Pioneering Process Research:

Andrew Pettigrew's Contribution to Management Scholarship, 1962-2014

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Abstract

This paper takes stock of Andrew Pettigrew's contribution to management scholarship. It goes through the process, content, and context of his research career. Chronologically, the process will be subdivided into the three distinct phases of the period leading up to the establishment of the Centre for Strategic Management and Change, his time with the Centre, and the research since leaving the Centre. The content of his research focussed on big problems and emerging phenomena like decision-making, organizational culture, organization development, strategic change, human resource management, competitiveness, new public management, boards of directors, innovative forms of organizing, high performing research teams, and business schools. His contextualist methodology for process research will be explicated. Pettigrew's contribution will be put in context by comparing it with contemporary research. The paper concludes that there is still a need to go for big problems and emerging phenomena, and for providing a processual understanding of management reality. There is a need to develop process research methodologies like Pettigrew's contextualism further, especially with regard to process research methods.

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Introduction

Andrew Pettigrew described his quest as trying to catch reality in flight (Pettigrew, 1998). His career has been varied, developing from lecturer in Organizational Behaviour into professor of Strategy and Organization, establishing and directing the Centre for Corporate Strategy and Change (CCSC) along the way. His contextualist methodology for doing process research developed as a common thread in all of this. The combination of a new methodology along with generating new theory, and his generally cooperative style of operation, made him highly influential as a management scholar. As a consequence, he is recognized as a leading process researcher (e.g. Langley, 2009; Sminia & de Rond, 2012). Additionally, he has been instrumental in building the management and organization research community in the UK in many ways, for instance as co-founder and first chairman of the British Academy of Management. He also received many honours, including being elected as Distinguished Scholar of the (US) Academy of Management: the first and still only non-North American who has been the recipient of this accolade. Andrew Pettigrew received an OBE for services to Higher Education in 2009.

Throughout his research career, Andrew Pettigrew tried to understand phenomena that are complex, that are a challenge to investigate, and that are difficult to capture with quantitative methods and statistical techniques. He went for organizational problems that were ignored by most management scholars. Pettigrew's contextualist methodology raised the legitimacy of qualitative research, his career starting at a time when the variance approach and quantification was the norm. His process scholarship helped lay the foundations

for other more sociological and qualitatively orientated management and organization research including, for instance, the current strategy-as-practice movement.

The paper will cover the content, process, and context of his contributions to management and organization research. There are three distinguishable phases to Pettigrew's life as a management scholar. This is reflected in the way this paper is structured. The review starts by looking at the years leading up to the establishment of CCSC. It continues by reviewing the research done under the CCSC umbrella, and then moves into the post-CCSC period. A separate section discusses the context in which this process took place. CCSC has been a profoundly important part of Pettigrew's career. It was also instrumental for establishing Warwick Business School as a centre for research excellence. And it boosted the careers of many researchers who have been part of it. The conclusion and discussion takes stock of Andrew Pettigrew's contributions – did he catch reality in flight? – to suggest how the quest might continue. Andrew has been a highly successful management scholar who went against the grain and in doing so, pulled off some remarkably large and risky research projects.

The Pre-CCSC Years, 1962-1985

Andrew Pettigrew's first degree is in sociology[2], reading the subject at undergraduate level at the University of Liverpool from 1962 to 1965. This was not his first encounter with the social sciences. While still at school, he was given

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[2] Biographical data is derived from Pettigrew (1998) and from a detailed CV Andrew Pettigrew kindly provided. The author has also had a lengthy conversation with Andrew about his work and life as a researcher. However, the content of this review is the sole responsibility of the author.

the opportunity to be part of an anthropological expedition to Uganda to chart cultural change among the Musopisiek people of the Sibei (with the findings published in Thomas, 1963). After graduating, he stayed on in Liverpool for another year to study for a postgraduate Diploma in Industrial Administration. In 1966, Andrew moved with Enid Mumford – his postgraduate research supervisor – to the Manchester Business School to take up a job as a research fellow. From 1969, there were two years as a visiting assistant professor at Yale University in the US, by invitation of Chris Argyris. On return to England in 1971, Andrew became a lecturer in Organizational Behaviour at the London Business School. In 1976, he moved to what was then the School of Industrial and Business Studies at the University of Warwick to take up a position as Professor of Organizational Behaviour. The School of Industrial and Business Studies would become Warwick Business School in 1988. At Warwick, Andrew founded and became the first director of CCSC in 1985.

These first 19 years of Andrew's academic career from undergraduate student to director of a research institute generated three research milestones. Together they lay the foundation for his distinct processual approach in management and organizational research. These are his doctoral dissertation into the politics of organizational decision-making (Pettigrew, 1970), which was published later as a research monograph (Pettigrew, 1973; reprinted in Pettigrew, 2001b), a case study into the creation of organizational culture (Pettigrew, 1979), and the massive investigation of continuity and change at ICI (Pettigrew, 1985a; reprinted in Pettigrew, 2011a).

Andrew Pettigrew's first publication reported on a research project that was part of the requirements to earn the Diploma in Industrial Administration at

the University of Liverpool (Pettigrew, 1968). It is an investigation into the "*strains and conflicts*" of "*innovating specialists*" (p. 216), in this case Operational Researchers. He would revisit the category of 'innovating specialists' again in some of the later research projects. More importantly, the phenomenon of organizational politics, as indicated by the 'strains and conflicts' will become a recurrent theme in almost all of his work. Chris Argyris picked up this particular article. It made him decide to invite the young Andrew to spend time at Yale: a unique opportunity for a young management scholar at a time when transatlantic associations were relatively uncommon.

What would become the Pettigrew brand of management research was first drafted in his doctoral dissertation (Pettigrew, 1970). It was developed from the research grant project formulated by Enid Mumford, on which Andrew was employed as a research fellow. It took the stimulating intellectual environment at Yale to articulate it well enough to persuade a publisher to take it on (Pettigrew, 1973). It reports on a case study of innovative decision-making. More specifically, it investigates a succession of decisions to replace a computer system at furniture and clothing retailer Littlewoods.

At the time, the majority of management scholars were occupied with rational decision-making and organizational structures. The then dominant understanding of how such decisions are going to take shape, would expect the computer experts as subordinates to act as information sources, to be consulted by their managers. These managers as hierarchical superiors then weigh up the information to decide as best as they can which computer system to procure. Pettigrew questions this expectation. He imagines that there are conflicts of interests, which will have an effect on what decision eventually will be made.

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Scholarly critique existed mainly in the form of the behavioural approach (Cyert & March, 1963; March & Simon, 1958). Pettigrew thought this was inadequate. The emphasis was too much on the individual level of analysis and on the cognitive limitations the manager is suffering from. He reckoned that decision-making is a social political process. To him, any study of decision-making has to take the social structure in which it takes place into account. It involves people with different professional and functional concerns but who are also mutually dependent on each other. In short, decision-making in organizations features organizational politics.

The research focused on the interdependency between the managers who have to decide on the new computer system and the computer experts in the organization – the 'innovating specialists' – who have to work with the new system. Referring to research practices in anthropology, history, and some strands of sociology, Pettigrew embarked upon a longitudinal case study because the analysis should incorporate time: "*... theories of organizational decision-making, power, and conflict require a processual form*" (Pettigrew, 1973, p. 55). He embarked upon participant observation, the analysis of documentary data, and a historical investigation of Littlewoods, in a way picking up on his very early experiences as a schoolboy anthropologist in Uganda.

Pettigrew (1973) provided a long answer and a short answer. The long answer is an elaborate account of how the experts, i.e. the computer specialists in the firm, gained and lost power relative to the managers. This in turn has an effect on their ability to affect the organization's social structure and therefore the content of the decisions that were made. It took place in a situation of disparity of demands, complexity, and uncertainty. This long answer is provided

in the course of several chapters, by first giving an overview of events, starting with the history of Littlewoods, then telling how specialization and the rise of the computer expert took place within the firm, by telling how various people acquired and maintained power, by explaining that the sequence of decisions pertaining to the new computer system is fraught with difficulties as a consequence of the different demands that need to be met, and by explaining how one decision sets the stage for the next decision, and that all these decisions are a reflection of the sources and use of power by the various people involved.

