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Abstract

This chapter positions Andrew Pettigrew as a process scholar. It describes his work of catching “reality in flight” as he investigated the continuity and change, which is involved in subject areas like the politics of organizational decision-making, organizational culture, fundamental strategic change, human resource management, competitiveness, the workings of boards of directors, and new organizational forms. The chapter also describes the research methodology of contextualism that Andrew Pettigrew developed to capture “reality in flight.” It discusses the extent to which Andrew Pettigrew succeeded and how his research program could be developed further.

Keywords

Process • Contextualism • Strategic change • Politics • Impact

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Is Andrew Pettigrew a “change thinker”? Asking this question is not meant to start an argument whether he should be included in this book or not. It actually serves the purpose of pinpointing why he should be included. Pettigrew is not a “change thinker” in that he aimed to understand the phenomenon of “change” in its own right.

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His prime motivation was to understand “process” as it happens. His research questions are not about how or why change happens or what change is in a general sense. They are about why particular change did happen while other change did not. In doing so, he conducted research on decision-making, organizational culture, organization development, strategy formation, human resource management, competitiveness, health services, public management, corporate governance, and new organizational forms. He is interested in the larger process of continuity and change, as the subtitle of Pettigrew’s landmark book, *The Awakening Giant: Continuity and Change in ICI*, aptly indicates (Pettigrew 1985a). In doing so, he generated a number of insights that are relevant for understanding change and change management. And he developed the research methodology of contextualism as a way to investigate change.

Influences and Motivations: Close Scrutiny of Real Problems

Andrew Pettigrew’s research career started properly in 1966. In the UK, business schools were in the process of being established. He had graduated with a sociology degree and a postgraduate diploma in industrial administration from the University of Liverpool. His first academic job was as research fellow on a project instigated by Enid Mumford, who had just moved from Liverpool to the newly established Manchester Business School (MBS). She also acted as his dissertation supervisor with Andrew earning his PhD in 1970. In this project, he uncovered the political nature of organizational decision-making (Pettigrew 1970, 1973).

In those early years, there were various influences that affected Pettigrew’s research orientation. In fact, his first experience as a researcher was on an anthropological expedition to Uganda when the young Andrew was still at school. He helped charting cultural change among the Musopisiek people of the Sebei. It was this experience that taught him the importance of getting close to the action to understand what is going on, but also about the contextual nature of social phenomena. This was perpetuated at Liverpool, where the sociology that was being established there was theoretically informed but problem-orientated empiricism but also assumed the presence of conflict and change. It continued at MBS with Enid Mumford doing her research in coal mines and the port of Liverpool in this tradition. Pettigrew’s study of managers while they were making their decisions was conducted in a similar manner. He went in and observed managers and their decision-making activity while it was going on, as Enid Mumford had done with the coal miners and with the Liverpool dockers. What he observed was far removed from the rationalistic ideal that was being propagated. He came out with a clear understanding of the inherently politicized nature of management.

Another profound influence was his time spent at Yale from 1969 to 1971, at the invitation of Chris Argyris. This he considers to be the most significant period of his career and indeed life (Pettigrew 1998). It strengthened Andrew Pettigrew’s conviction that true understanding comes from being close to the phenomenon under study, as Chris Argyris always insisted that any new theoretical and therefore abstract idea

has to be explainable through concrete examples. Yale also exposed Andrew Pettigrew to a completely different research culture that was simultaneously collegial and competitive, and where status and success for an academic were indicated through a stream of journal publications.

If his PhD research taught Andrew Pettigrew about the politicized nature of management, his next project revealed the influence and importance of culture. It was set up as a study of change. It concerned the Gordonstoun School in Scotland, which changed from single sex to coeducation in 1972. He conducted a multi-method study, doing interviews with key people – including members of the Royal Family, conducting a survey among students and staff, analyzing documents, and investigating the history of the school, all to get close to the action and to find out how and why things were going on as they did. The findings pointed at the interactions between entrepreneurship/leadership and organization culture (Pettigrew 1979). Andrew Pettigrew again was ahead of the curve here, being one of the first to introduce the notion of organization culture, indicating that if we talk about organizational change, we can conceptualize it as cultural change.

