

Evolution of IA practice in São Paulo State

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Research questions

- § Is the quality of environmental impact assessment (EIA) documents improving or evolving over time?
- § Previous studies in different countries suggest improvements (Landim and Sánchez, 2012, Morgan, 2012)
- § How can evidence of change be collected and validated?

Context – São Paulo State - Brazil

- § National regulations: 1986
- § EIA files 1987-2015:
 - Ø 889 Environmental Impact Studies (EIS) +
 - Ø ~2,500 shorter assessment reports
- § Dedicated EIA Division within State Department of Environment – technical staff ~ 60 professionals

Methods

- § Content analysis of EIA documents
 1. terms of reference (ToR)
 2. environmental impact study (EIS)
 3. EIS supplements
 4. records of public hearings
 5. EIA review report
- § Two-stage filtering for case selection
 - (1) approved quarry projects (4% of EIA files)
 - (2) (i) longest time spectrum possible; (ii) different rocks; (iii) different locations and settings
- § Six cases selected
- § Scripts developed for each document
- § Data was tabled and compared for detecting regularities, temporal changes or innovations.

Table 1: Cases selected

| # | Year | Rock | Setting | Mt/yr |
|---|------|-----------|---------|-------|
| 1 | 1990 | Granite | Urban | 2.0 |
| 2 | 1992 | Limestone | Rural | 0.36 |
| 3 | 1998 | Granite | Urban | 1.4 |
| 4 | 2003 | Limestone | Rural | 1.45 |
| 5 | 2012 | Limestone | Rural | 7.4 |
| 6 | 2013 | Basalt | Rural | 1.2 |

Results

Table 2: Selected findings – ToR review

| Question | Case | | | | | |
|---|------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Are there ToR for the EIS? | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Number of pages | - | - | 10 | 3 | 17 | 25 |
| Do they feature guidelines for the baseline? | - | - | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Do they present guidelines for determining impact significance? | - | - | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |

Table 3: Selected findings – Public hearing minutes

| Question | Case | | | | | |
|---|------|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Did a public hearing take place? | ? | ? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Did it result in any project change, complements to the EIS or further commitment in the Review Report? | - | - | No | No | Yes | Yes |

Table 4: Selected findings - EIS review

| Question | Case | | | | | |
|---|------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Number of pages | 189 | 47 | 411 | 815 | 729 | 505 |
| Are there comparisons of locational and technological alternatives? | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | No |
| Is there any integrated landscape analysis? | No | No | No | No | Yes | No |
| Does the EIS identify and locate protected areas likely to be affected? | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Were surveys undertaken with affected communities? | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| Does baseline describe vulnerable groups? | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| Are there archaeological data? | No | No | No | Yes | No | Yes |
| Does the EIS assess impact significance? | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Do environmental programmes include goals and indicators? | No | No | No | No | No | No |

Table 5: Selected findings - Review report

| Question | Case | | | | | |
|--|------|----|----|----|-----|-----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Number of pages | 15 | 12 | 37 | 71 | 44 | 35 |
| Does it request any commitment from proponent due to the public hearing? | - | - | No | No | Yes | Yes |

Discussion and conclusions

Some improvements over time were found:

- § Longer and more detailed documents: ToR, EIS (Landim and Sánchez, 2012) and Review Report
- § Use of primary data for anthropic environment on EIS, e.g.: surveys with affected communities
- § Impact significance assessment on EIS, from Case 4 and onwards
- § Improved regulation: mandatory ToR (1994); endangered species list (1998); impact prediction on protected areas (2000) and archaeological studies on EIS (2003)
- § Better public participation: hearings more influential, resulting in commitments to the proponent

But there are persistent shortcomings:

- § Despite improvements, there is no evidence of more advanced stakeholder engagement
- § Late public participation (Palerm, 2000)
- § Deficiencies on analysis of alternatives (Steinemann, 2001)
- § Deficiencies and gaps in EISs: all were supplemented
- § No new analytical approaches on EIS (Landim and Sánchez, 2012), e.g.: no integrated landscape analysis
- § Low detailing level for environmental programmes => does not facilitate follow-up.

References

- LANDIM, S.N.T.; SÁNCHEZ, L.E. The contents and scope of environmental impact statements: how do they evolve over time? *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal*. V. 30, n. 4, pp. 217-228. 2012.
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