The short answer is that innovative decision-making is a social political process because of complexity, uncertainty, and disparity in demands; with the process taking shape as a consequence of participants' strategies to use opportunities inherent in the social structure to alter the social structure in order to favour their demands. Those who understand the social structure and the process, by which it takes shape, are the ones who will get the decisions made in the way they want. Pettigrew singles out the effect of certain individuals who have a position as gatekeeper because their actions are pivotal for understanding the direction the process ends up taking.

Working as a lecturer at London Business School, Pettigrew's next research project was what he describes as a study of a change process. It concerns Gordonstoun School in Scotland. The change in 1972 from single sex to co-education sparked his interest. The only published result is Pettigrew (1979). This paper develops an argument about the role of organizational culture and the ideas of a founder / entrepreneur in generating purpose, commitment, and order in an organization, with the case data providing the rational for this argument. The empirical work was similarly extensive as in the previous project.

Again it is a longitudinal case study with in-depth interviews, a survey among staff and students, document analysis, and a historical investigation. With regret, he admits that he never has come round to writing the book (Pettigrew, 1998). The suggestion that a manager / entrepreneur is capable of affecting how an organization operates and can be successful, by working on the organization culture / social structure, takes the findings in Pettigrew (1973) one step further.

In 1975, Pettigrew was given the opportunity to study and compare the emergence and development of Organizational Development (OD) groups in ICI. This was a direct consequence of a publication on the development of specialist activities in organizations (Pettigrew, 1975). Interestingly, this was not a scholarly paper but a publication in a practitioner journal. The article was written on the basis of the findings with regard to the 'innovative specialists' or computer experts in Littlewoods (Pettigrew, 1973). An OD specialist, working at ICI at the time, picked it up. He recognized a parallel between OD specialists and computer experts as going through a similar process with regard to their functioning and position in an organization. He offered Pettigrew an opportunity to investigate the rise of OD as a specialism in ICI.

This project developed into the much more encompassing study of the process of strategic change at ICI. Apart from finding out about the contribution and fate of OD specialists in ICI, the project also asked the more general question of "*... what are the dynamics of the process which leave one idea for change in the organizational sidings, another completely derailed, and a further one well on its way to implementation?*" (Pettigrew, 1985a, p. 39). Involvement with ICI would last from 1975 until 1983. The results were published two years later in the form of 'the ICI book' (Pettigrew, 1985a) and 'the ICI paper' (Pettigrew, 1987).

The ICI book and paper meant that Pettigrew's name became associated with the strategic management field. Apart from Pettigrew's 1970s study of innovative decision-making, others had embarked on research recognizing the role of power, politics, and organizational culture as well (e.g. Allison, 1971; Bower, 1970; March & Olsen, 1976; Mintzberg, 1978; Pfeffer, 1981; Quinn, 1980; Silverman, 1970). Yet strategic management remained heavily influenced by the expectations of the field's founding fathers that the strategy process should develop in a rational and orderly fashion (e.g. Ansoff, 1965; Learned, Christensen, Andrews, & Guth, 1965). Relying on economics to provide a rationale for picking the 'right' strategy under given circumstances, only amplified this expectation (Porter, 1980; Schendel & Hofer, 1979). The contrast between this idealized conceptualization of strategic management as rational decision-making and the burgeoning empirical work on how strategies actually are realized effectively falsifying this ideal, made Pettigrew argue that the content of strategic change cannot be understood separately from the process by which it is realized and from the context in which it takes place.

A similar argument was made with regard to OD. He criticized the universalistic claims with regard to its ability to generate change as well as the apolitical nature of its application. He concurred with Warmington, Lupton and Gribbin (1977) who pointed at a fundamental paradox in planned organizational change. To design an effective change program, you need to know about the culture and power system in the organization. But you can only learn about the culture and power system in the organization once you have embarked upon a change program.

Overall, Pettigrew (1985a, p. 15) concluded that most research on strategy and change has been "*ahistorical, acontextual, and aprocessual*". To remedy this, the ICI project tracked the variability of the context, the process, and the content of strategic change with regard to ICI, as well as the emergence and fate of its OD resources over time. This reflects the 'Pettigrew Triangle', with content, process, and context positioned at each corner, and a distinction being made between inner context and outer context (Pettigrew, 1987; Sminia & de Rond, 2012). These three elements have to be investigated holistically and tracked over time (see figure 1).

Figure 1:
Framework for analyzing Change
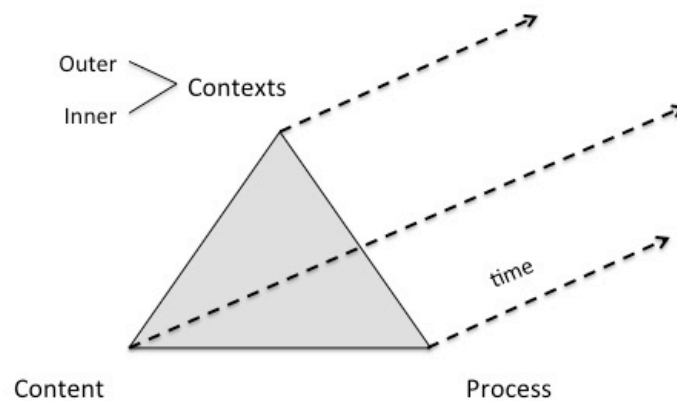
Source: Pettigrew lecture slides (April 2009)

The political and cultural perspective developed earlier was adopted again (Pettigrew, 1973, 1979). He now describes this as "*politics as the management of meaning*" (Pettigrew, 1985a, p. 44). It hinges on the concept of legitimacy. The expectation is that people who are actively involved in strategic

change seek to legitimize their own take on the state of affairs while simultaneously delegitimizing the points of view and demands of others. The context is not merely a backdrop. It offers opportunities and constraints on which participants in the process can draw to bolster their claims. But the context is also maintained and changed as a consequence of people's activities. The inner context refers to ICI itself. The outer context is made up of the firm's competitive environments as well as the wider economical and societal developments that are taking place.

Again the project generated a long answer and a short answer. The long answer involves elaborate accounts of ICI's changing business and economic context, of the rise and the changing role of OD in ICI, as well as accounts of continuity and change in the Agricultural Division, Petrochemicals Division, Plastics Division, Mond Division, and at ICI's corporate centre. Each one of these accounts demonstrates the contextualized and therefore unique course of events for each of these processes. Pettigrew provides a short answer by drawing out some commonalities in terms of patterns and ingredients that feature in every one of these processes.

One commonality is a further elaboration of his expectation that realizing strategic change is a process of politics as the management of meaning. It creates a periodic patterning of slow incremental change interspersed with episodes of rapid and more radical change. The latter involves a re-appreciation of the core beliefs of what the firm is about and how it is supposed to function. Such radical change requires "*strong, persistent, and continuous leadership*" (Pettigrew, 1985a, p. 454) of people choosing to put in the effort of playing the politics of meaning game. The external context offers and indeed necessitates reasons for change.

These have to be skilfully translated and drawn upon to make them meaningful within the organization to serve as an impetus and justification. If an internal context is too segmented, it will hamper if not inhibit change.

Rational linear processes of strategy formulation and implementation are found not to have had much of an effect as these mirror the prevailing cultural and political constellation too much. As was announced, "*the content of strategic change is thus ultimately a product of a legitimisation process shaped by political/cultural considerations, though often expressed in rational/analytical terms*" (Pettigrew, 1985a, p. 46 / 443). Pettigrew found core beliefs to be pivotal in how a firm functions. Strategic change, therefore, involves changing these core beliefs.

The role of OD specialists is developed into a more general assessment of the role and effects of innovative groups. Again this is found to be a complex concurrence of events involving context, intentions, leadership, and internal structure. The external context has to feature some necessary conditions for an innovative group to come into being in the first place. The internal context has to provide sufficient conditions for a specific course of events to take shape and for effects to occur. To have an effect, the innovative group has to navigate between an 'exclusive stance' and an 'inclusive stance'. This is summed up as the "*general dilemma* [of] *how to change the world whilst living with it*" (Pettigrew, 1985a, p. 513). The innovative group has to preserve some exclusivity and detachment to be able to function as a change agent while simultaneously being sufficiently inclusive and embedded to be accepted as a change agent.

