



# Consumer Practices in a Circular Society

Micro-Teaching ESR 6

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20/05/2022



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# Learning Objectives

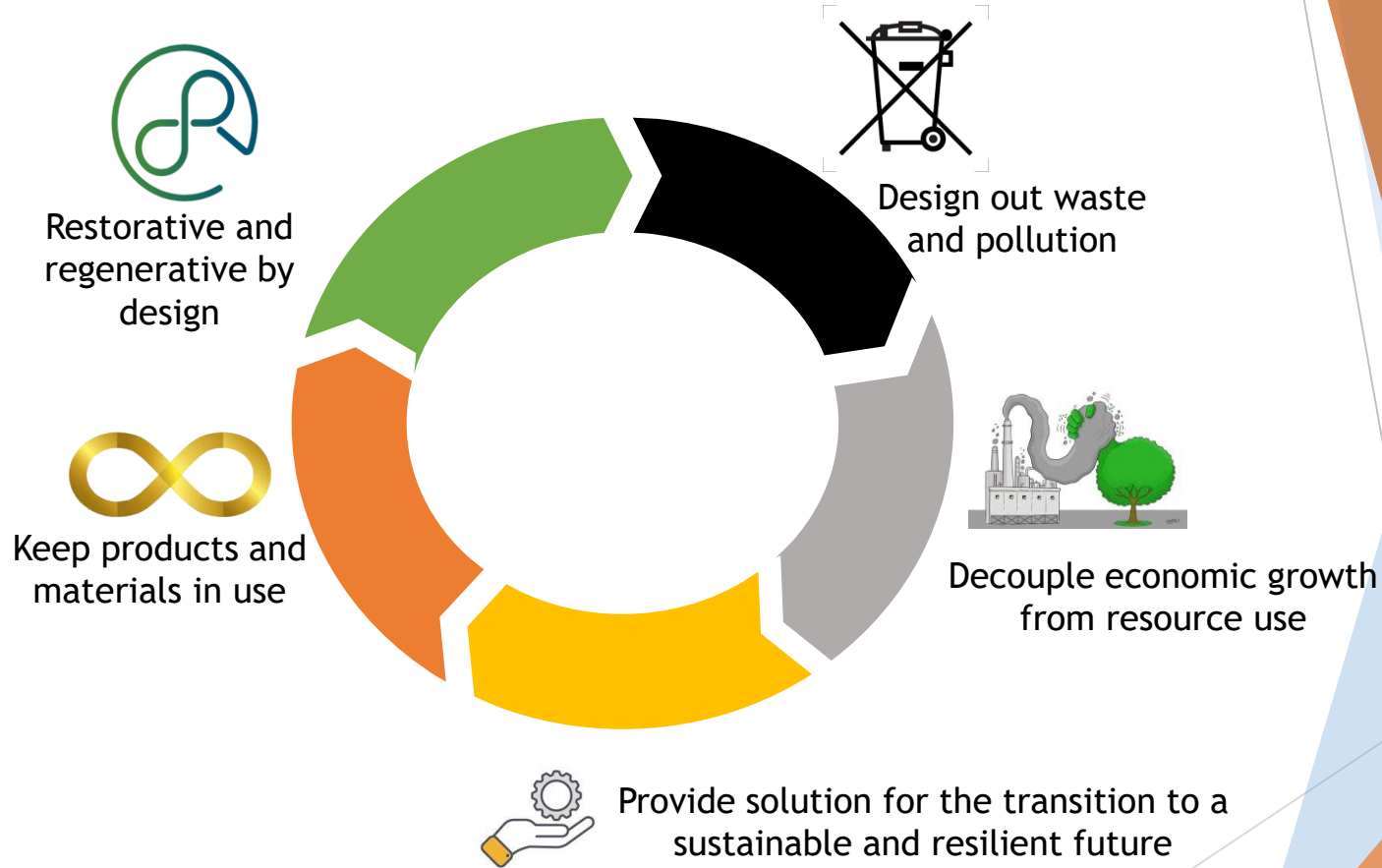
- ▶ Overview of consumer practices in CE/CS
- ▶ Basic understanding of theories of consumer behaviour
- ▶ Understand the need to focus on social practices instead of ABC
- ▶ Give examples of how SPT approach can help understand the dynamics of plastic circularity.

You really committed to avoiding plastic and your grandmother bought you a very expensive toy that contain plastic



Would you take this gift despite your commitment to avoid plastic... Or would you return your lovely grandmother's gift?

# Conceptions of a circular economy



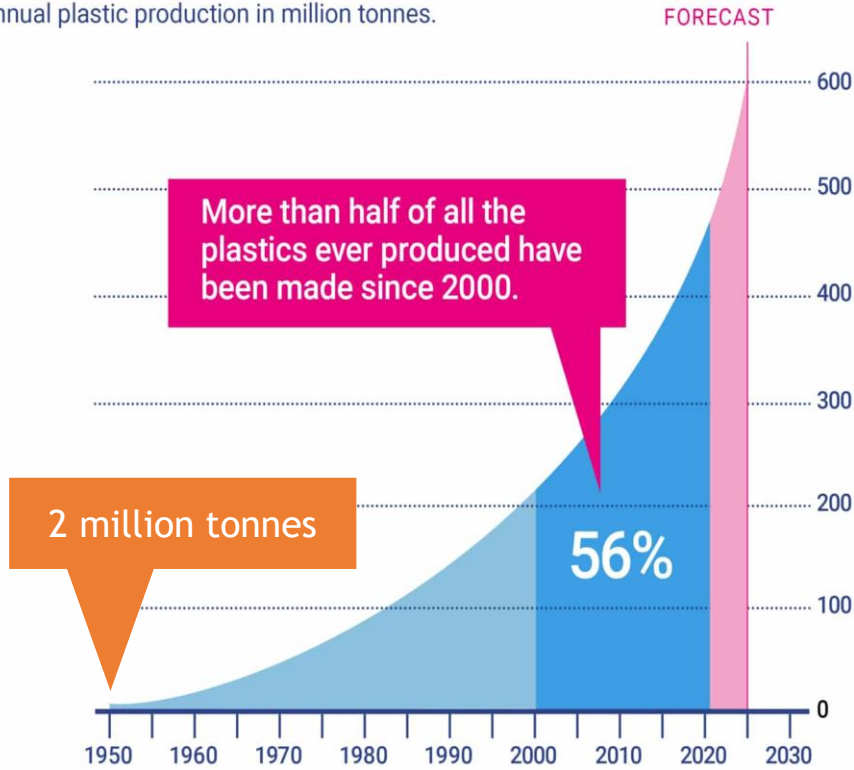
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# Why a circular Economy/Society for plastic?

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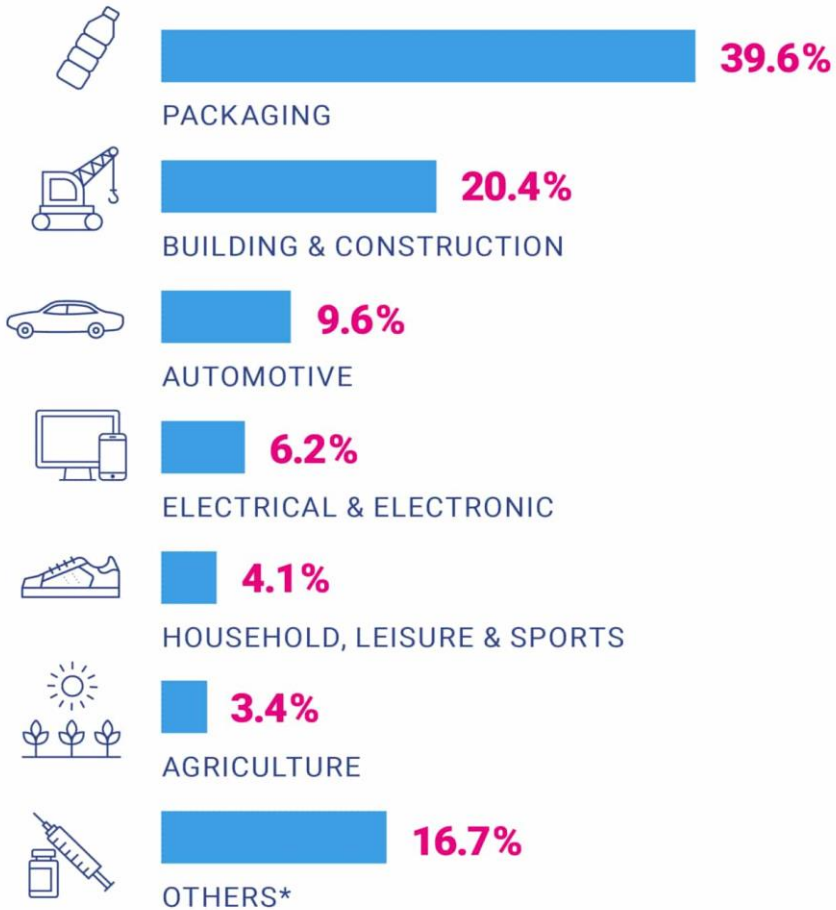
# PRODUCTION OF PLASTIC

Global annual plastic production in million tonnes.



