

Governance | Individual communication

IC - (21079) - PSYCHOSOCIAL VARIABLES DETERMINING THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE PROPOSAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND EXPLOITATION OF A URANIUM MINE BY THE AFFECTED POPULATION

Gonzalo Sánchez Tabernero¹; Carmen Tabernero¹

1 - University of Salamanca

Background and objectives

In recent decades, numerous alternative energy sources have been explored, often accompanied by the rejection of the population most directly affected by the construction of these infrastructures, highlighting the debate concerning development and nature conservation. Our research aims to analyze the psychosocial determinants of the social conflict generated (rejection/acceptance) by the project development of a uranium mine at southwestern Spain "Salamanca_Project".

Process and methods (for empirical research)

202 citizens related to the affected area and 169 university students (M_age 43.63 and 21.46; male 52% and 19%, respectively) responded to a questionnaire that included items about sociodemographic variables (age, gender, income and educational level, proximity and knowledge of affected area), environmental beliefs (nature conservation versus energy development; perception of risks versus benefits), emotional reactions activated (positive and negative emotions), active participation in protests (for and against), and level of agreement with the proposal.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

Different ANOVAs showed that citizens presented significantly stronger environmental beliefs, negative emotions, level of information, participation in protest activities (both in support and against) than students; on contrast, they showed lower perception of benefits associated with the mine and lower level of agreement with the mine. Regression analyses showed that the variables predicting higher agreement with uranium mine development among citizens were higher income level, higher positive emotions, and lower perception of risks versus higher perception of benefits ($R^2_{adj}=.37$; $F=17.72, p<.001$). Among students, the predictor variables were similar (lower risk, greater benefits, fewer negative emotions, and more positive emotions; $R^2_{adj}=.36$). However, when we analyzed the variables predicting participation in citizen protest activities, only environmental beliefs, risks, and benefits were influential ($R^2_{adj}=.32$). Analyses of predictive trajectories were performed including the variables studied considering multigroup designs by gender and proximity.

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

The results found allow us to analyze the social conflict generated in the populations affected by the energy intervention proposals in relation to the psychosocial variables studied.

Palavras-chave : Social conflict, Risk perception, Environmental beliefs, Emotional balance, Active participation, Acceptance or rejection, Uranium mine