The ICI project also saw a first articulation of Pettigrew's methodological approach (Pettigrew, 1985a, 1985b). Earlier he had argued against a

methodology based on hypothesizing about variables and outcomes because it ignores the process by which these relationships exist (see Pettigrew, 1973, pp. 79-81). Pettigrew adopts an epistemology which he labels as 'contextualism', one of Pepper's (1942) world hypotheses. He takes empirical observations and the knowledge that is derived from them as unavoidably bound up in when and where they occur. These observations capture events whose meaning can only be grasped by referring to the sequence of which they are part, in combination with the setting in which they take place. The overall approach is of an historian who tries to understand an outcome on the basis of what has lead up to it. As a social scientist, Pettigrew is not content with just providing an account of all the minutiae that contributed to the outcome under study. There is a requirement to abstract and to compare with existing theoretical insights to demonstrate an enhancement to our understanding.

This compels the researcher to adopt a longitudinal approach, utilizing a variety of data collection methods to capture what is and has been going on over the relevant period of time leading up to the outcome about which understanding is sought. This was already apparent in the Littlewoods and Gordonstoun School case studies (Pettigrew, 1973, 1979). It is repeated with the ICI project. Pettigrew (1985a) is a longitudinal study of ICI, with data being gathered while the process was playing out. He conducted long semi-structured interviews with a very large number of informants in three batches during 1975-1977, 1980-1981, and 1982. He collected company documentation. Pettigrew also worked as a consultant within the company. He did retrospective interviews and embarked upon archival research to get to grips with what happened before he became involved with ICI. The period covered is 1965-1983.

Pettigrew (1985a, 1985b) provides a six-step approach to analyse all these data. (1) Draft a detailed chronological description of the process under study. (2) Expose the continuity and change as it occurs in the course of the process. (3) Compare with existing theoretical insights or develop new theoretical insights on the basis of this description. (4) Identify various contextual levels that might impinge on the process under study. (5) Describe what is occurring at each contextual level for the period under investigation to link context variability to the process under study. (6) Evaluate the outcome of the process on the basis of how the course of the process and context has taken shape. This is not a matter of mechanically processing the data to arrive at a conclusion. He admits that putting the analysis together requires judgement and skill. The main criteria by which a contribution has to be considered include the balance between description and analysis, the extent to which there has been enhanced theoretical understanding, whether this enhanced understanding is a consequence of having answered the questions of what is occurring, why it is occurring, and how it is occurring, and how well the theoretical insights thus generated connect with the process data (Pettigrew, 1985b).

The long answers in Pettigrew (1973) and Pettigrew (1985a) are the result of these six steps. These are then condensed into the short answers to provide added theoretical understanding. Pettigrew's first three major research projects' theoretical understanding centres around the political and cultural conceptualization of the processes of decision-making and of strategic change in combination with their inherent contextual nature.

The CCSC Years: 1985-2001

The impact of the ICI study inspired Pettigrew to start a research institute to use and develop the contextualist methodology for answering 'big' management questions. So the Centre for Corporate Strategy and Change (CCSC) was established at Warwick in 1985. During its existence, Pettigrew was involved in seven different research projects. These were a study into the development of strategic human resource management (Pettigrew, Hendry, & Sparrow, 1990), a study in competitiveness and strategic change (Pettigrew & Whipp, 1991), a study of major change in the National Health Service (NHS) (Pettigrew, Ferlie, & McKee, 1992), a study into public sector change (Ferlie, Ashburner, Fitzgerald, & Pettigrew, 1996), a study into the functioning of boards of directors (McNulty & Pettigrew, 1999; Pettigrew & McNulty, 1998), a study into new and innovative organizational forms (Pettigrew & Fenton, 2000; Pettigrew et al., 2003), and a study of high performing research groups (Harvey, Pettigrew, & Ferlie, 2002). These were not the only projects done at the Centre but they were the ones that Pettigrew was heavily involved in. And they resulted in publications of which he was the (co-)author.

There are four major differences between how these studies were done and Pettigrew's first three projects (Ferlie & McNulty, 1997; Pettigrew, 1990, 1992a, 1997b, 1998, 2003a). (1) They were funded through large research grants. (2) There was a commitment to deliver results to the organizations that were investigated and they often participated as co-researchers. (3) The research was done by a research team put together especially for each project, as can be gathered from the many co-authors that now start appearing. (4) The

research questions at the core of these seven projects were aimed specifically at explaining variability in outcome on the basis of variability in process. The overall purpose was to move on from answering just 'how' questions to answering 'how to' questions. Pettigrew's three pre-CCSC projects concentrated on understanding 'how' an outcome comes about. The seven CCSC projects aimed to find out 'how to' realize a particular outcome. An understanding how specific particularities with regard to the course of the process lead to different outcomes, could shed light on how to go about to achieve a specific result.

CCSC by itself was a major innovation in the UK management research landscape. It employed highly talented people, mostly on a research only contract, with most of them going on to have distinguished academic careers by themselves. Private and public sector sponsors, accounting for about 20% of the budget, provided base funding (Pettigrew, 1998). This was topped up by grants and research contracts sourced from organizations ranging from ESRC to the NHS and Coopers & Lybrand, who co-financed the projects that were undertaken. This, of course, required Andrew Pettigrew to be highly topical in both academic as well as practical terms to keep sponsors interested and grant applications successful.

The purpose of the project on human resource management (HRM) was threefold: (1) to identify the impact of economic, technological, and product market strategies on HRM; (2) to identify the contribution of HRM to competitiveness; and (3) to identify novel and effective HRM policies and practices (Hendry & Pettigrew, 1986, 1992; Sparrow & Pettigrew, 1987). The study was built around a basic framework derived from the 'Pettigrew Triangle'. A distinction was made between an outer context, an inner context, an HRM

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context, and HRM content (Hendry & Pettigrew, 1990, 1992; Sparrow & Pettigrew, 1987). The development of a firm's competiveness was understood in terms of the strategic change process within ICI (Pettigrew, 1985a) and which was in the process of being investigated further in the competitiveness project (Pettigrew & Whipp, 1991) alongside the HRM project. HRM's contribution to such an emergent and indeterminate process was expected to provide flexibility and adaptability (Hendry & Pettigrew, 1990). Hendry and Pettigrew (Hendry, 1990; 1992) presented the development of HRM policy and practice as a function of a firm's life cycle. They identified three patterns: (1) rapid growth of a single or dominant product, (2) severe retrenchment in the case of market decline, and (3) slow decline of a mature company. Such shifts were accompanied by changes in the organizations' structures and strategies, which in turn changed the requirements and policies and practices of HRM.

The competitiveness project took the findings from the ICI project about how strategic change takes place a step further to link it with competiveness and performance. A firm's ability to manage change was expected to have an effect on how well a firm will be able to survive and perform (Pettigrew & Whipp, 1991). In effect, this project deals with dynamic capability (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997). Yet instead of treating dynamic capability as a dependent variable to be explained by an assortment of independent variables in a ahistorical, acontextual, and aprocessual manner (e.g. Helfat et al., 2007), the emphasis is put on how the ability to manage change develops and diminishes over time and whether there is a connection with the ups and downs of firm performance. Strategic change and competition are taken as inseparable processes to make the point that competitiveness is as much a consequence of 'management' as it is of

what happens in the competitive environment (Pettigrew & Whipp, 1991; Whipp, Rosenfeld, & Pettigrew, 1989a). The strategic change process, as can be expected, is elaborated in terms of the 'Pettigrew Triangle' of 'content', 'process', and 'internal and external context'. Competition is developed as stretching out across 'time' and across the 'three major levels' of 'firm', 'sector', and 'economy'.

