



Final report

on the UCL French Embassy Collaborative Science and Technology Workshop on

‘Innovating the study and practice of strategic change initiatives’

Held on May 15th-16th 2014, University College London, WC1E 7HB London

hosted by Dr. S Teerikangas (UCL) and Prof. P Very (EDHEC Business School)

Executive summary

A workshop title “Innovating the study and practice of strategic change initiatives” was organized at UCL May 15th – 16th in room 246, 1-19 Torrington Place, Bloomsbury. The workshop was co-funded by the French Embassy and UCL Grand Challenges. The hosts Dr. Satu Teerikangas (UCL) and Philippe Very (EDHEC Business School, Nice) had been planning the workshop since September 2013 (see pp. 2-4). A total of thirteen participants from French university institutions and UCL participated in the workshop (see p. 5). The workshop was organized as a set of open presentations on each participant’s area of expertise, and to this end, a pre-workshop exercise was circulated (see p. 6). The resulting set of inter-phenomena presentations made the agenda of the two-day workshop (see pp. 7-8). The practicalities related to the workshop are summarized pp. 9-10. The workshop can be considered a major success. The quality of the workshop organization, the collaborative and collegial atmosphere, and the intellectual input of the participants in presentations and dialogue were praised. In particular, the non-traditional format of discussion based on ideas vs. papers was praised, as was the interdisciplinary design of the workshop. Going forward, the French participants are keen on hosting a follow-up workshop. The idea would be to present paper drafts, and potentially to seek a publisher to publish an edited book on the workshop topic. The participants are also planning to set up an electronic sharing system and, longer-term, to initiate a track on Strategic change at one of the leading international academic conferences in management. This will be discussed when most of the participants meet next in Rotterdam, at the European Group of Organization Studies annual conference, July 2014. Notwithstanding, new collegial networks were formed and all participants gained new intellectual insights. The organizers and participants wish to sincerely thank the French Embassy and UCL Grand Challenges for this unique and inspiring opportunity! Thank you!

Workshop proposal

Workshop synopsis

The aim of the proposed workshop is to bring together academics from French institutions and University College London with the aim of seeking to innovate the study and practice of strategic change initiatives. The scholars involved represent interdisciplinary academic expertise spanning a range of strategic change initiatives, defined here as including mergers, acquisitions, alliances, inter-firm partnerships, projects, and mega-projects.

Rationale and background of the workshop

The proposal is set within the remit of social sciences, in particular management and organizational studies. The reason why the proposal is submitted to a call focused on science and technology stems from the fact that strategic change initiatives undertaken by modern corporations such as IBM, Aecom, Bouygues or Microsoft have shaped organizations across sectors, including and particularly ones dependent on science and technology.

The significance of strategic change initiatives to science and technology based industries is critical and cannot be under-estimated. Strategic change initiatives form part of the core operations of firms operating in technology intensive industries. Thus, technology-based acquisitions are prevalent in technology-intensive industries such as the pharmaceutical industry, telecommunications/media or information technology sectors. Alliances, on the other hand, have come to lay the cornerstones of the strategic game in the automobile or information technology industries. Mega-projects prevail in the built environment, be it with respect to major infrastructure or construction projects, e.g. the Channel Tunnel in the 1990s. Smaller to larger-scale projects are part and parcel of the research and development operations of engineering and technology based firms.

In a broader realm, the significance of strategic change initiatives parallels the modern firm's quest to remain competitive in an increasingly complex global competitive arena (Borys & Jemison, 1989). Whilst in the early to mid-20th centuries, firms could rely on 'within' firm resources (Barney, 1991), the technological developments of the later 20th century coupled with the liberalization of trade have forced firms to seek collaborative arrangements with partners, whether from within or beyond the industry, focused on upstream integration with distributors or downstream integration with suppliers (Dyer & Singh, 1998). These collaborative arrangements have come to shape competitive dynamics within and across industries. Beyond collaboration through alliances, joint ventures, partnerships or mega-projects, intensifying competition has fuelled firm growth via merger and acquisition activity (Faulkner et al., 2012).

Despite this intense activity, the performance rates of strategic change initiatives remains questioned. A recent meta-analysis of studies on merger & acquisition (M&A) performance since the 1970s showed that not only do M&As not enhance the performance of the acquiring firm (King et al., 2004), but moreover, there is need to further our appreciation of the factors predicting M&A performance (King et al., 2004; Haleblan et al., 2009). Similar arguments have been voiced with respect to alliances and joint ventures (Doz, 1998; Reus & Rottig, 2009), projects (Morris et al., 2012; Morris, 2013), and within firm change initiatives such as restructuring or reorganization efforts, where failure rates average 40-90% (Burnes, 2009). Combined, these results posit the fundamental challenge in managing strategic initiatives that

involve many parties, whether internal or external to the firm (Jemison & Sitkin, 1986; Doz, 1998; Faulkner et al., 2012; Morris et al., 2012).

