

LAPPEENRANTA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

LUT School of Energy Systems

Degree Programme in Environmental Technology

Bachelor's Thesis

**Conducting Finnish Planning and Urban Design Business in
China
Case Ramboll**

Examiner: Associate Professor, D.Sc.(Tech) Mika Luoranen

Supervisor: Post-Doctoral Researcher, D.Sc.(Tech) Sanni Väisänen

Lappeenranta, 18th of September

Ville Lassila

ABSTRACT

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Keywords: urban design, Chinese business, guanxi, xinyong, gangqing.

The research topic of this thesis is the demand for Finnish urban planning in the Chinese markets and the Chinese business culture's main aspects. Research has been done with interviews and scientific articles. The aim of this thesis is to recognize the challenges of the Chinese markets and identify the cooperation points between Ramboll, a consultation company, and Finnish architecture companies, when the architectural companies offer city planning to the Chinese markets. The cooperation in the Chinese markets would increase the brand knowledge of Ramboll and its cooperation partner. This brand development in China would allow Ramboll and its copartner a spot in the fast-growing economy of China. The research for this thesis was done by interviewing the Finnish architecture firms and Ramboll employees and reading scientific articles. The main aspects of business in China are identified and investigated in this thesis.

The cooperation points between Ramboll, architecture and development firms are identified and suggested in this Thesis. The Chinese markets are extremely large and full of opportunities, but not without difficulties. Every suggestion made in this thesis carries its own risks and opportunities. The most challenging part of conducting business in China was proven to be guanxi aspect of the Chinese business, as the cultural differences between China and Finland make it hard to build a good network in China. One of the suggestions was that Ramboll finland could help the architects in management of the Chinese business.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Lappeenrannan teknillinen yliopisto
LUT School of Energy Systems
Ympäristötekniikan koulutusohjelma

Ville Lassila

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Tässä työssä tutkitaan Suomen kaupunkisuunnittelun osaamisen markkinoita Kiinassa ja Kiinan liiketoimintakulttuurin pääedellytyksiä haastatteluiden ja tieteellisten artikkelien avulla. Tavoitteena on tunnistaa Kiinan markkinoiden vaikeudet ja löytää yhteistyömahdollisuuksia Ramboll-konsultointiyrityksen ja suomalaisten arkkitehtuuriyritysten välillä, kun he tarjoavat suomalaista kaupunkisuunnittelua Kiinan markkinoille. Yhteistyö Kiinan markkinoilla mahdollistaisi brändin kehityksen Kiinassa, minkä vuoksi Ramboll yhteistyökumppaneineen pääsisi mukaan Kiinan taloudelliseen kehitykseen. Tutkimistyö tehtiin haastattelemalla suomalaisia arkkitehtuuriyrityksiä, sekä Rambollin henkilökuntaa ja lukemalla tieteellisiä artikkeleita. Liiketoiminnan edellytykset Kiinassa tunnistetaan ja selvitetään työssä.

Rambollin, arkkitehtuuri- ja kehitysyritysten yhteistyömahdollisuuksia identifioidaan ja suositellaan työssä. Kiinan markkinat ovat erittäin suuret ja täynnä mahdollisuuksia, mutta vaikeuksiakin ilmenee. Jokaisessa työssä annetussa ehdotuksessa on suuret mahdollisuudet, mutta myös riskit. Haastavin ongelma Kiinan markkinoilla oli guanxi, koska kulttuurierot tuovat suuria ongelmia verkostoitumiseen. Toiseksi haastavin ongelma oli kielimuuri, koska yhteistä kieltä ei ole päätöksentekijöiden kanssa. Yksi ehdotus oli, että Ramboll Finland voisi avustaa suomalaisia arkkitehtuuriyrityksiä Kiinan liiketoiminnan johtamisessa.

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Appendix 1: Interview questions

1 INTRODUCTION

The enormous markets of China offer companies countless new business opportunities. China is currently investing massively into science and technology. The Chinese markets are growing rapidly and the gross domestic product growth was approximately 6.7% in 2016 (Trading Economics 2017c). China is already the world's second largest economy and per predictions by TEKES, it is going to become the world's largest market by the year of 2026. (TEKES 2016)

Ramboll (hereafter target company), a Danish consultation company (Ramboll 2017), has various offices in China and is looking to expand their involvement in Chinese projects. It can be assumed that China has a growing need for expertise that target company offers because of its extreme rate of urbanization. Due to the size of Chinese markets and the rate of urbanization the potential gain from becoming a leading consultation firm in China is tremendous. China is going to face further problems as the citizens of China are buying new cars into already crowded and jammed roads and increasing energy demand into an already high energy consuming community.

The aim of this thesis, is to analyse the consultation needs of the Chinese market for Planning and Urban Design (P&UD) through interviews and scientific articles. This thesis was made for target company's Finland department, with this thesis they aim to increase their brand in China. Projects from target company were chosen from the target company website to further understand the expertise that the company can offer. To specify this knowledge to China, the projects will be taken from target company China departments. To find out more about the possible difficulties, goals and hopes these specific projects faced/provided, interviews were conducted with experts involved in China projects. Analysis on the need of foreign expertise in China will be conducted through scientific articles and interviews whenever possible. China legislation and bureaucracy is an important aspect that also needs to be considered in this thesis as well. At last, suggestions will be provided, by which target company could improve its visibility in China, through either their architecture firm partners or target company China departments.

2 CHINA URBAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN MARKETS

China urban and environmental design markets are constantly increasing due to the rate of urbanization. The number of construction enterprises has increased by 9278 in 4 years, from the year 2010 to year 2014 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2015). With the increasing interest in western style brands, foreign companies can provide consultations to many of these enterprises (Moduslink 2015).

2.1 Challenges and opportunities in China

The growth of the Chinese middleclass will be an indicator to show economic growth and therefore urbanization in China. The definition of middleclass Chinese can vary, but within this thesis the definition will be the same as McKinsey Quarterly's article "Mapping China's middle class": earnings of \$9,000 to \$34,000 USD per year. Households in this income range, tend to spend less than 50% of earnings on necessities. This allows them to show distinctive consumer trends, which tend to lean towards foreign products. (Barton, Chen & Jin 2013)

Figure 1 shows the percentage of population living in the city in the past and the predicted future. The aim of this figure is to show the dramatic increase of urbanization in China. The increase dramatically increased in the year of 1975 and has proven to have a steady increase up to the present. Per history and predictions, the increase in urbanization will continue.

