The MADE-BY Benchmark for Fibers ranks fibers based on six factors of impact: GHG emissions, human toxicity, eco-toxicity, energy, water, and land. Both cotton and polyester rank at the bottom of this scale.

Conventional cotton’s pesticide use is significant; in 2013, 16.5% (by value) of all pesticides sold in the USA were used by cotton farmers. (Laitala et al., 2018). Also notable, the large mono-culture farms in which cotton is grown can contribute to poor biodiversity and socio-economic strife in their local area (Aiama et al., 2016).

Polyester is made from petroleum, in a high energy process which creates toxic emissions (Claudio, 2007). Furthermore, Polyester sheds plastic microfibers during the laundering process which pollute water systems. One study showed just one polyester garment releasing ~500 000 microfibers in a single wash (Laitala et al., 2018).

Despite these systems which Dubwear has put in place to reduce their social and ecological impacts, their choice of textiles and their choice of production locations reveal flaws in the efficacy of these systems.

Textiles are one of Honduras’ largest industries; knit sweaters alone make up 9.7% of Honduras’ exports (“Honduras”, n.d.). While international pressures have improved the state of child labour in textile factories (Pine, 2009), the conditions for other workers are still of concern. Women’s activist group Codemuh reported that 43% of 1436 women, working in textile factories, suffered from occupational diseases (“Women Factory Workers in Honduras”, n.d.).

Dubwear is a Canadian company, located in Mississauga, Ontario. They are a member of the Fair Labour Association (“Dubwear vs Sweatshop”, n.d.) and the Ontario FIT program which promotes the use of green energies (“Dubwear Go Green”, n.d.).

Most sweaters will make their way to the landfill. Textiles contribute significantly to the total waste of most countries. In 2012, 9.5 million tonnes of textile waste were sent to landfills in the US (Bukhari, 2018). Waste is only increasing with the current trends of low price, and low quality garments in the fashion industry (McNeill, 2015).

Despite these systems which Dubwear has put in place to reduce their social and ecological impacts, their choice of textiles and their choice of production locations reveal flaws in the efficacy of these systems.

We must reject the habits of fast fashion which incline us to buy cheap clothing and discard it prematurely. Support sustainable fashion by following the mantra “buy better, buy less, and make it last” (fashionrevolution.org).

References available upon request; contact tessabunz@stumail.viu.ca.