



**FROM INTENTION TO INACTION:  
WHY INTENTION DOES NOT LEAD TO RECYCLING  
BEHAVIOR FOR MILLENNIALS**

# A CHANGING WORLD

- Climate change
- Extreme weather events
- Increasing levels of waste
- A changing generation





## A SOLUTION

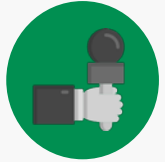
- Reduced GHG emissions
- Reduced pollution
- Less waste in landfills
- Less soil contamination
- Saves energy

*Why do millennials form the intention to recycle waste but fail to do so in public places?*

# RESEARCH METHOD



Qualitative research



Interviews & observations



Millennial generation



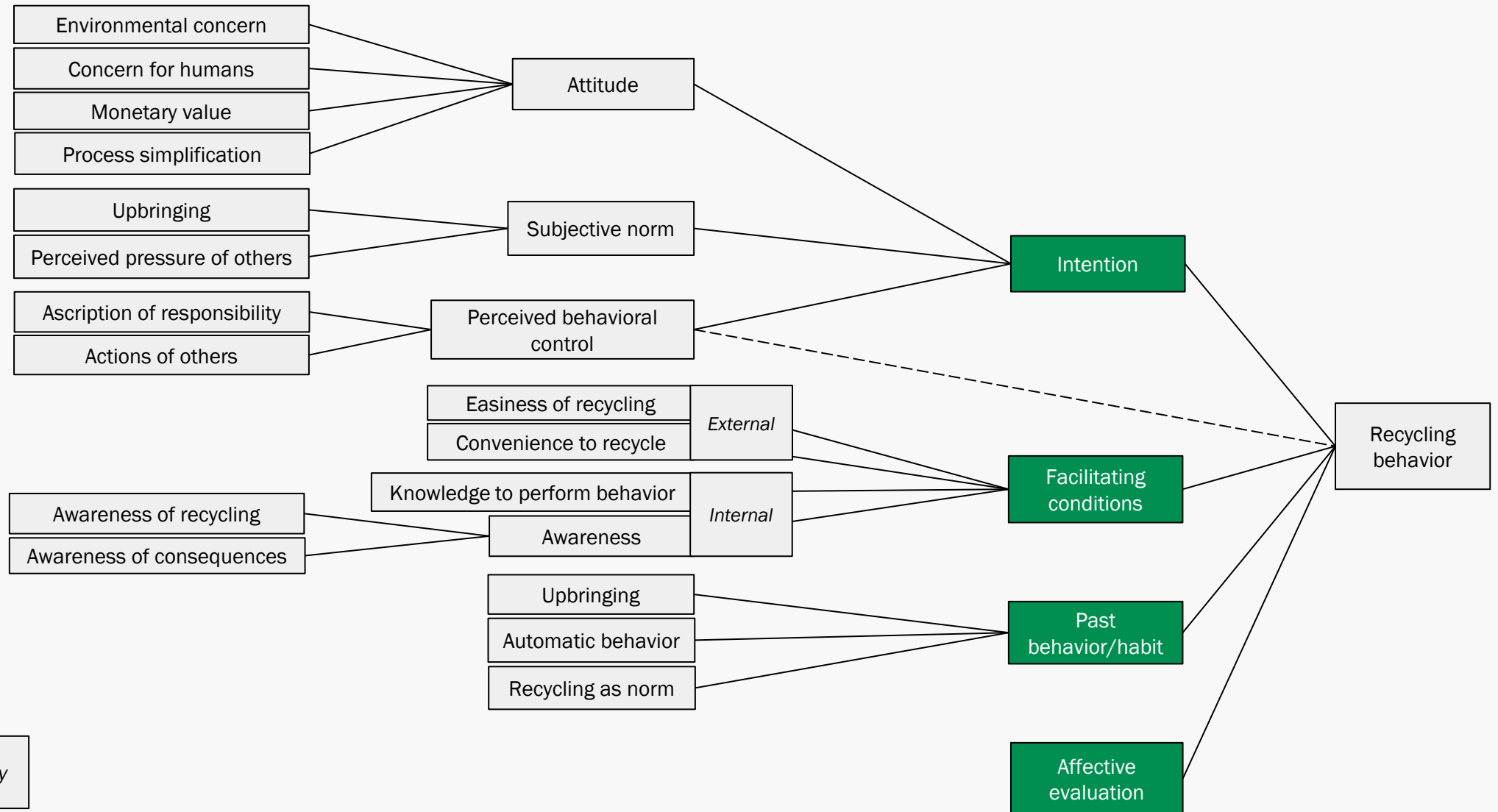
Public recycling in city of Rotterdam



Three step coding process with ATLAS.ti



# MODEL OF RECYCLING BEHAVIOR



Variable	Category
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# INTENTION

## Attitude

Environmental concern

*“Personal benefit? No, I am just doing it for the good of the planet.”*

Concern for humans

*“But any personal benefits for me. Yeah maybe for me, for my children, for their children.”*

Monetary value

*“Yeah, if I get paid to recycle!”*

Process simplification

