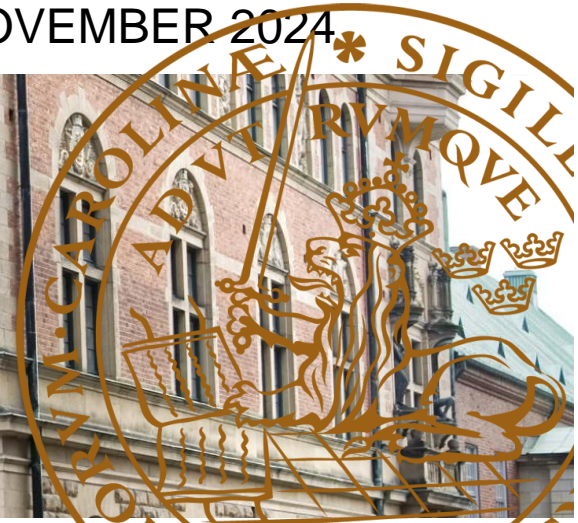




# Rethinking EPR from the perspective of Circular Economy

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IIIEE, LUND UNIVERSITY, 28 NOVEMBER 2024



# Sweden - Waste Management in 1980s

- Most traditional recycling systems have become outdated when we enter the 1980s
- Landfills are being complemented with waste incineration, but questioned solution
- People want more recycling
- Municipalities should eliminate landfilling of mixed waste
- From where could the money come for all necessary changes?

# Let's look at situation around 1990

- New materials and elements not used earlier (plastics, many metals etc., and mixed in products) and challenges in waste management
- Societies with an ever-growing level of consumption
- Waste leads to pollution and littering, and we knew by this time more about these problems than earlier

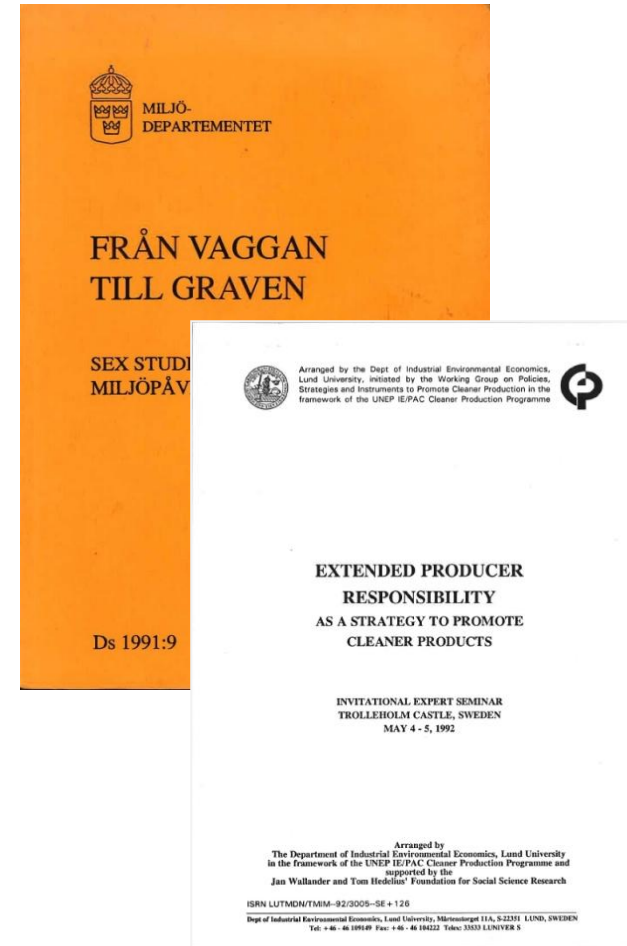


# The challenge

- We need **collection, separation of materials and recycling**, but only after a long utilisation and reuse of products
- Municipalities typically do not have readily available **resources** to run a good waste management system
- We need to find such resources – both **knowledge and money**, and use them in an efficient system
- Products should be **designed** accordingly