One of the things that Andrew Pettigrew has urged people to do is to not only conduct research for its own sake but to also engage with and propagate the findings among management practitioners. One way of doing this is to publish articles in practitioner journals. In fact, it was a publication in a practitioner journal on the basis of his PhD thesis, which had attracted the attention of an OD consultant who was working in ICI. ICI at the time was the largest manufacturing firm in the UK, working mainly in the chemical industry. The process that Andrew Pettigrew had investigated for his PhD project concerned a succession of decisions about investing in and replacing computer systems. As part of this, he focused on the role of computer experts in the firm and their interactions with the managers who were making the decisions. One of the findings pointed at the phenomenon of the “experts” gaining influence and legitimacy on the basis of their involvement in the decisions and their effect on the outcome. The OD consultant reckoned a similar process was going on with the OD specialists and their effectiveness in ICI. OD was introduced to ICI in an attempt to make its management more effective, but the extent to which OD was taken up varied across the various ICI divisions. He asked Andrew Pettigrew whether he was interested to investigate.

The ICI project originally was about this question of how OD’s influence and effectiveness varied across the various parts of ICI. It quickly grew into the larger question of how strategic change is realized. This project was eventually published in book form (Pettigrew 1985a) but with various other publications written on the back of it (e.g., Pettigrew 1987a, d, 1990). If anything, the ICI study put Andrew Pettigrew on the map. It also linked him with the strategic management field, contributing to making strategy process and strategic change research objects in their own right. Furthermore, it solidified his methodological approach of contextualism as a way to investigate change.

The “fame” and recognition that came with the ICI study allowed Andrew Pettigrew to establish a research center. After he came back from the USA in

1971, he became a lecturer at London Business School. In 1976, he took up a professorship in organizational behavior at the University of Warwick. This is where he established the Centre for Corporate Strategy and Change (CCSC) in 1985.

The center embarked upon a range of research projects, all utilizing his contextualist methodology. These projects were conducted by research teams, with many of its members going on to become well-recognized management scholars in their own right. These projects took on big questions like the usefulness and development of strategic human resource management (Pettigrew et al. 1990), competitiveness and strategic change (Pettigrew and Whipp 1991), continuity and change in the British National Health Service (NHS) (Pettigrew et al. 1992), new public management (Ferlie et al. 1996), the functioning and effectiveness of boards of directors (McNulty and Pettigrew 1999; Pettigrew and McNulty 1998), and new and innovative forms of organizing (Pettigrew and Fenton 2000; Pettigrew et al. 2003). All these projects were very timely, in effect investigating phenomena in the making but also right at the heart of what were then contemporary issues in management scholarship and in (British) society. Apart from conducting relevant research, in this way Andrew Pettigrew was also able to generate interest and secure funding.

Andrew Pettigrew expressed his eagerness of getting close to understanding what is going on as wanting to “catch reality in flight” (Pettigrew 1998). It is about getting to grips with the process by which things emerge. This implies change but also continuity. The way to do this, he reckons, is to engage with these phenomena in the making (i.e., Schwarz and Stensaker 2014). Management scholarship should not be this detached activity that just aims to explain. It should be about cocreation and engagement, about solving problems and generating insight that is relevant (Pettigrew 1997a, 2001a, 2005). This is reflected in his choice of research topics. He asks big questions. Only explicitly explained as such with the research project on innovative forms of organization (Pettigrew 2003), all of these topics were scrutinized for their progress (is the phenomenon spreading and what shape does it take?), process (how is the phenomenon coming into being?), and performance (what are its effects?). Ideally, it is about “big themes” investigated by “big teams.” It is about how particular changes are brought about, instead of how change in a general sense can be achieved.

