

# Sustainable Fashion & Apparel

# 101

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# THE FASHION INDUSTRY'S EFFECT ON THE PLANET IS MASSIVE

So massive and difficult to calculate it has people arguing over whether it's the **#2 or #10 polluter in the world.<sup>1,2</sup>**



## HOWEVER, TWO THINGS ARE CLEAR

- 1.** The fashion industry is a major global polluter and contributor to climate change
- 2.** Fashion is a consumer gateway into affecting numerous harmful industries

# NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF THE FASHION INDUSTRY<sup>11</sup>

RESOURCE DEPLETION



FOOD INSECURITY



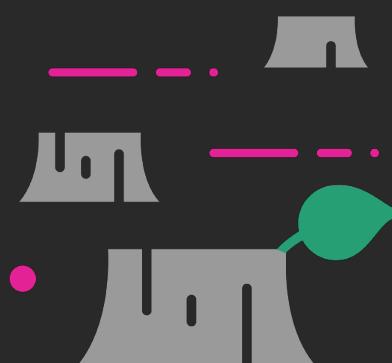
CLIMATE CHANGE



AIR POLLUTION



ANIMAL SUFFERING



HABITAT DESTRUCTION

WATER POLLUTION



HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

The fashion industry influences agriculture, animal agriculture, petroleum, forestry, mining, construction, shipping, manufacturing as well as social and labor justice.<sup>3,10</sup>

By fixing fashion we can positively impact much more

There are three general stages in the life cycle of our clothing. ***We have to get better at all of them.***

### PRODUCTION



### CONSUMPTION



### DISPOSAL





# Producing Clothing Takes A Toll on Our Planet and Society

# PRODUCTION

## *Greenhouse Gasses*



The textiles industry (60% being apparel) produces an estimated **1.2 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>eq)** per year - more than international flights and maritime shipping combined.<sup>4</sup>

Apparel and footwear combined account for an estimated **8.1%** of global CO<sub>2</sub>eq emissions.<sup>12</sup>

# PRODUCTION

## *Freshwater Withdrawal*

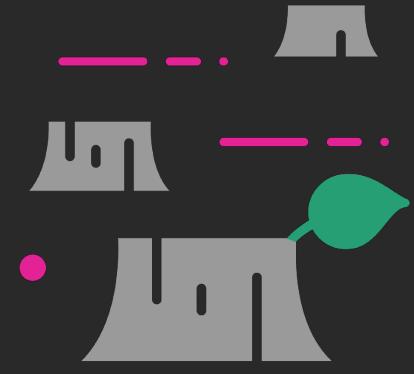


The fashion industry uses **79 billion metric tonnes** of water every year - think 32 million Olympic swimming pools.<sup>10</sup>

By 2030, as demand and water scarcity increase, main cotton-producing countries such as China and India may have to choose between cotton production and securing clean drinking water for their citizens.<sup>10</sup>

# PRODUCTION

## *Habitat Destruction*



The fashion industry is projected to use 35% more land for fibre production by 2030 (land double the size of France) that could be used to grow crops or preserve forest to store carbon.<sup>10</sup>

Runoff from cotton's excessive use of fertilizers leads to deadly algal blooms and its overuse of pesticides causes major ecosystem toxicity.<sup>10,13</sup>

While, the toxic textile dyeing/finishing processes are responsible for 20% of all industrial wastewater.<sup>5</sup>

# PRODUCTION

## *Labor Abuses*



In major textile manufacturing countries as many as **51%** of **workers are paid below minimum wage** even though those minimum wages are often **less than half of what can be considered a living wage.**<sup>10</sup>

Gender inequality worsens the reality: **87% of women are paid less than the minimum wage** while the figure is **27% for men.**<sup>10</sup>

Not only are they underpaid, these people are often overworked and subjected to hazardous working conditions.

# ASK: Who Makes Your clothes?

Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

# RANA PLAZA CATASTROPHE

“Six years after the Rana Plaza factory collapse in Bangladesh, which killed 1,138 garment workers, our clothes are still being made by some of the poorest, most overworked and undervalued people in the world.”<sup>14</sup>

# RANA PLAZA CATASTROPHE

As a response,  
**@fash\_rev** launched  
the campaign  
**#whomademyclothes**  
to demand more  
transparency along the  
supply chain so that  
workers are seen,  
heard, paid properly  
and work in safe  
conditions.<sup>14</sup>

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**Unfortunately,  
We Consume  
As Poorly As  
We Create**