China's Urban and Rural Population, 1950-2030

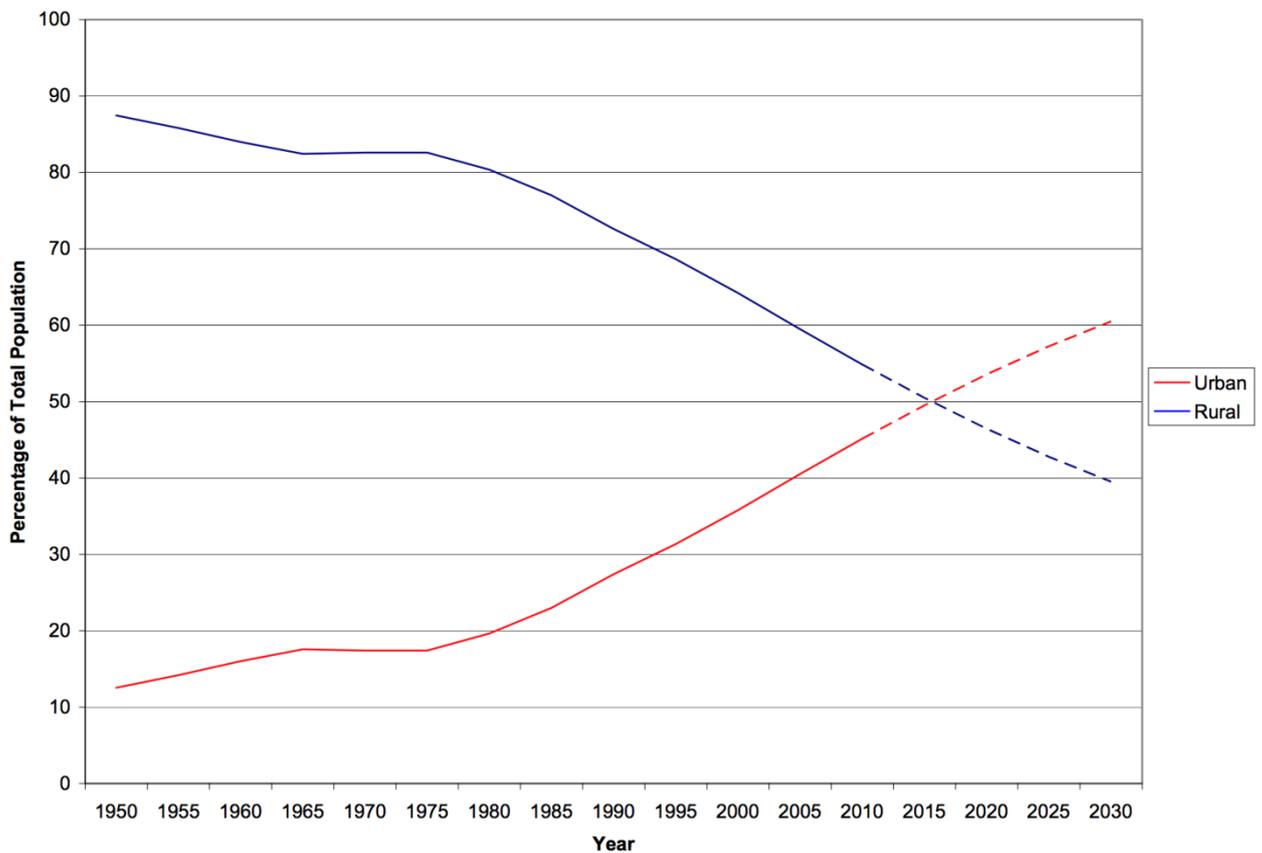


Figure 1. This figure shows the development in the past and projected development of Chinese urbanization. (Seto 2016, 10)

Urban population in China is predicted to increase by 300-700 million by 2050. Urbanization rate by definition is the percentage of population, which live in urban areas. In 2002, the urbanization rate of China was 36% and by 2050, it is expected to be approximately 70%, by which the rate of increase has slowed down significantly. To put this into context during the year 2000, the US had an urbanization rate of 77%, Japan 79% and Germany 88%. As shown in Figure 1, the urban population is constantly increasing at a slightly declining rate as expected. By the year 2030, approximately 60% of China's population will live in urban areas. (Seto 2016, 6)

2.1.1 Urbanization opportunities and challenges

Urbanization in China can be viewed as a crisis or as an opportunity. The problems that it causes can be the following: environmental degradation, loss of arable land, pressure on natural resources, inadequate housing and consumption pattern changes. Environmental

degradation, as pollution emissions from large cities are more severe than in rural areas. During the creation of buildings for cities, there will be a loss of arable land, as instead of using the arable land for agriculture, it will be required for housing. This will then cause pressure on natural resources such as water, food, and energy. Urbanization might lead to inadequate housing if the building rate of households is lower than the urbanization rate. Consumption patterns will change significantly when the urban population increases. (Seto 2016, 5)

Urbanization is the driving force in economic growth, as it provides new consumption opportunities and therefore employment opportunities. As the community urbanizes, infrastructure is also used more efficiently, as the population density increases. For example, in rural areas, the citizens usually live in their own house with excessive amounts of space, but in urban areas the populations usually live in apartment buildings with many apartments. The health services provided can be delivered faster and more efficiently with a higher population density. Education is much more convenient when the government can create bigger schools instead of increasing the number of schools. Everything tends to be more efficient in urban lifestyle, for example one heating source may be able to provide heat for many houses unlike in the rural areas. Lastly, even though during the urbanization process the houses that are required to be built for the coming population take space, the houses where they came from are freed for agricultural or natural processes. (Seto 2016, 5)

There are numerous challenges that need to be solved during urbanization. Urbanization has been a problem and a success in many Western countries and these countries have faced or are facing the challenges in transition. Unfortunately, the transition methods cannot be the same for each country due to numerous aspects such as consuming habits, cultural and geographical differences, economic status etc. Therefore, the transition must be done the Chinese way, instead of the western way. However, western technology could be used as a tool for Chinese planning. Public transportation needs to be thought out through consumer habits, city layouts and available technology. Land use efficiency needs to be extremely well thought out as the population density increases. The loss of productive agricultural land due to buildings need to be replaced in some way or another, as the demand will only increase as population increases. The energy demands will

increase radically as building energy consumptions in rural areas are relatively low, unlike in the urban areas (Li & Liu 2006). (Seto 2016, 34)

Overall, the extreme urbanization is a driving force for the leaders of China to invest in urban and environmental markets. Solutions for efficient space usage, efficient energy usage and environmental protection is going to increase at an alarming rate. Therefore, the demand of urban and environmental design markets can be assumed to increase as urbanization progresses.