SOURCE: PLASTIC ATLAS 2019 | © PLASTIC SOUP FOUNDATION

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## USE OF PLASTIC

Distribution of European (EU28+NO/CH) plastics converters demand by segment in 2019. Packaging and building & construction by far represent the largest end-use markets. The third biggest end-use market is the automotive industry.

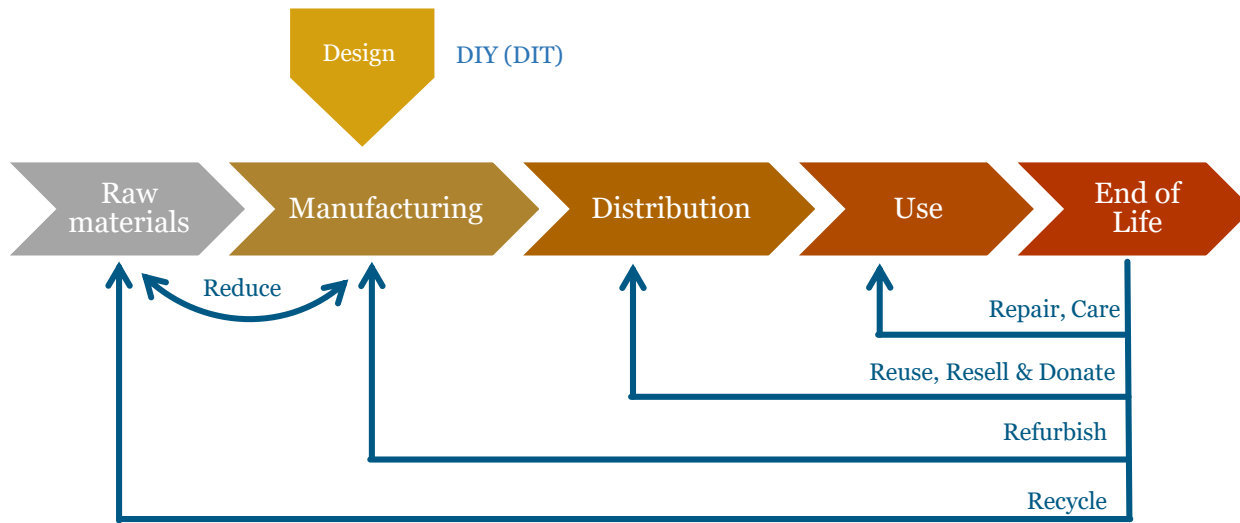
\*Others include appliances, mechanical engineering, furniture, medical, etc.

SOURCE: PLASTICSEUROPE | © PLASTIC SOUP FOUNDATION

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# Consumer role in CE for plastic

Consumers are important stakeholders in this transition

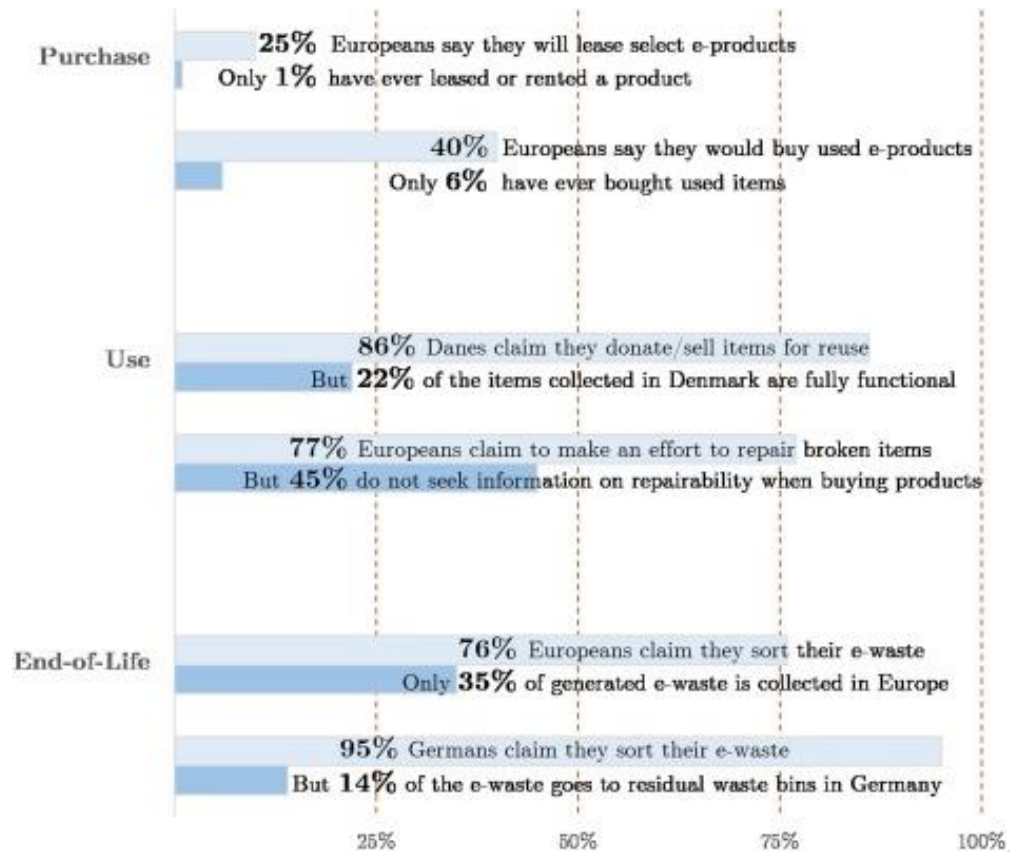




# Consumers' actual Engagement in CE

- ▶ Throwaway production and throwaway consumption go hand in hand
- ▶ Industrial mass production provides for a cheap and easy access to materials and products that consumers' everyday lives have adapted to
- ▶ Throwing broken/old things away and buying anew is much easier than repairing/maintaining and keeping the old item

# Disparity between consumer claims and actual CE practices



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(Source: Parajuly et al., 2020)

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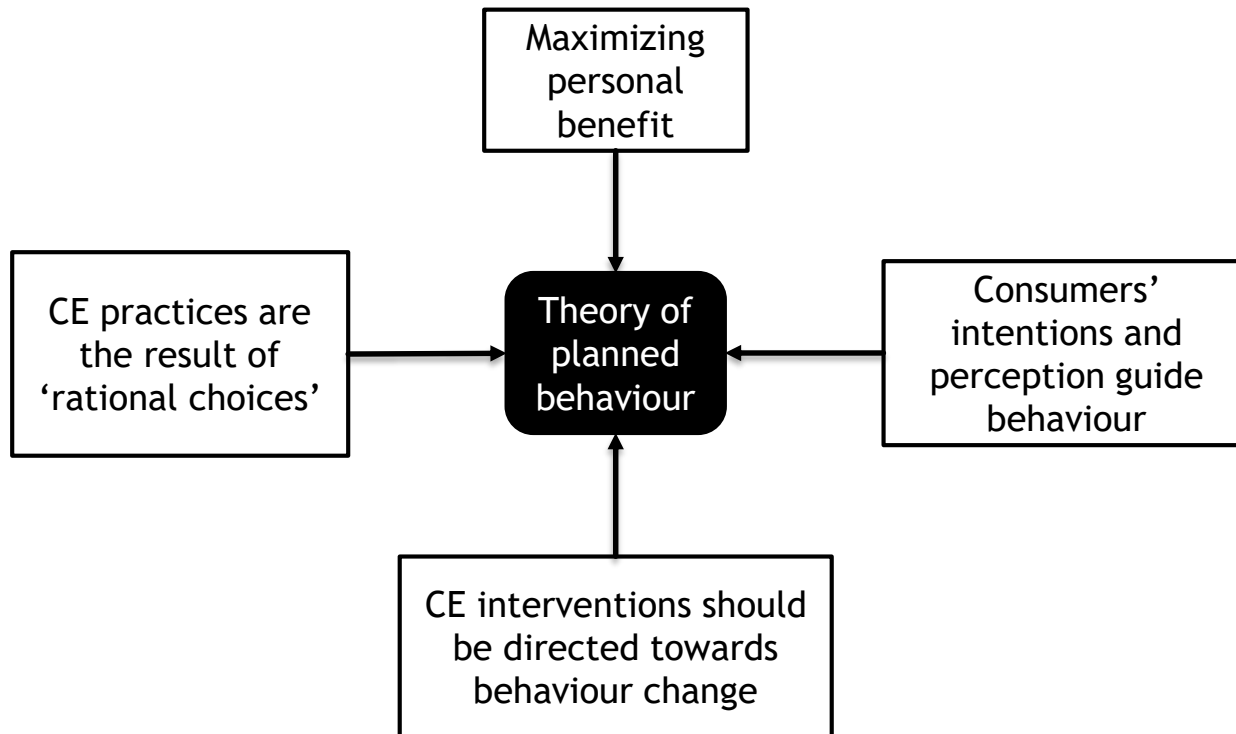
**why don't you repair/buy second hand/keep product as long as possible?**