Addressing this theoretical question and gap underlies the workshop's aim to innovate the study and practice of strategic change initiatives. The value added of the workshop to these theoretical debates is to bring together scholarly experts representing a range of disciplinary bases. Indeed, a critical assessment of the scholarly research on strategic change initiatives posits a seeming lack of debate across these research realms. Thus, whilst research on any one of these initiatives, be it projects, mega-projects, alliances or mergers posits a within-phenomenon interdisciplinary approach, there appears to be a lack of dialogue between these initiatives (Borys & Jemison, 1989; Parmigiani & Rivera-Santos, 2011; Teerikangas & Geraldi, 2011; Carwright et al., 2012). This can be considered a potential hindrance to the advancement of scholarly inquiry within and between these disciplines. By bringing together academics active in these fields of study representing a range of disciplinary and methodological lenses, the proposed workshop has potential to further our appreciation of strategic change, be it at the level of individual initiatives or at the meta-level of strategic change.

Why a UCL-French workshop? Recent advances in the study of individual strategic initiatives have been led by French or UCL-based academics. To take a few examples, whilst Professor Peter Morris has spearheaded the intellectual development behind project management, Professor Andrew Davies is known for innovation within the context of mega-projects. Professor Michelle Baddeley is a pioneer in behavioural finance and economics. The work of Dr. Satu Teerikangas explores the dynamics inherent in merger and acquisition integration. On the French side, Professor Philippe Véry is an acknowledged expert on the cultural and managerial sides of mergers and acquisitions. Professor Pierre Dussauge is an expert on the strategic management of global alliances. In sum, the workshop participants, be they established or emerging scholars, are renowned experts in their areas of study.

Beyond building a UCL-French connection, the workshop builds on existing ties. In particular, there is a history of collaboration between the main convenors of the workshop (Dr. Satu Teerikangas and Professor Philippe Véry) in terms of journal publications (see: *British Journal of Management* 2006; *Human Resource Management* 2011), conference papers (see: *Academy of Management* 2009, *European Group of Organization Studies* 2012, *European International Business Academy* 2003) and workshop convening (see: M&A track at the Annual Conference of *European Group of Organization Studies* 2012 & 2014). Second, there is a history of collaboration between Dr. Satu Teerikangas and Dr. Audrey Rouzies (IAE Business School, University of Toulouse I) in terms of co-editing the Special issue on Research Methods in the study of inter-firm encounters (see: *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 2012), co-authoring conference papers or symposia (see: *Academy of Management* 2009, *European Academy of Management* 2010, 2013) and co-chairing a track on M&As, then inter-firm partnerships at the Annual Conference of the *European Academy of Management* since 2008.

For the UCL convenor, organizing the workshop is thus a means of bringing together UCL and French colleagues bearing similar research interests; colleagues who otherwise would not join in a debate on the topic, given the lack of a platform to do so. This call for proposals provides a platform for scholars engaged in the study of different kinds of strategic change initiatives to debate and advance theorizing in this area. Such a workshop has potential to becoming a starting point for longer-term impactful interdisciplinary research shaping future research agendas in these areas.

Aim and objectives of the workshop

The aim of the proposed workshop is to bring together academics from French institutions and University College London with the aim of innovating the study and practice of strategic change initiatives. Within this broad aim, four specific objectives are identified driving the intellectual remit of the workshop:

1. Through inter-disciplinary dialogue, to engage in a courageous, impactful and creative exploration of how the study and practice of strategic change initiatives could benefit from innovation, be it thematically, philosophically or methodologically.
2. To contrast and compare the presented strategic change initiatives with the aim of developing meta-level theories of strategic change.
3. To advance the scholarly inquiry within the remit of each of the presented strategic change initiatives by seeking to mutually learn from one another's work and historic legacy. For example, how could theories advanced in the management of projects be applied to the management of mergers and acquisitions? How might advances from behavioural finance support strategizing on mega-projects, alliances or acquisitions?
4. To identify mutual areas of inquiry leading to future collaboration beneficial to both UCL and French parties, be it with respect to research projects involving industry, co-authorships on papers, edited book volumes, conference symposia, etc.

