**TITLE:**

Analysis of the political and economic context of the relationship between corruption and improper waste management.

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**Abstract:**

This research paper investigates the complicated nexus between organized corruption/crime and improper waste management, emphasizing the socio-political-economic mechanisms that enable the existence of this phenomenon. through an analysis of the Campania region, southern italy, a region that unfortunately suffers from a lack of waste disposal organization due to the strong presence of the camorra, and Sweden, a country known instead for low corruption and proper waste disposal, the study underscores the damaging effects of corruption on both economic growth and environmental sustainability. The analysis glances in each region's/state's political-economic background, examining the effects of governance, institutional strength, and economic incentives on waste management achievements. The study also demonstrates the power of excellent governance and clear legislation, as demonstrated by Sweden's waste-to-energy plants, in changing waste management from an environmental concern to an economic opportunity. Finally, the study suggests strategies that avoid corruption and promote sustainable waste management, highlighting the importance of secure legislation, civic education, and economic incentives. The research exposes the critical role of corruption in increasing waste management challenges, consequently adding to environmental degradation and public health risks, through a detailed analysis supported by empirical evidence.

**Introduction:**

This paper will discuss the improper disposal of waste, which for new generations is surely considered as one of the major global problems. This issue not only contributes to the spread of infectious diseases, but also increases the level of pollution for the planet, destroying the eco-sustainability of soils, oceans, and the atmosphere by occupying natural spaces with waste (so-called landfills) increasingly increasing the risk of environmental disasters. So it has a harmful impact on public health/quality of life and environmental stability. Within this very important issue unfortunately lies the equally frightening issue of corruption and organized crime. Here we look at the context of the management of public services and infrastructure, as we are dealing with waste management. Corruption operates by negatively controlling waste management policies or manipulating contracts, for example, by favoring inefficient companies for disposal or by buying the favor of unions on decisions that should favor change.

Unfortunately, in countries or regions where the economy is partially still developing it can be observed that corruption exploits the lack of solid organization provided by institutions, and without even much difficulty has revenues from these shortcomings.

The goal of this paper is to examine and find out what mechanisms are in deep detail that keep alive the relationship between corruption and improper waste disposal, and more importantly-"To what extent does corruption contribute to improper waste disposal and how does it manifest itself in terms of misuse of funds and manipulation of contracts?" - This part is crucial as it unveils the socio-economic mechanisms that make improper waste disposal possible and more importantly, makes visible to the world how organized crime slows down the country's economic growth, fuels the possibilities of public health risks, but most importantly, directly supports the destruction of the environment.

The analysis includes the structure of government (to better understand in political-economic contexts what fuels corruption and improper waste disposal in an economically developing country), the caliber of corruption, the state of the industry that handles waste disposal, and finally economic annexations.

The examples of the government systems that will be used for this research are Italy (more specifically the region of Campania) and Sweden. Campania is a region that has been going through a major crisis in waste disposal in recent years, a crisis that is often referred to as the "Naples waste emergency." This caused mainly by the infiltration of the Camorra into public institutions and the management of services. Sweden on the other hand is an example of success in the area of waste management, as it is defined as a country of transparency and good governance so as to avoid corruption and even more importantly it annexes economic incentives to its waste management policy, note that Sweden has a 99% recycling rate.

**Theoretical Framework**:

it is important to define the term corruption precisely, as in this case it is understood as the misuse of public power and influence over society for private monetary benefit. It has a strong tendency, as in the case of the Camorra in Campania, to easily infiltrate public services related to waste disposal. This influence given by the presence of organized crime then affects the formations and executions of policies and consequently the assignments of waste management contracts. Another way for the Camorra to profit from the waste crisis is to divert and direct public funds earmarked for waste collection elsewhere, again for private purposes, so as to leave waste services without sufficient funds to pay employees, causing disengagement and discontent among working society. The last important phenomenon that explains the correlation between corruption and improper waste disposal is the manipulation of contract awarding, favoring companies that do not comply with environmental standards or are easily bribed. All of these phenomena cause serious public health consequences and derail the path to eco-sustainability. (The Waste Issue and the Camorra, Isaiah Sales).

Regions, in this case we always use the region of Campania, being considered a region with a developing economy, which suffers from legal insecurities, and presents representative weak and prone to corruption institutions, prone to corruption because we know very well that the mafia, namely the Camorra, is a criminal organization that has repeatedly demonstrated the use of threats and violence, so it is obvious that these weak political institutions easily bend to their influence. Consequently, it is easy to understand that seeing potential gain from improper waste disposal forces weak institutions to render ineffective checks and balances (be corrupted), which should prevent corrupt behavior. Therefore, weak institutions and lack of right regulations can lead to a negative cycle of health damage and environmental degradation.

