

Contextual analysis and newspaper archives in management history research

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Purpose

The main aim of this article is to reveal how newspaper archives can support contextualisation in management history research by providing quantitative and/or qualitative, accurate, contemporary, cost-effective data which is not always available elsewhere.

Design/methodology/approach

The article comprises a literature review which summarises research into contextual analysis and newspaper archive theory; combined with content and textual analysis of articles published in the Journal of Management History and Management and Organizational History (2013-2017).

Findings

The findings reveal that the concept of contextualisation is absent from recent management history articles and that few management historians utilise newspaper archival sources as a data collection strategy.

Research implications

There is compelling evidence to suggest that contextual analysis can – perhaps should - be incorporated into management historians' research strategies because managerial organisations operate in open systems, which are influenced by external factors.

Originality/value

This article juxtaposes two neglected aspects of management history research, contextuality and newspaper archives, and proposes that a key source for historic contextual analysis is newspaper data.

Key words

Methodology; Research methods; Case study research; Mixed-methods; Trade publications.

Introduction

Historians are currently engaged in a philosophical debate about the uses of methodology in management history and the relationship between theoretical/empirical perspectives and post-modern critiques of history writing. One aspect of these debates is the role of contextual analysis which incorporates external situational influences in management research (Galvin, 2014). Another aspect is the role of newspaper archives as source material, especially in case studies which require multiple sources to support data collection and analysis (Batiz-Lazio, 2016). This article explores an often neglected data source in management history research - newspaper¹ archives - and investigates how newspaper data can provide relevant contemporary perspectives to support contextual analysis in management history research.

Academic interest in the conceptualisation of context has developed significantly during the past two decades across a wide range of disciplines including management research (Johns, 2017). The growth is especially noteworthy in organisational behaviour with its rich stream of contextual driven research since Rousseau and Fried 's (2001) seminal paper. Contextual analysis incorporates both a broader perspective of multiple environmental dimensions and specific contextual variables to ensure that external organisational drivers are fully recognised (Johns, 2006). Context is important because environmental influences have a significant impact on management and organisations (Tsui, 2006). One of the reasons why contextuality has emerged as a key construct in the design of management research is the recognition that heterogeneity exists across a wide range of organisations and people, both within and across countries; so much that one management journal actively encourages context-specific research (Galvin, 2014). Indeed Bamberger's (2008, p839) call for management and organisational scholars to engage in more contextualisation in theory

¹ Throughout this manuscript, the word newspaper/s refers to newspapers, magazines and trade print media.

development, and his suggestion that “context counts ... (and) ... shapes the phenomena and relationships we study” is pertinent to management history researchers. Academics involved with contextuality research methodologies recognise the value of newspaper archives as a source of contemporary perspectives on the environmental context (Tsui, 2006).

The benefits of employing newspaper archive data in historical research are well-documented. Newspapers offer an extensive range of easily accessible historic data (Hansen, 2004), providing a day-to-day chronology of events with contemporary political, economic and social commentary that was significant to people at the time (Tosh, 2010). “Newspapers provide long records of historical processes often not available” elsewhere and “much can be gained from their use” (Franzosi, 1987, p.14). Indeed, important historical interpretations can be based upon the evidence from newspapers - especially about companies (Hansen, 2004) and management. Also, the “unique periodicity of the press” (Nicholson, 2013, p64) enables the studying of continuity and change in a myriad of ways. Bingham (2010) explained that because newspapers played a central role in British political, economic and cultural life, these archives are now an important source for historians – and this feature of the press is replicated in many other countries. Today, the ease with which academics studying American and British history can access online digital newspapers from the 17th century onwards has simplified the search function even further. So the advantages of using the press in historical research are significant. Clearly newspaper archives provide relevant, rich, temporal data which are utilised by historians in other fields (for example political history) to support their discussion.

80 However, a survey of the management history literature reveals that many
81 management historians are reluctant to employ newspaper archives. The reason for this
82 remains unclear; perhaps it might be the complex issue of bias in print media. For example,
83 Lamberg et al's (2014, p241) Nokia case study in Management and Organizational History
84 (MOH) states all articles published in newspapers and business magazines were excluded
85 because "a set of exclusion criteria was established to reduce any bias related to subjectivity."
86 Because the theoretical benefits of contextualisation are well documented, the focus of this
87 paper is the following question: *How, if at all, can newspaper archives be used for the*
88 *purposes of contextualisation in management history research?*

89 The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. First, contextual analysis theory
90 and the newspaper archive literature is succinctly reviewed. This review is followed by a
91 description of the methodological procedure that was used to select and analyse publications
92 in the field of management history that have drawn upon newspaper archives. The paper then
93 discusses how newspaper archives are currently employed by management historians and
94 what role, if any, contextualization plays in it. The paper closes with a discussion/conclusion
95 section in which suggestions are made as to how newspaper archives can be successfully used
96 for purposes of contextualization and, indirectly, for the enhancement of management history
97 theory development.

