

HOMEWORK

- I. Personal work for 3 bricks: Read the texts, imagine a question (problematique) and write a synthesis (350 words)
- II. Personal work for 3 bricks: Choose one of the texts and translate it (Article in French type BCE / article in English type ECRICOME)

Doc A:**What shoppers say about sustainability doesn't match how they spend**

J.K. Scheeres, Stanford Report, May 6, 2025.

Despite claiming to value ethics and eco-friendliness, most consumers prioritize other factors at the register, according to a new study.

The market for personal care items that claim to be environmentally or socially responsible has exploded in the past decade. However, eco-friendliness and ethical considerations aren't the primary concerns of most shoppers, despite what they tell pollsters about a desire to live a more sustainable lifestyle.

That's one of the key findings from a study of sustainable health and beauty care products conducted by Yewon Kim, an assistant professor of marketing at Stanford Graduate School of Business, and Kristina Brecko, PhD '17, an assistant professor of marketing at the University of Rochester.

For years, brands have made eco-friendly claims, often without substantiating them; only recently has increased government oversight begun to ripple through the sector. "We wanted to study how companies behave in the absence of regulation – whether firms have an economic incentive to invest in marketing sustainable products," Kim says.

The researchers analyzed six terabytes of sales data for 30,000 products – from cosmetics and deodorants to shampoo and toothpaste – sold at U.S. retailers between 2012 and 2019. By reviewing information included in the products' packaging, they found that one-third of the products made at least one environmental or social claim. Nearly 29% were labeled "cruelty-free," meaning they were not tested on animals. About 14% mentioned eco-friendly packaging, such as recyclable or low-waste materials. Less than 3% mentioned environmental sustainability, such as reduced greenhouse emissions, or social responsibility, such as fair-trade certification.

Although 78% of respondents in a 2022 survey stated that a sustainable lifestyle was important to them, the researchers found that consumers' in-store behavior tells a different story. "It turns out that package size, ingredients, and brand name are much bigger drivers of purchases than sustainability," Brecko says.

Their findings also revealed that large brands offered fewer sustainable options than smaller "fringe" brands. A similar pattern holds even among brands owned by a single company. "We observe that large manufacturers provide sustainable options through their smaller brands rather than adding them to their established brands," Kim says.

Kim and Brecko suggest two reasons for this. First, adjusting an existing product line to conform to sustainability claims can be expensive, especially when big manufacturers know their regular customers aren't as concerned about sustainability as other features.

Second, consumers tend to be more suspicious about larger companies engaging in greenwashing – making false or misleading claims about their products' sustainability.

The study suggests that consumer demand alone is not enough to motivate large brands to invest in sustainable practices. "Based on consumer purchases alone, large brands with high brand equity have little incentive to widely incorporate these sustainability features," Kim says.

However, increased oversight could change this. Brecko points out that the European Union has more rigid rules governing personal care products than the United States. Companies making sustainability claims in the EU must provide proof of reduced environmental impact. "A recent regulation makes it such that companies cannot use words that sound 'green' on their product packaging without providing evidence that the product indeed meets sustainability standards," Brecko says.

In the U.S., there have been increasing calls for stronger regulation of the personal care product sector after toxic chemicals were found in items ranging from nail polish to lotion to soap. It wasn't until 2022 that Congress gave the Food and Drug Administration increased oversight authority by passing the Modernization of Cosmetics Regulation Act, the most significant expansion of the agency's power to regulate personal care products since 1938. At the same time, the Federal Trade Commission has stepped up prosecution of companies making deceptive environmental claims.

States have enacted their own sustainability mandates. In 2020, California became the first state to ban the sales of cosmetics tested on animals. By March 2024, 11 other states had passed similar bans.

Doc B:

The U.S. Sends Lots of Plastic Trash Overseas. Malaysia Just Said No Thanks.

Hiroko Tabuchi and Zunaira Saieed, The New York Times, July 1, 2025

In the shadow of President Trump's tariff fights, a different kind of trade war is playing out involving candy wrappers and plastic bottles.

On Tuesday, Malaysia, which received more discarded plastic from rich nations than any other developing country last year, effectively banned all shipments of plastic waste from the United States.

That might not seem like a big deal. But the United States has increasingly relied on countries like Malaysia to deal with plastic trash. American scrap brokers sent more than 35,000 tons of plastic

waste to Malaysia last year, according to trade data analyzed by the Basel Action Network, a nonprofit group that tracks plastic waste issues.

Last year, after seizing more than 100 shipping containers of hazardous materials sent from Los Angeles that had been improperly labeled as raw materials, the Malaysian environment minister, Nik Nazmi, told reporters that “we do not want Malaysia to be the world’s rubbish bin.” The country’s Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry did not respond to a request for comment on Tuesday. Turmoil in the little-known trade in plastic waste has its roots in a decision by China in 2018, for the same reasons as Malaysia, to ban imports of wastepaper and plastic. Before that, China had for years accepted as much as half of the globe’s discarded plastic and paper.

Western nations have since struggled with a buildup of plastic trash. The United States recycles less than 10 percent of the plastic it discards. (Food and other contamination in plastic waste hinders recycling, and a significant portion of plastic, like chip bags that contain layers of different plastics and other materials, simply can’t be recycled economically.)

The rest ends up in landfills, is burned or is shipped overseas. And while new overseas destinations have emerged, a growing number of countries are starting to say no to trash. This year, Thailand and Indonesia also announced bans on plastic-waste imports.

