

# **Recycling and Waste Governance in Korea**

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Global Public HR Conference, Korea  
2018.11.2

# Garbage crisis and challenges

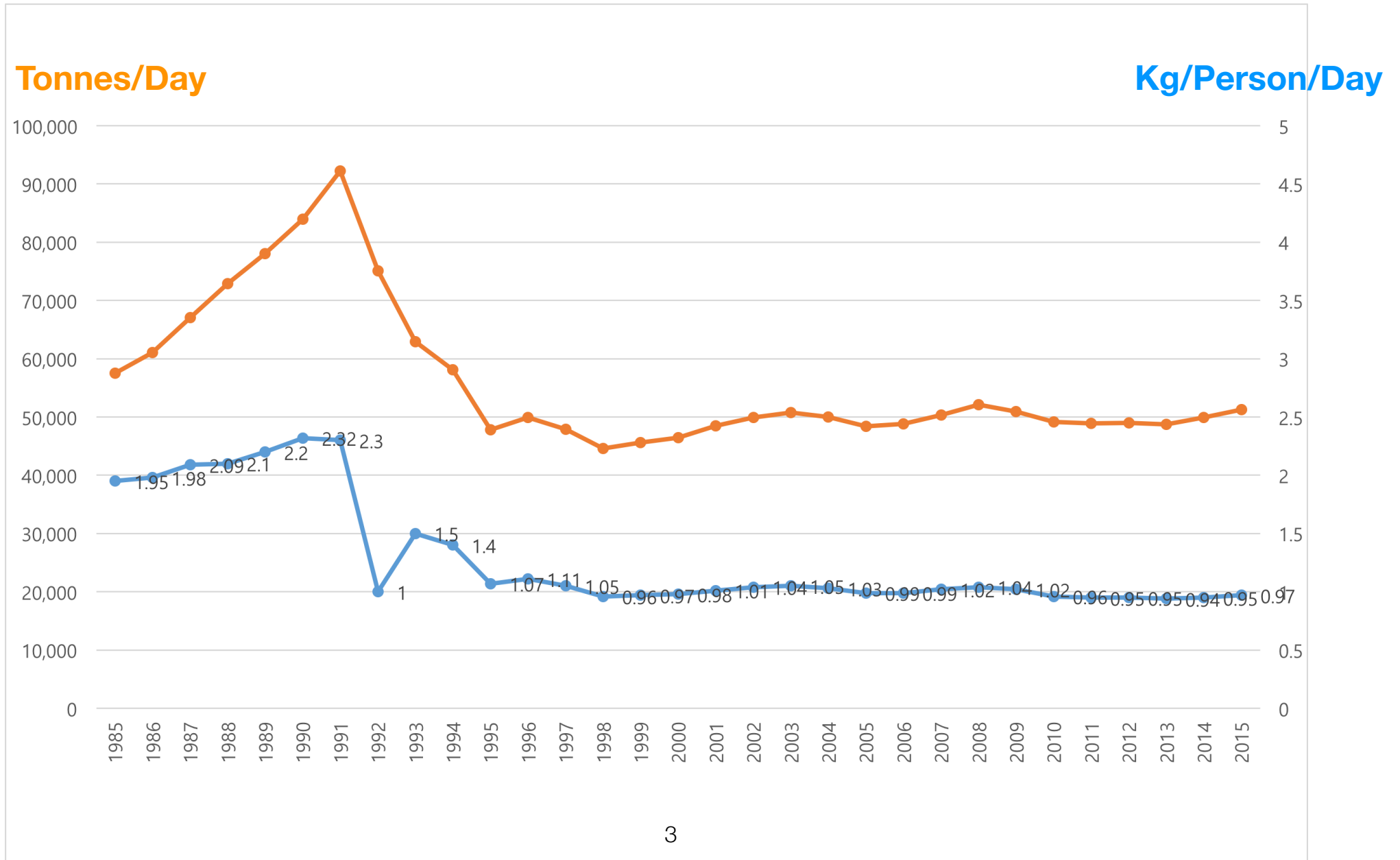
- Garbage crisis

- Increasing municipal wastes due to economic growth and urbanization
- Decreasing capacity to dispose them in landfills
- NIMBY for incinerators and landfills

