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"Exchange Relationships and the Environment: The Acceptability of Compensation in the Siting of Waste Disposal Facilities"

Claro, Edmundo

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Within siting literature there is strong agreement that compensation for environmental risks is a necessary condition for local acceptance of waste treatment facilities. In-kind compensation is commonly pushed forward as being more effective than financial benefits in reducing local opposition. By focusing on the siting of a sanitary landfill in Santiago, Chile, this paper explores the performance of both types of compensation and relates the analysis to the notion of social norms of exchange. These are understood as being based on three main types of social relations: care, justice and freedom. Whereas monetary compensation is associated with market relations based on freedom and the offer of in-kind compensation to egalitarian relations based on justice, the absence of compensation is linked to fraternal relations based on care. It is argued that in-kind compensation is more acceptable than monetary payments or no compensation because people tend to understand siting conflicts more as matters of justice rather than as matters of freedom or care.
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