*“Makes peoples’ lives easier. If we do that here it might mean hours or days less of processing.”*

## Subjective norm

Upbringing

*“Yeah, it was very important in the family that I grew up with. So I am raised with recycling.”*

Perceived pressure of others

*“Just because we are supposed to.”*

## Perceived behavioral control

Ascription of responsibility

*“That’s the responsibility from local government I think.”*

Actions of others

*“And I used to recycle, but then my mom would put rubbish into the recycling bin and then it kind of defeated the point.”*

# FACILITATING CONDITIONS

## External

Easiness of recycling

*"I think it's really easy to use, you just have to take the right one. So it is really no extra effort whatsoever"*

Convenience to recycle

*"If there is an option to separate, people will do it. But we are also lazy, so if it is not, we are still going to think about ourselves and not about the environment."*

## Internal

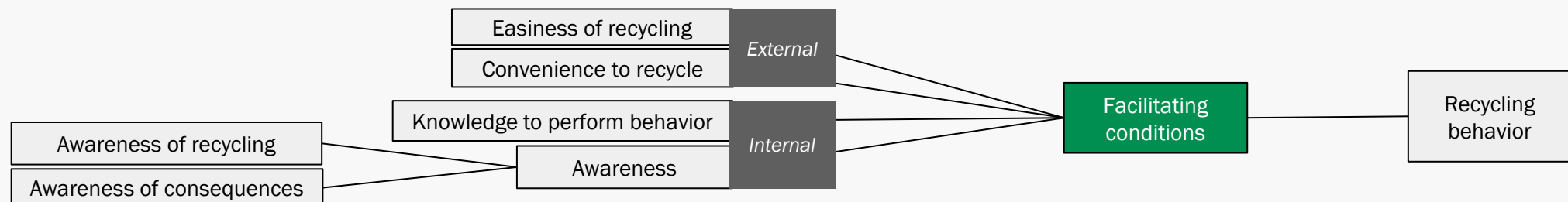
Knowledge to perform behavior

*"Sometimes it's complicated to separate some waste. For example, you see the chips, I know there is a kind of package which contains plastic and paper. So how are you going to do it?"*