98 99 **Literature review**

100 *Contextual Analysis*

101 Academic debate concerning 'the conceptualisation of context and its role in management
102 theory' has been discussed since the late 1970's (Bamberger, 2008, p839) and has produced a
103 rich stream of research in contextualisation theory that continues to this day. Indeed, in an
104 editorial for the Journal of Management and Organization, Galvin (2014, p1) explicitly called

for context-specific research stating that ‘context matters.’ Johns (2017), in his reflection on a decade of incorporating context in organisational research, observed that numerous disciplines as well as management studies have focused on the critical role of context as part of a trend away from universalism.

Johns (2006, p386) defined context ‘as situational opportunities and constraints that affect the occurrence and meaning of organizational behavior as well as functional relationships between variables.’ Poulis et al (2013) suggest that context is a multi-dimensional array of phenomena, sites and events as opposed to a monolithic, homogeneous construct based on a single dimension. The external environment provides the context in which organisations operate; and the organisational environment provides the context in which individuals work. A contextual analysis means describing, understanding and theorising the phenomena within it. Contextual phenomena simultaneously provide opportunities and boundaries for organisations and individuals which can enable or constrain actions (Welter, 2010, p165). Tsui (2006) argues that contextualisation is more than simply evaluating environmental opportunities and constraints; contextualisation comprises cognitions at the individual level, the organisation of role relations at the institutional level, the values and beliefs at the societal level, and serendipity – described as major events such as wars, famine, discoveries, which significantly influence historical development. For example the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack in the USA is an example of an event which has stimulated contextual analysis into work attitudes and behaviour (Johns, 2006). Context also includes ‘the culture, the political and legal system, the stage of economic development, or the economic system ... the history, the geography, its ecology ... and why a context is the way it is today’ Tsui (2006, p1). Critically a contextual environment fluctuates between periods of change and stability depending on the temporal dimension (Zahra et al, 2014). Rousseau and Fried (2001, p2) emphasised the importance of contextualisation for

organisational behaviour research 'because it makes our models more accurate and our interpretation of results more robust'.

Johns (2006, p391) suggests two different levels of contextual analysis: omnibus and discrete. The omnibus dimension takes a broad perspective using many variables; whilst the discrete focuses on a specific contextual variable. The discrete variable nests within the omnibus context. Johns (2006) uses a journalistic story-telling analogy to explain an omnibus approach – the who, what, where, when, why – to place events in a comprehensive setting; and he draws on social and environmental psychology using task, social and physical variables to express the discrete dimension. In their analysis of contextualisation in international business case study research, Poulis et al (2013, p312-3) explore a wide range of contextual dimensions including “consumers’ cultural diversity, industry/product category, competitive, organisational, geographic, retail, and the temporal.”

From a historian’s perspective, the temporal dimension – “the time-frame associated with causal effect” (Rousseau and Fried, 2001 p8) - is especially pertinent. Temporal factors influence economic and social relationships which underpin organisational behaviour (Johns, 2006); and from an entrepreneurial viewpoint windows of opportunity which are time-sensitive (Zhara et al, 2014). Johns (2006, p392) notes that “key contextual conditions underlying time effects include secular trends, changing institutional patterns, evolving technology (and) major organizational change.” The consequences of managerial strategic decisions become more evident with the passage of time (Zhara et al, 2014), although “the time lags in causal effects at the individual and firm levels probably differ” (Rousseau and Fried 2001, p8). Bamberger (2008, p843) focuses on “how the meanings attached to different organizational phenomena vary across situations, time frames, and social units”.

A key approach to contextual research is the emphasis on “rich detailed description and informed reflection on the role that context plays in influencing meaning, variation and

relationships among variables” (Rousseau and Fried 2001, p7). This focus on rich description at the micro level, linked to omnibus and/or discrete contextual variables, involves a multi-level analysis incorporating micro/macro levels and potentially intermediate meso-levels (Johns, 2006). Rich description is intrinsically connected to qualitative research methods and such an approach is inherent to contextualisation (Rousseau and Fried 2001; Johns, 2006; Poulis et al, 2013; Johns, 2017). The importance of contextual analysis is derived from the fact that organisations are open systems which are palpably influenced by external factors outside their control (Tsui, 2006); thus context is a major influence in understanding the actions and behaviour of organisations and managers. Finally, Tsui (2006) suggests that to develop deep knowledge of the contextual situation, the research strategy should incorporate an analysis of relevant newspapers.