# 1990 – Extended Producer Responsibility

- Report to the Swedish Ministry of Environment  
– Förlängt producentansvar
- Translated to English for a UNEP workshop we organised in 1992
- Gradually accepted in many countries and translated to various languages
- **Not an instrument, but a policy principle**

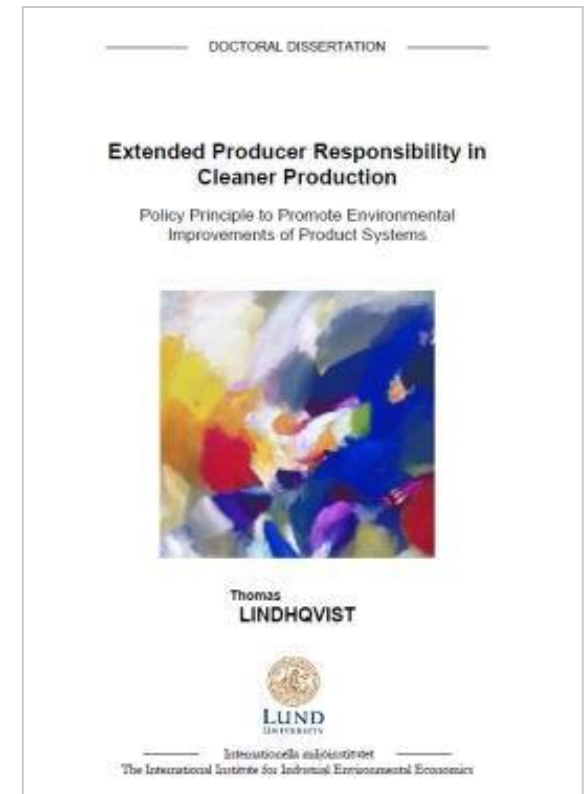


# What did EPR mean?

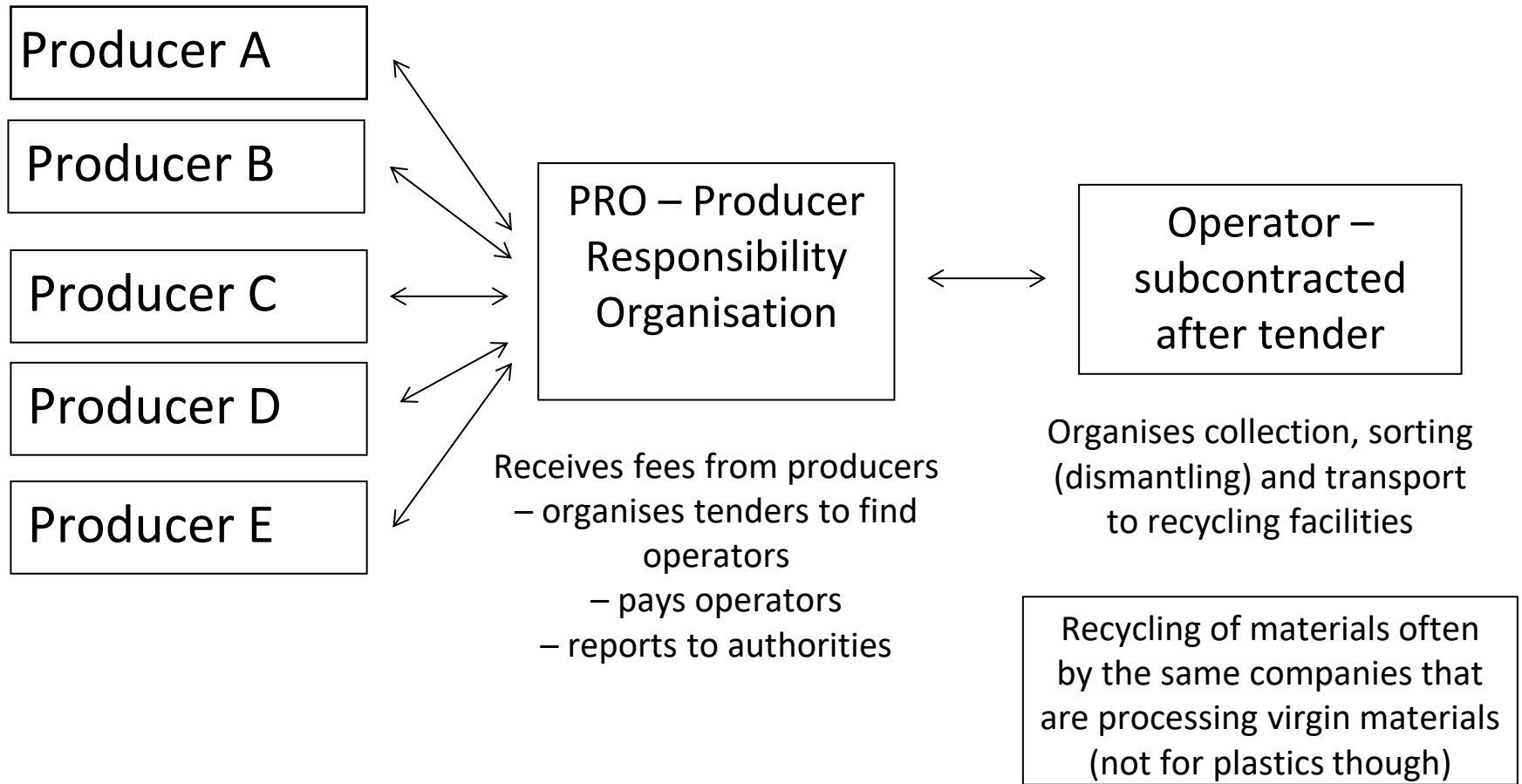
- Consumers pay when they are consuming, not by taxes and fees
- **Producers must include waste costs in the prices of their products**, and this should make producers interested in collection efficiency and design improvements
