

## **CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING MASTERS DISSERTATION ABSTRACT**

### **Collaboration: the elusive ideal. Exploring the drivers and barriers to the use of collaborative contracts and collaborative approaches in the UK social infrastructure domain**

This research has aimed to map the discrepancies between the public and private sectors perceptions of collaboration within the construction industry. The objective has been to systematically determine the root causes behind the construction industry's difficulty in adopting both collaborative contracts and collaborative approaches in the UK social infrastructure domain.

In applying a mixed methods approach, the study has aimed to classify and categorise how the various parties involved in social infrastructure construction both value and manage risks. It has sought to consequently identify whether a reframing of this risk could further enhance and enable collaboration.

The first stage in achieving this goal, was to conduct an extensive literature review which identified five key themes that regularly influence collaborative capability. This created a platform from which to launch the successive stages of the study. The literature review was followed by a pilot survey which was based on these key themes and was used to interpret the potential usefulness and quality of the responses that could be expected. The final survey that resulted from the pilot survey feedback process, ensured that the data obtained could be used to compare any disparities between the responses of the public and private sectors. The governing rationale behind the use of the survey was to develop a method that could capture knowledge and data in a consistent and systematic way. The trends and patterns that emerged from the survey were then rationalised and examined via two workshops; one with the private sector and one with the public sector. This helped to expand on the data and further explain trends obtained through the survey with a view to critiquing them and providing a strategic recommendation for the improvement of collaboration in the social infrastructure domain.

Through this lens, the study identified that the early confrontation of ideas was in fact beneficial and conducive to the development of constructive and sustainable relationships between the private and public sectors. The study found that during the procurement phases of a construction contract, early positive confrontation helps to delineate the boundaries of the contractual landscape, therefore better defining risks and therefore improving the manner in which they are addressed. This early confrontation facilitates a rapprochement of purpose and avoids misaligned intentions which ultimately lead to adversarial behaviours.

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**March 2019**