Beyond these disciplinary theoretical gaps, the workshop is embedded in UCL's radical legacy to seek academically and practically impactful research.

Workshop participants

French participants

1. Professor Stephanie Dameron, Paris Dauphine University [Inter-firm and intra-firm cooperation]
2. Associate Professor Nicola Mirc, University of Toulouse I [Mergers and acquisitions/ social networks]
3. Associate Professor Audrey Rouzies, University of Toulouse I [Mergers and acquisitions/ identity]
4. Professor Eero Vaara, permanent visiting professor at EM Lyon [Sensemaking / power & politics]
5. Professor Isabelle Vandangeon-Derumez, Paris East University [Management of change]
6. Professor Philippe Very, EDHEC Business School [Mergers / performance]

UCL participants

7. Professor Michelle Baddeley, University College London [Behavioural economics]
8. Professor Andrew Davies, University College London [Innovation in mega-projects]
9. Dr. Grant Mills, Lecturer at University College London [Values]
10. Dr. Niamh Murtagh, Research associate at University College London [Behavioural change and sustainability]
11. Dr. Hedley Smyth, Senior lecturer at University College London [Relationship management]
12. Dr. Vaughn Tan, Assistant Professor at University College London [Organizational adaptability]
13. Dr. Satu Teerikangas, Senior lecturer at University College London [Mergers and acquisitions / integration]

Pre-workshop exercise

In the spirit of the call for proposals for bicultural workshops funded by the French Embassy in the United Kingdom, the workshop gathers a set of fifteen academics from French institutions and University College London (*see attached list of participants*). The aim is to share, discuss and ideally to innovate the study and practice of strategic change initiatives (*see attached workshop proposal*).

With this aim in mind, as convenors, we have invited French and UCL academics working within the broad remit of 'strategic change'. The expertise of the invited academics thus reflects a range of (1) strategic change initiatives across firm boundaries, (2) means of organizing for strategic change, and (3) means of making sense of strategic change.

The workshop will not follow the traditional setting of participants presenting existing or work-in-progress papers. Instead, we have assigned each participant a role that reflects his/her area of academic expertise in the remit of the workshop's topic 'Strategic change'. **It is in the spirit of this expertise that we ask attendees to prepare for the workshop as follows:**

- Please take a look at the agenda draft (*see attached agenda*);
- Within your remit of expertise, please prepare a short, maximum 10 minute presentation using a few power point slides (3-5 maximum) on the following two points:
 1. **Mapping the present state:** where is the study of strategic change at presently in your domain of expertise (e.g. alliances, project management, sense-making, behavioural economics, ..).
 2. **Looking into the future:** (a) what are the areas/themes/methods of inquiry that you foresee as emerging in importance in the study of your domain of expertise (e.g. alliances, project management, sense-making, behavioural economics, ..); and/or (b) what are unexplored areas warranting further study?
- In summary, though succinct, the presentations ideally withhold much intellectual depth, reflecting the expertise of the participants.

The aim of the presentations is to enable participants to briefly share their domain of academic expertise to the audience. This enables us then, collectively, to engage in a dialogue of comparison and mutual reflection, which ideally leads to a set of conclusions on (1) the study of individual strategic change initiatives as represented at the workshop, (2) unexplored or understudied areas at the cross-roads of the studied themes and theories, and potentially (3) meta-level reflections on the study of strategic change.

Workshop agenda

Thursday, May 15th	
Morning (ideally by 11h)	Arrival of participants to London and settling into the workshop hotel, and lunch individually. <i>The workshop hotel is: The Academy Hotel, 17-25 Gower Street, London WC1E 6HG.</i>
13h30	Arrival to the workshop premises, registration and coffee/tea: <i>Please report at the reception of 1-19 Torrington Place. The workshop is held on the 2nd floor, in seminar room 246.</i>
14h00-16h00	<p><u>Introduction to the workshop & participants</u></p> <p><u>Session 1: Inter-firm dynamics of strategic change</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inter and intra-firm cooperation (S. Dameron) 2. Management and innovation in mega-projects (A. Davies) 3. Mergers & acquisitions (A. Rouzies & N. Mirc) <p><u>Session format:</u> 10 minutes of presentation followed by 20 minutes of questions, comments, feedback from the workshop participants. This totals 30 minutes per presentation.</p>
16h00-16h30	Break
16h30-18h30	<p><u>Session 2: Organizing for strategic change</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relationship management (H. Smyth) 2. Organizational adaptability (V. Tan) 3. The dynamics of within firm change (I. Vandangeon-Derumez) 4. Values and value sense-making: reconciling multi-stakeholder views of projects (G. Mills) <p><u>Session format:</u> 10 minutes of presentation followed by 20 minutes of questions, comments, feedback from the workshop participants. This totals 30 minutes per presentation.</p>
19h30	Workshop dinner in Oscar Restaurant, Charlotte Street Hotel, Charlotte Street.
Friday, May 16th	
9h00-11h00	<p><u>Session 3: Making sense of strategic change</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The economics of change – a behavioural perspective (M. Baddeley) 2. Sense-making and making sense of change (E. Vaara) 3. Cognitive approaches to change and the role of middle managers in implementing change (H. Laroche) 4. Behavioural change toward sustainability in SMEs (N. Murtagh) <p><u>Session format:</u> 10 minutes of presentation followed by 20 minutes</p>