Figure 2:
Managing change for competitive success:
The five central factors
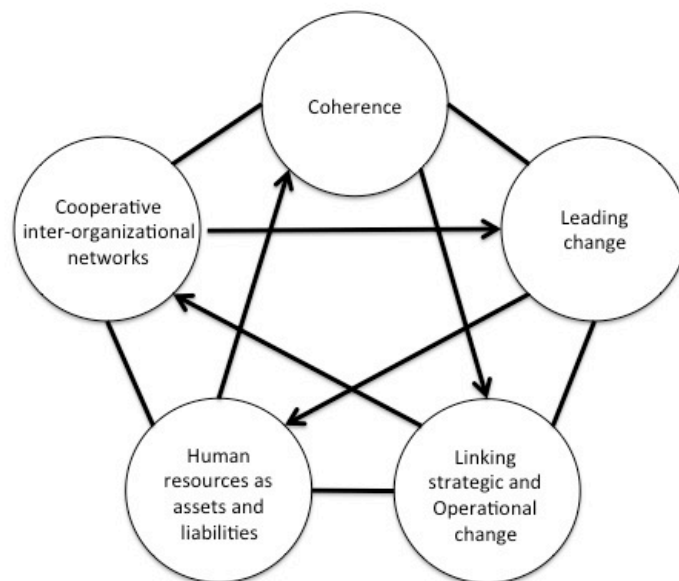
Source: Pettigrew & Whipp (1991, p.104)

The competitiveness project features seven longitudinal case studies, with three contrasting pairs of firms with high and low performance. The pairs are taken from the automobile, merchant banking, and book publishing sectors. There is one life insurance case. Matching pairs in this way was a deliberate choice, to study changing process features over time within firms that face similar circumstances. This allows for linking the way strategic change was managed in each firm with performance differences (Pettigrew, 1990). Gathering real-time data – on this occasion from 1985 until 1990 – by conducting semi-

structured interviews and by consulting primary (firm) and secondary archival sources was taken forward from Pettigrew's earlier studies. This was supplemented with historical research into the case companies in question. Again there is a long answer and a short answer.

The short answer is a rather elaborate model (see figure 2). It depicts a pattern of activity that characterizes the higher performing firms (Pettigrew & Whipp, 1991, 1993; Whipp et al., 1989a; Whipp, Rosenfeld, & Pettigrew, 1989b). Process variability in terms of five interrelated factors is linked to outcome variability in terms of realized competitiveness and performance. The five interrelated factors are 'environmental assessment', 'leading change', 'linking strategic and operational change', 'human resources as assets and liabilities', and 'coherence'. The five factors are teased out further in terms of 'primary conditioning features', and 'secondary mechanisms'. They all work together to generate a virtuous circle allowing firms to deal with changing demands and to remain competitive. More specifically, environmental assessment should not be seen as a technical exercise. Organizations need to be 'open learning systems' that re-interpret the circumstances in which they have to function. Leading change is not about bold and dramatic actions, but about providing small incremental directions and about generating legitimacy for change. Linking strategic and operational change is about connecting intentions with emergent activity. Human resource management should treat people as assets and not as liabilities. Coherence is about keeping the organization together while it changes. It should focus on consonance, advantage, and feasibility. The long answer is found in subsequent chapters in Pettigrew and Whipp (1991). Every one of these

five factors is elaborated by describing how they featured and developed over time in each of the seven cases.

The NHS project was of a similar research design. The question here was how the same change initiative can proceed at a different pace across various localities (Pettigrew et al., 1992). This was and still is a particularly apt question for the NHS. There still are many attempts to adapt, improve and change its delivery and organization across the country while the results of such initiatives vary so much depending on when and where you look. The NHS is the UK government funded and directed health services organization whose primary purpose is to meet the health needs of everyone, to be free at the point of delivery, with its services based on clinical need and not ability to pay. At the time, by taking on the NHS as a research site, Pettigrew was one of only few to bring management research into the public sector. As can be expected, starting point for the project was that change in the NHS involves a context, process, and content, and their interrelationship over time (Pettigrew et al., 1992; Pettigrew, McKee, & Ferlie, 1988). Here too, the fieldwork featured comparative, longitudinal and issue-based case studies. The purpose was to track variability in the pace of change and to link it with variability in outcome over time (Pettigrew, 1990; Pettigrew et al., 1992).

The long answer (in Pettigrew et al., 1992) involves detailed descriptions of various change attempts. These include the introduction of general management in the NHS as top-down restructuring (also reported in Ashburner, Ferlie, & Fitzgerald, 1996), the management of retrenchment in the acute sector while dealing with rationalization and redevelopment, the management of uncertainty and crisis in dealing with HIV/AIDS (also reported in Ferlie &

Bennett, 1992; Ferlie & Pettigrew, 1990), managing major change in dealing with new approaches to psychiatric care, the creation of positive change in mental handicap services, and the creation of new organizations by building a new hospital.

Figure 3:
Receptive contexts for change:
The eight factors
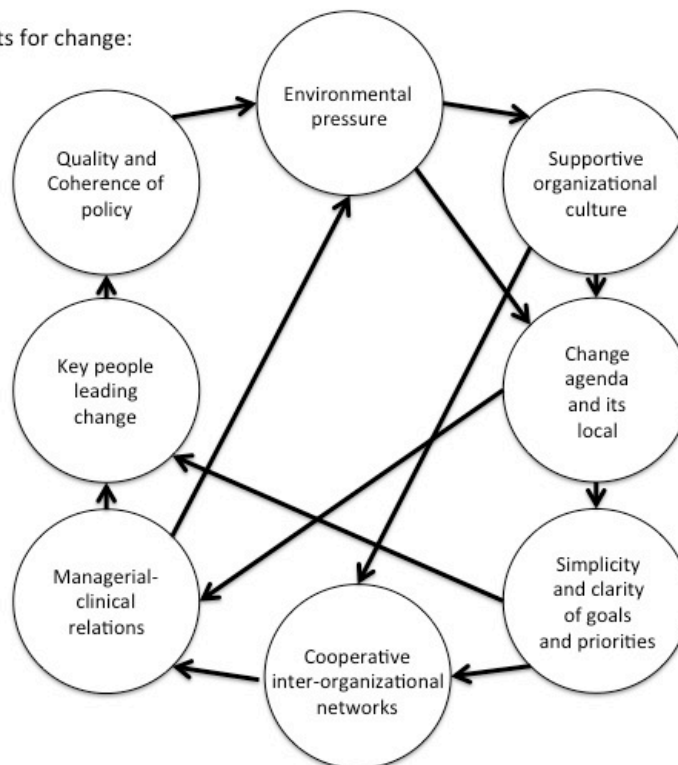
Source: Pettigrew, Ferlie & McKee (1992, p.276)

The short answer is a model that consists of eight factors that indicate an organization's receptivity for change (see figure 3). These eight factors include 'quality and coherence of policy', 'availability of key people leading change', 'environmental pressure', 'supportive organizational culture', 'effective managerial-clinical relations', 'cooperative inter-organizational networks', 'simplicity and clarity of goals and priorities', and 'fit between the district's change agenda and its locale'. All eight factors reinforce each other in a virtuous manner. Some features like leading change are shared with the model in Pettigrew and Whipp (1991). However, the competitiveness model is a model of

activities. This receptiveness model describes an evolving state of affairs. With its references to health service features including the distinction between managers and clinicians it is specifically formulated for the NHS.

The receptiveness model became a means for NHS change initiators to assess whether certain parts of the NHS have receptive or non-receptive contexts for change. This then formed the basis for diffusion strategies by taking a change initiative first to those parts of the NHS that have a receptive context and then utilize the initial success of these initiatives as legitimation and leverage point in those parts that were less receptive to change.

The NHS study was subsequently broadened out to a more general exploration of change in public sector organizations, to critically engage with the emerging 'new public management' movement (Ferlie et al., 1996). It drew on primary data from the NHS project, but was supplemented with secondary data on other public service sectors. It also incorporated insights from the competitiveness project (Pettigrew & Whipp, 1991) and the study on the functioning of boards of directors in the private sector (McNulty & Pettigrew, 1999; Pettigrew & McNulty, 1998), which was conducted in parallel. Four distinct themes were explored. Is management in the public sector different from management in the private sector? How does the introduction and dissemination of new public management work as a process of organizational change? Are there changes to the roles and relationships of and between individuals specifically at the top of local public services? And how is strategy developed among these specific individuals at the local level in this apparent changing context?

This exploration of 'new public management' at the time did not find any definitive answers but did present a number of tendencies. Public management remains different from management in the private sector in a number of aspects. Top down organizational change was a feature of public organization reform but with varying consequences. Roles and relationships were altering but these changes had different consequences for different people. And people at the top of local public services were engaging more in developing their own strategy. It also threw up many more questions about, for instance, how accountability had to be arranged, about the apparent rise of hybrid organizational forms that feature characteristics of both public and private sector organizations, and about 'quasi markets' (also see Ferlie, 1992). This reflects what is now recognizable as the typical way in which Pettigrew develops his answers. He specifies a range of contextual factors that affect how the course of a process plays out. He singles out various kinds of people whose activities contributed to the course of events. He describes the variety among various process courses with regard to a selection of process, context, and content parameters. And he links this to the variety in outcomes. Particularly interesting about this study is that Pettigrew focused on a phenomenon that was both empirically as well as theoretically in the process of emerging, viz.: 'new public management', and took that as a subject of investigation.