- Waste was a problem for the society and **not the least for the municipalities in Europe** and EPR promised some relief
- Municipalities facilitated the intro of EPR

# Implementation

- Packaging in Germany 1991, followed by a number of European countries
- Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) around 2000 in Europe with restrictions of hazardous materials
- End-of-life vehicles
- Batteries
- and gradually more products



# Typical EPR Scheme



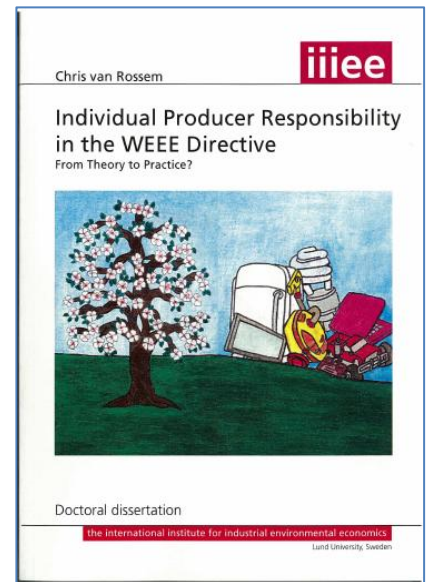
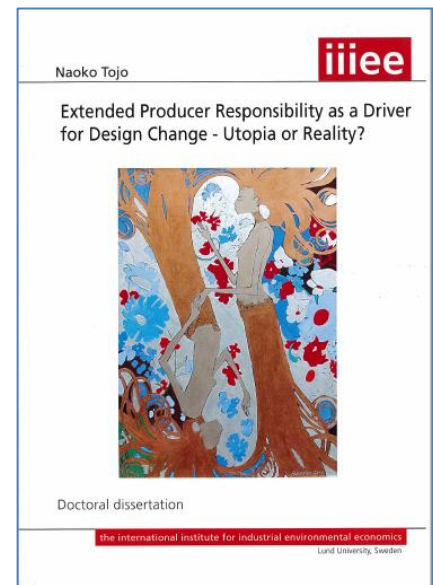