Andrew Pettigrew left Warwick in 2003, taking up the position of Dean of the University of Bath School of Management. CCSC had been dissolved in 2001. He moved to the University of Oxford Saïd Business School in 2008, becoming a Professor of strategy and organization, from which he retired in January 2016. At Bath, he would say, he had to practice what he preached. He saw his tenure there as having to reinvigorate what was essentially a good school into a world-class business school. He also became a bit more reflective, involving himself with an EFMD initiative on the future development of business schools (Pettigrew et al. 2014), as well as publishing on the relevance of management scholarship (Pettigrew 2001a, 2011b).

Key Contributions: Contextuality in Process Courses and Outcomes

It is not easy to pick Andrew Pettigrew's main contributions, as there are so many. Yet all his works center on two interrelated themes. One is theoretical in wanting to understand the course and outcome of processes of continuity and change. The other one is methodological in developing contextualism as a research methodology to generate this understanding.

Starting with his dissertation (Pettigrew 1970, 1973), he found the process of continuity and change to be very much of a political-cultural nature. What he observed was that decision-making is an essentially social and political process. It features complexity, uncertainty, and diverging interest and demands. This he captured later with the expression "*politics as the management of meaning*" (Pettigrew 1985a, p. 44). He recognizes that people basically act to further a cause they have an interest in, but do so within the confines of an existing social structure or context. However, this context does not just act to channel people's activities. It is actively drawn upon to legitimize claims and interests, and in doing so becomes a target and subject for change as well.

Management activity is therefore stratified in that it aims to achieve certain ends – the surface layer – and in doing so confirms or changes the social structure or context, the deeper layer, within which this takes place (cf. Sminia and de Rond 2012). People who want to be effective as a change agent have to be proficient in playing this politics of meaning game. It also turns management and the ongoing process of continuity and change into a continuous contest between people who are content with how things are going on and people who favor a different way of how things could and should be going on. Recognizing that we are dealing with a struggle here, the way in which this is allowed to play out affects the outcome. For instance, a firm's competitiveness was found to depend on how it deals with this contest between change and continuity (Pettigrew and Whipp 1991). Likewise, the effectiveness of boards of directors depends on how the board process is allowed to play out, with boards that feature debate about the future direction of the firm getting better results than boards that just rubber-stamp decisions made by the executive team (McNulty and Pettigrew 1999; Pettigrew and McNulty 1998).

Andrew Pettigrew was arguing against the many management scholars who expected managers to be rational decision-makers and who saw organizational change as designing and implementing new organizational structures. The dominant understanding of how decision-making is and should be done was one of information processing and choice. He was also arguing against the behavioral approach (Cyert and March 1963; March and Simon 1958). To him, the behavioral approach put too much emphasis on the individual manager and on cognitive limitations. He observed decision-making as a social-cultural-political process, involving an organization's social structure as much as the interests and cognitive abilities of the participants.

This basic finding of continuity and change playing out within a context but also shaping the context resonates with other observations that distinguish between incremental and more fundamental and radical strategic change (e.g., Anderson and Tushman 1990; Argyris and Schön 1978; Burgelman 1983; Greenwood and Hinings 1988; Johnson 1988). Incremental change takes place within the confines of the social structure. “Real” strategic change involves alterations to the social structure. It reflects a dialectic (Van de Ven and Poole 1995) and structuration-like theory of process. It is remarkable that Andrew Pettigrew sketched out the contours of a structuration-like theory of management in his 1970 dissertation (Pettigrew 1970, 1973), well before Giddens (1976) was published. Andrew Pettigrew (1985a) later associated his stance with structuration sociologists like Giddens (1979), Sewell (1992), and Sztompka (1991).

Structuration refers to an approach in sociology that tries to marry the what appear to be contradictory explanations of social order as being a consequence of either individual initiative (agency) or collective interests and norms and values (social structure). Giddens (1976, 1979, 1984) developed the notion of “duality of structure,” proposing that social structure constrains but also enables agency while simultaneously social structure only persists if the actions it specifies continue to be enacted. From a structuration point of view, agency and social structure therefore are seen as mutually constitutive.

