

Understanding the Importance of "Patient's Choice" in the Early Environmental Justice Activism of the Karen of Klity Creek (Thailand)

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Abstrak

ABSTRACT

During the latter half of the twentieth century the small Karen community of Klity Creek (Thailand) suffered from industrial lead pollution. With the help of an NGO, members of the community started a civic campaign demanding environmental justice and raised public awareness about their exposure to lead pollution. The Thai Ministry of Public Health offered them medical treatment, but they rejected it. Instead, the patients/activists requested another form of treatment (chelation therapy). When this was not forthcoming, the patients began a public campaign demanding their treatment of choice and maintaining that it should be provided to all villagers contaminated with lead. Using detailed descriptions of events, this paper explores the Karen community's civic activism demanding their treatment of choice.