Abstract

Title: Internationalization strategies of Spanish construction enterprises  
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The construction industry is one of the most important industries of the Spanish economy; in 2004 this industry reached the 18.2% of the Spanish PIB. Despite that, the construction industry is one of the most cyclical activities of the economy. Now a days, is it a good moment for this industry, not only for the edification but also for the civil construction, but it has not been always like this, and it is not going to be. This fact has encouraged the construction enterprises to search for other activities without this cyclical mood, among all of them, the internationalization is one, because the cyclicity of other countries might be different from the Spanish one.

These days the Spanish construction market is the fifth in importance inside Europe, but its activities are differently distributed if it is compared to Europe, mainly the rehabilitation in Spain is far lower than the European percentages. During the last decade there have been big changes, specially, on the industries, which have followed a concentration process that has ended in big construction enterprises that were able to export construction and go inside the concesional market.

The internalization of the Spanish construction companies has not only been encourage due to the cyclicity of the market, the concentration process has allowed the enterprises to export, but also this fact has nearly obligate them to do it, because it has created the need of larger markets. But there is still more motivations, like the duration of the construction market in Spain, or the searching for new business... As it was nearly showed before, the internationalization also needs some requirements from the enterprises, such as enough size, technological capacity, finance capacity...

If inside Europe and related to national construction, Spain was the fifth country in importance, inside the international construction Spain is the sixth, but really far from the two fist. Actually the Swedish exportations, first European country, are nearly six times bigger than the Spanish ones, but considering the whole world, United States is the main country in construction exportations. Comparing the different typologies of construction works, the Spanish enterprises do not follow the same distribution in percentages, so their collaborations in edification and petroleum constructions, second and third activities, are really low. It does not happened this way with the first typology, transportation, in which Spain does take part, not only in railway constructions but also in road construction. Related to the regional markets, the only one in which Spain is powerful is the Latin American one, where Spain is the second country in importance after United States.

The main Spanish enterprises related to construction exportation are ACS, Ferrovial, FCC, Acciona, Sacyr Vallehermoso, OHL and Comsa. These companies have a great tradition in the construction industry, and now a days they have, in general terms, high levels of diversification, though the percentages of internationalization are quite different from one to an other.

Some of these companies, are the ones that started the internationalization of the construction industry at the ending of the 80’s, mainly in Latin America. Later on, and after the recovery of the construction in Spain, these enterprises diminished the international activities, also helped by the crisis in the Latin American countries. At the beginning of the 90’s, due to the creation of the large Spanish enterprises, the exportation was recovered, but this time around the whole world.

Now a days there exist to big markets of construction exportation, Europe and Latin America, where the Spanish enterprises mainly export railway and road construction, respectively. Two huge enterprises, Ferrovial and ACS are the ones that mainly do these constructions. Though there exist two more regional markets that are growing really fast, one is East Europe and the other one is United States, this last one, is mainly growing in grants, which are the future of internationalization.