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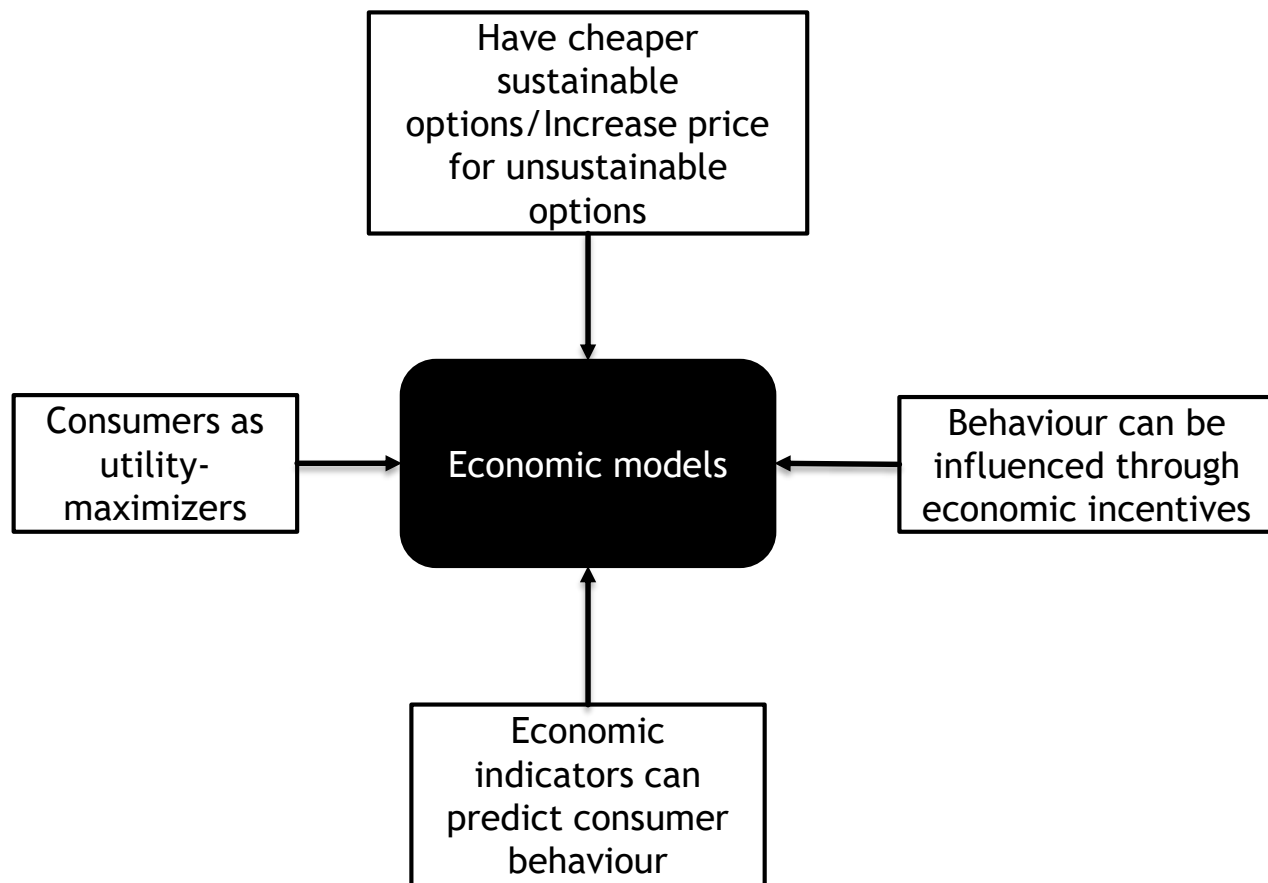
It could also be a framing problem.

How is consumer appropriation of CE strategies conceptualized?

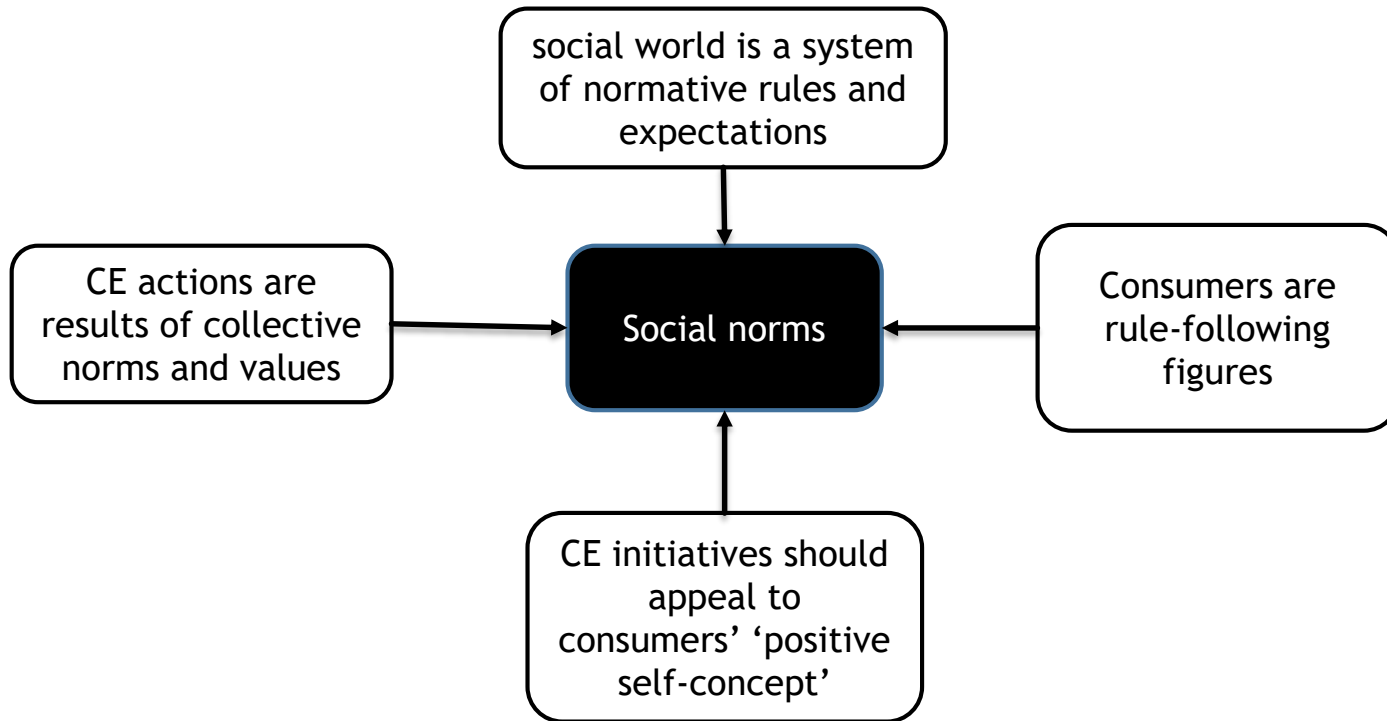
# Rational choice theories



# Economic models



# Norm-oriented theory



# ABC as the site of the social



Consumers have **ATTITUDES**  
Attitudes towards plastic need changing  
Attitudes are changed by rules, information and incentives