It is therefore not surprising that Andrew Pettigrew is critical of much change research that he considers as being “ahistorical, acontextual, and aprocessual.” He is wary of change methods and methodologies that claim to be universally applicable, as management in general, and therefore change management in particular, is very context sensitive and plays out as a unique concurrence of events. This is particularly apparent in his conclusions about the spread and use of OD in ICI (Pettigrew 1985a). He points at a paradox first put forward by Warmington et al. (1977) that to design an effective change program, one has to understand an organization’s culture and power configuration, which one can only learn about in the course of embarking upon a change program. This is also apparent in his research into change in the British National Health Service (Pettigrew et al. 1992), where he develops the concept of a receptive context to change. In a similar vein, he contextualizes competitiveness within the way in which a firm deals with change over time (Pettigrew and Whipp 1991). The more sensitive the management of change is to the specific circumstances in which the change is playing out, the more effective the process will be.

In the course of doing his research into continuity and change – attempting to catch reality in flight – Andrew Pettigrew developed a research methodology that he labeled as contextualism (Pettigrew 1985a, b, 1987c, 1990, 1992, 1997b), a term derived from Pepper (1942). It is most succinctly described by way of the “Pettigrew triangle” (see Fig. 1). It requires the researcher to investigate the process of change over time while relating it to the context in which it plays out as well as the content of what is being changed, treating all three angles of the triangle as mutual constitutive. The methodology is longitudinal in nature, utilizing multiple methods to gather data while the process takes place, supplemented with historical data to understand where the process under observation is coming from. There is a direct link between

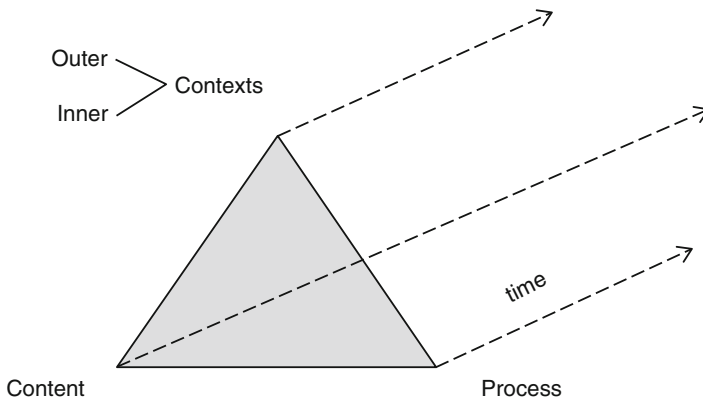


Fig. 1 Framework for analyzing change (Source: Pettigrew lecture slides (April 2009))

contextualism as a methodology and the structuration-like process theory that Andrew Pettigrew employs.

The requirements of multisource, multi-data, and also multi-researcher teams, as the size and the scope of a project tend to exceed the capacities of a single investigator, however, are not a license to simply collect everything that comes into sight. This, as Andrew Pettigrew puts it, will only lead to data asphyxiation (Pettigrew 1990). To prevent this, firstly, data collection has to focus on the context and how it impinges on but is also affected by the course of events, on the process and how the course of events takes shape over time, and the content of what exactly is changing and what remains constant (Pettigrew 1985a, c).

Secondly, any data gathering exercise needs to be accompanied by a careful consultation of the existing literature, drawing on various different approaches to provide a first conceptual sketch about how the phenomena under study is currently understood. As was said earlier, Andrew Pettigrew prefers big questions about issues and problems that in effect refer to phenomena in the making like, for instance, strategic human resource management, new public management, or innovative organizational forms. Similarly, he is interested in how things like managerial decision-making, OD, strategic change, competitiveness, or board process actually play out while being enacted. The consultation of the literature generates a first understanding with regard to the phenomenon under study as well as expectations about its effects. It will also generate more specific questions, as it is not uncommon that the literature holds conflicting accounts, often features widely exaggerated claims about the effects, and very likely is ahistorical, acontextual, and aprocessual. These more specific questions then inform as well as limit the data collection efforts. Andrew Pettigrew favors a comparative case study design where similar processes of continuity and change but with different outcomes are scrutinized for differences in the course of the process.

