

A METHODOLOGY FOR MINERAL MARKETS STUDIES: THE CASE OF THE CRUSHED STONE INDUSTRY

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Mineral economics first appeared as an area of knowledge at the first half of the 20th century as an auxiliary theoretical tool for the mining professionals. It aimed at supplying basic information on, or matters related to mining companies activities, as those linked to the financial support of a mineral project, or the markets behavior, since they are responsible for the final decision on projects feasibility. An assessment of the present situation of this area in Brazil shows that, even today, it does not have an organic object of study, being also very difficult to find information about the best methodology to be applied on its investigations. Because of that, in studies on specific mineral commodities markets, the most commonly found procedure is that of searching into the most accessible literature, which varies depending on the institution at which the researcher is working with, examples of similar studies and reproducing the steps that apparently were followed by the author. It would be useful, in dealing with that state of affairs, to look for the basis for its epistemological structuring in the economic science contemporary universe of theories. This paper enrolls in that context and discusses a methodology to be applied to studying the crushed stone market, chosen for being the second highest production value among Brazilian mineral commodities and, at the same time, being one of the least known.