**BEHAVIOUR** is what consumers do  
Behaviour need changing  
Behaviour are driven by attitude  
People choose how to behave

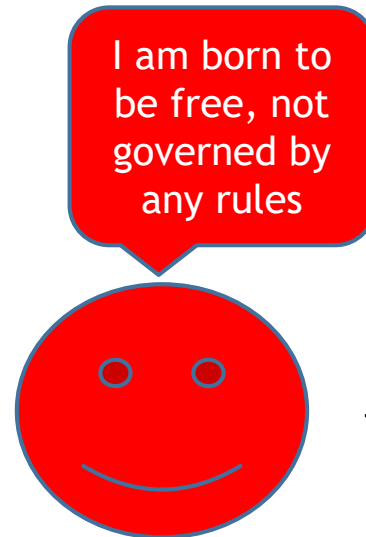


If consumers chose to use less plastics we would not be in the fix we are in now  
Policy makers need to encourage consumers to make sustainable **CHOICES**

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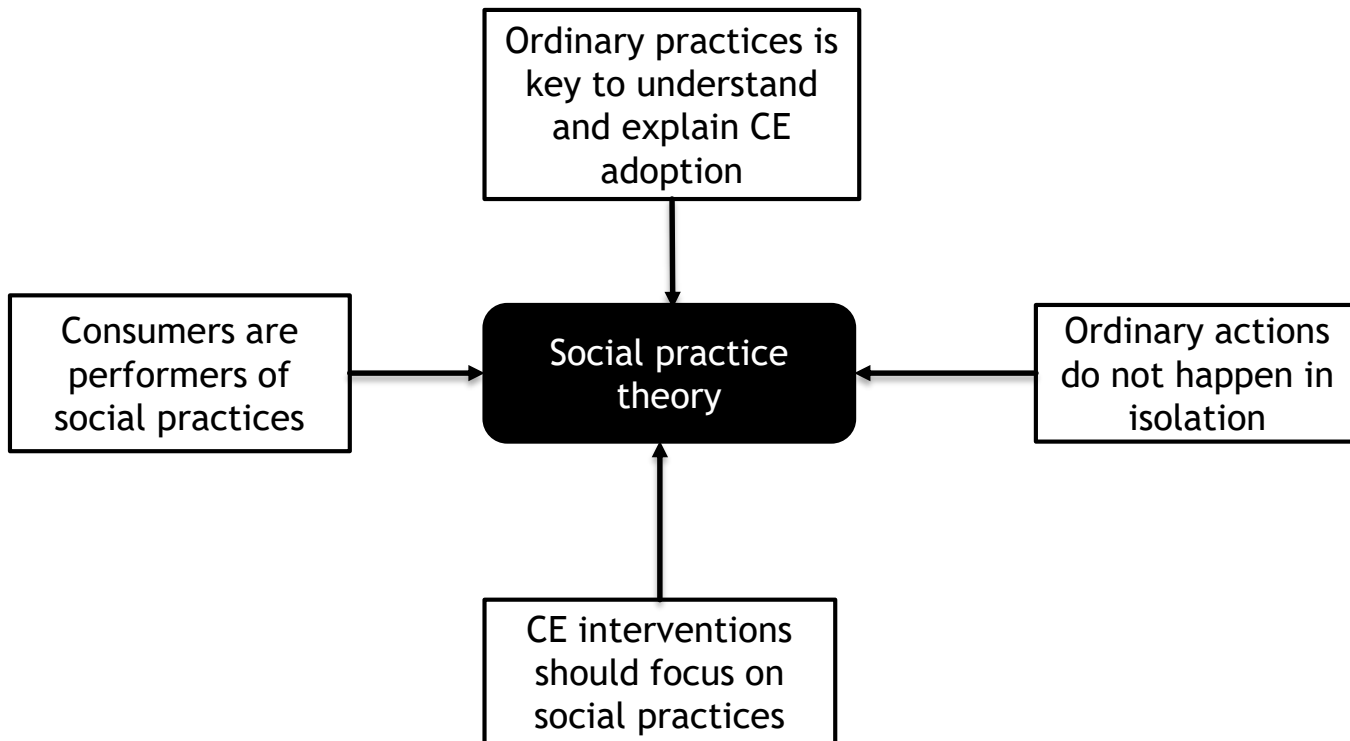