Newspapers

The locus of a newspaper ranges from the local, to the regional, national and international. Local media focus on the local news and events affecting local government, local companies, local people and organisations. Hansen (2004) suggests that local newspapers can provide a strong contextual perspective about a company; adverts, advertorials, and press releases which are authored by the business are a valuable data source for researchers. Some cities have strong links to specific industries and their local newspaper will chart the development of organisations, managers and the work force involved in that industry over generations. Sheffield is internationally recognised as a centre for British cutlery manufacturing and its local newspaper, the *Star*, was a key source in Tweeddale’s (2013) qualitative analysis of 19th century local family cutlery firms.

The financial media, newspapers and magazines like the *Financial Times*, *Wall Street Journal* and the *Economist*, are significant sources of company, management and industry

data. Hansen's (2012) search for "shareholder value" in the *New York Times* from 1851 to 2011 revealed that the first time the phrase was used was in 1982. The phrase was then repeated more and more frequently into the 21st century; thus demonstrating that the concept of shareholder value has had a significant impact since the 1980's, but is not intrinsic to capitalist society.

There are a vast number of special interest publications which provide in-depth coverage of business, finance, literature, politics, society, hobbies, and specific sports. There is a curious silence concerning the use of business and consumer magazines in the research methods literature. This is surprising given the extensive number of publications devoted to specialist subjects in magazine publishing – especially business magazines. In the UK alone there are 5,100 business/trade magazine and 2,800 consumer titles (Magforum, 2018) and many other countries also have comprehensive trade magazine archives. Mollan and Tennent (2015, p1058) note that the "trade press typically operated to supply practitioners with valuable information affecting their behaviour, giving us an insight into industry structure and practices". Sedgewick et al (2014) relied upon the Australian film industry's weekly trade journal *Everyones* to provide extensive qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate competition in international film distribution in the 1930's.

Newspaper Archives

Although "archival holdings are essential to historical scholarship" (Tosh, 2010, p90), Decker notes that the "methodological treatment of archival work are rare" (Decker 2013, p159); and the methodological treatment of newspaper archives is even rarer. The Cambridge University Press (2017) defines an archive as "a collection of historical records relating to a place, organization or family." A key issue relates to the authenticity of the records in an archive. Authenticity is dependent upon the provenance of the archival records from their creation and

205 ownership throughout time to the present day (Theimer, 2012); thus provenance is central to
206 archive management (Jordanova, 2006, p162). Despite bias and the ‘silence’ in archives
207 (silence is a media studies concept where print media deliberately or unintentionally omits
208 data, facts, and information when reporting an event), archival material remains integral to
209 historical research and “a sound anchoring in the past, the evidence, the archival record”
210 underpins the historical narrative of reconstruction and representation (Decker, 2013, p161).

211 The role of newspaper archives in historical research is dependent upon the
212 characteristics of the research question and the problem definition (Hansen, 2004). Since
213 newspapers and periodicals are public documents, which reflect issues relevant at the time of
214 publication, they are unable to provide data about confidential, internal organisational
215 matters. However, in the pre-internet era “newspapers ... often constitute the only available
216 source of information” (Franzosi, 1987, p6) and “are useful, sometimes indispensable
217 (sources) to the business historian” (Hansen, 2004, p99). Bingham (2010, p2) suggests that
218 “perhaps the greatest virtue of newspapers for scholars is the wealth and diversity of content”
219 and emphasises the enormous newspaper readership in the 19th and 20th centuries. This
220 readership must have included virtually all businessmen, managers, politicians and trade
221 union leaders. Indeed, newspapers are the most comprehensive and diverse public record of
222 important events, issues, and opinions – via the editorials and correspondence columns - of
223 the time; and this record of events is not obtainable from other sources (Tosh, 2010). There is
224 a strong tradition dating back to the mid-19th century of investigative journalists carrying out
225 in-depth research to highlight economic and social injustices (Tosh, 2010). Investigative
226 reporting includes exposes of business and management malpractices, especially in
227 broadsheets and the financial press. Journalists with established and credible reputations also
228 write informed articles at the intersection between the private sphere of a company and the
229 public sphere (Franzosi, 1987). A unique aspect of newspaper archives is their chronology of

events, as they happened and from multiple perspectives. This feature enables the historian to analyse phenomena through the lens of the time, obtain deeper insights into the actions and reactions of the key players involved, and use this circumstantial evidence to reveal hitherto unknown insights (Hansen, 2004).