The study into how boards of directors operate developed out of an interest in 'managerial elites', as these had been rarely investigated and were considered difficult to access (Pettigrew, 1992b). There are questions about who they are and whether they have the power they are presumed to have. It also picks up on the politics of the management of meaning theme from the ICI study.

It focuses on how part-time chairman and non-executive directors through their actions affect strategic change (McNulty & Pettigrew, 1999; Pettigrew & McNulty, 1998). A basic model is developed that sees part-time chairmen's and non-executive directors' influence in the board as dependent on the board's 'context and structure' that enable and constrain 'power sources', and on the chairmen's and directors' 'will and skill' (McNulty & Pettigrew, 1996, 1999; Pettigrew & McNulty, 1995, 1998). Empirical work is somewhat different but still quite substantial. Instead of establishing a detailed chronological account of a particular course of events spanning a number of years, this time the focus is on the current established practice of how boards operate across the UK. Data collection relies on a survey, interviews and the analysis of publically available documentation. The survey is conducted among the chairmen and non-executive directors of the top 500 UK PLCs and no less than 108 interviews of board members have been conducted. A remarkable feat as the top level of large firms is deemed to be inaccessible for research.

McNulty and Pettigrew (1999) eventually present a model that distinguishes between taking strategic decisions, shaping strategic decisions, and shaping the content, context, and conduct of strategy. All boards are found to take strategic decisions by accepting, rejecting, or referring capital investment proposals. Some boards shape strategic decisions by consulting with executives when investment proposals are drafted. Very few boards shape the content, conduct, and context of strategy by developing a context for debate, establishing a methodology for strategy development, monitoring strategy content, or altering executive conduct in relation to strategy. These three ways in which a board involves itself with strategy are put on a continuum. It stretches from a
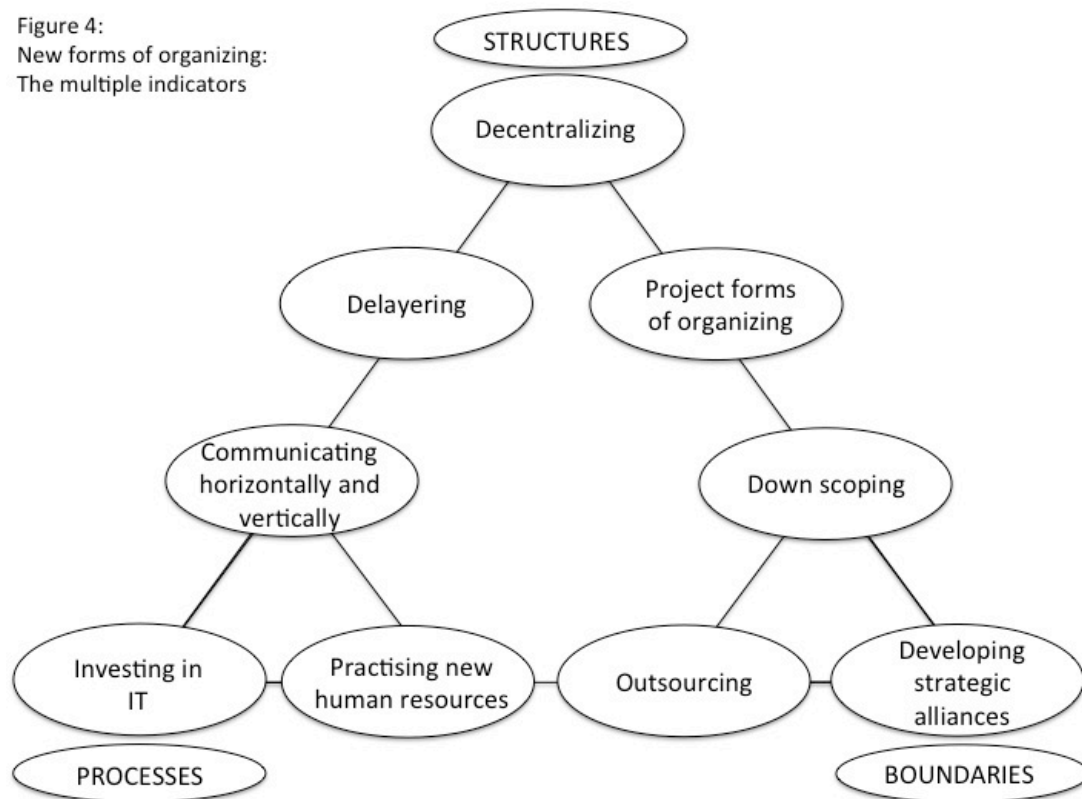
minimalist board that only reacts to executives' capital investment proposals to a maximalist board that is a forum for reflection and debate. The implication is that maximalist boards are deemed to be more effective.

The next CCSC research project, in which Andrew Pettigrew was involved, was also its most ambitious one. This was the project on Innovative Forms of Organizing (INNFORM). His starting point was yet another empirically and theoretically emerging phenomenon. It was triggered by the observation that there were more and more claims that firms move away from traditional organizational forms and that different and more innovative organizational forms were being developed to deal with an increasingly dynamic and more complex world. There were three aims to the INNFORM project (Fenton & Pettigrew, 2000; Pettigrew, 2003b; Pettigrew & Massini, 2003). The 'progress' aim was to assess what these new organizational forms look like and whether they are on the increase. The 'performance' aim was to find out whether and how these new forms generate better performance. The 'process' aim was to examine how organizations move from the traditional to these newer forms.

The INNFORM project was conducted by a team of teams, with CCSC serving as the hub (Pettigrew, 2003a). The other teams were based at Erasmus University (the Netherlands), ESSEC (France), Hitotsubashi University (Japan), IESE (Spain), Jönköping University (Sweden), Oxford University (UK), St Gallen University (Switzerland) and Duke University (USA). The empirical work spanned three continents, with an extensive survey done in Europe, Japan, and the USA to measure the rise and spread of these new organizational forms. To probe these new innovative organizational forms further, no less than 18 in-

depth case studies were conducted of firms based in the UK, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, and Spain.

Figure 4:
New forms of organizing:
The multiple indicators

STRUCTURES

Decentralizing

Delayering

Project forms of organizing

Communicating horizontally and vertically

Down scoping

Investing in IT

Practising new human resources

Outsourcing

Developing strategic alliances

PROCESSES

BOUNDARIES

Source: Pettigrew & Massini (2003, p.12)

The large quantitative inquiry was a departure from previous research practices. It was still processual in the sense that there were two measurements taken to enable a comparison over time. To identify these new organizational forms, a set of nine variables was developed, associated with the constructs of structures, processes, and boundaries (Fenton & Pettigrew, 2000; Pettigrew & Massini, 2003). These variables are decentralizing, delayering, project forms of organizing, developing strategic alliances, down scoping, outsourcing, investing in IT, practicing new human resources, and communicating horizontally and vertically (see figure 4). Labelling these variables as verbs is another indicator of the process character of this specific inquiry. The survey revealed that firms are not replacing but supplementing older organizational forms with newer ones.

Yet starting points and rates of change vary considerably across the world (Fenton & Pettigrew, 2000; Lewin, Massini, Ruigrok, & Numagami, 2003; Massini & Pettigrew, 2003; Pettigrew & Massini, 2003; Whittington, Pettigrew, Peck, Fenton, & Conyon, 1999).

Performance effects are associated with 'complementarity', a term derived from Milgrom and Roberts (1995; Whittington & Pettigrew, 2003). This relationship is present in the survey data (Massini & Pettigrew, 2003; Whittington et al., 1999) and in individual case studies (Fenton & Pettigrew, 2003; Pettigrew & Whittington, 2003). Complementarity in a way is a further development of the virtuousness in the circles that indicate the capability to manage change (Pettigrew & Whipp, 1991) and the receptive context for change (Pettigrew et al., 1992). In going for a new organizational form, the various aspects as indicated by the nine variables tend to have a mutually reinforcing effect. There is a positive complementarity with the benefits only becoming apparent when firms achieve a more encompassing system change involving all elements of the new organizational form. There is a negative complementarity in that the benefits fail to materialize and things can even get worse when firms limit themselves to only one or a few aspects.

