailed aspects of their data.  
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17 Some themes may be defined by the ‘realist’ researcher *a priori* – perhaps defined from a  
18 literature review – or they can emerge interpretively from the textual data. Given some themes may either  
19 be defined *a priori* or emerge inductively, template analysis is a method that can be used within different  
20 philosophical traditions<sup>4</sup> (King & Brookes, 2017; 2018). On one hand, it can be utilised in types of realist  
21 research that accepts much of the assumptions of quantitative social science research, often found in  
22 many management and organisation history studies. Used in this way, researchers utilising template  
23 analysis would be concerned with ‘quality’ issues of inter-coder comparison, respondent feedback (in the  
24 case of interview data), and audit trails (King & Brooks, 2017). On the other hand, themes may emerge  
25 from the textual data in the type of interpretivist or radical constructionist research discussed by Madill,  
26 Jordan and Shirley (2000). In these types of interpretivist traditions, staying within the parameters of this  
27 paper, the researcher assumes that there are multiple interpretations to be made of any historical and  
28 temporal data, dependent upon the epistemological position of the researcher. As King and Brooks (2017)  
29 highlight, this kind of research is less concerned with issues of ‘quality’ and instead foregrounds issues  
30 such as researcher reflexivity, examining the topic from differing perspectives, and the richness of the  
31 description produced, as important requirements. Template analysis may also be employed in other kinds  
32 of research that sit between these two positions, such as subtle realism (Hammersley, 1992). limited  
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55 <sup>4</sup> King and Brookes (2017) highlight a number of template analysis studies within different epistemological and  
56 methodological traditions  
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3 realism (King & Brooks, 2017, 2018) and critical realism (Archer, et al., 1998). There are, of course, kinds  
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5 of research where template analysis may not be suitable. For example, King and Brooks (2018) highlight  
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7 that kinds of phenomenological approaches that seek to identify 'essences' of phenomena through  
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9 processes of condensing or distilling may not be suitable. Matrix Analysis (eg, Nadin & Cassell, 2004) is  
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11 another epistemologically-flexible data analysis method, developed from the work of Miles and  
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13 Huberman (1994) and based upon the idea of utilising different types of table (or 'matrix') to display and  
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15 develop analysis across cases (King & Brooks, 2018). King and Brooks (2018: 229) highlight that:

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19 "There are many different ways to in which matrices may be organised; for example, by time  
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21 period, to trace chronological developments (e.g. Cassell, 1989), by organisational case  
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23 examples (e.g. Mahmood-Yousuf et al., 2008) or by data collection method where multiple  
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25 forms were used in one study (e.g. Kislov et al., 2012)".

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29 The development of a matrix – or a number of matrices – tends to provide a structure in which  
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31 to organize and/or present the outcomes of coding at quite a broad-brush level. The approach is therefore  
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33 useful for large studies with large volumes of textual data, often the case in management and organisation  
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35 historical research, or where multiple cases need to be compared and contrasted. The use of a matrix also  
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37 allows data to be tabulated to different units of analysis relevant to the study so as to illuminate  
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39 interdependence and connections, as well as comparisons both within and across different 'levels' of data.  
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41 In such broad matrix-style approaches, there is naturally a risk that the fine-grained analysis needed for  
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43 some studies may be lost. In contrast, when used alone, fine-grained coding approaches, such as template  
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45 analysis, may also overwhelm the researcher when faced with large amounts of textual data across  
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47 different units of analysis, cases, and chronological periods. Therefore, we propose that matrices are used  
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49 alongside other more fine-grained forms of data analysis, such as template analysis (Nadin & Cassell,  
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2004). However, with the notable exception of Cassell (1989) and Anonymous<sup>5</sup> (2016; 2018), examples of the combined use of template and matrix analysis using historical or temporal data are rare.

The combination of matrix and template analysis we advocate was developed for a research project that examined change processes in the UK individual personal pensions product market between the mid-1980s and 2014 (Anonymous, 2016). The method of inquiry developed utilised an inductive approach to periodization, and oral histories were analysed to construct a master matrix and multiple 'templates' that represented (i) the time periods, and (ii) the different units of analysis, deemed meaningful by participants. This approach allowed us to reveal a deeper understanding of the interdependence and connectedness of multiple change phenomena across time.

