

Do the evolution!: Psychosocial impact studies methodology

Rui Gaspar de Carvalho, André Mata, J.M. Palma-Oliveira, Dalila Antunes, Sérgio Moreira, Sibila Marques

Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências de Educação- Universidade de Lisboa (University of Lisbon)

In recent years, Environmental Management has been calling more and more psychologists (social and environmental) in to its procedures, because both disciplines aim in to the same goal: managing human behaviour and its consequences for the environment (natural and built).

Their part in this area has gained particular relevance in Social Impact Studies (SIS). In spite of this, in most cases, these studies give more attention to social-economic aspects, and less to psychosocial impacts. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to point out the importance of including a more *micro* analysis in SIS, by evaluating the latter, in order to identify, predict and mitigate the consequences from a change in the biophysical and/or social environment, for individuals health and well-being .

Also, social scientists' procedures have been criticized for being subjective and consequently, demanded greater scientific and methodological accuracy. For that reason, this paper will also present some methodologies and instruments for analysing psychosocial impacts (some of them created by psychologists), in terms of two categories and corresponding dimensions: 1) Health and Well-being (physical and psychological); 2) Psychosocial (attitudes; perceptions; behaviours).

It will also be presented a SIS of a road infrastructure, from the Environmental Impact Assessment of IC12 (secondary road) Mira/Santa Comba Dão. The objective will be to present an example not only of social-economic impact assessment, but also for psychosocial impacts. The steps for the analysis process and the corresponding methodologies (to identify and predict impacts) will be presented, along with some of the psychosocial impacts expected. From those methods, it will be pointed out a proposal for analysing impacts from an environmental stress model viewpoint (Palma-Oliveira, 1992), that allows predicting individuals and social systems behaviour, as a consequence from a change in the environment perceived as negative.

We hope this type of methodologies allows an evolution in SIS procedures, in order to include a scientific methodology that resists the “acusations” of a nonexistent subjectivity!

Key words: Social Impact Studies; psychosocial impacts; methods; assessment instruments

Presentation format: Paper

Presenting author: Rui Gaspar de Carvalho; rfgc@portugalmail.pt