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**SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT: THE PRINCIPLES,
CRITICISMS AND SOCIAL IMPACT VARIABLES.**

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ABSTRACT

Every development project delivers either positive or negative impact, some even both. As emphasized by Vanclay (2003a, p.1), “the costs of development generally are not adequately taken into account by decision makers, regulatory authorities and developers, partly because they are not easily identifiable, quantifiable and measurable”. Therefore, appropriate methods have to be used to identify and categorize relevant impact. Social Impact Assessment (SIA) is widely used to categorize and analyze the impact of development policies, programs and projects. Currently, there are two sets of SIA principles available in the literature, namely the US version and the International version. This paper discusses the diverse definitions of SIA as well as the brief development history of SIA. This paper also compares the differences between the SIA principles of 1994 and 2003 version (the United States version) together with the criticisms made on both versions. This paper then compares the different sets of social impact variables written by three different parties namely the Interorganizational Committee on Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Assessment (1994; 2003), Burdge (1994) and Vanclay (2002). Lastly, the application of the list social impact variables in designing social research will be described.

1. Introduction

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