### Context

The UK individual personal pensions product market was chosen on conceptual grounds, because it had seemingly undergone multiple periods of change (Anonymous, 2018). The mid-1980s was selected as the starting point of the study as it is widely recognized as the starting point of the financialization agenda in the UK and US, and the deregulation reforms led by the then Conservative PM Margaret Thatcher (Anonymous, 2018). More specifically, the reforms to the UK pensions product market were embodied in the UK in the Social Security Act 1986 (which came into force in January 1988). Given the paucity of studies concerned with the development of UK individual personal pensions in the aftermath of the election of the Conservative government in 1979 (see Anonymous, 2018), the inspiration for this paper was a research project undertaken in late 2014 which examined the relationship between regulation, financialization and organisational strategy (Anonymous, 2016).

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<sup>5</sup> Self-citation of papers that may limit the potential for a true double blind review have been listed as Anonymous (with the relevant years provided). Should the paper be accepted, these will be listed with full details in the final version that is provided as a basis for the typesetting and subsequent publication.

### Management and organisation history using template and matrix analysis

Like mixed method studies (e.g. Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) there was no single obvious epistemological position that guided the entirety of this study. The initial temporal bracketing that defined the time periods for analysis and the assessment of architectural forms that were developed a priori adopted a perspective of realism. The analysis of the data with no a priori themes (beyond the generalist research questions) across the different time periods was interpretivist and recognised that respondent's reflections on past events were socially constructed. Given the realism associated with the bracketing and creation of the various matrices, but taking an interpretivist approach to coding the data, it may be appropriate to describe the epistemological position as 'limited realism' (King & Brooks, 2017) – which has similarities to the kind of 'subtle realism' advocated by ethnographer Hammersely (1992) - a commitment to a realist ontology combined with an interpretivist epistemology<sup>6</sup> (we shall return to this distinction in this and future sections). Certainly moving between the template and the data, and the data and the template creates something of an iterative deductive-inductive logic that supported our intention of recognising different respondent experiences whilst telling a 'credible' tale of the events that took place across the industry.

Our data was collected from unstructured interviews (oral histories<sup>7</sup>) with thirty-one senior managers (representing six different companies), each with first-hand and continuous experience of the time period between mid-1980s and 2014. Each interviewee held a strategic role at an insurance company or fund management company. Thus, our selection criteria for inclusion in the study aimed to give credibility to the findings. While there should be some healthy scepticism towards an interview sample of thirty-one, a Linked-In search of potential respondents highlighted only seventy-seven strategists with

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<sup>6</sup> As discussed in this paper, we argue, however, that the method of inquiry we propose can be adapted to accommodate different epistemological positions

<sup>7</sup> For example, see Carnegie & Napier (1996) and Thompson (1988)



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2  
3 continuous professional experience spanning the time-period bookends still practicing in the sector. Our  
4  
5 use of oral history was sympathetic to the position advocated by Carnegie and Napier (1996: 29) who  
6  
7 argue that “oral history’s greatest potential lies in its ability to capture the testimony of those effectively  
8  
9 excluded from organisational archives”. Given existing archival studies (eg, Hannah, 1986) and  
10  
11 organisational histories (eg, Moss, 2000), our intention was to endeavour to illuminate new findings and  
12  
13 insights from strategists who were leading or closely-involved in organisational strategy during the time  
14  
15 periods of interest to us. We recognize the limitations of this primary data collection method – such as  
16  
17 memory and recall bias (eg, Glick, et al., 1990) – which we elaborate on later in this paper and, in our  
18  
19 concluding remarks, we advance ways that our proposed method could also accommodate archival and  
20  
21 secondary data sources to verify and triangulate other forms of data (which would be of interest to realist  
22  
23 historians).

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27  
28 The professional experience of the interviewees is summarised in Table 1:

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30  
31 <<<Insert table 1 about here>>>

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33  
34 While oral histories deal with a person’s past, and are often used to give voice to those stories  
35  
36 that would not usually be heard (eg, Haynes, 2010; Thompson, 1988), we were interested in capturing the  
37  
38 oral histories of interviewees in respect of the industrial and organisational change events that occurred  
39  
40 within the UK individual personal pensions product market within the period between the mid-1980s to  
41  
42 2014. However, while the time period ‘bookends’ (which were initially inductively generated from  
43  
44 respondents) were imposed upon data collection, the interviews were ‘unstructured’ to encourage  
45  
46 interviewees to range across a number of different topics and phenomena that were meaningful to their  
47  
48 histories of events.