# EPR Results in Europe

- Much more collection and better source separation
- More and better recycling

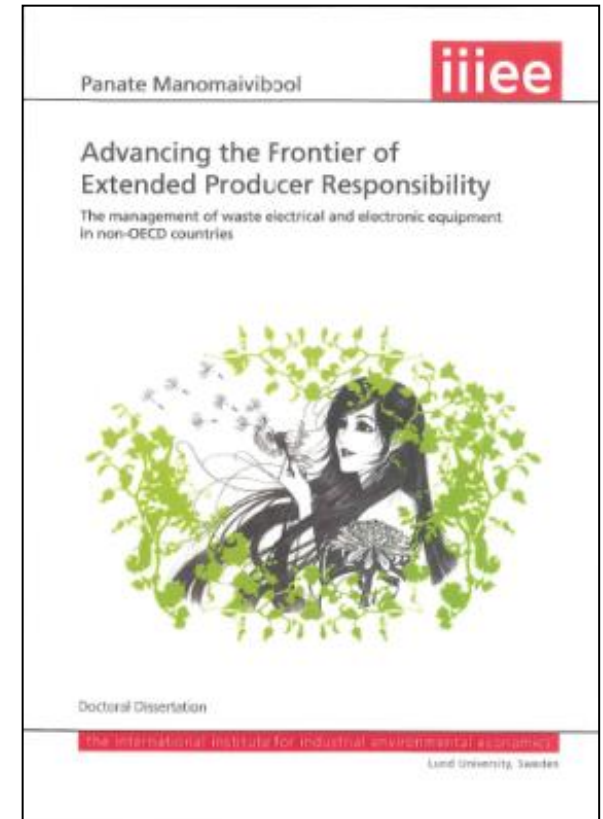
## BUT

- **Loss of resources by downcycling and lacking emphasis on durability and repair of the products**
- **Too weak demands on what is called recycling**
- **Too few design changes**



# Legal and governance issues globally

- Governments have hesitated to **demand** effective collection and really good recycling
- Bad governance allows cheating, insufficient control and low demands
- Governments need to supervise honestly and effectively



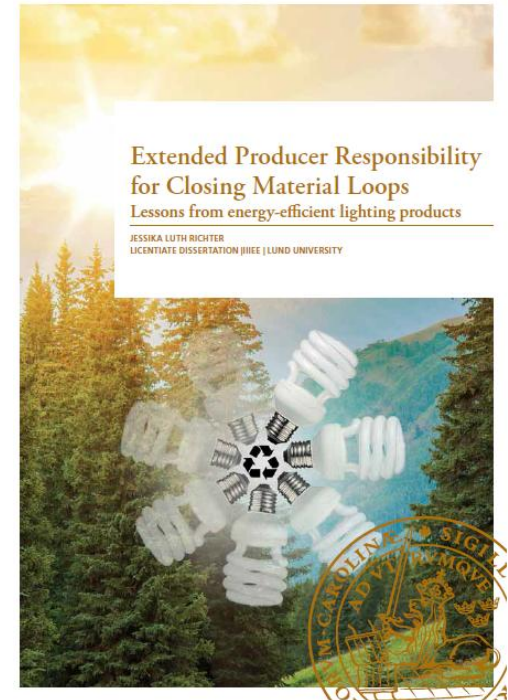
# EPR in the future

Collection always can be improved

- but the most urgent need is to **improve the reuse and recycling**

The inherent value of the materials must be better taken care of

- for this you need governments to **make demands**
- to do that you must refer to **standards and quality references**
- **And release creativity in industry**



# Thank you for your attention!

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IIIEE teaches at master's and PhD levels in environmental management and policy since 1995 and has 1000 master's alumni from more than 100 countries.

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