Awareness

*"I just throw everything away and I don't really pay attention to it."*

*"And maybe I don't know enough on how the impact will be if we do separate."*



# PAST BEHAVIOR/HABIT

Upbringing

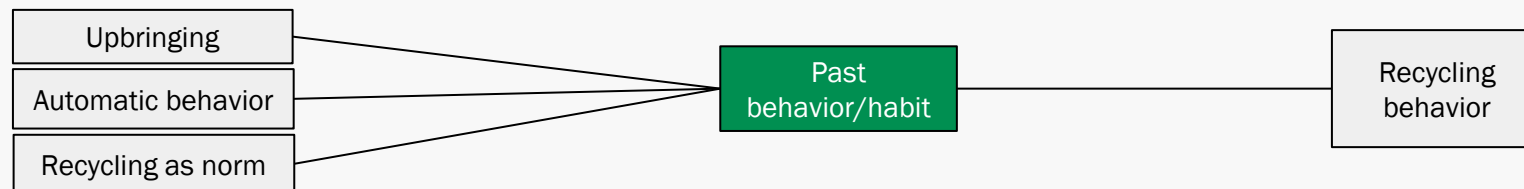
*"I just grew up like that. I just do it. Without a real reason."*

Automatic behavior

*"Yes, it's automatically. You look where to put it and just do it."*

Recycling as norm

*"I think because it's like drilled into us anyways. So now it's part of my normal routine to just do it now."*





# AFFECTIVE EVALUATION

*“I think I just feel better as a human being. I think at least I can help a little. It’s good to do that.”*

*“No I mean you feel a little tiny sense of goodness that might be spend maybe 1 or 2 seconds more helping out.”*

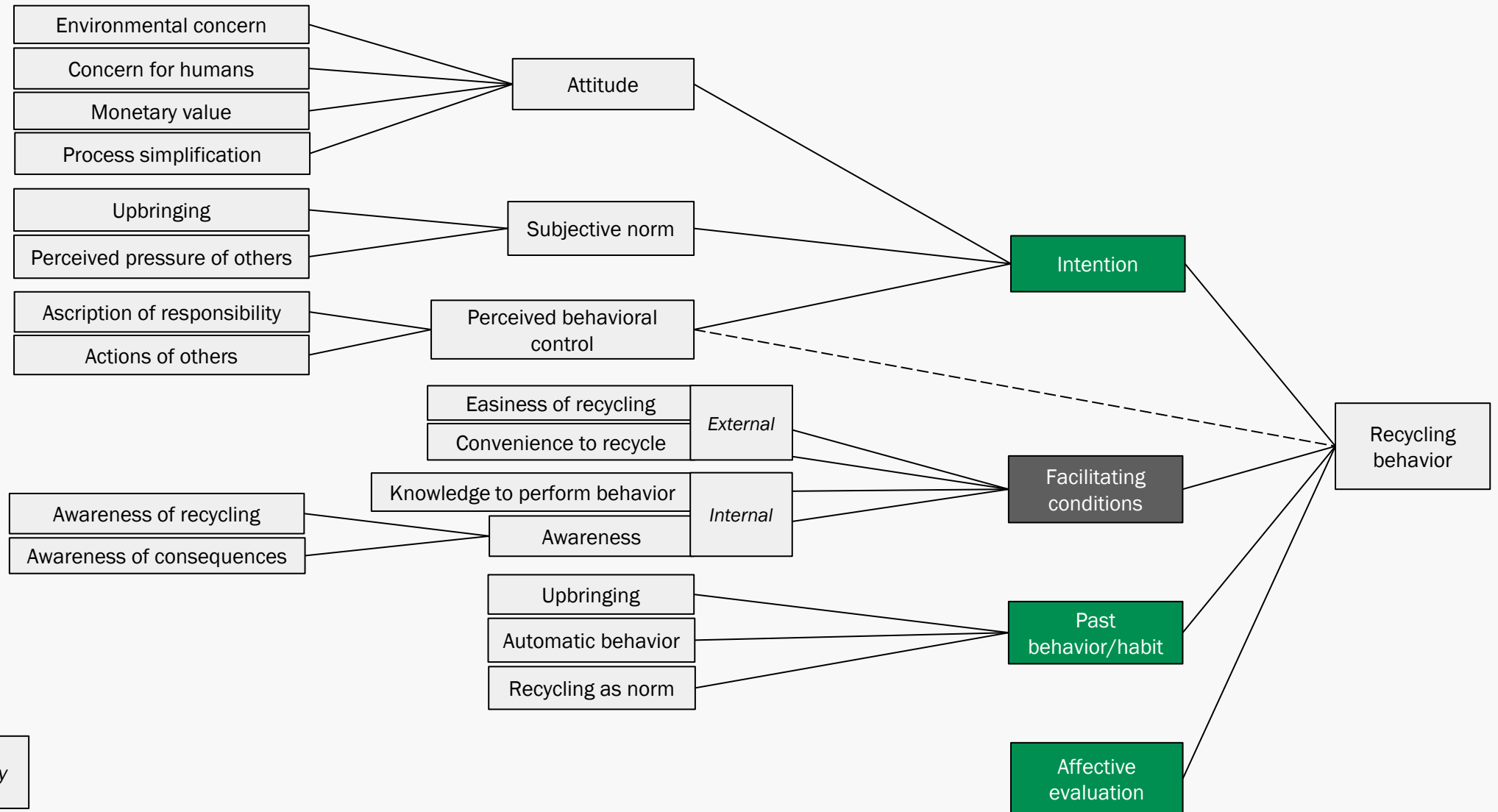
*“I think there is more a feel good aspect, you learn that you are doing something good for the environment rather than an actual tangible benefit you get from recycling.”*