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50  
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52  
53 The structure of the interview (each around one hour) was sub-divided into two distinct parts.  
54  
55 In part one, we invited interviewees to ‘chunk’ the time bookends (mid-1980s to 2014) into meaningful

and sequential time sub-periods. Following this, we then encouraged interviewees to describe the product design within each time sub-period. To assist interviewees in assigning product design types to each time sub-period, we provided interviewees with a stylised product design typology (see, Anonymous, 2018).

The following five time sub-periods were identified:

- Mid to late-1980s
- Early to mid-1990s
- Mid-1990s to mid-noughties
- Mid-noughties to 2012
- 2012 to 2014

There was a significant degree of commonality in the time-chunking performed by the interviewees. For example, of the thirty-one interviewees, twenty-six identified a change period of 1984 to 1990. However, the remaining five suggested 1984-1989, 1986-1989, and three respondents identified 1985-1990. This kind of commonality was experienced across the chunking of all time sub-periods above; a high-level of commonality, but with some difference. Following the first stage of interviews, we created a 'master periodization', with the help of an expert panel<sup>8</sup> to further enhance the credibility of the findings, to synthesise the thirty-one time sub-periods into a single 'master periodization' that reflected the generalities across the interviewees. Given the commonality in time-chunking across the thirty-one interviewees, this approach seemed 'reasonable' given our aim for credibility. Next, interviewees were encouraged to assign a product design type to the time sub-periods they had identified. For this step, there was complete commonality across all thirty-one interviewees. The product design types identified were as follows:

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<sup>8</sup> The expert panel consisted of 2 'experts' known within the industry as 'thought-leaders' who were not involved in the interviews. The expert panel also reviewed our coding to ensure that the codes would be meaningful to respondents and aligned with the data.

- Mid to late-1980s: non-modular/integrated product
- Early to mid-1990s: Closed and modular product
- Mid-1990s to mid-noughties: Hybrid product
- Mid-noughties to 2012: Modular product
- 2012-2014: Hybrid product

From this part of the interviews, we were then able to construct the following matrix that then guided data analysis, as shown in Figure 1.

<<<Insert Figure 1 about here>>>

Following the first interviews and meeting with our 'expert panel', a copy of the audio-recorded transcript and the 'master periodization' was emailed to each interviewee inviting any changes before data analysis. Twenty-five respondents confirmed that the transcript was accurate and that the matrix was a 'credible' representation of the change periods and product types. Six respondents did not respond to our email.

In the second interview, the matrix enabled unstructured questions to be directed towards each time sub-period, such as 'what was going on in this time period?', 'what led to this change?', 'what was the result of this change?'. Furthermore, questions could be directed to the transition points from one-time sub-period to another. In addition, during data analysis, the matrix allowed us to code themes to discreet time sub-periods.

We used a sample of the data – three interviews – to construct an initial template. However, within the sample data codes were clearly emerging at three different units of analysis – (1) industry level themes, (2) organisation-specific themes, and (3) themes about the product design. We decided at this stage to amend our initial matrix to incorporate the three units of analysis that were emerging from respondent accounts, as follows:

<<<Insert Figure 2 here>>>

With a more work-able matrix - and a set of fifteen initial templates - we now applied these to the remainder of the data, while remaining open to amending our matrix and templates throughout data analysis, as appropriate. Despite having some *a priori* ideas from our literature review, we decided not to impose *a priori* themes upon the data. Preferring instead to allow themes to emerge from the data, in line with our interpretivist epistemology. We had to weigh-up the potential complexity of constructing and analysing fifteen templates against our need for fine-grained analysis of the textual data. As 'live' documents, the templates were continually modified during the data analysis phase. For example, we deleted various codes, merged lower level codes together, and changed the position of some codes in the template hierarchy as the data analysis process continued. Where new themes emerged or other changes to the templates were made, previously analysed interview transcripts were re-examined, and this iterative process continued *ad-finetum*.

The coding process proceeded as follows: first, each interview transcript was coded one at a time, focusing on one time sub-period, before moving onto the next, from past to present. Second, horizontal cross-sectional analysis was then conducted in order to examine all templates across time, from past to present. Third, vertical cross-sectional analysis was then conducted in order to examine all templates across different units of analysis. This approach often involved reading and re-reading the oral histories many times as changes at one unit of analysis may only be found to impact other units of analysis in subsequent time sub-periods. As mentioned earlier, the final fifteen templates were then examined by an 'expert panel' to ensure that they reflected a 'credible' representation of the change processes described by the different respondees. It was not possible at the time for another party to code the data independently to maximise inter-coder reliability and thus the two experts from industry were used to ensure that the coding developed made sense in respect of the data and their knowledge of the industry.