The world produces nearly a half-billion tons of plastic each year, more than double the amount from two decades ago, and a growing amount of plastic waste is turning up on coastlines and river banks, as well as in whales, birds and other animals that ingest them. Researchers have estimated that one garbage truck’s worth of plastic enters the ocean every minute.

China’s ban “sent shock waves through the global plastic waste trade,” said Tony R. Walker, a professor at the School for Resource and Environmental Studies at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, who researches the global flow of plastic waste. The countries that started to accept that discarded plastic “quickly became overwhelmed,” he said. Much of that plastic trash ends up dumped in landfills or is burned, which releases harmful air pollution, or is simply released into the environment.

People in rich countries may assume the plastic they diligently separate is being recycled, he said, something he termed “wish cycling.” However, instead of going into a recycling stream, “a lot of it gets redirected to waste,” he said.

Malaysia’s amended Customs Act bans all plastic waste shipments from countries that have not signed the Basel Convention, a global agreement that regulates hazardous waste including plastic. That puts the United States, the only major country that is not a party to the agreement, in a particularly tricky spot.

The amended law also sets stringent restrictions on plastic waste imports from other countries, saying they must contain only one type of plastic, with at most 2 percent contamination, to ensure that the imported plastics are recycled and not discarded. That level would be challenging to meet for any plastic waste collected from consumers.

Malaysia's ban on plastic waste imports from the United States was prompted by the discovery of hundreds of containers filled with hazardous electronic and plastic waste that had been falsely declared as raw materials in order to bypass the country's trade control laws, said Wong Pui Yi, a researcher at the Basel Action Network.

But local industry associations have urged the government to lift the ban on clean, recyclable plastic imports, arguing that the imports are necessary to help manufacturers meet their recycled-content targets. Brands like Nestlé, Coca-Cola and Pepsi have committed to using more recycled material in their products, said C.C. Cheah, the president of Malaysian Plastics Manufacturers Association, and the Malaysian recycling industry could still play a role.

Kate O'Neill, a professor of environmental science, policy and management at the University of California, Berkeley, said Malaysia's ban could mean that plastic waste starts flowing to other countries that are less able to handle the waste. Monitoring will be important, she said. "The recycling industry still hasn't caught up with the disruption, so these exports are still needed."

That's why experts increasingly say that, on top of investing in recycling infrastructure, policies are needed to help rein in plastic production itself, for example by curbing demand for single-use plastics. Some countries negotiating a new treaty aimed at curbing plastic pollution have also called for caps on plastic production.

That could come from packaging designs that cut down on plastic use, measures like plastic bag bans and overall policies that make manufacturers more responsible for the waste their products generate.

Those policies have been spreading across the United States as well as globally. On Tuesday, a law went into effect in Illinois that prohibits large hotels from providing small, single-use plastic bottles for toiletries like shampoo and conditioner. (Smaller hotels have until 2026 to comply.)

Also on Tuesday, Delaware began prohibiting restaurants from providing foam food containers, plastic beverage stirrers and plastic cocktail and sandwich picks, and requires that single-use plastic straws are only given out at the customer's request.

II.

a) Version journalistique (type ECRICOME)

How a city awash in garbage is trying to take out the trash

Oakland, long regarded as a scrappy, more affordable city across the bay from San Francisco, has struggled since the pandemic with crime, an enormous deficit and a civic embarrassment when its mayor was recalled and federally indicted.

But the city's residents are especially frustrated with illegal dumping these days. Makeshift, open-air landfills choke sidewalks, sully schoolyards and anger business owners across the city.

Illegal dumping plagues cities nationwide, but Oakland has one of the nation's worst problems when accounting for the city's smaller footprint and population of 444,000. Based on rough estimates provided by local governments, it appears that only a handful of larger cities, such as Los Angeles and Detroit, pick up more illegally discarded garbage each year.

Oakland has become so infamous for street garbage that a local artist erected a sign renaming the city "Trashland," and a city councilman suggested that the moniker might be more apt than being named after the oak trees that once predominated.

Eighteen million pounds of illegally dumped trash were collected last year, according to city officials, equivalent to about 41 pounds per resident. But Oakland residents believe those statistics don't tell the complete story, because they don't measure how much garbage isn't picked up by the city.

The New Yorker, October 8, 2025.

b) Thème journalistique (type BCE)

Antoine Brizard : « Dans les sports collectifs, la consommation de textile est excessive »

Le double champion olympique de volley Antoine Brizard a décidé de s'engager pour l'environnement et plus précisément de sensibiliser à la sobriété textile en devenant un des ambassadeurs Sport Planète de la MAIF.

« L'écologie est un sujet qui me tient à cœur, ça devrait même être la priorité absolue face à l'urgence climatique », nous raconte Antoine Brizard ce mercredi en fin de journée. Nous sommes à Paris, au Plateau Fertile, une manufacture de mode circulaire et solidaire. Mais, même s'il vient de s'essayer à la surjeteuse pour faire de l'upcycling et coudre un tour de cou avec un de ses vieux maillots, le double champion olympique de volley (2020 et 2024) n'est pas là pour se recycler. Il vient de participer à une conférence consacrée au lancement de la campagne Les 4 saisons de MAIF Sport Planète. À cette occasion, Yves Pellicier, le président du groupe, a officiellement présenté l'intégration de l'éco conditionnalité dans les contrats de sponsoring avec les fédérations, un projet dévoilé en avant-première dans notre quotidien le 18 septembre. « L'urgence climatique nous concerne toutes et tous. Le constat est clair : le dérèglement climatique n'est plus une menace lointaine, c'est une réalité quotidienne. Si nous n'agissons pas, certains sports deviendront impraticables. »

L'Equipe, le 2 octobre 2025