# Limitations of the ABC approaches

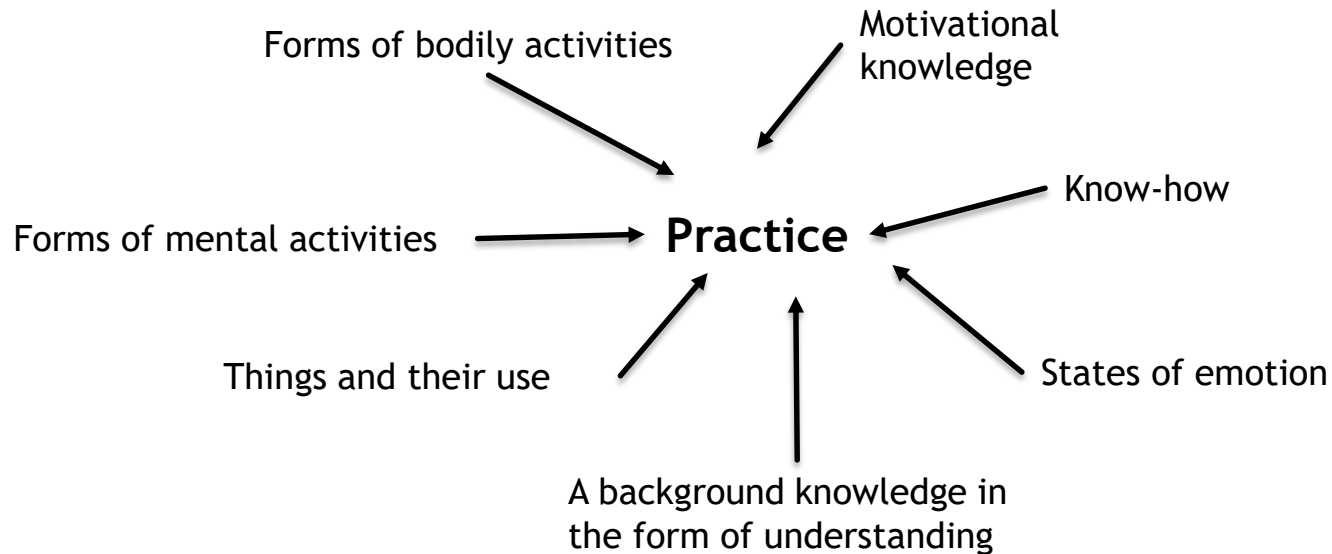


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The "practice" turn

# Social practice theories



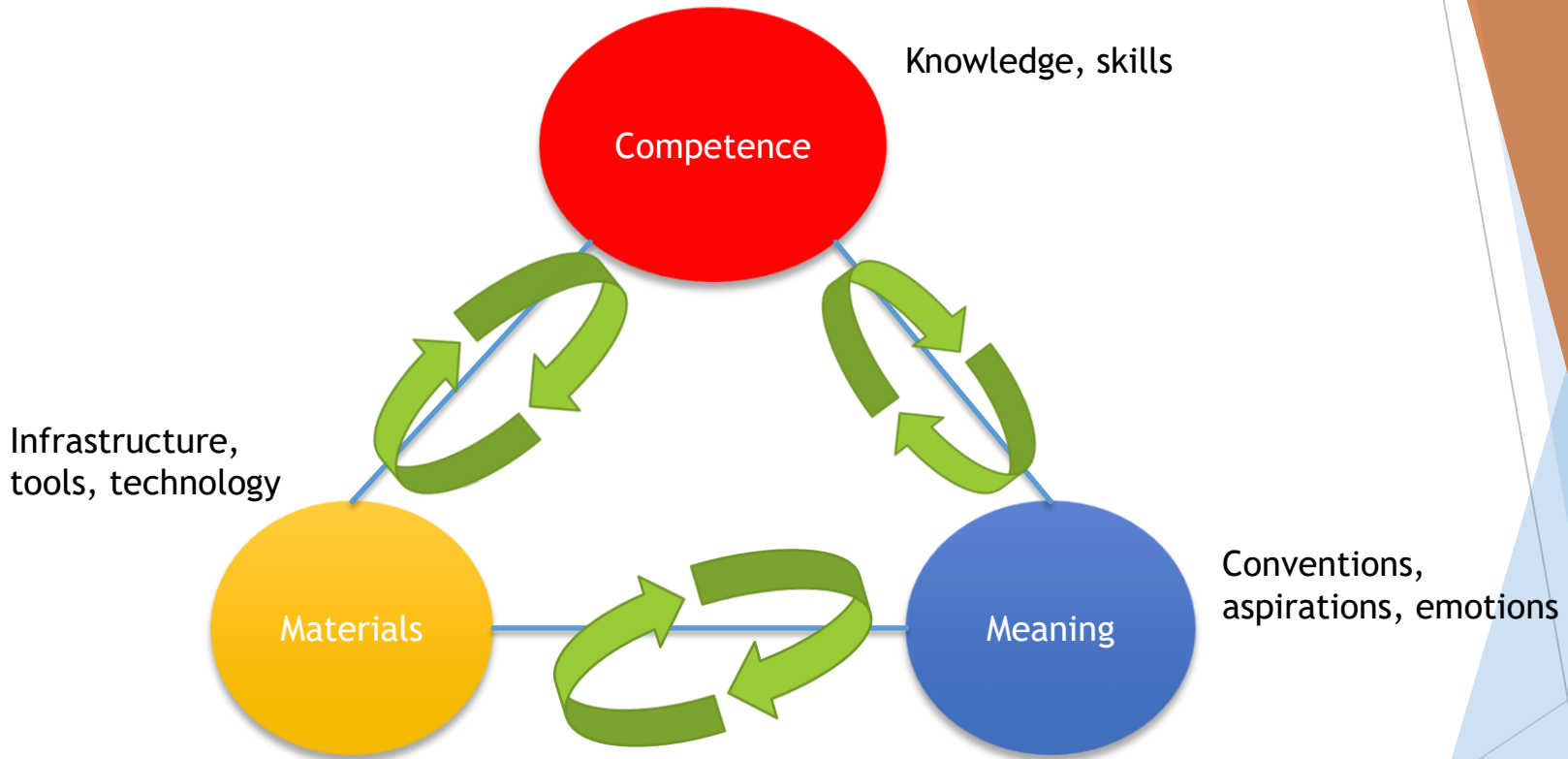
# Social practice theory...what is a “Practice”



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(Reckwitz, 2002)

# Elements of Practice



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C2M

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(Shove et al., 2012)

# Cases of avoiding plastic packaging and deposit lending (ReCup) using social practice theory approach

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# SPT and Plastic food packaging

- ▶ Plastic food packaging, as one of the main sources of plastic waste, is closely linked to our modern lifestyles and consumption patterns, such as takeaway food or ready meals.
- ▶ Their use and disposal reflects everyday practices in economic markets and private households.
- ▶ Ecological problems related to plastic packaging and waste are closely linked to the everyday plastic items use and disposal
- ▶ Thus interventions should link to ordinary practices of organizing daily routines.

# Functions of packaging in consumer goods

- ▶ Medium of communication and information
- ▶ It provides hygiene
- ▶ Gives a certain measure of a product
- ▶ Efficient logistics
- ▶ Prevent waste

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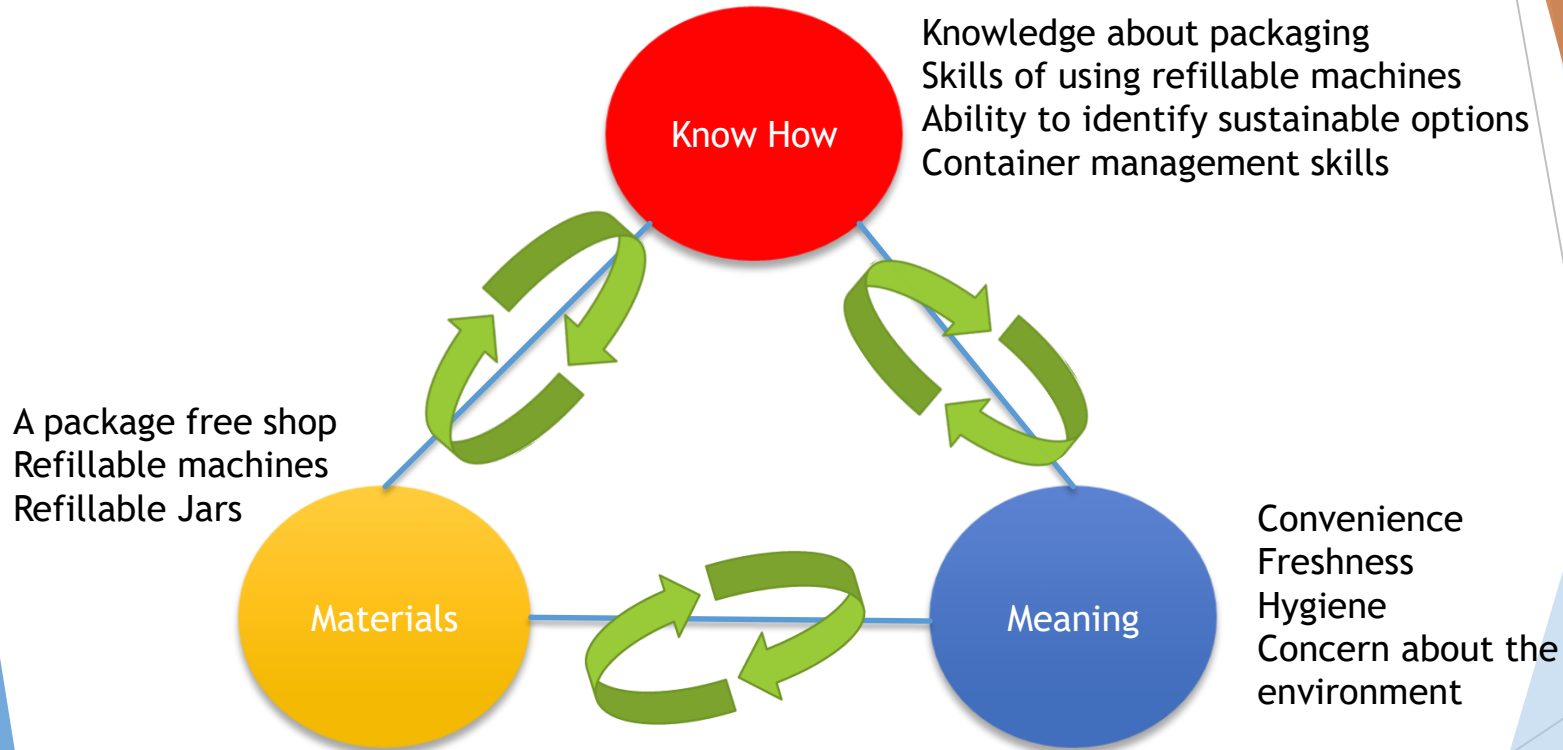
**What materials are needed to carry out the practice of avoiding plastic packaging?**