Theory also touches on the economic side since these phenomena also impact the economic side. With corruption in place, a hostile business environment can be created in which innovation and large-capital investment are discouraged because of the constant need to pay bribes or enact negative influence on political institutions. In parallel, it has consequences for public health and natural resources, for example, water or land, which are essential for the primary and tertiary sectors. The outcome of this attitude also brings discontent among society, which automatically stops trusting public institutions because they perceive that they are driven by private interests; from this arises civic disengagement that can later fuel further social conflicts. In the case of Sweden, which is considered an exemplary country in waste management, for example, we can talk about the spread of waste-to-energy plants. this program expands to 34 operating facilities, which annually scrap waste from other countries, plus charge for it, and with this waste produce almost entirely sustainable energy for 1 million Swedish households per year. This program is made possible by transparent institutional bodies that have enabled the creation of this sustainable circular economy, which in pursuit has led to a greater commitment by government and citizens to sustainability.

Possible strategies to address these problems are: intensifying efforts to combat corruption. thus adopting stricter regulations and promoting a more transparent and accountable political attitude. Implementing policies that encourage waste recycling, in turn causing the need for better and more responsible civic education.

In conclusion, after observing the dynamics of corruption regarding improper waste management and its negative socio-economic impacts, it is evident that these factors are linked. As we have seen, corruption, by distorting public policies, hinders innovation and economic progress, in turn reducing the effectiveness of public services, which in turn leads to a demonstrated worsening of the environment and quality of life in general. The comparison between the Campania region and Sweden serves to illustrate how a different approach to waste management, from policy management and economic-social incentive, can lead to quite different results in terms of economic and sustainable development.

**Empirical Analysis**:

In the context of Campania, there is plenty of evidence that can show how corruption has negatively affected waste management and all that goes with it. This crisis has been present for years in the city of Naples and is mainly attributed to the presence of the Camorra an organized crime group, which as mentioned earlier hijacks and manipulates policies on waste disposal management to divert public funds to private gain. Evidence of these attitudes can be found in many reports. for example, a report by legambiente (2008), an Italian organization that defends the environment, points out that there are over 2,600 illegal waste disposal sites in Campania. these sites can be traced back to the camorra and obviously contribute to the problem that persists in the region. Another study by Giacomo D'Alisa, an Italian ecologist, indicates that up to 30% of the region's municipal waste ends up in landfills without permits or is improperly burned.

A interesting case study that we can go through is the successful waste management in Sweden: an empirical example demonstrating the success of waste management can be found in Sweden, which has shown that it has turned the waste issue on its head and turned it into an economic gain and which also benefits the social aspect for the country. As mentioned earlier, a significant element that led has this positive cycle was the use of waste-to-energy plants. According to the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, there are 34 waste-to-energy plants operating in the country. These not only prevent the overcrowding of municipal waste in landfills, but also provide energy and heating to 260 000 homes annually. The country also makes money from the sale of the service it provides, charging about 40 euros per ton of garbage shipped, plus shipping included. Finally we can say that, good governance and transparent management policies have positively influenced the promotion of own waste disposal, leading corruption and organized crime to be almost zero.

Data trends show that statistically Sweden as mentioned earlier, stands out among other countries for remarkable environmental waste management. The nation boasts of a 99% recycling rate, one of the most others globally (Swedish Waste Management, 2018). this surely stems from the positive policy attitude mentioned earlier. it is proven that converting waste to energy not only helps the disposal of toxic waste, but also alleviates the intensity of dependence on fossil fuels. Even if waste will not be the most profitable source of energy, it still remains useful for producing it. In addition, there is a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, which is more than critical to the war against global warming. Also as stated earlier it helps to clear landfills so that the degradation and decomposition of waste causing leachate production can be avoided, noting that 47% of house hold waste is burned into energy in Sweden it is a good amount of garbage (Eriksson & Finnveden, 2015). Continuing in the environmental discourse, such effective waste management reduces water pollution, reducing the risk of vector borne diseases, and in addition being the facilities equipped with proper filters also decreases air pollution, helping to improve air quality. (Hossain, 2021), (World health organization,2018).

**Conclusion:**

This research paper has looked in detail at the relationship between corruption and improper waste management by showing socio-economic circumstances that allow the latter to persist and the crucial role corruption plays in slowing economic development and producing public health and environmental risks (as in the case of the Campania region). By analyzing the political-economic context of the Campania region, and comparing it to that of Sweden in the political aspect, in the policy case and in the economic case, incentives, a totally different result can be drawn. The case of Campania shows how corruption and organized crime are present within the institutions, causing a domino effect degradation. while in the case of Sweden, the data speaks, in fact the rate of recycling, supported by positive policies and better civic sense, as we have observed is 99 percent. In conclusion we have listed potential solutions to these problems, and showed how the statistical part supported the argument. Intensification of public policy toward waste disposal and all the bureaucratic organization present behind it. Encouragement from the government, economically incentivizing industries and citizens to work together toward the issue, making it in the eyes of polite society no longer an issue. And all this with the aim of living in a more environmentally sustainable country with a definitely better quality of life.

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