2.2 China business culture

The Chinese business culture is different when compared to the western business culture (Chinese Culture 2017). It tends to be much faster, more unpredictable and flexible and highly irregular. There are three main aspects that need to be taken into consideration when starting business in China: *guanxi*, *xinyong* and *ganqing* (Tong 2014, p.12-13). In short, *guanxi* is business connections, *xinyong* is references, and *ganqing* is emotional connections. In the next couple paragraphs, the concepts of *guanxi*, *xinyong* and *ganqing* will be explained further in terms of doing business in China.

2.2.1 Guanxi

The role of *guanxi* is extremely important to understand when conducting business in China. *Guanxi* is best understood as the interpersonal relationships within China business. There are different bases of *guanxi*, which can and should be activated in different situations. For example, as a business starts to grow, the kinship *guanxi* is extremely important as it helps determine the ownership of the company through personal relationships. The presence of *guanxi* is looked at as a catalyst for the success of business in China (Gong, He, Hsu 2013. p.367). As the law in China is not as developed and trustworthy, the development of *guanxi* has decreased the uncertainty in the markets of China and increased the use of tangible resources (Gong, He, Hsu 2013. p.367). The conducting of business through personal relationships can be problematic as well as it can be difficult to make profit and demand debt payments. The idea of *guanxi* needs to be understood by international companies as unsteady as it can decay at any point in time. To

uphold guanxi, it requires constant efforts within the personal and social side of the relationship, such as invitation to dinners, social visits, gifts and in some extreme cases, marriage. To sustain good guanxi with limited amounts of effort, you need to create guanxi in numerous different bases. Guanxi is effectively illustrated in figure 2, showing hands as the connecting pieces. The different hands as connections are completing empty spaces within other pieces. (Tong 2014, p.12-13,44)

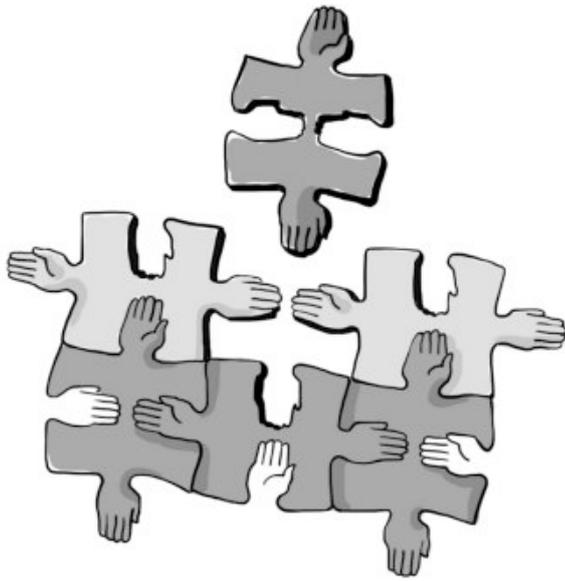


Figure 2. An illustration of guanxi in practise. (Fairhead, 2012)

The presence of guanxi implies assistance in both ways, however it does not mean that both parties benefit the same amount from the relationship. Chinese businessmen like the idea of doing business with someone that they trust and are close and personal with. In the case that the guanxi starts to significantly take more than it provides, the strength of the bond is weakened as sometimes fully diminished, therefore the presence of guanxi does not make costs of the processes insignificant. The existence of guanxi opens new opportunities, and possibly creates current business transactions faster and easier. (Tong 2014, p.12-13)

2.2.2 Xinyong

Guanxi is often understood as a singular term and this may cause the downfall of projects in China. While guanxi is important, it cannot work unless you also possess two other important concepts, xinyong and ganqing. The concept of xinyong can be translated as

“trust” or “trustworthiness”, but means the credibility and reputation of a businessman or company. The word consists of two characters, one is “xin” and the other is “yong” these translate to “verbal trust” and “utilization” respectively (Chan, Leung, Lai, Ngai 2011, p. 1195). The meaning of xinyong is that an individual’s verbal promise must be kept when conducting business with others to earn personal credits for following business transactions (Chan, Leung, Lai, Ngai 2011, p. 1195). In the case that a businessman does not possess xinyong, all the guanxi gathered will be of little use. Xinyong can be gained through good references and long-term business relationships. The presence of xinyong ensures the lack of fraud and the existence of order within business relationships. Some can argue that the concept of xinyong is used to compensate for the lack of trust towards the Chinese legislations that the businessmen operate under. A partial reason for the social gatherings and long lasting drinking sessions is the evaluation of the trustworthiness of a possible partner. (Tong 2014, p.13)

The presence of xinyong helps Chinese businessmen make choices between partners and they tend to favor partners with xinyong and avoid partners with little or no xinyong. At the start, Chinese businessmen must rely on the general xinyong that the potential partner has. The deciding factor as to whether they will initiate a business deal will rely on whether there is guanxi present. The guanxi and xinyong are connected to each other very closely and the improvement of one can and most likely will mean the improvement of the other. (Tong 2014, p.13)

Newcomers to Chinese business culture are often required to develop xinyong by proving their worth through projects. Developing xinyong can be much easier when there is connection between the observer and the assessed person. This connection could for example be that they are relatives or connected through a mutual business partner or friend. The observer often creates tests to make sure xinyong can be established. Xinyong is as unstable as guanxi, it can be lost through cheating or not keeping your word. The stronger the xinyong is, the bigger the buffer zone it has before it breaks. (Tong 2014, p.14)

