

CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING MASTERS DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

British Buildings Made in China – the Future?

A global law firm, called Pinsent Masons, published a report in 2014 called 'China Invests West'. The report forecast that £105bn of Chinese investment will flow into United Kingdom's (UK) infrastructure and real estate by 2025. This research study investigates the opportunities and threats that the main UK contractors are likely to face from a possible influx of both China's money, and their massive construction companies, into the UK construction market.

This study presents a critical literature review of publications that focus on the Chinese entry into the UK, with a synopsis of the developments in the UK construction market to date. It examines the barriers the Chinese are likely to face as they look to enter the UK.

A mixed methods research methodology was selected, combining both quantitative questionnaires with qualitative interviews. An online questionnaire was completed by executives from the leading UK contractors, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with a cross section of key senior personnel within the UK government, industry and academia, who are analysing the Chinese situation within the UK construction sector.

The synthesis of both primary and secondary research data concludes that there are compelling expectations that the Chinese will be investing heavily into the UK construction market, and that their main Chinese contractors will also be entering the market in parallel with these investments, either through partnerships or by acquisition. The entry of the Chinese should be embraced as an opportunity by the main UK contractors. However, in order for the Anglo-Sino partnerships to be successful, there must be close collaboration between both parties, respect for each other's cultures and careful due diligence must be undertaken prior to locking into any contract.

The research concludes with recommendations which will prime the main UK contractors to seize the opportunities, whilst also preparing for the impending competitive advantage that the Chinese may well bring to the UK construction market.

This study may be considered a first of its kind, at a time when the entry of the Chinese into the UK construction market is in its infancy, and it should assist with dispelling much of the misconception, hearsay and anecdotal evidence that currently exists surrounding their entry. Finally, this research unearths that the UK construction products sector may well be threatened by the entry of the Chinese into the UK construction industry, therefore making the delivery of British Buildings Made in China a very real prospect for the future of the UK construction industry.

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