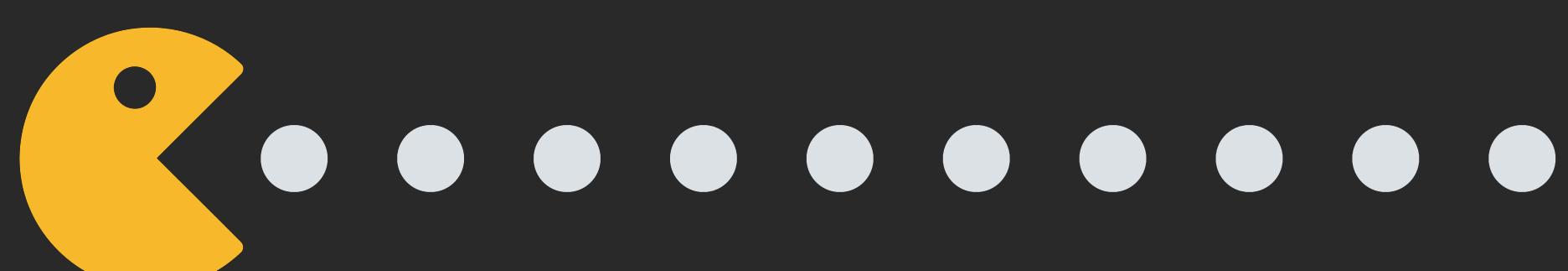
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# CONSUMPTION

The rise of “fast fashion” has fostered a disposable mindset

Fast fashion retailers sell garments intended to be used less than 10 times.<sup>15</sup>

Which is why the average number of times a garment is worn before it ceases to be used has decreased by 36% in the last 15 years.<sup>4</sup>



# CONSUMPTION

Low quality fast fashion is also why textile waste in the U.S. has soared from 20 lbs in 1960 to **83 lbs per person per year** in 2016.<sup>12,16</sup>

The problem, however, is only getting worse, as the consumption of “fast fashion” is projected to jump 63 percent by 2030.<sup>10</sup>

***This trend can't  
continue***



# REMEMBER,

*“The reason fast fashion businesses can afford to discount so heavily is that somewhere along the supply chain, someone has paid the price—be it environmentally or through sweatshop labour.”*

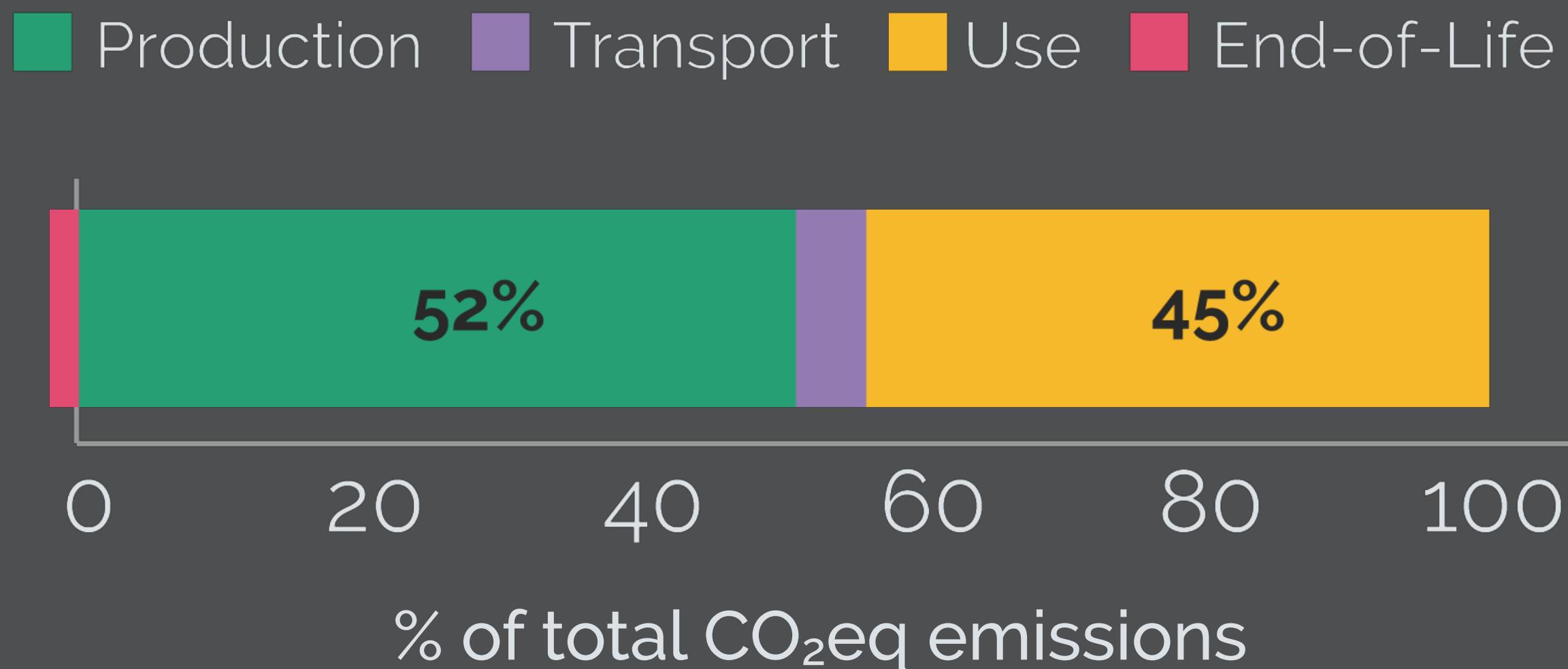
-Kate Osborne, Po-Zu

# CONSUMPTION

Where and from whom we buy our clothes isn't the only factor that contributes to our clothing's effect on the planet