2.2.3 Ganqing

The third and last aspect that will be examined of Chinese business is often not considered as important, however it is worth keeping in mind while doing business in China. Ganqing is translated as “affection” or “emotional attachment”. The line between business and personal relationships is much more transparent than in European countries. Talking, drinking, eating, entertaining and socializing are a large part of Chinese business culture. Social interactions are business interactions for the Chinese and the desire of personalizing business relations are shown by upholding social relationships. The time and energy put into social relationships in China by businessmen are extreme and the businessmen expect the same from the other party. The presence of ganqing make it easier to develop and uphold guanxi, however they are not the same term. (Tong 2014, p.14)

The difference between ganqing and guanxi is slight but present. Ganqing is a deeper level of personal commitment than that of guanxi. Ganqing emphasises on the psychological interaction between guanxi members. Psychological interaction consists of mutual empathetic understanding, sharing of happiness and affection. Guanxi is more focused on obligation, duty or loyalty instead. Therefore, the better the ganqing between two partners, the closer they are within the network of businessmen. The presence of ganqing allows flexibility within transactions and discourages the legalizing of all terms and conditions within the transaction. (Chan, Leung, Lai & Ngai 2011, p. 1198)

2.2.4 Main aspects of Chinese business

Due to the scope of this thesis, further study into the Chinese business will not be done, however there are many more aspects that need to be taken into consideration when conducting business in China. These three aspects will get you far in Chinese business and the rest tend to come with intuition when these three are taken into consideration. Chinese business tends to revolve around networking, references and emotional connections between the network that you have. In the next section, we will consider how target company has developed these three aspects of Chinese business.

3 TARGET COMPANY

Target company was founded on 15th of October 1945 in Denmark. Since then, it has become an internationally known corporation, which employs over 13,000 specialists. Approximately 2200 of these specialists are in Finland. In 2014 target company's turnover was 1,4 billion euros, and currently target company's Finland department has a turnover of 175 million euros. target company has almost 300 offices in 35 different countries and three of these offices are in China. target company specializes in real estate and construction, infrastructure and transportation, urban planning, water, environmental and health, energy, oil and gas and management consultation. (Ramboll 2016e)

3.1 Planning & Urban Design

Planning & Urban Design (P&UD) is a series of projects by target company, which involve planning from the broad point of view all the way down to the specifics. It balances out the environmental, social and economic aspects of a new urban design. P&UD provides strategic consultancy services, which helps recognize the core areas and the goals of the operations. It also provides innovative and working solutions to problems through experience in countless challenging projects. Lastly the solutions to these specific problems will be using the best available technology worldwide. The P&UD can be integrated worldwide with knowledge from many different environmental and economic conditions. (Ramboll 2016f)

3.2 Target company's Involvement in China

Target company has a series of projects located in China. One of these projects is in ZhuZhou, China, where the Xiangjiang river of 4 streams flows through the city to a catchment area of 459km². This area has been contaminated with severe environmental problems. The economic development of companies has declined and all taxpayers are starting to emigrate out of the city. The project was to increase economic, social and

ecological sustainability by creating ecologically sustainable infrastructures. As the city becomes more ecological and socially acceptable, citizens will emigrate back to the city and therefore restore the economic status of ZhuZhou. (Ramboll 2016b)

Judging from target company's different projects, China is focusing primarily on water usage. Water is an extremely important variable in China due to the present lack of it, therefore target company's expertise has been suited in projects such as the Nandian Park City. Tianjin had the problem of extreme seasonal variation, therefore during some time periods the lack of water was an issue and other time periods floods were an issue. A company who is a part of the target company Group, Dreiseitl, oversaw creating a water system, which allowed the conditions for urban comfort and the development of water quality at the same time as managing flood events. (Ramboll 2016c)

Target company has also taken a part in an infrastructure project, which provides expertise for an underwater tunnel in Hong Kong. This tunnel is 1,7km long with 1,4 of it being immersed in water. The project was created to improve the public transportation of Hong Kong. The expertise has been gained from the Nordic immersed tube channels such as the Fehmarn Belt tunnel and the Øresund tunnel. Target company works as the geotechnical consultant and expert reviewer in the immersed tunnel project. (Ramboll 2016d)

Many Finnish architecture firms have been a part of many contests and projects in China. Recently there has been a project in Nanjing, which was to design a Sino-Finnish Center. This project was one of the biggest contests in China and only the top was invited to this competition. The competition was special, as only Finnish architects were invited due to their highly appreciated skills in design. The winner of this project was PES-architects and target company was a part of the design that won the competition.

4 RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCESSES

The research process for the needs and problems in Chinese markets will be conducted qualitatively through interviews. Qualitative data is “data that approximates or characterizes but does not measure the attributes, characteristics, properties, etc., of a thing or phenomenon.” (Business Dictionary, 2016) This thesis will shed light on the attributes, characteristics and properties of China and Chinese business culture. The sources for this information will be scientific online articles and literature. Questions in the presented in the interview will be conversation starter questions, so the development of the discussion is more free and therefore more towards the truth. Questions within this survey will be based on background knowledge through qualitative research. Analysis will be conducted to make conclusions from the received information by creating patterns between the received qualitative data (Alasuutari 2011, p. 39). The questions for the qualitative interview will be based on information gathered through literature, the requirements of target company and personal experience of the Chinese culture. The interview questions can be found on appendix 1 at the end of the thesis. Fifteen people were invited into partake in this project in the form of an interview and a total of eleven people were interviewed by the end.

The experts interviewed for the project are employees of Finnish architecture companies and target company employees. Each of these experts have had experience with China business and have cooperated with target company in the past. The cooperation between the companies can be enhanced through the identification of the challenges within the Chinese markets and suiting these challenges to the knowledge and expertise of target company.

Each interview was recorded with a recording device, and the information gathered from the interviewees will be sent to the interviewees for inspection and verification. Approval was asked for the recording. All the information gathered within the interview itself will be available to the interviewee, and the interviewee has the chance to modify the data in case he/she finds the need to. The interviews will be made anonymous in this thesis, to protect the privacy of each company and person.