Online newspaper archives

The digitalisation of newspaper archives has transformed the search process and this explosion of information on the web has changed how archives are used. Theimer (2011, p61) suggests that archives are now “open not closed ... transparent not opaque ... (and) ... user-centred not record centred”. Nicholson (2013) observed that the aggregation of online multi-title databases coupled with individual major title sites has enabled access to thousands of English language newspapers, magazines, and periodicals. Newspaper archives can be used for quantitative and/or qualitative research; this flexibility enables historians to utilise newspaper sources either as the principal data collection method or as part of a mixed methods strategy. Batiz-Lazo (2016) cites numerous authors who support the strategy of collating multiple sources of evidence, including newspapers and magazines, as relevant sources for obtaining contemporary perspectives. For historians wishing to adopt a triangulation methodology, which is relevant to case studies, the inclusion of newspaper archival sources is particularly pertinent. The debate about the primacy of primary over secondary data is less of an issue when employing newspaper archives in historical research. Black and MacRaid (2007, p90-92) suggest that the distinction between primary and secondary sources is “actually quite blurred” and separating sources into precise categories is not helpful.

Validity and bias

A key issue for historical researchers is determining the authenticity of relevant documents – this is called external criticism which focuses on the credibility of the date of the document (Wood, 1990). Although there can be a problem with some forged historical documents, this is less of an issue with newspapers. In the case of newspaper archives, the provenance of titles and individual editions of a newspaper are well-established; it is rare for a newspaper document to be challenged on the grounds of its authenticity.

Another fundamental challenge is to determine whether the details in the document are credible – this is called internal criticism (Wood, 1990). Internal criticism focuses on individual statements within the document and is based upon the source. Sources can either be eye-witness or a non-witness. When an author is an eye-witness and therefore present at the event they are a primary witness and they are regarded as more credible than non-witnesses. This temporal proximity to the event lends credibility to the primary witness's account; the greater the time-distance from the event, the less credible the account (Wood, 1990). Additional and critical elements in evaluating the credibility of an account is whether the primary witness was willing and able to tell the truth; and the competence of the witness – witnesses with “expert knowledge” are deemed to be more credible. Another way to explore the credibility of the witness is to understand the author's motivation, the purpose of the document and who was the intended audience (Wood, 1990).

Different newspapers have different political stances which cater for specific audiences, influence how proprietors, editors and reporters respond to events, and consequently shape how events are recorded. Hansen (2012) suggests that several documents should be evaluated from different sources to provide comparative and competing versions of an event; this helps to reduce the impact of bias from a single source. If possible, independent corroboration of the primary witness's details are required but sometimes so-called

independent sources have derived their data from a solo source, so researchers need to explore and locate the origins of a source (Wood, 1990).

Bias in newspaper reporting can take many forms. The Gramscian perspective argues that newspapers and mass media are an integral element of capitalist societies and that journalism and news reflect the interests of the dominant economic group, especially when reporting on class and labour issues (Franzosi, 1987). Clearly, newspaper owners and their editors are selective in what and how events are reported in terms of political or social agendas (Agiridas, 2015). Another perspective recognises that editorials and features, which represent the newspaper's viewpoint, are clearly prone to bias; but that the reporting of dates, hard facts, and the people involved in an event are reasonably accurate (Franzosi, 1987). There is also the issue that bias in the mass media consists of emphasis and silence. The press as a source of historical data might omit information rather than be erroneous; and of course information can be manipulated and distorted by the use of language – “language is the tool of media manipulation” (Franzosi, 1987, p7). A caveat concerns the relationship between companies and the media. Press statements, business personality profiles, and adverts are an “expression of the company's view” and constructs of the desired “public image” of the company which therefore need to be treated with caution (Hansen, 2004, pp 109-110).

Whilst bias is inherent in newspapers, bias can be managed. Since the partisan opinions of a newspaper are discernible, authors should be able to balance differing political perspectives to reduce any potential bias by ensuring that multiple sources are incorporated in the analysis of an event. Although Mollan and Tennent (2015, p1057) recognised the “risk of the subjectivity of journalists and editors,” they justified the use of newspaper articles as an established business history research technique, particularly where corporate archives are non-existent or difficult to access. They selected *The Times*, *Financial Times* and *Economist* as key sources because “they generally provided reliable business reporting ... they also

operated as industry journals for finance in this period.” Indeed in a JoMH editorial note, Bowden (2016) argues that researchers need to know their sources; understand the historical context of the events and people involved; and use multiple sources to cross match evidence. The use of multiple sources enables authors to avoid the potential bias of depending upon only one source to represent press opinion of the time.