With regard to the 'process' aims, firms experimenting with and adopting new organisational forms were increasingly troubled by dualities. Dualities are opposing forces that need to be balanced (Sánchez-Runde & Pettigrew, 2003). Innovation, strategy, and change is never finished, as duality is always present and requires attention (Pettigrew, 2003b). As a consequence, organizations need to be continuously re-created. Whatever appears as a duality is very local and contextual, and as such appears to defy a generalized and more universal take on

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it. Yet specific dualities are seen as the manifestation of a meta-duality between homogeneity and heterogeneity (Achtenhagen & Melin, 2003). Furthermore, the duality between organizing and strategizing was put forward as a more generally appearing phenomenon as well (Whittington & Melin, 2003). This duality manifests itself as a tension between having to strategize and commit to a specific way of operating to exploit competitive advantage while simultaneously having to organize to uphold a capacity to deal with change. It is reminiscent of the tension between exploitation and exploration so often referred to in in the resource-based view (Levinthal & March, 1993; March, 1991). Again, leading change as a collective and persistent effort was identified as a vital ingredient in the process (Whittington & Pettigrew, 2003).

The last CCSC project Pettigrew was involved in investigated high performing research groups (Ferlie, Harvey, & Pettigrew, 2002; Harvey et al., 2002). The project focused on performance differences between research units in order to find out how to organize and manage knowledge production. Interestingly, although the research question concentrates on performance, it was not a comparison between instances of low and high performance, as was done earlier with similar research questions (e.g. Pettigrew & Whipp, 1991). The research was done for the NHS, with the empirical part investigating high impact research groups in a medical setting but with strong affiliations to university research. Similar to the INNFORMS project, there was a survey concentrating on the general parameters, by which high impact research groups can be described, combined with four case studies of highly successful research groups to find out how they operate. The findings take on the form of another set of interrelated factors that take shape as a virtuous mechanism. These factors are strong

leadership, finding, motivating and retaining talent, strategies of related diversification in research subjects, a strong link between (scientific) theory and (clinical) practice, and network connectedness. Excessive reliance on short-term contracts, financial insecurity, conflicting demands, and inter-occupational tensions inhibit the operation of this virtuous circle.

This succession of seven research projects saw a further development of the contextualist methodology (Ferlie & McNulty, 1997; Pettigrew, 1990, 1992a, 1997b). The comparative longitudinal case study has emerged as a research strategy, specifically adopted to answer 'how to' questions. Comparing matched pairs that differ with regard to an outcome generates explanations in terms of differences between the process courses of each case. This in turn provides a basis for advice on how to achieve particular results. Data collection still needs to be multi-method but now also is multi-researcher, to add to a better understanding of what is going on. Quantitative survey data is used to find out about the 'what' of the phenomenon under investigation. Qualitative comparative case studies aim to find out about the 'how'. The process research skill (and challenge) is further explicated. The process under investigation has to be defined beforehand. Data has to be gathered and corroborated in a sequence of collection and verification. And most importantly, 'data asphyxiation' has to be avoided. Data asphyxiation occurs when there is not a clear enough steer on what the research project is about. As a consequence, it is unclear what data is relevant to be collected. And the investigators are tempted to collect just everything.

There now is also a more explicit qualification of the ontology and epistemology of contextualism. Pettigrew (1992a, 1997b) identifies with a

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'structuration-like' theory of process (Sminia, 2009) by explicitly referring to sociologists Giddens (1979, 1984), Sztompka (1991), Sewell (1992), and Abbott (1992), and to historian Tilly (1984). These publications still had to be written when Pettigrew (1973) first indicated that social process constitutes and is constituted by social structure. He now clarifies this further. Social reality is a process that occurs rather than exists. It is socially constructed. It emerges as actions with the tension between actions and structures as its driving force. There is a duality of structure and a dual quality of actors. Both are involved in their own creation and the interchange of action and structure is cumulative over time. He agrees with Van de Ven (1992) that process research is about explaining an outcome as a consequence of the course of the process that led up to it.

Pettigrew's seven CCSC research projects further deepened this understanding of the contextual and processual nature of organization and management. He abandoned the idea that strategic management is exclusively about decision making and choice, now preferring it to be conceptualized as a process of strategic change (Mintzberg, Waters, Pettigrew, & Butler, 1990). Recurrent themes across the findings of the CCSC studies include the observation that the way in which a process progresses has performance implications, whether it is in terms of HRM, competitiveness, the success of change initiatives, or reaping the benefits of new and innovative organizational forms. High performance is a consequence of virtuous circles amongst a range of factors playing out over time, which eventually has been labelled as positive complementarity. Leading change appears across the CCSC studies as a crucial ingredient to create and maintain such an effect. This is not the charismatic and

transformational leadership so often prescribed (e.g. Bass, 1991). Instead it is about persistence and about continuity of effort by a succession of various people in various places in the organization who keep it moving along in a world characterized by ambiguity and duality.

The Post-CCSC Years, 2001-2014

In 2003, Andrew Pettigrew left Warwick Business School to become dean of the University of Bath School of Management. CCSC had been dissolved two years earlier in 2001. In 2008, Andrew transferred to his current position as Professor of Strategy and Organization at the University of Oxford's Saïd Business School.

This period did not see the large research projects that Pettigrew was involved in earlier. Nevertheless, there was a project in international collaborative management research. And he became involved in an EFMD initiative on the institutional development of business schools (Pettigrew, 2014; Pettigrew, Cornuel, & Hommel, 2014). Up to now, the management research project has only resulted in one publication. It reflects on the INNFORM experience for the purpose of conducting international collaborative research in the area of international business (Collinson & Pettigrew, 2008). This period also saw publications co-authored with PhD students Andrew had supervised (Hatum & Pettigrew, 2006; Paroutis & Pettigrew, 2007), as well as work that picked up on the earlier CCSC project on boards of directors (McNulty, Pettigrew, Jobome, & Morris, 2011; Pye & Pettigrew, 2005). Other contributions were more reflective and centred on the future direction and relevance of management research (Pettigrew, 2005, 2011b, 2012, 2013).

Hatum and Pettigrew (2006) and Paroutis and Pettigrew (2007) were not the first co-authored papers with PhD students. There also was Hardy and Pettigrew (1985) and Webb and Pettigrew (1999). Hatum's project was about the flexibility of Argentinian firms, operating in the context of an emergent economy. It picked up on the management of change and competitiveness theme (Pettigrew & Whipp, 1991). Paroutis' project was about the daily activities of strategists in multi-business firms and whether and how these affect the overall strategic direction. This one continues with the politics of meaning from the ICI project (Pettigrew, 1985a, 1987). It also links in with the emerging interest in strategy-as-practice (Jarzabkowski, 2005; Johnson, Melin, & Whittington, 2003; Sminia, 2005; Whittington, 1996). Webb's project connects the external context – in the form of the UK insurance industry - with the strategic initiatives UK insurance companies embarked upon. Hardy and Pettigrew (1985) demonstrate that the use of power does not necessarily instigate conflict and can actually be used to accommodate contradictions. It reports on two case studies of works closures. All four projects feature Pettigrew's contextualist methodology.

Drawing on earlier publications on the requirements for management scholarship in general (Pettigrew, 1997a, 2001a) and strategic management in particular (Pettigrew, Thomas, & Whittington, 2002; Whittington, Pettigrew, & Thomas, 2002), Pettigrew (2011b) declared his views on the future of management research. For research to be sound, it has to clear the double hurdles – with the emphasis on the plural – of rigour and relevance.

There is a careful argument, undoubtedly inspired by his detailed observations of how strategic change takes place, explaining the limitations of the still dominant modernist approach in strategic management (Pettigrew,

2001a). This modernist approach is especially apparent in the majority of strategy academics' working assumption that strategic management is an ordered, rational and linear process of choice and implementation, with the variance approach being the preferred mode of research. Although not dismissing it entirely, there is scepticism with regard to the modernist ideal of management science eventually uncovering universal truths that can be commonly applied.