5 RESULTS

In this section, the results of the interviews were analysed and collected. The main challenges in the Chinese market was put in order of importance. Challenges for some companies' present opportunities for other companies. These challenges were crossed with the knowledge and understanding of target company and presented as opportunities.

5.1 The role of Finnish urban and environmental design

The role of Finnish urban and environmental design is very clear and defined in Chinese urban design projects. In July of 2015, the average salary of a person per month in Finland was 3346 EUR, and the corresponding amount for an average Chinese person is 5169 CNY (Trading Economics 2017b and 2017c). The current exchange rate of EUR to CNY is 7.29 CNY per 1 EUR, this means that the salary of an average Finnish person is 4.7 times that of the average Chinese person (XE 2017). The salary differences may not provide an exact amount for architecture specifically, however it gives an idea of what the price differences of labor is between Finland and China. Finnish design is extremely expensive when looked at from the point of view of the Chinese urban design market. There is no possibility of competing in architecture with prices at the current state. Therefore, Finnish architecture needs to compete in another category, which is the quality of work. The chances of a Chinese customer paying for a 100% Finnish design team is close to none, however the chance that they will hire a 50% Chinese 50% Finnish design team is much more likely (Interviewee D 2016). When examining the price differences between Finnish and Chinese services, it sounds illogical to bring Finnish knowledge into China. The Chinese are however extremely interested in international business and well branded companies. When you examine the overall cost of a specific building or a city, in the end, the cost of the consultation provided by the Finnish company is extremely small, most likely close to 0.1% of the total costs depending on the project (interviewee D 2016).

Finnish architects come from extreme conditions and the knowledge that comes from Nordic conditions is very valuable (interviewee J 2016). The difference between the Chinese and the Finnish seems to be that the Chinese are great at executing the process, whereas Finnish people are great at planning the process (interviewee J 2016). The lack of planning and execution from start to finish in China results in situations such as hotels being closed due to mold problems very early in its lifecycle (interviewee J, 2016). Finnish people are great at maintaining buildings/cities and planning them. The maintenance of cities and buildings is not a business case for the Finnish in China, as the costs of maintenance would be extremely high. Therefore, the knowledge that the Finnish can bring is consultation in the planning. New Nordic concepts are valued highly in the Chinese community and Finnish engineers and architects are good at providing them (interviewee A 2016).

The knowledge that Finnish people bring to the projects, is simply the quality, new knowledge, international brand and new innovative designs. Specifically, the knowledge that is in high demand in China cities, is landscaping, sponge cities and green solutions (interviewee I 2016). Finnish architects and design offices that have created a brand are given a chance at the highest ranked projects in China, due to the expertise that they can provide. An example of this is the low carbon Sino-Finnish demonstration city, which will be built in Nanjing, a Finnish company PES-architects has won the design competition for this project (Cleantech Finland 2016). Therefore, the demand for Finnish urban and environmental planning is not centered around the normal everyday design, but instead the high value projects.

The demand for Finnish architecture is increasing according most of the personnel interviewed. This seems logical as urbanization of Chinas brings along problems with efficient space usage and traffic. Currently, the level of normal Chinese architecture is bad, if not pathetic (interviewee J 2016). Many of the buildings built in the outskirts of cities are built with the same usual poor design and the same problems exist (interviewee J 2016). In the future, this can be expected to change due to the brain drain effect from the US and other countries, where Chinese citizens go into the US to learn new concepts and then come back to China to use the new information. This increases the overall level of Chinese

architecture, however the very top of the peak architecture will still come from the Nordic countries, if the interest still exists (interviewee J 2016). There are a couple world class architects in China, however not enough to plan all the high-class projects available.

5.2 Challenges in Chinese markets

The challenges presented in this chapter of the thesis are challenges that architecture companies faced in their China projects and the overall challenges in China. These are not however the only challenges in Chinese markets and many of them have already been solved. These challenges are currently the ones, which do not have a known solution.

An overview of the challenges and opportunities are shown in table 1 below.

Table 1. The challenges caused by urbanization in China and the opportunities that it could bring.

Challenges in China	Opportunity
Traffic problems	Creating a traffic analysis system
Inadequate housing	Creating a concept, which allows the increase of usage rates in buildings
Environmental degradation	Renewable energy consultation
Loss of arable land	Creating more efficient farmlands
Pressure on natural resources	Water purification consultation Renewable energy consultation
Consumption pattern changes	Adapting to these changes

These opportunities are examples of solutions that could possibly provide business opportunities for companies all around the world. Even if urbanization might have a negative aspect to it, it only changes the situation that we live in and we must change along with it to make it into an opportunity instead of a challenge.

China business difficulties tends to revolve around the culture differences. There are five different major problems that repeatedly was talked about in the interviews conducted. The amount of times the five different problems were mentioned in different interviews is

shown in figure 3. The aim of this thesis is to identify these challenges, however they are by no means supposed to be taken negatively, as these challenges provide opportunities for companies like target company.

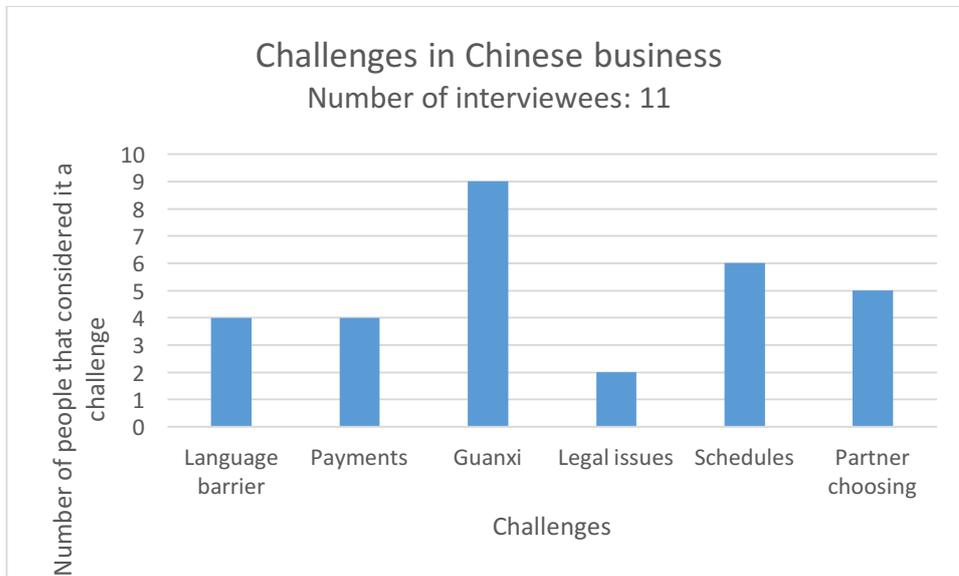


Figure 2. The main problems that occur when conducting business in China are shown in figure 3.