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3 The final step in our data analysis phase was to examine the fifteen templates as a whole in order to  
4  
5 identify 'integrative themes' that permeate the entire data (King, 2004; King & Brooks, 2017).  
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7

8 In the next section, we highlight our template analysis between two sequential time sub-periods  
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10 (mid noughties to 2012 and 2012-2014) and show how we identify 'integrative themes' in the data.  
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#### 14 15 **Case example - Factors affecting industry structure between mid-noughties and 2014**

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17 *Period: mid-noughties-2012*  
18

19 The mid-noughties was marked by themes relating to a technological disruption and changes in regulation,  
20  
21 which were, in turn, associated with significant industry specialisation. To illustrate this, one respondent  
22  
23 observed that "technological disruption and new product technologies threw everything up in the air, and  
24  
25 the industry value chain was being actively reconfigured. Specialisation is definitely going on and there's  
26  
27 re-carving up of the old value chain". Industry specialisation emerged as a theme from respondents who  
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29 highlighted that "we outsourced because the technology providers spend billions of pounds in core  
30  
31 operating infrastructure and have scale efficiencies and quality". Another respondent suggested that "it  
32  
33 costs us a lot of money to keep up with legislation, regulation, and product enhancements and it's just  
34  
35 not efficient to make all of those changes in-house". A further respondent commented that "it is  
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37 operationally more cost effective for us to outsource. CEOs were saying 'great, I've now got variable costs  
38  
39 and less of a fixed cost company'".  
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44 Changes in regulation occurring in 2006 also promoted these processes. The then Labour  
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46 government (1997-2010) had previously announced a pensions simplification regime to be implemented  
47  
48 in 2006. The intention of the new regulations were to simplify the complex range of pension regulations  
49  
50 amassed over many decades into a single set of product regulations. For instance, one respondent  
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52 suggested that "2006 was a big catalyst. Competition got much stronger, we went from about 6 to 30  
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54 competitors, because the market was growing, there is enough capacity at the moment for them all."  
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3 Another respondent highlighted, “We saw a proliferation of new entrants in all segments of the value  
4 chain who are very small but which have dragged the existing incumbents to change their businesses and  
5 to adopt leaner outsourcing models in order to survive”. However, the regulations increased competition  
6 and put downward pressure on profit margins, and scale economies were seen as the key strategic goal  
7 to survive, “our mind-set was scale, because the technology companies charge you on the basis of  
8 benefitting from that scale”. One respondent summed up “the pensions space was very profitable thank  
9 you very much indeed. In came the technology companies, new regulations, not profitable anymore. You  
10 basically tried to hang on”.

21  
22  
23 *Period: 2012-2014*

24  
25 Between 2012 and 2014, the specialised industry value chain reconfigured towards vertical integration.  
26  
27 The implementation of further regulation initiated by the Labour Government (1997-2010), and enacted  
28 by the Conservative government (2010--) in 2012 was identified as a key change event. The regulations  
29 put organisations under increasing commercial pressure to differentiate and seek competitive advantage  
30 – as profits margins were diminishing. In response to threats of commoditisation, most organisations  
31 began to consider mechanisms to improve profit margins. As one respondent recalled, “how do you add  
32 more value back? Margins get squeezed so, so tight, that somebody in the value-chain's got to do  
33 something different because there's a footrace to the floor, which is clearly doing damage” and another  
34 highlighted that “you can certainly see some of those companies taking activities back in house that they  
35 would think offer differentiation. Otherwise, it's pure commoditisation, and then difficult to have  
36 something that looks distinctive”.