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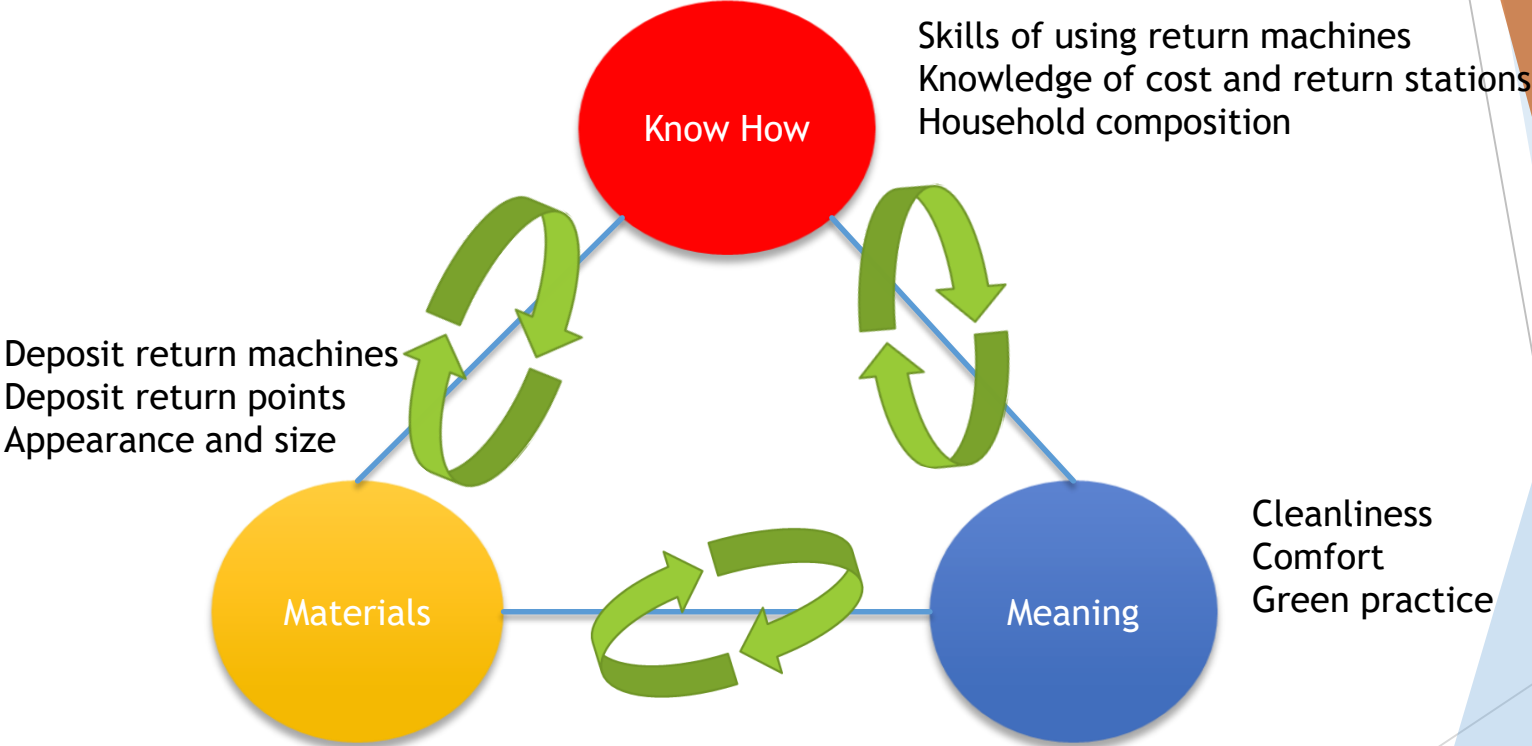
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# The practice of avoiding plastic packaging



# Deposit refund schemes for ReCup SPT approach



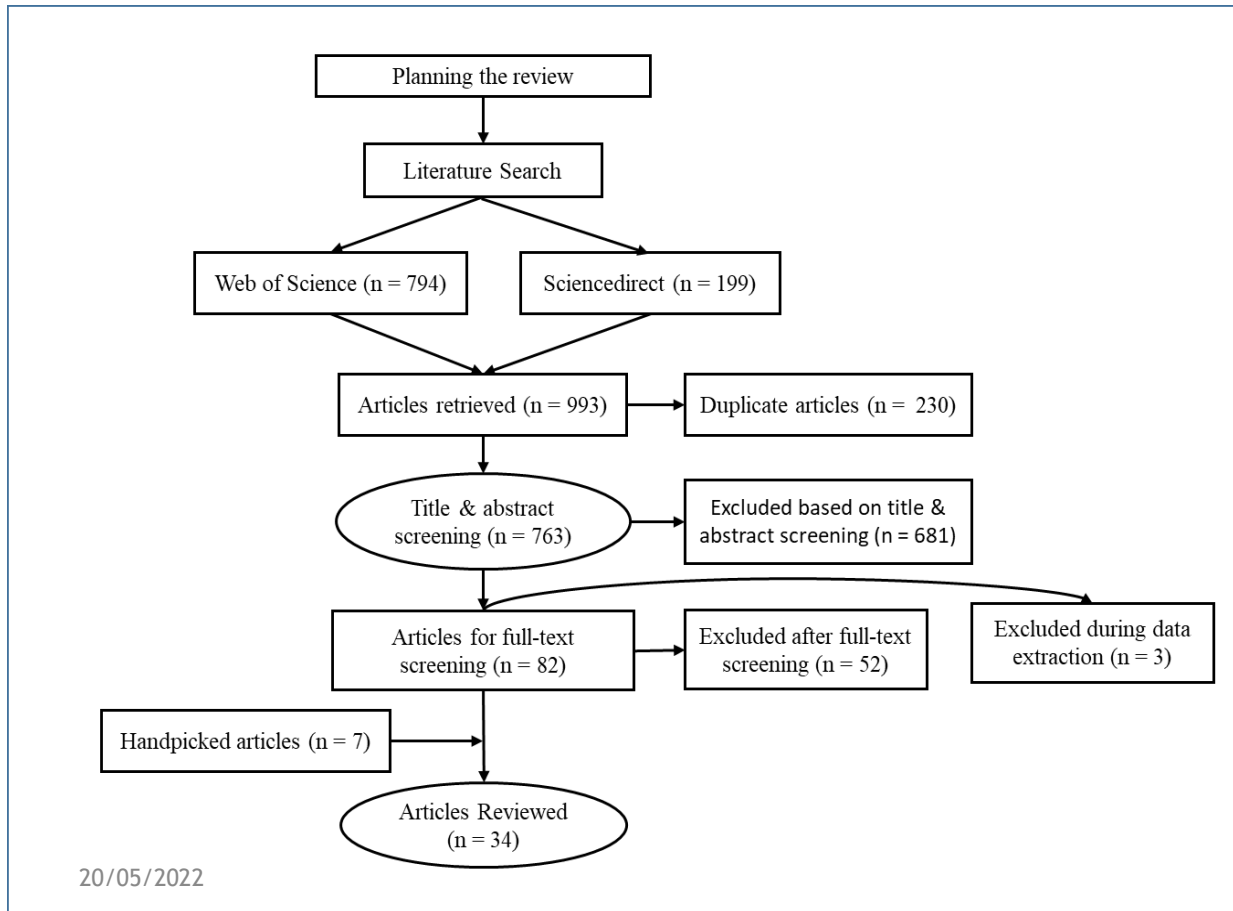
# Current use of the SPT in CE research

- ▶ Does not address the environmental impact of the practice
- ▶ Trade-offs and rebound effect are not examined
- ▶ Social settings that are outside the practice elements (time, cost, etc.) are often neglected

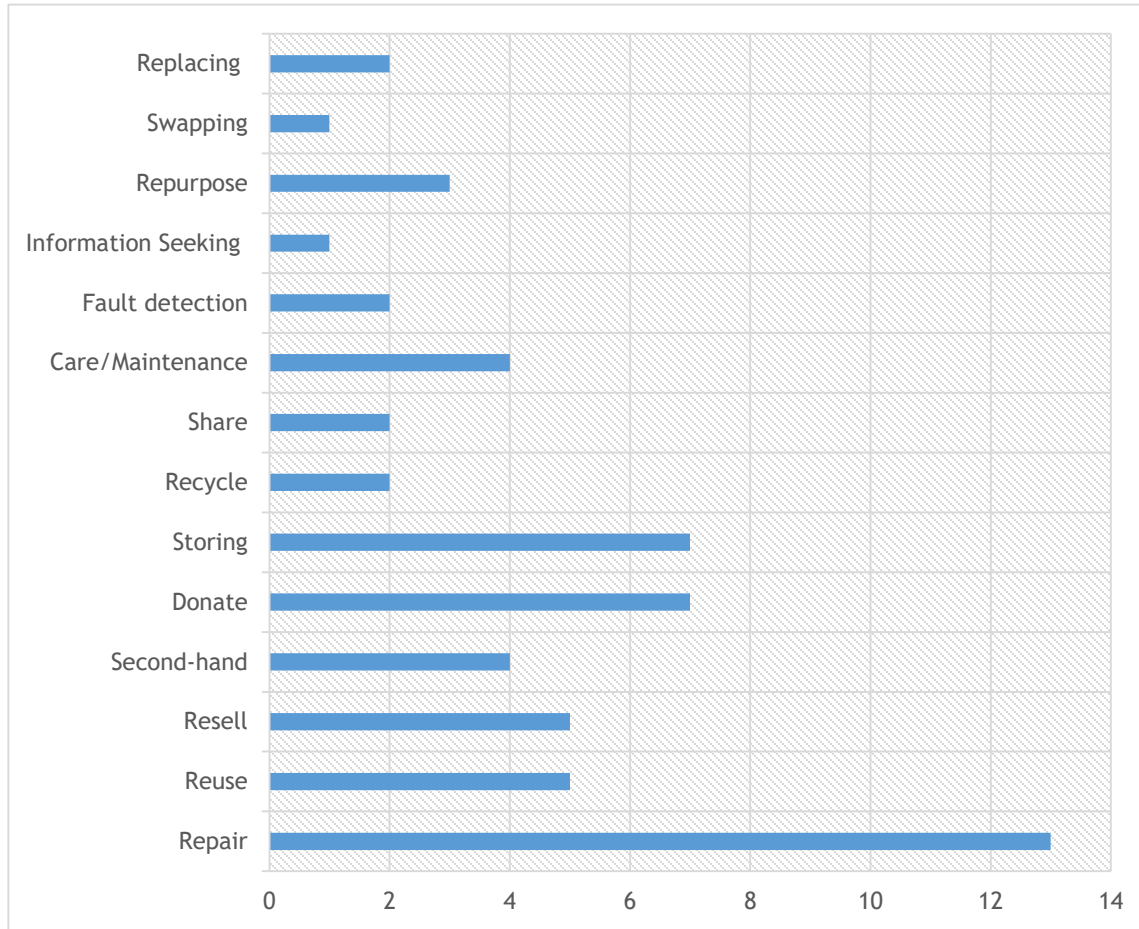
# Systematic Review

- What circular consumer practices have been studied in the CE literature?
- What requirements have been identified for the appropriation and routinisation of circular products and services?
- How can the appropriation and routinisation of circular consumer practices be improved?