The two main problems seemed to be guanxi and schedules. They both have a strong connection to the Chinese culture in business and that culture is extremely different from Finnish culture. Xinyong and ganqing tended to not be as big of a problem. This in my opinion is because majority the architecture firms that make their way into the Chinese markets have the references that it requires. Ganqing hasn't shown its position in this chart as most of the interviewees do not know what ganqing is and architecture firms rarely have gone so deep into the Chinese business to even realize the importance of it. Ganqing tends to appear when the cooperation is much deeper between the Chinese partner and the Finnish partner.

5.2.1 Guanxi

The main problem was the establishment of guanxi and the understanding of Chinese culture through it. To conduct business in China, the business culture needs to be understood and the actions of the company needs to be modified to fit the culture in China. This requires a lot of time, labour and therefore investments. As conducting business in China is highly personal and time consuming, the idea of going to China to consult in a

short-time schedule does not seem logical at all. The main reason that international business in China fails, is because the amount of time and money they invest into these projects is not enough. If you go into China, you should not hold back (interviewee C 2016). Company *I* has been in China for approximately 14 years now and the time and effort has not paid off to the extent that they expected it to. During the 14 years, they have developed strong connections and a strong presence in China. They have created a great brand name in China, and this is one aspect that the Chinese appreciate. Company *I* has invested a lot of money into China, unlike most other companies in Finland, who tend to be more project-based. Project-based refers to attending possible architecture or urban planning competitions and only attending the high-status projects, which could possibly bring a huge opening to the Chinese markets.

The idea of developing *guanxi* can be extremely hard, however it can also be looked as pleasant and welcoming. Developing *guanxi* can be extremely pleasant for businessmen, as the social activities can be fun and enjoyable. Throughout the course of Chinese business cases, you develop a great group of friends and these friends can be looked as not only business partners, but also people to develop a personal connection with during free time. After the development of deep *guanxi* with the business partners, the *guanxi* can be used to gain benefits that would not otherwise be possible.

5.2.2 Scheduling

The second most mentioned complication in China was scheduling. Scheduling refers to how the timeline can change at any point in time. To expand this further out, many things can change in a small amount of time, such as contracts and requirements. The Chinese system sets a high importance on hierarchy (interviewee D 2016). Therefore, in the case that the highest ranked person cannot attend the meeting, the notice that the meeting has been cancelled will be sent out sometimes quite late, and the businessmen below do not have a say in it. The Finnish are used to a very structural and organized way of doing business. This means that in the case that something was planned, it will be carried out and completed like planned and if complications occur, they will be presented as far ahead of time as possible. In China, the schedule changes include last minute meeting changes, and therefore the financial loss of plane tickets (interviewee D 2016).

The contracts also change last minute, for example there has been a contract for the designing of a building, and a couple weeks before the deadline, instead of the original design of one building, a design of two buildings needed to be made (interviewee A 2016). To complete this task, all the architects of Finland should be working on it fulltime, and it most likely wouldn't be complete by the deadline anyway. The labour forces of China and Finland differ extremely and therefore the flexibility requirements of Finland is not the same as that of China. Rare Finnish companies possess the flexibility provided by excessive work force that China business requires. This leads to deadlines not being met, which then starts a chain of events that consist of the forfeiting of xinyong, the lack of guanxi and the fall of business cases.

The changing of schedule seems very stressful and unpredictable; however, it brings certain amount of flexibility to business projects. Instead of having to go through all the acceptance processes all over again, which could possibly take years in Finland, you can go on with the project without starting all over again. If you can keep up with the schedules set by the Chinese, your projects have the potential of being completed extremely fast.

Scheduling has become a problem for some companies in Finland. Urban planning competitions in China have very fast schedules. For example, in the Nanjing competition, all Finnish architecture offices needed to provide a Chinese introduction of their company in three days (interviewee H 2016). This caused trouble for some architect offices. The difference between the labor that China has and the labor that Finland has is extreme, and therefore the schedule is much harder to follow for Finland. Finnish architecture companies should have a China specific team on standby if any China projects require attention.

5.2.3 Partner choosing

The second most mentioned problem is the choosing of partners. The Chinese legislation demands that the official plans of projects need to be created and approved by a local Chinese company, which has the authority to do so (interviewee L 2016). The establishment of guanxi with the right people is extremely important and often very

difficult. The attendance of personnel to meetings is very easy to organize, however the attendance of the correct decision making personnel is extremely hard to organize (interviewee F 2016). To ensure the success and quality of a project in China, a trustworthy and reliable partner must be chosen. International brands are appreciated in China. At times when the project is looking for investments, they use the international brand to advertise the project as high class, sustainable, innovative and self-sufficient, to receive the investment money for the projects (interviewee L 2016). Once the money has been delivered, they often go low status and disregard the international planning to build something that was not per plan (interviewee L 2016). This problem can be compensated with careful choosing of partners, creating trust between them and involving yourself in the project until the end, which however is extremely hard on a consultation basis.

5.2.4 Language barrier

The third most mentioned complications were language barrier and payments. The problem with language barriers seem to be that the Chinese contract is always the one that counts in court (interviewee D 2016). In China, you also never know if the *guanxi* between the judge and your opponent is much better than that of yours and the judges. Usually you want to avoid court as much as possible in China, as they tend to lean towards the Chinese point of view quite heavily instead of the international point of view. Language barriers are also a problem within meetings, as translators are always present, however the translations may not be as accurate, and the true meaning is not portrayed correctly. Also, as said above, the establishment of *guanxi* is extremely important and personal connections are hard to establish when you have no common language (interviewee E 2016).