Despite the apparent potential for newspaper archives to move history-writing and management theory forward, there appears to be limited discussion of contextualisation in the management history literature. In fact, a key word search of ‘contextual analysis’, ‘contextuality’, and ‘situational analysis’ in two leading management history journals, the *Journal of Management History* (JoMH) and *Management and Organizational History* (MOH), between 2013 and 2017 revealed that no article matched these words or phrases. Subsequent content and textual analysis of methodology sections confirmed that management historians did not incorporate contextual or situational analysis as a formal element in their research strategies. The absence is puzzling given that contextual analysis has become such an important concept in the organisational literature. This suggests that two neglected aspects of management history, the theory of contextual analysis and the role of newspaper archives as a data collection strategy, require further research.

Data and method

A survey of research in management history was undertaken to establish the extent to which management historians utilise newspaper archives as a data collection method and to explore how management historians can adopt contextual analysis as an element in their research methodologies.

The process of reviewing the use of newspaper archives in the management history literature was akin to a systematic literature review (Fink, 2005), where a comprehensive

search incorporated a wide range of journal databases and included articles published in two leading management history journals: JoMH and MOH. These journals were selected because of their close relationship in historical subject matter (Booth and Rowlinson, 2006). To ensure that a comprehensive coverage of historians' output was achieved (Stemler, 2001), a proximate 5-year time period was considered; and to ensure contemporary currency (Crawley, 2007), data collection was focused on the years 2013 through 2017. The editorials; a special 20th anniversary celebratory edition of JoMH reflecting aspects of the Journal's development; and five interview articles with senior scholars were excluded from the study. The JoMH's article guidelines clearly states how newspaper articles should be referenced: "Surname, Initials (year), "Article title", *Newspaper*, date, pages. e.g. Smith, A. (2008), "Money for old rope", *Daily News*, 21 January, pp. 1, 3-4" (Journal of Management History, 2018). This enables easy identification of the vast majority of newspaper sources in the text, notes, and references. Occasionally when an international source was not easily identified, then an online search provided clarification; for example *De Stentor* in de Jong et al (2017) was identified as a Zwolle-based Dutch regional newspaper. In the articles where newspapers sources were integral to data collection, the approach was discussed in the methodology – for example Varje, Anttila and Väänänen's (2013, p36) analysis of job advertisements in the Finnish newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* was explained in depth.

The number of newspaper sources referenced in each article was manually counted. The coding scheme (Franzosi, 1987) comprised four categories: no newspaper references; minimal (1-4); modest (5-10); and substantial references (over 10). Table 1 provides a summary of recent newspaper archive usage by management historians in JoMH and MOH.

	No. of newspaper sources				Total	
	0	1-4	5-10	>10		
<i>JoMH</i>	72	19	9	6	106	Table I. Analysis of newspaper sources in <i>JoMH</i> and <i>MOH</i> , 2013-2017
<i>MOH</i>	70	20	5	5	100	
Total	142	39	14	11	206	
%	69	19	7	5		

The 11 articles with more than 10 newspapers sources were analysed in depth to evaluate how, if at all, newspaper archives can be used for the purposes of contextualisation in management history research. Content analysis (Krippendorff, 1989) of articles was the prime method used to analyse how management historians utilise newspaper archives as a data collection method. Each article in the database was read, and the notes and references, were carefully scrutinised to determine the extent of newspaper, magazine and trade press sources. One of these articles, Tikhomirov (2017) has not been included in the detailed analysis and discussion because its focus on F W Taylor's publication strategy for his Principles of Scientific Management in the American Magazine does not incorporate contextuality.

Textual analysis was then used to analyse each of the remaining 10 articles to evaluate elements of contextuality in the texts. This "involves a prolonged engagement of the chosen text using ... narrative ... approaches to qualitative analysis" (Fursich 2009, p240). The articles were analysed using the dimensions (omnibus or discrete); levels (macro, meso, micro); and variables (geographic, political, economic, social, cultural, organisation, and competition) discussed in the contextual analysis literature. All but one of the articles adopted an omnibus dimension; there were 7 macro and 3 micro studies; and a wide range of variables were used, but only 1 variable was included in all the studies – the economic context. Table 2 provides a succinct summary of these articles.