37  
38  
39 Forward and backward vertical integration began to be a characteristic of the industry value  
40 chain after 2012. For example, organisations began forward integrating into distribution, “a quasi-arms-  
41 length solution where the providers were taking more and more significant financial stakes in distribution,  
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3 and were using those stakes to lock-out competitors". Organisations were also backward integrating to  
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5 buy-in specialist capabilities, such as "we bought a stockbroking business. I think in terms of development  
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7 of products now, it's all about actually being very close to all the moving pieces".  
8  
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10 From our example, there was already an emerging realisation – as early as the mid-noughties –  
11  
12 that the changes to the technological regime – a shift to 'platform' technologies (coded as a product level  
13  
14 theme) and changes in the regulatory environment (coded as an industry level theme), posed significant  
15  
16 risks to continued differentiation and competitive advantage, and ultimately to profit margins (coded as  
17  
18 an organisational theme). One respondent recalled "The shake-out will be massive". In this period (mid-  
19  
20 noughties to 2012), the technology and regulation environments were strongly associated with increasing  
21  
22 specialisation and outsourcing throughout the industry (coded as an industry level theme). However, the  
23  
24 effects of these processes did not play out until the next subsequent period in 2012-2014. In this period,  
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26 we highlight the relationship between further regulation and industry structure change as it reintegrated  
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28 to a more vertically integrated structure. We also show how organisation-level themes associated with  
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30 value and profitability was a key driver for this change.  
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35 In our case example, we show the association between technology, regulation and industry  
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37 structure. These three integrative themes permeated much of our data across the five time sub-periods.  
38  
39 For example, in a recent paper that examines the UK individual personal pensions market (Anonymous,  
40  
41 2018), the main author identifies regulation and (de)regulation as an integrative theme throughout the  
42  
43 period mid-1980s to mid-1990s. In fact, the data set shows how continuous changes in regulation – such  
44  
45 as Stakeholder pensions in 2001, pensions simplification in 2006, and recent changes to distribution in  
46  
47 2012 (Retail Distribution Review) – can all be interpreted as critical change events that had unforeseen  
48  
49 impacts on organisation- and product design-level strategy. While it is perhaps hardly surprising that  
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51 'regulation' emerged as an integrative theme given the UK individual personal pensions product market  
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3 is a highly-regulated financial services sector, what was surprising and unexpected was the extent to which  
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5 it impacted upon other units of analysis, such as significant changes to industry structure.  
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### 10 **Discussion and conclusion**

11  
12 Both the template analysis and matrix analysis relied upon respondents providing a series of responses to  
13  
14 questions to create an oral history concerning the UK pension industry since the mid-1980s. However, the  
15  
16 different stages in the data collection relied upon different epistemological assumptions. Creating the  
17  
18 timeframes (brackets) and the subsequent matrices through which the comparative analysis could occur  
19  
20 adopted a position of realism. Whilst the exact point that distinguishes one timeframe from another  
21  
22 varied somewhat across respondents, the legislative or technological changes that tended to define the  
23  
24 transition points between the timeframes were recognisable events and thus the researchers approached  
25  
26 the determination of the brackets and the product, firm and industry architectures from a position of  
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28 realism. For example, the first timeframe was identified as being 1984 to 1990, but some respondents  
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30 suggested different starting dates and ending dates to this time period.  
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35 However, the second stage – the inductive component of the research – that would form the  
36  
37 basis of the template analysis provided an opportunity to gain an insight into how key industry participants  
38  
39 remembered various events. As the interview had limited structure, respondents were able to highlight  
40  
41 those elements that were most likely more distinctive to them (Hunt, 2003). These memories invariably  
42  
43 reflect their own reality given respondents' different roles and thus exposure to the changes occurring at  
44  
45 different levels (ie product, firm and industry). The memories of respondents also reflect the relevant  
46  
47 organisational memory of their place of work. That is, the individual memory presented incorporates the  
48  
49 shared understanding of the events that constitutes the organisational memory (Do et al., 2018). Thus,  
50  
51 the memories reflect the subjective experience of the respondent. For example, some respondents  
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53 initially focussed on changes to the product, others to the changes in the scope of the major firms in the  
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3 industry and others still pointed to the changes in competitive dynamics. Interestingly, while there were  
4  
5 always differences in what was the primary focus amongst the different respondents, within a particular  
6  
7 time period, there were clear trends concerning the focus across the different time periods. For example,  
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9 the mid-noughties to 2012 saw a specific focus on the technological disruption and the resulting changes  
10  
11 in the industry value chain.  
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14  
15 As the initial bracketing and creation of the templates relied upon realism, yet the analysis of  
16  
17 data was undertaken in an interpretivist manner (as the themes emerged from the data rather than the  
18  
19 analysis occur via established coding categories) it is not clear that there is a single dominant  
20  
21 epistemology. Unlike mixed method studies whereby there are distinct stages (with different  
22  
23 respondents) that may feature first, an inductive phase to identify key concepts to investigate and then  
24  
25 second, a test of these concepts via a positivist epistemology, in our case, the two stages were more highly  
26  
27 integrated than might be the case in many mixed methods studies. We thus suggest that while our  
28  
29 approach has elements of 'limited realism' (a realist ontology combined with an interpretivist  
30  
31 epistemology), the template analysis that recognises the multiple realities of respondents takes a more  
32  
33 interpretivist epistemology. Whilst King and Brooks (2017) highlight that template analysis may be  
34  
35 agnostic in respect of the epistemological position adopted, in our case the two phases take on different  
36  
37 epistemological assumptions.  
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41  
42 Through considering a number of distinct time periods and as the narratives collected covered  
43  
44 multiple levels (industry, firm and product), a key feature of studies using template and matrix analysis is  
45  
46 the extensive and complex data that they can handle. Template analysis can be used in the context of any  
47  
48 form of textual data, such as interviews, focus groups, diary entries, and social media (Brooks & King,  
49  
50 2012), and in this paper we have argued the method has potential uses for management historians  
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52 analysing qualitative oral history data. It may certainly be appealing to researchers who wish to find an  
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3 alternative method to the prescriptions often associated with other thematic and coding approaches (eg,  
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5 Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2013).  
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8 Furthermore, in our study we found that combining template and matrix analysis is a useful  
9  
10 approach that can be modified to the needs of the researcher within the parameters of different  
11  
12 epistemological traditions. Indeed, given this utility, the method we have outlined may appeal to  
13  
14 management and organisation historians of different epistemological stripes. For example, 'realist'  
15  
16 researchers may be attracted to the feature of *a priori* codes, or to the various dimensions of 'research  
17  
18 quality' that can be included within a template and matrix analysis study. We have highlighted how we  
19  
20 utilised respondent feedback and the use of an expert panel, to name but two approaches, to assist in  
21  
22 providing a 'credible' representation of how and why products, firms and the industry developed and  
23  
24 changed over time. Of course, further quality dimensions in the qualitative research literature could  
25  
26 equally be employed, such as inter-coder comparison, and other types of audit trails (King & Brooks,  
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28  
29  
30  
31 2018).  
32