Another effect of the language barrier is that in conversations, the actual meanings of sentences often need to be read in between the lines, and the truthful meanings behind every sentence can easily be changed as it is translated into another language (interviewee I 2016). This situation is changing fast however, as Chinese decision makers are becoming more and more internationally educated. Currently, the Chinese government are supporting international education. The fraction of Chinese students in a lecture on architecture given by Interviewee B in the US, was approximated to be 30% (interviewee B 2016). However currently, the decision makers are usually older and without adequate English proficiency

and therefore hard to obtain guanxi with. In the future, the issue of language barriers can be expected to decrease as the future decision makers are most likely internationally educated.

5.2.5 Payments

The second fourth most mentioned problem is the receiving of payments. With consultation services, the cost of the work is calculated per the number of hours that an expert puts into the solution. When the architectural solution has been created and then assessed as not applicable for the Chinese requirements, the motivation to pay for the work input is very close to zero (interviewee H 2016). There have been some projects that have not received any kind of payment at all for company H (interviewee H 2016). In China, the invoicing process is nowhere near as simple as in Finland, as the payments come late or sometimes don't come at all. This leads to the lack of trust between partners, which damages the guanxi between them. When doing business in China, you should usually assume that the last 20% of the full price will not be paid (interviewee A 2016). This leads to a price increase of 20% on the normal services, or the demanding of advance payment as company D does. Payment complications are not present in every project, however the risk of it needs to be in consideration when doing business with private companies.

Target company has three offices in China and the cooperation between them and the Finnish office is currently weak. There are many services that different target company departments can offer the China offices, however they are currently not being used. There have been problems with money transfer away from China, due to taxing and legal reasons (interviewee D 2016).

5.2.6 Legislation

The fifth most important topic was legislation. The reason that legislation is not considered a major challenge in architecture and urban planning, is because many of the companies in Finland have not gotten to the stage of organizing and executing projects. The planning stage of the process face requirements from the buyer, however the requirements rarely base themselves on legislations, but recommendations instead (interviewee D 2016). However, once you do get into the execution of the project stage, the legislation becomes quite troublesome. There are a lot of complicated legislation procedures, documents and

paper works, which need to be handled (interviewee K 2016). If these basic legislation processes can be overcome and are taken into consideration from the very start of the project, they do not present as a challenge to the project creator (interviewee J 2016).

In legislation, the ruling of China and the hierarchy structure was also taken into consideration. A couple interviewees mentioned the speech of Mr. Xi Jinping, the current president of China. This speech was a criticism of China being a playground for absurd architecture. Finnish architecture is quite odd and creative in many ways, however Finland itself does not have the resources to complete all these projects and therefore many of these are being suggested to Chinese projects. Xi Jinping took this negatively and criticized some projects in China such as the birds nest, the boot, the egg, the coin and a pair of trousers (Schwab 2016). These projects are the Beijing Olympics stadium, the Louis Vuitton boot building, National Grand Theater of China, the Guangzhou Circle and the CCTV headquarters respectively. After this speech, projects all around China stopped and many Finnish architects were a part of the projects.

Legislation processes can also work as an advantage, as in Europe you must go through many processes, with politicians and public hearings. Then if it turns out that you have problems or complaints, these processes can take 2 years before they are completed (interviewee D 2016). In China, the decision-making process is more centralized. If you can get the decision makers into the same dinner table, the decision that would take more than a year in Finland, can be made within one week in China (interviewee J 2016). Even if the president of Finland wanted to make decisions regarding plans for projects in China, he would not be able to due to regulations (interviewee J 2016). This is one of the reasons that Finland has a hard time keeping up to the schedules that the Chinese set.

The governmental control in China is very important. The acceptance of the government is crucial to the success of your project (interviewee A 2016). This acceptance can be gained by going to the top leaders in China and working your way down to the mayor of the town. However, getting your project to that profile is extremely rare. Another way to gain the approval of the government, is to access China's markets through universities in China. Universities are looked at as the peak of knowledge and they are very well appreciated and

trusted by the government (interviewee A 2016). The government have close examinations of each university, for example, in Tongji university (one of the leading institutes of architecture and urban planning in China), there are offices given to government officials only for the sole purpose of examining the actions of the university (interviewee A 2016) (Tongji University 2017). The last and most common way, is to steer your partner choices into partners that have the government's approval.

5.2.7 Sustainability

There are many difficulties when operating in the Chinese markets, most of these are caused due to the cultural differences between Finland and China. There is however project based difficulties as well, which is more related to the sharing of knowledge and understanding the wants and needs of the buyer.

The air pollution in China is a major issue for the Chinese government and with the fast urbanizing community, usage of energy and heat production is only going to increase. The air pollution has become a problem for Chinese citizens. When you walk along the streets of Beijing, you notice that many Chinese citizens are wearing a filter over their mouth to block out the bigger harmful particles. It is fair to say that the citizen stakeholders are becoming more and more aware of the issues in China.

Currently cleantech and sustainability is an extremely important topic of discussion within China projects (interviewee G 2016). Finland is known as the country of pure air, cleanliness and technology, which is true up to a certain point. However, when the Chinese customers ask a simple question "What is the sustainability plan for this project?", there is rarely a definite answer (interviewee G 2016). Finland can bring knowledge from several different companies, however they are all small-scale projects and lack the bigger picture. Finland has a great base for clean environments and pure air, however the scale at which Finland does it, is much smaller than that of China. The scale differences between China and Finland make the cooperation harder, as one of China's cities can have more than four times the number of people than the population of Finland.

6 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Chinese market is the world's second biggest market, and is soon to be the world's biggest. As the economic growth of China is fast, target company along with many other companies, want to be a part of this growth. Target company could increase their brand in China along with architecture companies if their cooperation was closer. The research topic of this thesis is the demand for Finnish urban planning in Chinese markets and the Chinese business culture's main aspects. The main aspects of Chinese business are very focused around personal connections and networking, along with trustworthiness through references. Target company can share their experience in China for the benefit of Finnish architecture companies.

This section of the thesis will be analysing what possible solutions target company's Finland department could offer to different companies, to avoid having these complications when arriving into the huge markets of China. These solutions will be based on the interviews that were conducted and the information that was collected through scientific articles. These topics came up in most of the eleven interviews that were conducted. The reason they are being mentioned in the conclusion and discussion, is because target company's Finland department could possibly have a good impact on these problems.