Article	Period	Country/ries	Sector/Industry	Field of study	Method	Dimension	Contextuality Level	Variables
<i>JoMH</i> Varje, Turtainen and Väinänen (2013b)	1949-2009	Finland	Advertising	Psychological management	Longitudinal, mixed methods study of 1,305 manager job advertisements in Finnish newspaper, with quantitative and qualitative analysis examining the evolution of ideal manager traits	Omnibus	Macro	National Political Economic Social Cultural
Riad (2014)	100-1963	West Europe and the USA	Literature and film	Leadership	A longitudinal qualitative analysis of leadership retelling the story of Anthony and Cleopatra within the social and economic context of the Roman, Elizabethan, Georgian and Hollywood eras	Omnibus	Macro	International Political Economic Social Cultural
McLarty and Rosen (2014)	1906-1911	USA	Meatpacking factories	Employee and public health	A qualitative study of archival newspaper clippings, original journal articles and books written by physician Dr Caroline Hedger, which helped improve working and living conditions of American workers	Omnibus	Micro	Local Political Economic Social
Prieto and Phipps (2016)	1898-1951	USA	Financial services	Management philosophy and practice	A longitudinal study analysing the influence of Charles Clinton Spaulding, a prominent black business leader, based on his own writings published in history journals and newspapers	Omnibus	Macro	National Economic Cultural
de Jong <i>et al.</i> (2017)	1971-2001	The Netherlands	Health technology	Marketing communication and financial performance	A quantitative and qualitative longitudinal case study examining the relationship between CEO strategic announcements and share price reactions; data obtained from 451 articles in the Dutch financial newspaper <i>Het Financieel</i> <i>Dagblad</i>	Discrete	Micro	Organisation National Economic Organisation
Terment (2017)	1918-1995	UK	Public transport	Profit- maximisation	Longitudinal, archival, micro case study of British municipal tramways response to the political and economic context using multiple sources	Omnibus	Micro	Local Political Economic Organisation
<i>MOH</i>								(continued)

The use of newspaper archives in the recent management history literature

The textual analysis of those articles which employed substantial data from newspaper archives provides evidence to support the proposition that newspaper archives can facilitate elements of contextual analysis in historical research, even though the authors did not formally research contextuality. The key newspaper archival sources used in these articles were broadsheets like the *Guardian* and *New York Times* (Riad, 2014) and the Chicago Tribune (McLarty and Rosen, 2014); financial and business media like *Het Financieele Dagblad* (de Jong et al, 2017); local newspapers such as the *Yorkshire Post* and *York Evening Press* (Tennent, 2017); specialist technical print media like *The Horological Journal* (Proctor, 2013); and professional organisations' publications such as *Indústria Portuguesa* and *Pessoal* (Matos, 2016).

The articles demonstrate the wide range of rich sources available in newspaper archives which is not available from other sources. In some studies newspaper data was the key source and integral to the data collection strategy. Newspaper data was the primary data source for Varje, Anttila and Väänänen (2013) and Varje, Turtiainen and Väänänen's (2013) in their analysis of ideal manager characteristics in Finland; and for de Jong's (2017) study of Philips' share price movements following CEO strategic announcements. At least 4 of the studies adopted a mixed methods data collection strategy with 3 including a quantitative element as well as qualitative (Batiz-Lazo, 2016).

Riad's (2014) analysis of Cleopatra and Anthony's conspicuous consumption demonstrates different moral perspectives on leadership, ostentation, and social responsibility across centuries. Riad (2014) used 21st century newspaper archives to analyse contemporary contextual data and her comparative analysis using diverse sources effectively illustrates how meanings vary across several temporal dimensions (Bamberger, 2008).

McLarty and Rosen's (2014) study of the physician Dr Caroline Hedger's description of the appalling working and living conditions of meat packers in the USA in 1906 includes several direct quotes from newspapers, illustrating the unhealthy environment of the factories and nearby housing. For example "The poor health of these children is directly traceable to bad sanitary conditions . . . both along Bubbly Creek and surrounding this dump at Forty-seventh and Robey streets," Chicago Tribune, 1909 (McLarty and Rosen, 2014, p66). McLarty and Rosen's newspaper archival research provides historians with a richer understanding of Dr Hedger's motivations to improve the working/living conditions of families. The complex contextual environment which Dr Hedger presented in her newspaper articles emphasised the significance of context (Galvin, 2014) in addressing the well-being of workers and their families.

de Jong et al (2017) evaluated the financial performance of Philips following the public announcements of their strategic decisions using quantitative and qualitative methods. Philips announcements in *Het Financieele Dagblad*, the Dutch daily business and finance newspaper, and share price movements were analysed between 1971 and 2001. Adopting the event study method which measures share price changes following new market data, de Jong et al (2017) analysed 451 announcements and subsequent share price reactions. This article incorporated contextual data from multiple sources, including financial broadsheets, to explore the relationship between CEO public announcements and the market's reaction measured by share price fluctuations.