A contextualist analysis consists of six activities (Pettigrew 1985a, c). To start, you are required to draft a detailed chronological description of the process under

study. Once that is done, you expose the continuity and change as it occurs in the course of the process. This then allows you to compare existing theoretical insights with the course of events to identify where current theory falls short. In the course of this, you have to distinguish between the various contextual levels at which the process plays out. As this is done, the initial chronology is redrafted to separate out what is occurring at each contextual level for the period under investigation. Finally, the outcome of the process has to be evaluated on the basis of how the course of the process has taken shape as interplay between these various contextual levels. Such an analysis is not a mechanical exercise of processing data to arrive at a conclusion. It requires judgment and skill. The criteria by which a contextualist analysis is judged center on the balance between description and analysis, whether there is new theoretical understanding, whether this new understanding is based on how the course of the process has taken shape, and how well the abstracted theoretical process account connects with the process data (Pettigrew 1985c).

These six activities then allow you to report on the findings in the way that Andrew Pettigrew normally does (Sminia 2016). For instance, in Pettigrew and Whipp (1991), the literature review in effect is a consultation of various strands of literature about competitiveness, with its limitations explained in a way that anticipates the findings of the research project. These findings and explanations in turn take shape in the form of providing short answers and long answers. The long answer here contains in-depth and mostly chronological accounts of the five cases that were investigated for the competitiveness project. This long answer illustrates, demonstrates, and justifies the short answer.

The short answer of how firm competitiveness relates to strategic change ability then introduces the new theoretical understanding that has come out. In this project, this is explained by way of a mechanism consisting of five interrelated factors (see Fig. 2; Pettigrew and Whipp 1991, 1993; Whipp and Pettigrew 1992; Whipp et al. 1989a, b). The five factors are “environmental assessment,” “leading change,” “linking strategic and operational change,” “human resources as assets and liabilities,” and “coherence.” It refers to a process pattern that is shared among higher-performing firms. With regard to environmental assessment, organizations should be “open learning systems” that reinterpret the circumstances in which they operate. It should not be regarded as a technical exercise of information processing and dissemination. Leading change is about both providing small, incremental directions and generating legitimacy for change. Linking strategic and operational change is about emergent activity being embraced but linked with evolving intentions. A firm’s human resource management should not treat people as liabilities but as assets. Finally coherence is about consonance, advantage, and feasibility and about safeguarding the integrity of the organization while it changes.

Another example presents a novel theoretical understanding about innovative forms of organizing (a verb) by way of a short answer in the form of a set of nine complementary activities (see Fig. 3; Pettigrew and Fenton 2000; Pettigrew et al. 2003; Whittington et al. 1999). Andrew Pettigrew found that these nine activities tend to have a mutually reinforcing effect and that the benefits of such an innovative organizational form will only be present when a firm goes for it wholeheartedly. This

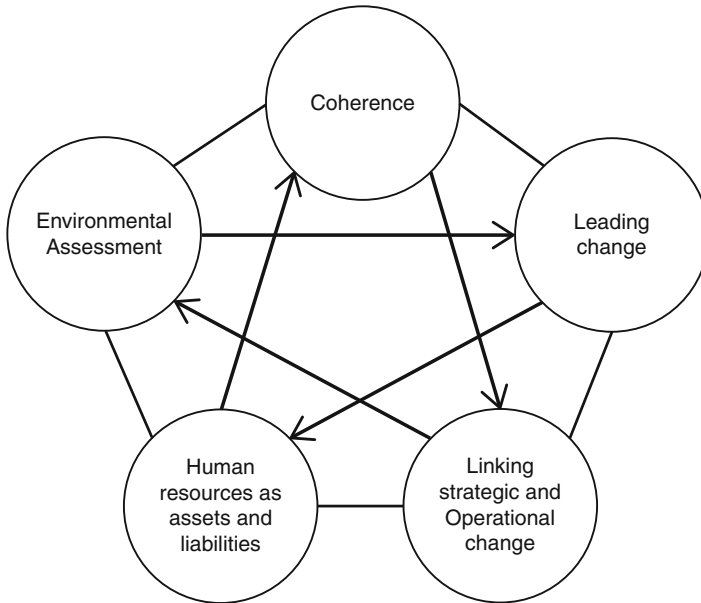


Fig. 2 Managing change for competitive success: the five central factors (Source: Pettigrew and Whipp (1991, p. 104))