# Selecting review articles

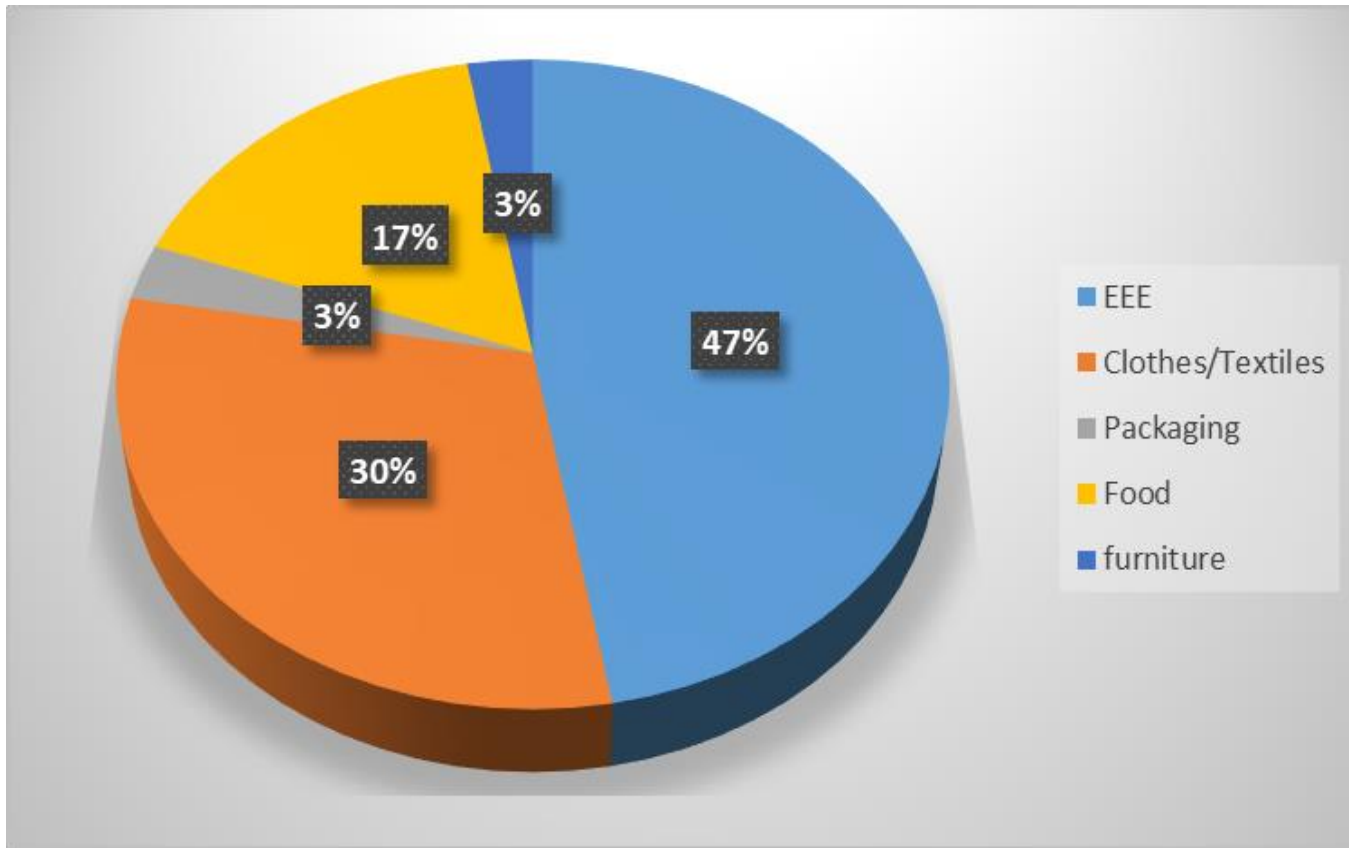


# Circular practices in the CE literature



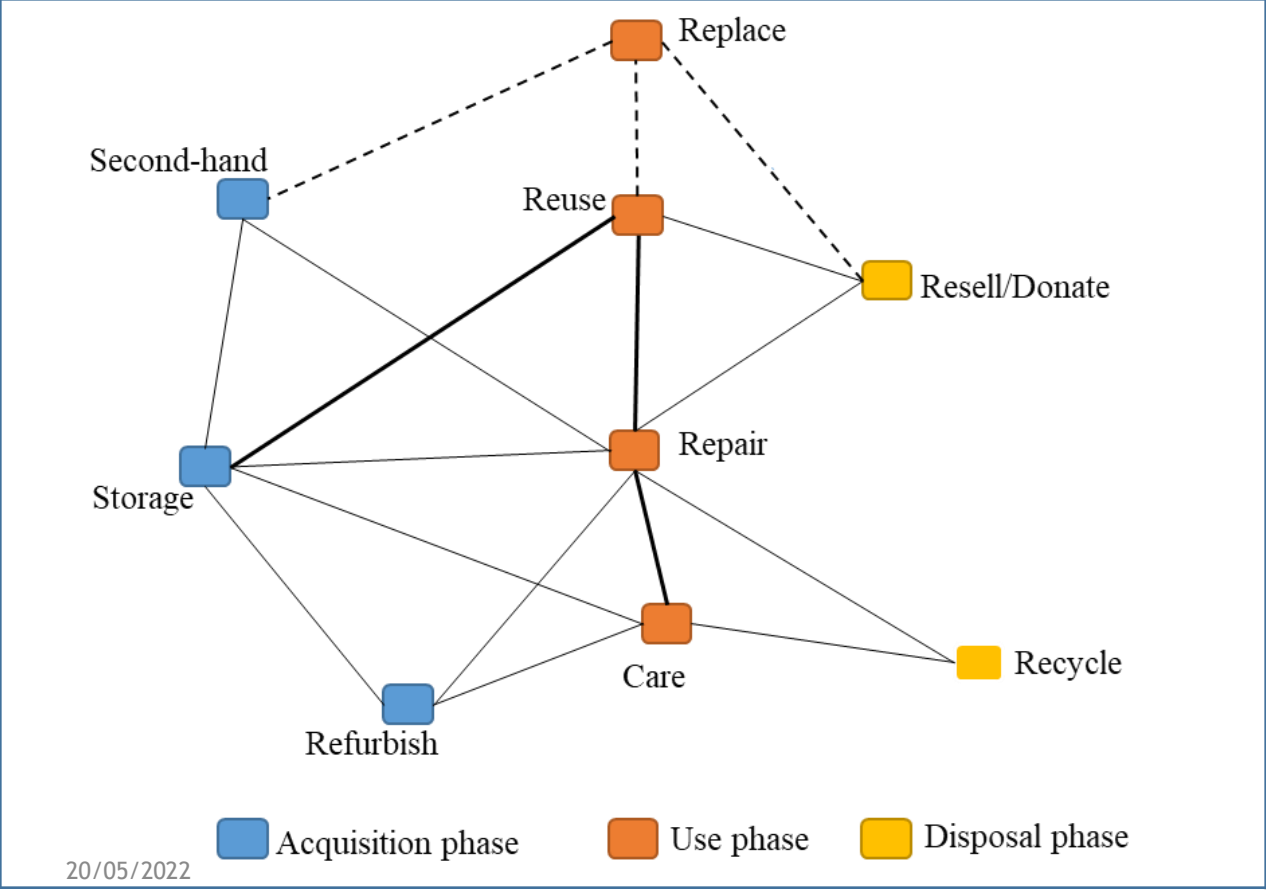
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# Product/materials explored