Pettigrew with Whittington and Thomas points at the irony of all these research efforts of testing hypotheses, not arriving at any definitive conclusions but throwing up additional and more fine grained questions instead (Whittington et al., 2002). This if anything, effectively validates his contextualist point of view. Therefore, to Pettigrew the purpose of strategic management research, including that of the modernist variety, is to generate theory that inspires creativity and reflexivity, not to discover universal truths. If there is anything that is universal, it is the contextuality of management practice, both in time and place. Pettigrew's expectation is that the quest of answering the 'how' questions that are inherent in process research should eventually allow us to provide answers to the 'how to' questions that are relevant for practicing managers.

The requirement of rigour and relevance translates into a duty of not only performing excellent research but also of engaging with the world of practice and with society at large (Pettigrew, 2005). This duty is expressed in the five I's of Impact by offering 'how to' knowledge, of Innovation in theory and method, of Interdisciplinary openness, of Internationalism of investigation and collaboration, and of Involvement with but independence from fellow

researchers and users. Concentrating on impact, which is of increasing concern in the UK because of its rising prominence among the criteria by which university research is being assessed, Pettigrew (2011b) argues that his contextualist methodology is ideally suited to deliver on this.

Relevance requires engagement with those who are the object of inquiry to make the findings useful for them (Pettigrew, 2012). Moreover, there is an expectation that management scholarship not just investigates to explain and understand. It has to continuously co-create a managerial and organizational reality with those for whom the research is being done (Pettigrew, 1997a, 2001a, 2005). The main inspiration needs to come from big themes such as competitiveness, health care change, new public management, or innovative organizational forms, rather than theoretical considerations. These are deemed too parochial and only lead to incremental knowledge accumulation.

Drawing on and engaging with existing social science theory and methodology achieves rigour. The aim is to extend rather than to stay within their bounds. Management and organization scholarship needs to be pluralistic because of the "*absence of unambiguous foundational truth in the social sciences*" (Pettigrew, 2001a, p. S62). Ideally multi-disciplinary and international research teams should be formed to conduct the research projects. There is a clear echo here of Pettigrew's experiences with his increasingly ambitious research under the CCSC umbrella.

Rigour is indicated by fulfilling the range of criteria for qualitative research put forward by Bluhm, Harman, Lee, and Mitchell (2010). These chime with the requirements Pettigrew set out earlier. They include giving voice to the people who are investigated, a longitudinal design, consideration of context in

the explanation, drawing on existing theory but aiming to enhance and develop new theory, multiple data sources, and transparency of methods and analysis (Pettigrew, 2012). He specifically singles out transparency. This is further elaborated as "*transparency of theoretical and empirical positioning, transparency of research questions, of appropriate theory, of where the theoretical and empirical gaps are to be filled, of choice of cases and evidence, of transparency of method and forms of analysis, of data display and evidence and substantiation of claims of scholarly contributions*" (Pettigrew, 2012, p. 1322). Although not explicitly processual in orientation, the work of Eisenhardt (1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007) is offered as a benchmark, providing further insight into how transparency can be achieved (also see Pettigrew, 2013).

Context

A research career spanning 52 years certainly is a process. It also features a context – both academic and societal – within which this process took place, on which Pettigrew could draw, and which was affected by his work.

Academically, Pettigrew was not the only one writing about process in the realm of management and organization. Nor was he the only one who introduced us to a political and cultural understanding of strategic decision-making and change, and leadership. When he started, he could draw on and extend the behavioural approach (Cyert & March, 1963; March & Simon, 1958). Pettigrew was both instrumental for and part of a larger research stream that introduced us to power, politics, and culture (Bower, 1970; Clegg, 1975; Quinn, 1980; Schein, 1985; Silverman, 1970). Others have done longitudinal case studies on

strategy processes as well and reported similar findings (e.g. Burgelman, 1983; Grinyer & Spender, 1979; Hinings & Greenwood, 1988; Johnson, 1987; Mintzberg, 1978). Process pioneers include Abbott (1990), Barley (1986), Langley (1999), Mintzberg (1979), Orlikowski (1992), Van de Ven, (Van de Ven, Angle, & Poole, 1989; Van de Ven & Poole, 1995), and Weick (1979).

The CCSC studies in particular made extensive use of already existing theoretical insights – also from variance studies – to provide direction and an initial vocabulary for the research projects, and more specifically to indicate what a contextualist approach would add to our understanding of the phenomenon under study. For instance, the competitiveness project drew on microeconomics (Lenz, 1980; Nelson & Winter, 1982; Porter, 1980), new competition ideas (Abernathy & Clark, 1981; Wheelwright, 1987), institutional economics (Hodgson, 1988), the then current economic retardation debate (Weiner, 1981), and excellence and turnaround studies that were fashionable at the time (Grinyer, Mayes, & McKiernan, 1988; Peters & Waterman, 1982), to make the point that each one of them only partially addresses the issue. The other studies featured a similar 'consultation' of existing research.

Pettigrew's projects were also very timely with regard to societal developments. Maybe he was fortunate that the UK was experiencing considerable change and turmoil at the time. Maybe it is about having a nose for the major issues. This timeliness helped with getting access and legitimacy among those who were investigated and those who provided the grants and the contracts. The competitiveness project fitted very well with contemporary concerns about the UK economy, as politicians were trying to make it recover from the previous economic crisis. The NHS project was conducted while

politicians were grappling with a need for a major restructuration to adapt health service provision to societal change. The board of directors project took place while concerns over the way they functioned were surfacing. The public management project and the INNFORM project investigated phenomena that were both theoretically and empirically emergent at the time.

Pettigrew's academic impact is self-evident from the many citations his work received. There is also an effect on management practice, again specifically with the CCSC projects, because those who were investigated were also involved as co-researchers, with their problems being at the heart of the inquiry. Moreover, with the research topics chosen from phenomena that were taking shape while investigated – like human resource management, NHS change, new public management, or new organizational forms – Pettigrew's research has been part of their development.

Discussion and Conclusion

Has Andrew Pettigrew caught reality in flight? Or should the question be: what reality did Andrew Pettigrew catch? And how well has he done it? There is a definitive pattern to his contributions. Initially, the focus was on capturing the managerial reality of decision-making and of organizational change, and to link it with outcome. This management reality turned out to be in sharp contrast with the reality presumed by then prevalent management scholarship. Instead of the ordered and linear processes of information processing and rational choice, he found and emphasized that the presence of conflicting interests, politics and organizational culture essentially makes management a social process,

meandering and developing over time. Context is not just an entity scrutinized and reduced to information flows to feature as an input into a choice process. It is continuously involved in how the course of the process takes shape. Yet there are different qualities to how management proceeds through this process, with these being responsible for performance differences.

In his later work, there is a realization that process is essentially creative and generative. New realities emerge, producing new problems that require new solutions. Consequently, research topics moved away from trying to just describe and understand what is going on, to trying to capture and in some instances to become part of what is being created. This was especially the case with the HRM project, the NHS research, new public management, and the INNFORM project investigating new organizational forms. The implication of course is that management researchers cannot be objective and detached investigators. They are co-creators of an evolving management reality.

To get to grips with this, Pettigrew developed his unique contextualist take on process research. It is based on an underlying structuration-like process theory, with the contours already present in his PhD research (Pettigrew, 1970, 1973), ahead of the later articulation by Giddens (1976). The essence of his contextualism is to take the multi-causal nature of process evolvement over time seriously. This has an effect on the use of theory, on how data collection is done, and on how answers to research questions are developed.

The theoretical starting point of Pettigrew's projects is that the majority of research on any topic is acontextual, aprocessual, and ahistorical because it utilizes a variance approach. Nevertheless, there tends to be a wealth of insights available, which are consulted to develop a range of expectations and questions

with regard to a more processual understanding of the phenomenon under study. The existing insights may even allow for a comparative case study design, with cases put together in matched pairs that face similar circumstances but experience dissimilar outcomes. Hence, theory is utilized deductively by drawing on already existing insights that then guide data collection, but developed further inductively to construct a more processual understanding.

Ideally, Pettigrew would like data collection to be multi-case, multi-source, multi-method and multi-researcher, and not necessarily limited to just qualitative data. Quantitative data is particularly useful to track the 'what' of the phenomenon under study. Multiple data sources from which both qualitative and quantitative data are generated – depending on the sources drawn on and the methods utilized – form the basis of the more in-depth case studies that concentrate on the 'how' of the process by which the phenomenon under study develops. Having more than one researcher involved not only allows for simultaneous data collection but also encourages explication and reflection while data is being collected and analysed. This makes the whole exercise more critical and better considered.