is because there is a positive complementarity, involving all of the elements of the new organizational form. There is a negative complementarity when firms limit themselves to only one or a few aspects, with the benefits failing to materialize and things even becoming worse. Again, there are also extensive long answers that provide the details of the various case studies, as well as theory reviews that consult and interrogate different strands of literature, expose their weaknesses, and to which the findings are compared.

New Insights: Generality in the Specifics

Elaborating continuity and change in a structuration-like manner, putting (change) management forward as a process of politics of meaning, and developing a contextualist methodology that reflects the highly specific nature of each change process yield a number of new insights that on occasion contradict the prevailing orthodoxy.

The emphasis on context and the uniqueness of each process course plays down the importance of generalizability of research outcomes. There is a questioning of the presumption that management knowledge eventually will take on the form of generalizable theory and universally applicable change tools and methods. Very early on he argues against the variance approach and the expectation that “proper” research has to be about developing constructs, variables, and indicators, which have to be tested for

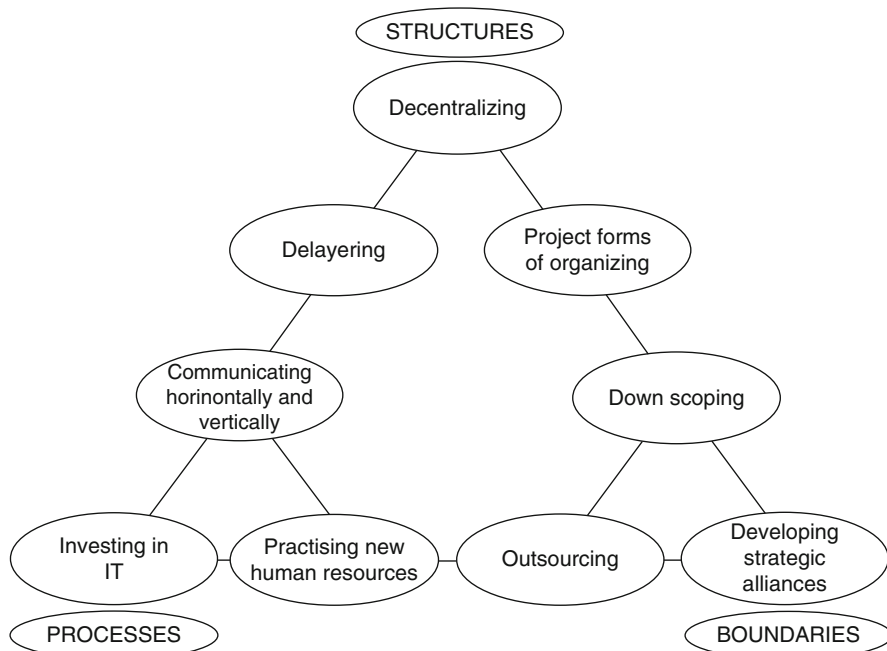


Fig. 3 New forms of organizing: the multiple indicators (Source: Pettigrew and Massini (2003, p. 12))

their hypothesized relationships (Pettigrew 1973). Later in his career, he comments on the irony of this kind of research, not arriving at any definitive conclusions but instead prompting further research on more specific and fine-grained questions and boundary conditions, in effect validating his contextualist perspective (Pettigrew et al. 2002). It makes you wonder why generalizability is considered to be such a key indicator of research quality. Contextuality does not mean that management research is incapable of generating insights that are of relevance beyond the cases under investigation. It should be more about transferability and versatility than generalizability (Van de Ven 2007), about looking for the general in the specific than the generalizability of the specific. Some of Andrew Pettigrew's close collaborators in a number of his research projects have argued for external validity in terms of relevance for the people for whom the research is conducted (Ferlie and McNulty 1997).