The following sections are: sustainability, China management and engineering team. These three titles were chosen as they are the three main connecting pieces between the knowledge of target company's Finland department and the opportunities presented by the architectural firms. Sustainability was mentioned in the form of cleantech by many of the architectural firms. The architectural firms lack the knowledge of cleantech, and the knowledge of cleantech would improve the chances of winning project competitions in China.

China management in another challenge that repeatedly came into discussion during the interviews. China management more specifically means managing the networks and labour in China, and understanding the Chinese partners. Many of the problems that the Finnish

architects are facing in China is that they don't fully know the intentions of the Chinese partner partially due to the language barrier and partially due to the cultural differences.

The last topic that repeatedly was discussed about was that the designs that architects provide lack the knowledge of an engineer. This means that some of the architectural designs may not be possible. When the solutions provided by the architects are not possible to be made into reality, the motivation for the Chinese partner to pay and to continue the cooperation decreases drastically.

6.1 Sustainability

As target company is an engineer office and can therefore offer different solutions to sustainability problems. Target company could initiate a project, where all green technology and sustainability aspects were grouped into one big project, and presented in a small compact form. A team of engineers would need to represent this project and sell the consultation to architecture firms in Finland. This would provide an answer to the sustainability questions within China projects. As cleantech and sustainability is extremely valued in China, the value that a project like this would bring to architecture projects in China would be huge. The project needs to be extremely generalized so that it could fit into many different conditions. One representative of the project could provide a presentation of the possible sustainability solutions for a larger scale project and market the solution within competitions for the Finnish architecture firms. The person/team in charge needs to focus on presentation and language skills, to be able to advertise the gathered information properly (interviewee H 2016).

6.2 China management consulting

Target company has created a good base in China and a good brand name all around the world. Instead of only offering the technical consultation, target company could possibly initiate a bigger role in projects and use its developed network in China for the assistance of others. China consulting could also consist of China culture education and the business

culture education in general. The most troublesome aspect of the Chinese market is its culture in social and business situations. In the case that an architecture firm receives a project in China, they could avoid initial troubles that are faced with Chinese business. This would save the initial troubles and therefore cut down all the unnecessary activities before the actual project can start.

Target company could assist in Chinese business management; however this does not use target company's technical understanding, but instead its China experience. The management would consist of providing trustworthy contacts and partners. This would improve target company's relationship with the authorities in China, which tends to be an extremely important aspect in China projects. Management would consist of quality control as well, which plays an important role in China projects after the initial consultation process is over and the Chinese take over the project. The management could also provide a solution to language barriers, by having a person, who knows the Chinese language and culture to manage projects for different companies.

6.3 Engineering team

To break down the wall between architects and engineers, target company could assemble a team of engineers, that work closely with architects to provide an engineering point of view into China consultation projects. This would provide a larger work force for when the schedule gets tight due to schedule changes or competition requirements. The designs would have a higher chance of winning competitions as they are thought out from many different points of views. This however increases the costs of the projects to levels that the Chinese may not be willing to pay. The Chinese are not willing to pay for a 100% Finnish team, but they may pay for a 50% Finnish and 50% Chinese team (interviewee D 2016). With that in mind, we should understand that when going into China, you must accept that it is going to take more money than it gives in the short term (interviewee C 2016). This initial investment will be to develop a brand name and create a network within China. An engineering team working closely with architecture will ensure the demolishing of the wall between architecture and engineering. The Chinese appreciate when they can get all the planning from one provider, instead of many (interviewee A 2016).

6.4 Conclusion

Overall, as the urbanization of China progresses, China will face many challenges. They can however be viewed as opportunities, as change is not always negative. The challenges that China faces, will bring opportunities to companies that are specifically good at adapting to this change. Currently the interest in western business is still high in China. Therefore, with the demand from urbanization and the interest in Nordic technology and expertise, companies in Finland should try satisfy the demand. Finland's knowledge in cleantech can be transferred over to China, however Finland cannot produce it itself for China. This is because Finland, as a small country, cannot produce the amount of products that China requires. The knowledge from Finland should be transferred over to China and then further manufactured within China to satisfy the demand in China. Target company has the chance to be a part of this fast-growing economy along with Finnish architecture firms if it invests time and effort into it.

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8 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview questions

Questions for interview conversations:

Projects

What kind of activity do you have towards China?

What scale projects? Buildings or city plans?

I am going for an exchange trip to China for half a year in February 2017, what kind of information would you want to acquire from China?

What kind of troubles have you faced along the way?

Has the language barrier caused much trouble?

Rate from 1 to 10, 10 being the most troublesome, how troublesome is Chinese legislation in China projects?

What kind of troubles has legislation brought?

What plays a huge role in China architect/city planning projects?

Water?

Social sides? (shopping malls, parks, leisure activities etc.)

Infrastructure? (transportation)

Sustainability? Digi and smart technology?

What factors do you see as very important for a profitable business case in China?

What surprises did China projects come with?

How do you supervise the quality in your projects? Has this brought any problems along?

Where do you get information regarding new project possibilities?

Is it worth creating offers for China projects?

How profitable have China projects been for you?

Development

How is the development of international architecture offices in China? Is the demand increasing or decreasing?

What level is Chinese architecture in comparison to international architecture? How do you see it changing in the future?

What kind of projects are you expecting in the future?

The expanding of offices? Creating new offices?

Are you looking for new partners in China? Are you considering marketing in China?

Are you already with company clusters such as Finpro, TEKES, FIAC invest Oy? Is it profitable?

What kind of possibilities does China offer for you?

How do you see Ramboll Finland being a part of these projects?

Hopes, problems and expectations

What kind of experience would you require in order to be stronger in China markets?

How do you think we could bring a higher value for projects in China? Would the Chinese appreciate this value?

What stops a business from growing in China? What kind of solutions have you thought of for this problem?

Do you have anything else to mention about projects in China?

How attractive do you see projects in other countries?

Would you require some support from Ramboll Finland with your projects?

How can Ramboll Finland improve its services?

In case I think of more questions, can I contact you?

In the case that you would require some information from China, I will be there from February to mid July.