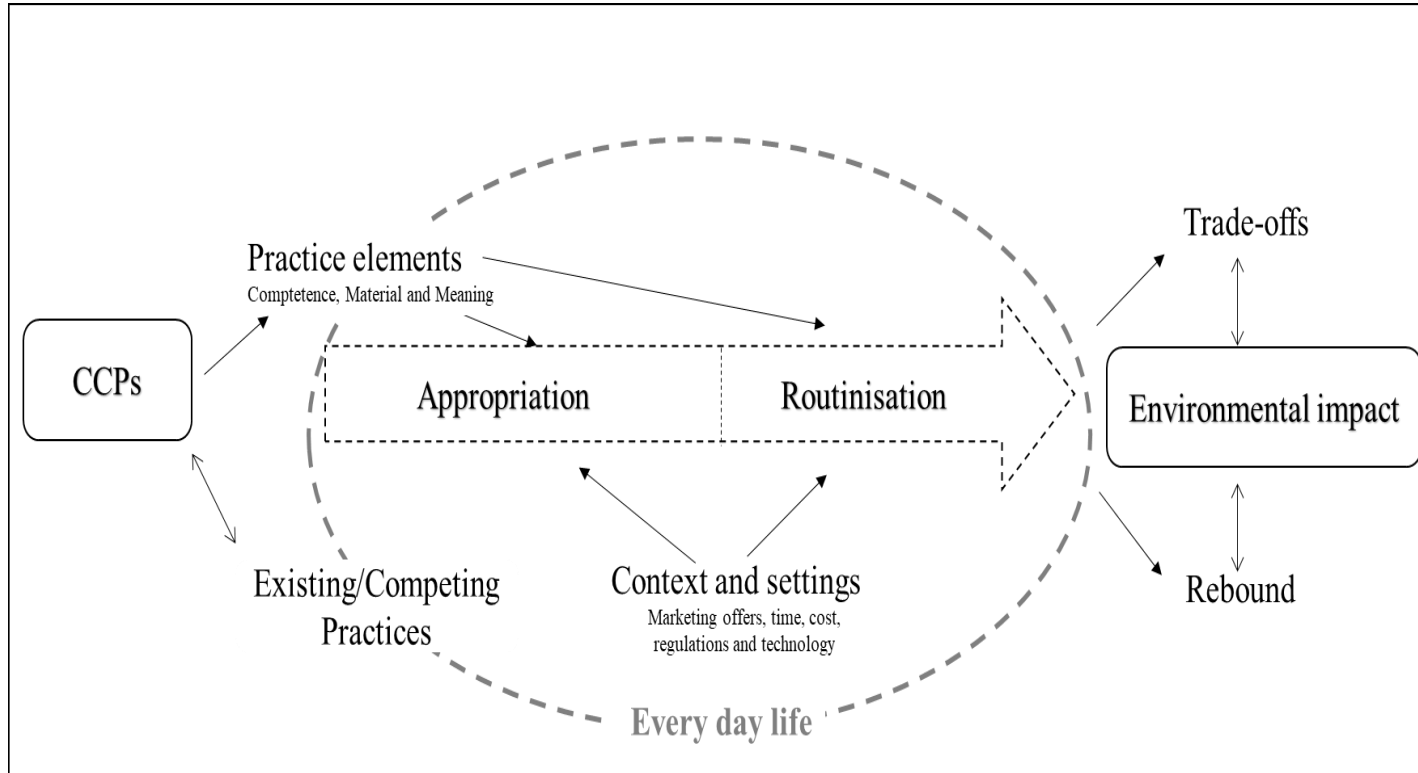
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# Interlocking between CCPs

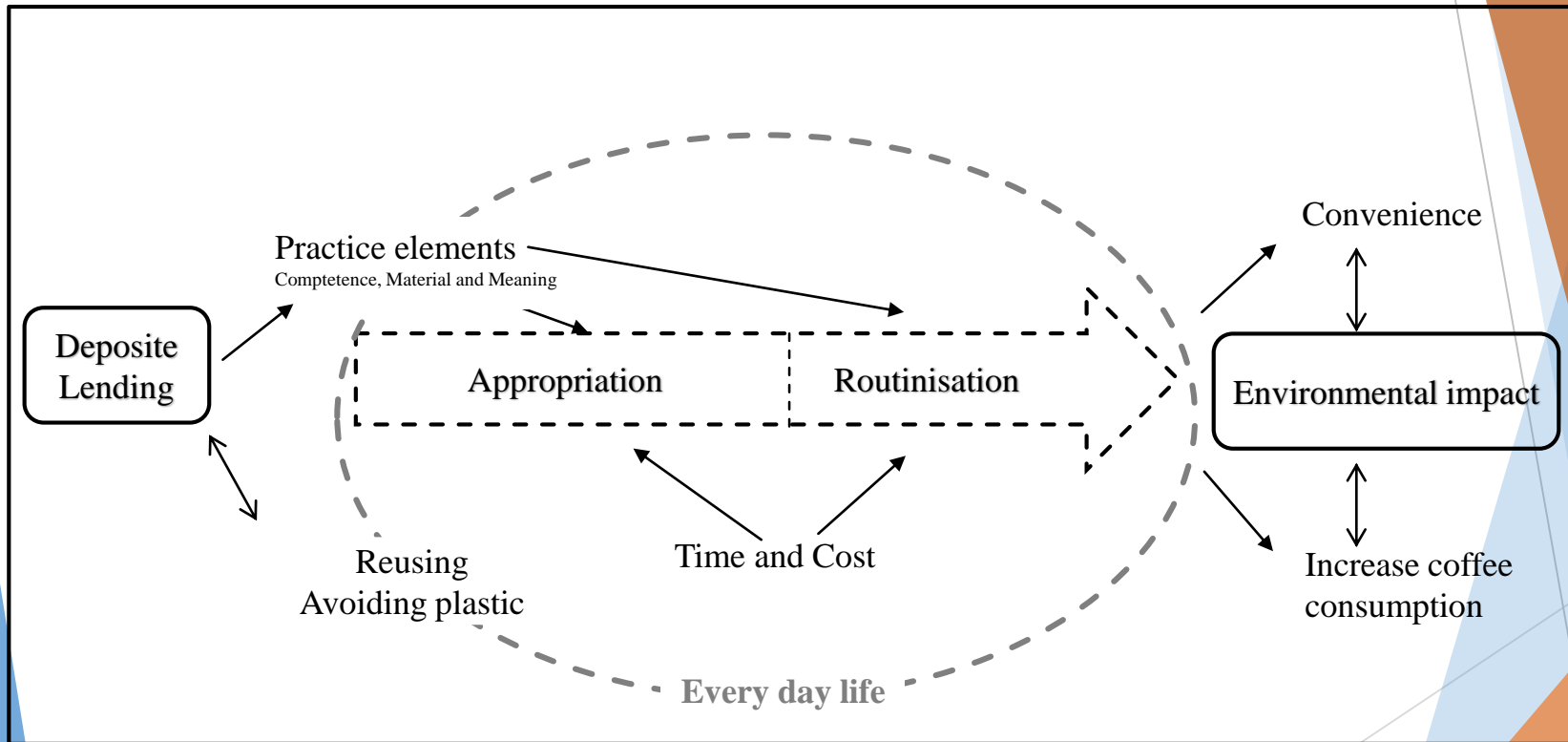




# Suggested Framework



# ReCup case with our framework



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# Recommendation for future research

- ▶ Sufficiency strategies such as reduce, refuse and rethink should be explored
- ▶ Components such as socio-structural contexts, trade-offs, and unintended consequences should be given greater attention
- ▶ Circular consumer practices should be conceived as a framework of linked, and probably competing, or mutually enhancing practices

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**Would you take Grandmother's gift or return it?**

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# Summary

- ▶ A circular economy for plastic is not possible with business as usual
- ▶ The transition to a circular economy for plastic requires a collaborative effort from all stakeholders
- ▶ Circular plastic interventions should focus on everyday practices
- ▶ Trade-offs, unintended consequences and environmental impacts of interventions should be explored



Thank you for your  
attention



**C-PlaNeT**  
CIRCULAR PLASTICS NETWORK  
FOR TRAINING

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