It also puts the utilization of change management tools and techniques in perspective. The specific and contextual nature of (change) management means that any claim about an inherent and universal effect of a specific tool or technique has to be questioned. If there is an effect, it is a consequence of the interaction between the tool or technique, the way in which it was deployed, and the circumstances in which it was used. For instance, we found the utilization of large-scale intervention (LSI) – a bottom-up approach of realizing change throughout an organization as a whole (Bunker and Alban 1992) – in effect perpetuated the top-down culture that existed in

the organization in which it was applied (Sminia and van Nistelrooij 2006). The supposed effects inherent in LSI of generating change through dialogue were counteracted by contextual and emergent factors that shaped the course of the process. In another instance, despite carefully formulating a strategic plan as well as setting out and embarking upon the various steps by which it should be implemented, I observed that some skillful politics of meaning meant that the whole thing was abandoned within a year (Sminia 2005).

Cases like this can be easily dismissed as instances of bad management. Yet on reflection, they reveal the possibility of highly skillful change management practices by which a specific tool or technique is utilized in a context-sensitive manner (van Nistelrooij and Sminia 2010). For instance, dialogue can improve mutual understanding in an organization that is entrenched in various noncommunicating factions. The same exercise can also infuse an organization with a bit more variety and spice things up, when it is suffering from groupthink. In different contexts, with the change management tool keyed in differently, the process will generate different, albeit possibly favorable outcomes for each specific situation.

Contextuality not only refers to place but also to time. And as “times change,” the problems and situations that managers have to deal with change as well. To Andrew Pettigrew, management scholarship therefore is not about uncovering universal truths. It is about engaging with the realities that managers have to deal with. He propagates engaged scholarship (Van de Ven 2007) that queries phenomena as they occur and emerge (Schwarz and Stensaker 2014) instead of filling gaps in existing theory. Scholarship therefore comes with the double requirement of rigor and relevance (Pettigrew 1997a, 2005). This he expresses by way of the five I’s of Impact by offering “how to” knowledge, of Innovation in theory and method, of Interdisciplinary openness, of Internationalism through investigation and collaboration, and of Involvement with but independence from fellow researchers and users. Impact is an increasing concern in the UK because of its rising prominence among the criteria according to which university research is assessed. He claims that contextualist methodology is ideally suited to deliver (Pettigrew 2011b).

Legacies and Unfinished Business: Change Beyond the Confines of the Organization

The “Pettigrew triangle” has informed many research projects, either just as a means to clarify the object of enquiry has a process, context, and content aspect or by embracing the full contextualist research methodology. Moreover, Andrew Pettigrew’s research has helped to introduce and further legitimize qualitative research, especially in the realm of strategic management. It has also helped to effectively falsify the effectiveness of too linear and objectivist approaches to management.

Yet Andrew Pettigrew is not without his critics. For instance, Cray et al. (1991) and Rajagopalan and Spreitzer (1997) criticized Pettigrew’s work for its lack of generalizability, but this is beside the point for a contextualist. More essentially, he has been

criticized for not being contextual enough. Andrew Pettigrew (1985a, pp. 36–37) urges us to elaborate context as more than “*just a descriptive background, or an eclectic list of antecedents.*” Caldwell (2005) argues that this is exactly what Andrew Pettigrew has been doing. In fact, Caldwell points at a more fundamental problem that is present in all research that adopts structuration-like theory. This is the problem that it is empirically very difficult to distinguish whether specific events in the course of a process are primarily due to management agency or to the surrounding context or social structure. Moreover, by arguing, as Andrew Pettigrew has done, that change processes are to a large extent indeterministic, Caldwell reckons that a contextualist approach has become irrelevant to practicing managers. As there apparently is so much impinging on a situation, what difference can a manager make? Such impracticality is also brought forward by Buchanan and Boddy (1992) and Dawson (1994). Ironically, others have criticized Andrew Pettigrew’s uncritical stance toward (top) management and the implicit assumption that they are ultimately in charge (Morgan and Sturdy 2000; Willmott 1997).