	of questions, comments, feedback from the workshop participants. This totals 30 minutes per presentation.
11h-11h30	Coffee break
11h30-13h	<p><u>Session 4: Wrapping it up</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Session presenters team up to consider: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are your key observations? 2. Where are opportunities for cross-fertilization? 3. What are ways of going forward? ▪ Sharing across teams and Q&A ▪ Open discussion ▪ Concluding
13h-14h	<p>Workshop farewell lunch <i>Terrace Restaurant, UCL main building, Gower Street</i></p>
14h	Workshop end
14h00-16h	<p>Optional Research seminar by Professor Eero Vaara.</p>

Practicalities

- **Travel arrangements.** Please ensure that you arrive by 13h30 to University College London on Thursday, May 15th, for a prompt start of the workshop.
 - **By air.** This means that, whether you fly to London Heathrow, London Gatwick, London City, or London Luton airports, please ensure that your flight is scheduled to land to London latest by 11h in the morning. This allows you time to settle in your hotel, have lunch, and arrive on time to the seminar starting 13h30-14h00.
 - **By train.** Traveling from Paris to London is easy using Eurostar. The service arrives at St Pancras International terminal, which is a 10 minute taxi ride away from UCL and your hotel. Plan to arrive for latest 12h if you arrive with Eurostar.
- The French Embassy funds the workshop as follows:
 1. French participants' travel will be funded. French participants' hotel in London on Thursday May 15th is funded. The hotel is located in Bloomsbury (see below for details), within a 5-minute walking distance from University College London.
 - The default room reservation is a single room.
 - Hotel reservations include breakfast.
 2. All participants' Thursday evening dinner is funded;
 3. All participants' Friday lunch is funded.

Workshop location

- We will be located on the campus of University College London, in Bloomsbury, central London. See the link below for an overview of the university: www.ucl.ac.uk
- The address of the workshop is: **1-19 Torrington Place, London.** The nearest underground stations are (see also <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/maps/public-transport>)
 - **Goodge Street (1 min walk) – recommended route! (on the Northern line)**
 - Warren Street (5 min walk)
 - Tottenham Court Road (5 min walk)
 - Euston Square (7 min walk)
 - Euston Station (10 min walk)
 - King Cross St Pancras (15 min walk)
- On the attached link, you can see the UCL campus, as well as the walking route from Goodge Street tube station to the venue of the workshop on 1-19 Torrington Place: <http://crf.casa.ucl.ac.uk/screenRoute.aspx?s=1176&d=1&w=False>
- For your information, UCL is a 10 minute tube ride from central London (e.g. Leicester Square, Covent Garden, Piccadilly Circus, Oxford Circus), and a 15 minute walking distance to these central attractions.

Hotel location

Visiting guests have been booked into:

- The Academy Hotel, 17-25 Gower Street, London WC1E 6HG:
<http://www.theacademyhotel.co.uk/>

- The hotel is a 3-5 min walk from the university workshop premises
- The nearest underground stations are (see also <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/maps/public-transport>)
 - **Goodge Street (3 min walk) – recommended route! (on the Northern line)**
 - Tottenham Court Road (5 min walk)
 - Warren Street (7 min walk)
 - Euston Square (7 min walk)
 - Euston Station (10 min walk)
 - King Cross St Pancras (15 min walk)

Finance

The allocated workshop budget was spent on:

1. French delegates' hotel expenses;
2. French delegates' travel expenses;
3. Evening meal day 1;
4. Lunch day 2;
5. Coffee/tea on days 1 & 2.

The final costs are being calculated, as invoices are incoming. The final costs will be communicated in a follow-up email.