33 On the other hand, researchers in the interpretivist tradition may be attracted to the way  
34  
35 themes may emerge from the textual data being used. Research in this tradition assumes that there are  
36  
37 multiple interpretations to be made of any historical and temporal data, and as a consequence, our  
38  
39 approach, for example, to 'master periodization' may not sit well. Nonetheless, this kind of research is  
40  
41 much less concerned with issues of 'credibility' and instead would have much more emphasis on reflexivity,  
42  
43 examining differing and competing perspectives, and the richness of the description produced. Template  
44  
45 and matrix analysis, in this tradition, would seemingly provide the utility such research often demands.  
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49 Our case example has highlighted how a combination of template and matrix analysis can serve  
50  
51 to structure complex data – allowing us to see the wood for the trees – and yet, at the same time, our  
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53 interpretivist approach to template analysis allowed us to focus on the particulars of our data. Together,  
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3 the approach has allowed us to trace changes events chronologically, but also, following Pettigrew (1990),  
4  
5 how changes in one event at one level of analysis may have high levels of interdependence with changes  
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7 in other levels of analysis in future time periods.  
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10 We contribute to the management literature in the following ways. First, our method responds  
11  
12 directly to recent calls for new methods of inquiry in management and organisation history research.  
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14 Thematic approaches to textual data analysis have often largely ignored the issue of temporality and  
15  
16 perhaps, in turn, management and organisation historians have often ignored thematic analysis  
17  
18 approaches (such as template analysis) and thus such an approach clearly aligns with Rowlinson et al.  
19  
20 (2014) focus on the role of chronology in management and organisation studies. Certainly in a review of  
21  
22 studies using template analysis in business and management (King & Brooks, 2017), few studies have used  
23  
24 template analysis with time in any meaningful way.  
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29 Second, as we discuss in limitations, our study relies exclusively upon primary qualitative data  
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31 elicited through a set of broad questions that tap the memories of long-term industry participants that go  
32  
33 back thirty years. These memories emphasise the importance of the subjective experience of the  
34  
35 respondent and their particular experience including the manner in which their individual memories are  
36  
37 shaped by the organisational memory. Thus we take a realist approach to 'when', 'where' and 'what' type  
38  
39 questions akin to the storage bins of memory concept proposed by Walsh and Ungson (1991) but  
40  
41 recognise the multiple realities concerning 'why' and 'how' type questions. Such an approach would fall  
42  
43 into the 'narrating' quadrant of Maclean, Harvey and Clegg (2014) as a research strategy for using history  
44  
45 in organisation studies. Nevertheless, we contend that this proposed method may be utilised by  
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47 management and organisation historians engaged in analysing other forms of textual data, such as  
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49 secondary and archival research – either in addition to qualitative data as a form of triangulation, or  
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51 instead of. As management and organisation historians often analyse and interpret large volumes of  
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53 textual data, the combination of matrix and template analysis attempts to develop a more structured  
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3 approach that can handle large volumes of data, but also complex and uneven forms of temporality or  
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5 units of analysis. In our case, the capacity of the research method to consider phenomena across different  
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7 levels of analysis and the interactions between these levels was critical.  
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10 Third, our proposed method may also interest management and organisation scholars handling  
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12 other forms of temporal data, such as longitudinal data where chronology is an important part of the data.  
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14 Based on the above, we propose, first, that a combination of template and matrix analysis – through its  
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16 unique features and epistemological flexibility – is eminently appropriate for wider use in management  
17  
18 and organisation history.  
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#### 24 **Limitations**