Andrew Pettigrew has also been criticized for not being sufficiently processual (Chia and MacKay 2007; Hernes 2014; Tsoukas and Chia 2002). This also relates to his structuration-like conceptualization of the change process in that these authors decline the mutual constitutive nature of agency and structure, and therefore the distinction between change and continuity. To them process is always a matter of emergence and change, with agency and structure both arising out of the inherent dispositions and logics of practice (Schatzki 2001). It is fair to say that, despite being critical of Andrew Pettigrew’s elaboration of process and change, his work did pave the way for the introduction of the “practice turn” in management and organizational scholarship, specifically with regard to the strategy-as-practice movement (Jarzabkowski and Spee 2009; Whittington 1996, 2006).

Andrew Pettigrew’s contextualist methodology is also in need of further elaboration in terms of contextualist methods (Sminia 2016). He provided extensive guidance in how to design and conduct a contextualist research project (Pettigrew 1985b, c, 1987b, 1989, 1990, 1995, 1997b, 2011b, 2013). Nevertheless, replicating his approach is not without difficulty because of a lack of more detailed descriptions how all that data that comes with a contextualist research project has been gathered and especially analyzed. He only indicates that this requires skill, judgment, and lots of discussion among research team members.

Andrew Pettigrew retired from Saïd Business School, University of Oxford, in January 2016. The Pettigrew project is far from finished and still worth pursuing, despite the criticism. One avenue would be to extend research in change as well as the reach of the management of change well beyond an organization’s boundaries. There are at least two reasons for doing this. Firstly, as is already implied in his elaboration of context as social structure, whether its constraining and enabling effect is due to something inside or outside the organization is not a necessarily important aspect for understanding what is going on. What is important, though, is that the contextuality of the change process is taken into account.

Secondly, there is a need to be more ambitious with change management and change research in that its reach should extend beyond the organization’s

boundaries. There is a somewhat implicit understanding that organizational change is about adapting an organization to changing (external) circumstances. This is notwithstanding that many change initiatives, although originating within an organization, generate effects well beyond it. This is especially apparent in studies into institutional change and institutional entrepreneurship (e.g., Gawer and Phillips 2013; Greenwood and Suddaby 2006; Johnson et al. 2000; Leblebici et al. 1991; Lounsbury and Crumley 2007). Conceptually, many of these studies share Andrew Pettigrew's structuration-like approach to process (e.g., Barley and Tolbert 1997; DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Hirsch and Lounsbury 1997; Lawrence et al. 2009). Furthermore, the accounts and explanations of institutional change and institutional entrepreneurship resemble Andrew Pettigrew's "politics as the management of meaning" in that they combine politics and power with culture. It stands to reason to integrate research in organizational change and institutional entrepreneurship by treating it as one and the same process. In doing so, it would be possible, for instance, to open up strategy content research by adding considerations about how a firm can be competitive in specific circumstances with considerations about how a firm can generate and change the circumstances that are responsible for its competitiveness.

One of my current research projects takes up this challenge of investigating continuity and change well beyond the confines of a single organization. It looks at the emergence of High Value Manufacturing. Apart from being a phenomenon in the making as managers and policy makers look for a solution for manufacturing firms to find a viable way of operating in a world where competition appears to be mostly focused on price, manufacturing appears to become more and more a matter of simultaneous cooperation and competition, with continuity and change taking shape concurrently in both the intraorganizational and the interorganizational realms.

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Further Reading

The best way to get to know Andrew Pettigrew's work is to read it, with the list of references below providing the information when and where his books and articles have been published. To get 'inside the man', there are a few occasions where he reflected on his own work (Mintzberg, Waters, Pettigrew, & Butler, 1990; Pettigrew, 1998, 2001a, 2011b, 2012). Apart from that, concise introductions to his body of work can be found in Sminia (2009, 2016; Sminia & de Rond, 2012). Finally, two of his major publications, his dissertation project (Pettigrew, 1973b) and the ICI study (Pettigrew, 1985d) have been re-printed recently as Pettigrew (2001b) and (Pettigrew, 2011a) respectively.

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