The **use stage of a textile's life-cycle accounts for around 45% of its GHG emissions** as a result of our washing, drying, and ironing habits.<sup>13</sup>

## Greenhouse Gas Emissions Throughout Textile Life Cycle<sup>13</sup>



# CONSUMPTION

## Microplastics

Synthetic fabrics like polyester shed tiny plastic particles during the washing process. Sea life eat these undigestible plastics causing them harm before returning to our plates.<sup>4</sup>



As much as 35% of primary microplastics in the ocean are released from textiles during the washing process.<sup>4</sup>

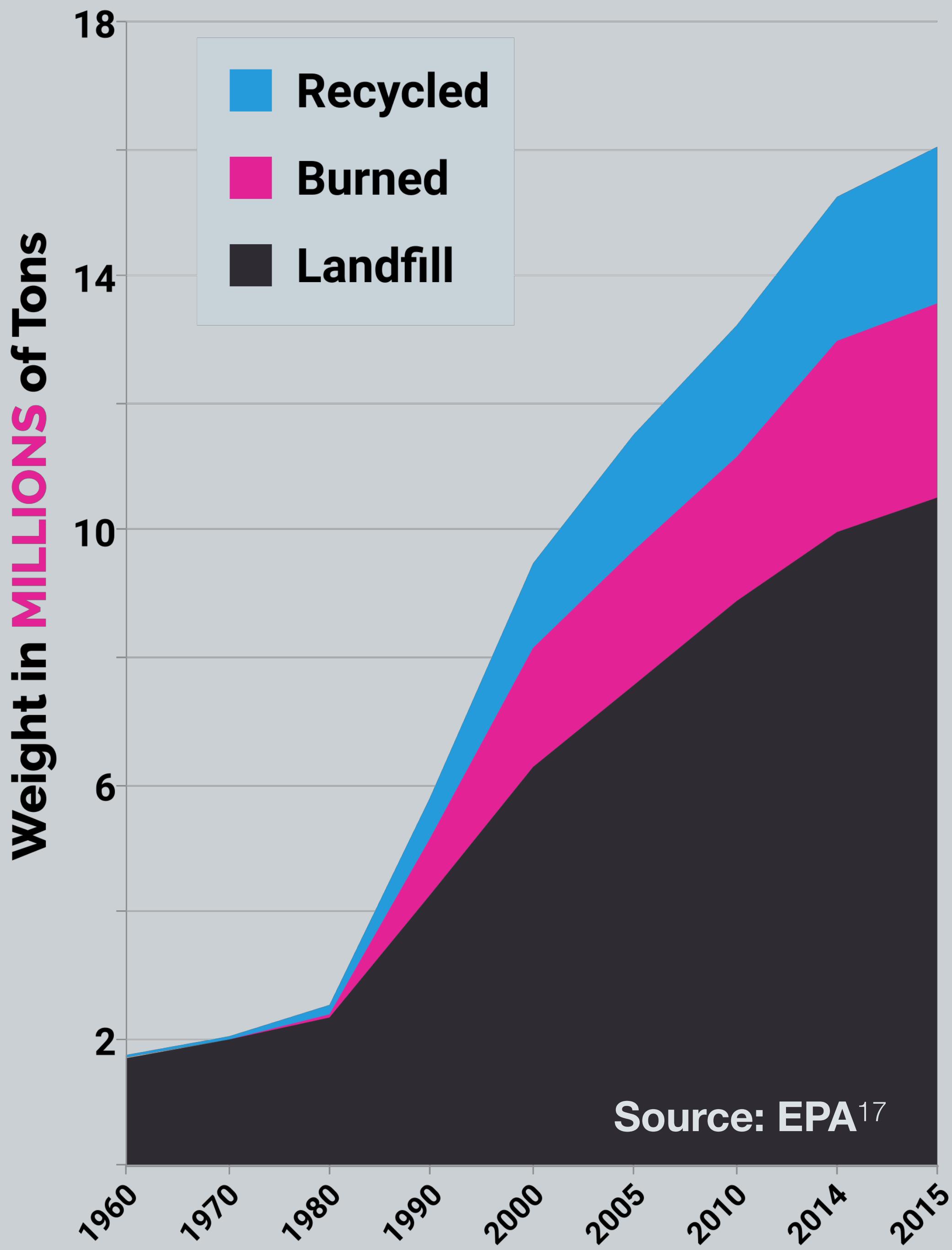
# A Disposable Mindset Can Only Lead to One Place

X

# DISPOSAL

We send 84% of our used clothing to be landfilled or incinerated<sup>4</sup>

**Textile Waste Management  
United States 1960-2015<sup>17</sup>**



# DISPOSAL

Worse than the percentage of clothing going to the landfill is the sheer volume of clothing being disposed.

In 2015 alone around **77 TRILLION** pounds of our clothes were sent to landfills or incinerated globally<sup>4</sup>

*That's the weight of ten Empire State Buildings<sup>18</sup>*



Almost all of this was recyclable

# All of this Makes me Wonder, **What's Our Role As Consumers?**