Findings are presented by providing long answers and short answers. The long answer features the in-depth case studies to illustrate, explicate, and justify the over-aching and more abstract short answer that effectively deals with the research question. The short answer is presented as a mechanism, mostly in the form of a virtuous or vicious circle (see figures 2, 3, and 4). The theoretical models that are the outcomes of the research projects are expected to take shape in this way. The combination of long answer and short answer requires the results of a research project to be presented in the form of a book. The short

answers lend themselves for development into a journal article. Because the research is so close to how managers experience their reality, there is plenty of scope to publish useful insights for managers in practitioner journals. In fact, developing a presence in this type of outlet provides legitimacy and opportunities for doing management research in the first place.

Interestingly, most of the criticism and comments on Pettigrew's work stress it is not contextual and processual enough. Those strategy scholars who Pettigrew effectively criticises – the ones who did and still do research that is acontextual, aprocessual, and ahistorical – mostly have ignored and at best have acknowledged Pettigrew's contribution as 'complementary' (e.g. Hambrick, 2002). They also periodically proclaim the need for more processual and longitudinal research (e.g. Lockett, Thompson, & Morgenstern, 2009; Porter, 1991; Priem & Butler, 2001; Shanley & Peteraf, 2006), and that is about it.

People who engaged with and have criticized Pettigrew's work share his concerns about the lack of a contextual and processual understanding of management and organization. They take on board Pettigrew's requirement of embeddedness but argue that his elaboration of context is uncritical by not questioning the legitimacy of top management (Morgan & Sturdy, 2000; Willmott, 1997). It is lacking as it does not sufficiently incorporate the influence of (British) society at large (Whittington, 1989) or of technological change (Starkey, 1987). Caldwell (2005) accuses Pettigrew of inconsistency. Pettigrew argues that context should not be treated as a descriptive background or as a list of antecedents. This is what Caldwell indicts Pettigrew of doing.

Others find that Pettigrew's conception of process does not incorporate an ontology and epistemology, which is truly processual (Chia & MacKay, 2007;

Hernes, 2014; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). Their post-processual approach is developed from the point of view that reality is constituted by change. A course of events therefore comes forward from inherent dispositions and logics within practice (Schatzki, 2001), and not from agency or context. They see agency and context as the consequence of process. They claim Pettigrew's foregrounding of the agent as the driver of the events that make up the process, and therefore of the process as a whole, does insufficient justice to the essentially emergent character of management and organization. Acknowledging this point of view, Pettigrew (2012) has replied that this alternative processual approach has not yielded a processual methodology yet.

Pettigrew's work can also be criticized for underplaying the effect of process content. Strategy scholars, for instance, whose main concern is to explain why firms outperform others and who concentrate on competitive advantage as the key variable (e.g. Barney, 1991; Porter, 1980) can be accused of being too linear and too rationalistic in their conceptualization of process and too simplistic in how they build their explanation. Yet in the core they offer a compelling argument that firms and managers can get it wrong content-wise. Pettigrew's politics as the management of meaning is a convincing account of how strategic change is realized. Yet the meaning that prevails within a firm does not necessarily provide this firm with a basis for success and survival. Considerations with regard to the actual content and direction of strategic change can feature more in explaining an outcome, especially as strategy is concerned with organization and firm performance as well as maintaining a firm's or organization's potential to perform (Sminia, 2014; Sminia & de Rond, 2012).

A final point of criticism refers to contextualism being put forward as a process epistemology and methodology without going into the further detail of contextualist methods. For instance, how do you conduct a contextualist interview? How do you code data in a contextualist manner? Pettigrew's published work provides little in detailed explanation of how raw data from multiple sources has been analysed to arrive at the virtuous and vicious circles that he provides as answers to his research questions, apart from indicating that this requires discussion, judgement and skill (Pettigrew, 1985b, 1990, 1995, 1997b, 2003a, 2013). This lack of detail makes it difficult for others to adopt his contextualist approach, if not to check on his judgement and skill.

If CCSC could be revived, what should the next research project be about? Because the majority of research in management and organization relies on the variance approach, the statement that much of it is acontextual, aprocessual, and ahistorical is still relevant. It can still serve as the starting point for a research agenda in many areas, with Pettigrew's contextualism offering a well-developed process methodology that can serve as a template. Nevertheless, contextualism, based as it is on a structuration-like process theory, is not the only way to proceed. The last few years have seen the development and application of other process approaches – specifically as part of the strategy-as-practice movement – including, for instance, sensemaking (Weick, 1995), activity theory (Jarzabkowski, 2005), or actor-network theory (Czarniawska, 2004). Giddens is not the only one who offers an underlying process theory. Alternatives are Bourdieu, Foucault, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, and Whitehead (see Golsorkhi, Rouleau, Seidl, & Vaara, 2010; Hernes, 2008; Nicolini, 2012). The extent to which these alternatives offer a well-articulated methodology, however, varies.

Pettigrew found his inspiration in the 'real' world, focusing on 'big' questions, not by identifying 'gaps' in the literature within the realm of a particular theoretical approach. Society at large, and management and organization practice in particular, develops continuously and throws up new issues and concerns for which workable solutions need to be found. Pettigrew (2012) himself pointed at business and society relationships and at the collaborative strategies of international institutions like the European Union, the United Nations, or the International Monetary Fund as possible research topics. With regard to the business-society relationship, Pettigrew (2009) would like to see it move away from what he calls the 'value-laden' language of corporate social responsibility to a more neutral inquiry into the ongoing development of the contemporary corporation. Alternatively, the recent economic crisis and the initiatives to contain the problems and remedy the situation featured attempts of coordinated action of international institutions. Their importance appears to be growing; yet little is known about how they function and can be effective. This theme can even extent into investigations that critically look at the effects of managerialism, and of political ideologies like neo-liberalism or state-capitalism on the public and private sectors and on the definition and delivery of public goods.

One 'big' issue that is still present in strategic management concerns the incorporation of change into strategic thinking and strategy content. Dynamic capabilities and the more recent move into micro foundations seem to stick with a variance approach to process. Suggested variables refer to process attributes to test their relationship with outcome variables. The strategy-as-practice movement does take process very seriously, and Pettigrew's research can be

regarded as being part of paving the way for its rise, especially with regard to combining the topics of strategy, organization, and change into one approach. Yet it is mostly inward looking; leading to elaborate and insightful descriptions but often at the expense of the 'how to' question and considerations of a practice's effectiveness (Langley, 2010).

What still remains under-investigated is how industries, markets, or organizational fields change, come into being, disappear, but also continue to be, while simultaneously going into the detail of how individual actors can make purposeful contributions. A rich collection of studies of institutional entrepreneurship and institutional change does exits at the level of the environment (e.g. Greenwood, Suddaby, & Hinings, 2002; Hargadon & Douglas, 2001; Leblebici, Salancik, Copay, & King, 1991; Lounsbury & Crumley, 2007; Munir & Phillips, 2005). These parallel the arguments and findings put forward by Pettigrew about strategic change at the level of the organization. Firms and organizations generate their usefulness, survive and prosper within this environmental process, and they add to it continuously. This is essentially a creative and generative process within which the organizational strategy process is nested. A process perspective on strategy content can be developed by drawing on these studies of institutionalization and institutional change, incorporating Pettigrew's insights about strategic change to extend 'politics of meaning' to what happens within as well as outside the organization.

In turn, it is to this organizational strategy process that individuals contribute their actions, in interaction with the circumstances in which they find themselves in. This generates the question how interventions by individual strategists can purposefully and effectively add to the organizational strategy

process in order to make the organization perform in the larger environmental survival process. A recurrent theme in Pettigrew's findings is the notion of leadership. He dismisses the association of leadership with management heroes and CEO supermen, whose charisma and apparent infallible insight supposedly is key to a firm's fortunes. Instead he describes it as a social and contextual phenomenon, but does recognize the significance of key people in making things happen. Here is an inherent tension between the individual and the social, and how to understand the constant interplay over time. Theoretically, it is a variant of the agency-structure problem. Empirically, it creates the challenge of separating out how both individual actors and social structure contribute to the course and outcome of a process, and how the process contributes to the continuity and change of actors and structure. To answer these questions, more process research is needed. To be able to do this, there is a need to develop process methodologies like Pettigrew's contextualism further, especially at the level of process research methods.

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