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AN EXPLORATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE DETERMINANTS OF ILLEGAL WASTE MANAGEMENT:

THE ITALIAN CASE

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ABSTRACT

In the last several decades, illegal waste management (IWM) has attracted great academic and public attention. Due to its negative consequences not only for the environment, but also for public health and economic growth, scholars started to be interested in the dynamics of IWM and in how to prevent it. Some studies stressed the existence of different factors that can determine the phenomenon, but very few of them have empirically tested their validity. Consequently, developing new research on the topic is still necessary.

The present study conducts an explorative analysis of the socio-economic, policy and performance-driven and criminal factors influencing IWM in Italy. After the identification of the most relevant determinants according to the literature, the objective is to empirically test them. First, thanks to a unique dataset focused on the Italian context, the study quantitatively investigates the effect of different factors on the phenomenon through an econometric analysis. Second, the study realises a crime script analysis to explore which factors suggested by the literature and tested in the quantitative part emerge also in concrete case studies and how they effectively intervene in the Italian waste cycle.

Results indicate that IWM is determined by: i) a low level of economic development and population density, a high level of education and tourists' presence; ii) inefficiency in environmental regulation, enforcement and waste performances; iii) the presence of organised crime and the diffusion of economic and fiscal crimes. According to these findings, the study not only deepens the knowledge of the phenomenon, but it is also able to provide some policy suggestions to efficiently hinder illegal conducts related to waste management.