Tennent (2017) analysed the changing political, economic and technological environments which impacted on British public transport systems between 1918 and 1935, using the City of York as a case study. Local newspapers, such as the *Yorkshire Post* and *York Evening Press*, provided contextual data on economic facts such as tram fares and

425 routes; and political controversies within the York Corporation (the local government
426 authority) – for example quoting councillors’ detailed comments in committee meetings.

427 Matos (2016) explored fluctuations in the dominant managerial discourses in
428 Portuguese businesses, between 1959 and 1986, by analysing articles in the magazine
429 *Indústria Portuguesa* published by the Portuguese Industrial Association and *Pessoal*
430 published by the Association of Portuguese Personnel Heads and Directors. The turbulent
431 political and economic context during this period in Portugal is critical to Matos’s (2016)
432 analysis of managerial discourses and relevant data is derived from these professional
433 magazines.

434 Clearly these management historians have effectively utilised newspaper archives as a
435 key source in their data collection research strategies. However, although there are elements
436 of contextualisation derived from newspaper data in the articles, the authors do not formally
437 discuss contextual analysis in the methodology sections of the articles.

438 439 **Discussion and Conclusion**

440 The focus of this research is to examine *how, if at all, can newspaper archives be used for the*
441 *purposes of contextualisation in management history research?* The evidence from the
442 survey of management history articles suggests that newspaper archives can be used to
443 research contextuality in management history research. The contextualisation theory
444 discussed in the literature review provides several justifications as to why management
445 historians might adopt contextual analysis in their research strategies. Such justifications
446 include the fact that management organisations are open systems which are influenced by
447 external factors (Tsui, 2006); that a contextual environment fluctuates between different
448 temporal periods (Zahra et al, 2014), which consequently influences changing contexts in
449 management history research; that the ‘meanings’ of different organisational phenomena

change through time (Bamberger, 2008); and finally contextual analysis engages in rich, qualitative research (Johns, 2006) which is also a feature of much management history research. This is a convincing argument for management historians to incorporate contextualisation, where appropriate, into their research strategies - and one data collection tool which is available to help facilitate contemporary contextual analysis is newspaper archives.

Much of the research undertaken by management historians involves businesses and organisations which operate in open systems and are therefore influenced by external factors. Relevant newspaper archives are an effective research tool to assess contemporary awareness and opinions about political, economic, socio-cultural and technological external factors. This data enables researchers to develop a deeper understanding of the context in which organisations and individuals are working. Lubinski's (2015) analysis of the Indian gramophone market between 1890 and 1914 included American, British and German trade journal archives, Indian newspaper advertisements, and different companies' record catalogues which helped her to capture deep insights into PEST drivers and international corporate competitor strategies in the Sub-Continent's record market.

The temporal focus of many research studies in management history range across decades and even centuries. Given the fluctuating contextual environment between different temporal periods, newspaper archives are uniquely capable of providing contextual macro and micro-level temporal data about environmental and societal influences relating to explanations of individual or organisational behaviour (Johns, 2006; Johns, 2017). Because of the extensive period of many local and national print publications (*The Times, London*, has been continuously printed since 1785), newspaper archives are especially suited to longitudinal research which can reveal a chronology of events, as and when they happened from multiple perspectives (Hansen, 2004). Examples of management history longitudinal

research using local newspaper archives include Tennent's (2017) micro analysis of public transport in a British city over a 17-year period, which utilised newspaper archives to chart political developments in York; and Varje, Anttila and Väänänen (2013) and Varje, Turtiainen and Väänänen's (2013) analysis of job advertisements in *Helsingin Sanomat* between 1949 and 2009 which explored the changing qualities of ideal managers in Finland.

Given how much management history research spans generations, another complex and critical issue for our research is to recognise how the meanings of phenomena change through time (Bamberger, 2008). An interesting example of how meanings can change in different eras in the management history literature is Riad's (2014) analysis of how Cleopatra and Anthony's conspicuous consumption was interpreted in the Roman, Elizabethan, Georgian and 1960's Hollywood periods. Although Riad (2014) only uses newspaper archives for a comparative contemporary 21st century political and social context, clearly data derived from newspaper archives can help support contextual analysis from the late 17th and 18th century onwards.