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26 With theoretical implications aside, this paper has some obvious limitations. First, in the  
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28 operationalization of our proposed method we rely upon oral histories from thirty-one senior managers  
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30 as our data source. We have not attempted to verify or triangulate their accounts with archival or  
31  
32 secondary data. Our primary aim in this study was to illuminate new discoveries about change events in  
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34 the UK individual personal pensions product market from actors who were involved in interpreting the  
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36 changes in real-time, and, therefore, our interviews provided access to primary data unavailable by any  
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38 other methods.  
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42 The second obvious limitation in the operationalization of our method is that errors of recall can  
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44 permeate oral histories. However, the fact that the retrieval of memories to build a history of the industry  
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46 is imperfect provide clues as to those events or activities that were seen as critical and/or unique by  
47  
48 respondents – something that helped the researchers understand what was deemed as critical from the  
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50 point of view of different respondents. However, memories change over time and thus the analysis  
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52 reflects the reality of the participants at the time. For example, an individual memory might change if a  
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54 respondent moved to another firm as the organisational memory there may be quite different and thus  
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3 they may look back at their own experiences in a different way given this new understanding of the events  
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5 from a different standpoint.  
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8           Nonetheless, despite these limitations to the operationalization of our proposed method, as we  
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10 highlighted above, we contend that our proposed method may serve management and organisation  
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12 historians engaged in analysing other forms of textual data, such as secondary and archival research.  
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Professional experience in the product market began:	Before 1980	1980-1985	1986-1990
No. of respondents	19	8	4

Table 1: Commencement of interviewees’ professional experience

Time periods	Mid to late 1980s	Early to mid-1990s	Mid-1990s to mid-noughties	Mid-noughties to 2012	2012-2014
Product type	Non-modular/integrated	Closed and modular	Hybrid	Modular	Hybrid

Figure 1: Initial matrix<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> As a general systems theory (Schilling, 2000), modularity has often been researched as a static, cross-sectional property of organisational systems, such as industries, organisations and products (see for example Campagnolo & Camuffo, 2012, for a literature review). In contrast, the typology provided to interviewees follows Anonymous (2018) to conceptualise modularity as a dynamic systemic phenomenon.

Time periods	Mid to late 1980s	Early to mid-1990s	Mid-1990s to mid-noughties	Mid-noughties to 2012	2012-2014
Product type	Non-modular/integrated	Closed and modular	Hybrid	Modular	Hybrid
Industry themes	Template	Template	Template	Template	Template
Organisation-specific themes	Template	Template	Template	Template	Template
Product design themes	Template	Template	Template	Template	Template

Figure 2: Final matrix structure applied to the data

Professional experience in the product market began:	Before 1980	1980-1985	1986-1990
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Time periods	Mid to late 1980s	Early to mid-1990s	Mid-1990s to mid-noughties	Mid-noughties to 2012	2012-2014
Product type	Non-modular/integrated	Closed and modular	Hybrid	Modular	Hybrid
Industry themes	Template	Template	Template	Template	Template
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