
Introduction

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Biographical notes: Peter J. Buckley is Professor of International Business, Director of Centre for International Business University of Leeds (CIBUL) and Honorary Professor at the University of International Business and Economics (UIBE), Beijing. He was President of the Academy of International Business (2002–2004). He is Editor of the Edward Elgar book series *New Horizons in International Business*, Associate Editor of *International Business Review*, Consulting Editor of the *Journal of International Business Studies*, and on the editorial board of the *International Journal of the Economics of Business*, *Asia Pacific Business Review* and the *Journal of Chinese Economic and Business Studies*. He has consulted for governments, UNCTAD's Division on Investment, UNIDO and leading companies. In 2007 he was awarded the Viipuri Prize in Strategic Management and Business Economics. In August 2008 he was awarded the Academy of Management International Management Division, Booz Allen Hamilton Strategy and Business Eminent Scholar in Management Prize.

Mergers and Acquisitions (M&As) have had a mixed press in recent years. On the one hand, they are seen as a demonstration of vision and strategy on the part of the acquirer, moving the company forward in a dramatic leap. On the other hand, they are seen as the prime exemplification of rapacious capitalism and, as many mergers fail from the point of view of the acquiring firm, as an exhibition of hubris.

International M&As are fraught with more dangers than domestic ones (Buckley and Ghauri, 2002). There are many more uncertainties in the pre-merger evolution stage and the post-merger integration process is fraught where cultural differences come into play.

The papers in this Special Issue cover the whole gamut of issues surrounding mergers. The first paper by Srani et al. examines a framework for understanding international M&A value creation, concentrating particularly on the operational supply chain issues. Releasing value from global operations through network access and network efficiency provide the keys to success. In the second paper, Buckley et al. examine the factors that influence the performance of target firms in advanced countries after their takeover by emerging country firms. The topic of emerging country multinationals has become a huge subject of investigation in recent years (Goldstein, 2007). This piece finds that the performance of the target firm is likely to be maximised when there is a moderate level of relatedness between the target and the acquiring company. Forsans and Balasubramanyam, in a theoretical piece, compare acquisitions with licensing agreements as vehicles for technology transfer to developing countries. The paper argues that foreign acquisitions are a more efficient and inexpensive source of technology to countries such as India than are licensing agreements.

It is widely acknowledged that a key element in the outcomes of M&As is post-merger integration. The paper by Zhang et al. identifies the essential network integration issues for successful M&As. This paper uses ten case studies to illustrate network configuration and to draw out successful strategies to meet the firms' key objectives. The following paper by Anh Vũ et al. aims to pinpoint the key strategies in horizontal M&As to create value by merging brands and products. Several sub-strategies are identified and these are related to two key motives for M&As: positioning and resource acquisition. It is shown that successful brand management after acquisition requires attention both to customers and to the internal organisation and culture. The paper by Chapman et al. examines linguistic issues in mergers and acquisition and suggests that in some cases this may be a hidden barrier to the success of M&As.

The external effects of M&As and other foreign direct investment strategies are illustrated in the final paper by Firth and Ghauri. This paper focuses on service multinationals and their linkage effects with local firms as they expand and evolve. The case studies examine UK service multinationals in China and Korea.

This collection therefore covers growth by M&A (including alternative strategies), motives and targets, strategic planning and tactics, the merger process and post-merger integration strategies, and some of the consequences of acquisitions. The pieces are also suggestive of ways forward and of research methodologies and strategies to shed further light on the fascinating and varied landscape of international mergers and acquisitions.

References

- Buckley, P.J. and Ghauri, P.N. (Eds) (2002) *International Mergers and Acquisitions: A Reader*, Thomson, London.
- Goldstein, A. (2007) *Multinational Companies from Emerging Economies*, Palgrave, New York.