In this analysis of management history articles, the concept of rich, qualitative research seems to be well embedded in the research strategies of management historians (for example: McLarty and Rosen, 2014; Riad, 2014; Lubinski, 2015; Matos, 2016; Prieto and Phipps, 2016; Tennent, 2017; and de Jong et al, 2017). Since rich, qualitative data is also embedded in contextuality (Johns, 2006), this aspect of contextual analysis seems to be a natural fit with existing management history research strategies.

Newspaper archive research could also support contextualisation in management history fields such as, but not only, colonialism; gender issues; labour relations; historical process research; institutional theory; and organisational identity. Potential studies could include cross-sectional research, historical process research, institutional theory research and organisational identity research. For example cross-sectional research into high-profile labour

disputes, which have been extensively reported in newspapers across the political spectrum, and could provide in-depth coverage from multiple perspectives to illustrate how different sections of society responded to labour conflicts (Franzosi, 1987).

Historical process research, which explores changes in ‘the processes of management in organisations’ over time from a social construction perspective (Foster & Suddaby, 2018, p1), clearly requires an element of contextualisation which print media can provide within the corresponding time-line of the period under study. Institutional theory research, which is predicated upon the premise that individuals create organisational social structures out of shared assumptions about the nature of reality (Suddaby et al, 2014), requires an understanding of the historical context of the period and this can also be derived from an analysis of newspaper archives. As times change, so newspapers reflect the changing values which underpin the rules and belief systems of the environment in which they exist (Weerakkody et al, 2009). In organisational identity research, Foster & Suddaby (2018, p10) observe the close links between organisational identity and organisational history and - since “constant identity adaptation and change is a *sine qua non* of organisational life” (Balmer, p1475) - both planned corporate communications and extempore events, which are chronicled in print media over time, can be researched in newspaper archives.

Newspaper archives are an accessible source for at least two reasons. First, they provide an extensive range of data, with a day-to-day chronology of events seen from the perspectives of people living at that time. This long period of historical processes is not available from any other source and, because of the central role of print media as the principal communication medium in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, newspapers enable management historians to research the facts of events and the opinions of contemporaries. Indeed, one eminent historian researching in the field of political biography revealed that newspaper archives are an essential source, providing a veritable “treasure

trove” of data to mine (Howell, 2018). Newspaper archives can be used in quantitative and qualitative research; and as a principal research method or in mixed method case studies. This flexibility, combined with the emergence of online access to multiple newspaper archive databases, provides management historians with a powerful research tool which could be more utilised.

Second, the use of newspaper archives as a data source is not dependent upon a historian’s epistemological and ontological perspective. Although many of the articles analysed for this paper adopt a reconstructionist form of narrative, constructive and deconstructionist researchers (Godfrey et al, 2016) can also utilise data derived from newspaper archives. Researchers who want to adopt a positivist or a phenomenological, or a mixed-methods approach to their data collection can incorporate newspaper archive analysis in to their research strategy. Since newspaper archives reflect the authentic voices of people involved with, or commenting on, events at that moment in history - almost in real-time – they provide an opportunity to capture those attitudes and opinions of actors and observers in a variety of different genres of management history research.

There are a number of limitations to this research. Newspaper data is not appropriate for certain categories of management and organisational history research. Topics covering pre-newspaper publication eras or in countries where newspapers were not produced, or were produced but not effectively archived, clearly cannot be researched in newspaper archives. Also, subjects which were not in the public domain at the time, such as confidential government or internal organisational issues, will not have been published in newspapers; and of course silence in the archives can inhibit data collection on some topics. The author is an English speaking, solo researcher based in the UK; this means that the review of the literature could not incorporate research in to newspaper archives written in other languages. Another limitation is that the viewpoint of research-active management historians is absent; a

survey exploring the opinions of management historians towards research methods in general and the use of newspaper archives in particular would be revealing.

Hopefully, the argument and evidence presented in this article is sufficiently compelling to demonstrate to management historians that the newspaper archives can provide quantitative and/or qualitative, accurate, cost-effective and insightful data to support contextual analysis, as well as other research objectives, and help to enhance management history theory development. It is hoped that the article will stimulate significant interest in the use of newspaper archives by management historians in their future research strategies, and that Toft's (2010, p. 78) declaration that the 'most important source for the historian is the press' will also apply to research in management history.

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