Affective  
evaluation

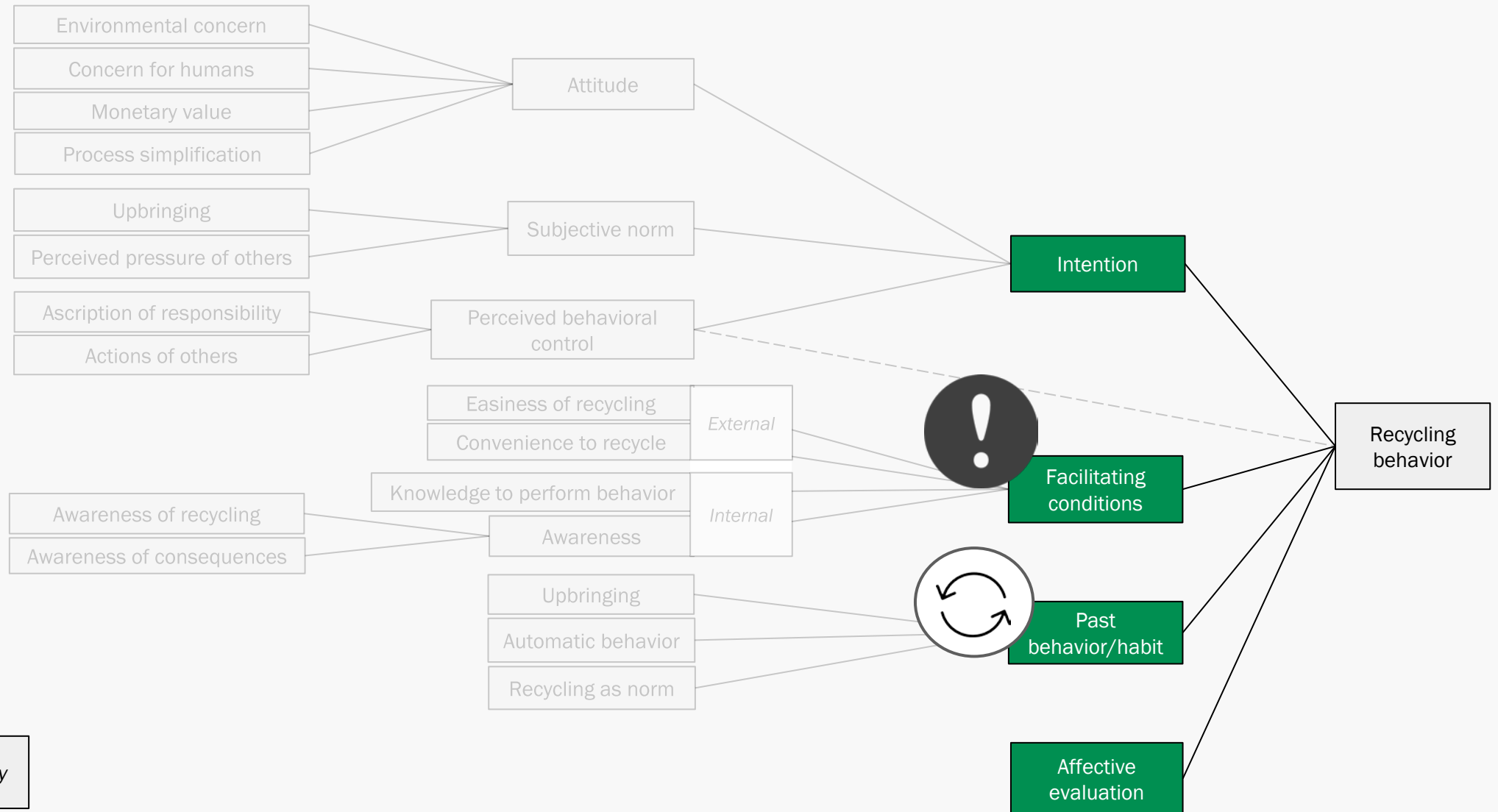
Recycling  
behavior



# MODEL OF RECYCLING BEHAVIOR



# PUBLIC VS. HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING



# NEXT STEPS

1

Increase recycling **awareness** and **education** through schools, advertisements and company cooperation

2

Increase **number of recycle bins** in city center and residential areas

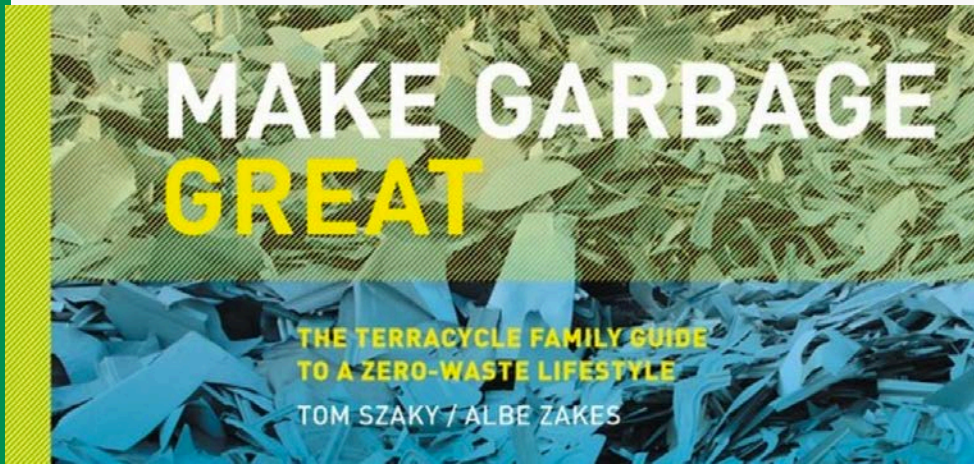
3

Create **coherent recycle strategy** within the Netherlands and the EU

# NEXT STEPS

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# NEXT STEPS

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Increase number of recycle bins in city center and residential areas



# NEXT STEPS

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Create coherent recycle strategy within the Netherlands and the EU





# CONCLUSION

*Why do millennials form the intention to recycle waste but fail to do so?*

## Intention

- Combination of self-interest and long-term concern for communities and environment
- Upbringing and pressure of others
- Ascription of personal responsibility and actions of others

Facilitating conditions

Past behavior/habit

Affective evaluation



Recycling behavior



THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
ATTENTION