- Challenges

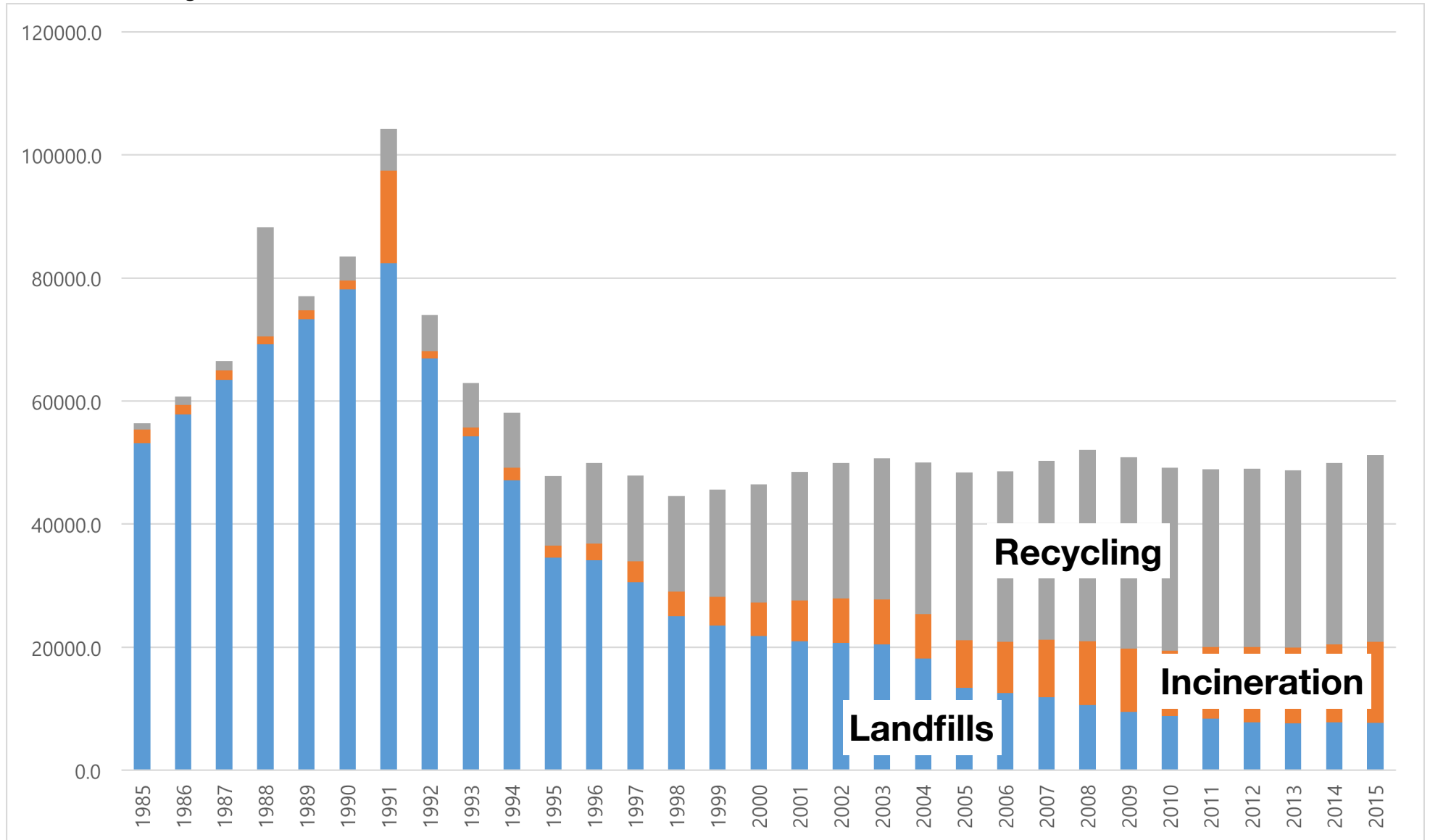
- (How to) Decrease waste generation?
- (How to) Build new landfills or incinerators?
- **(How to) Increase recycling**

# Waste generation in Korea



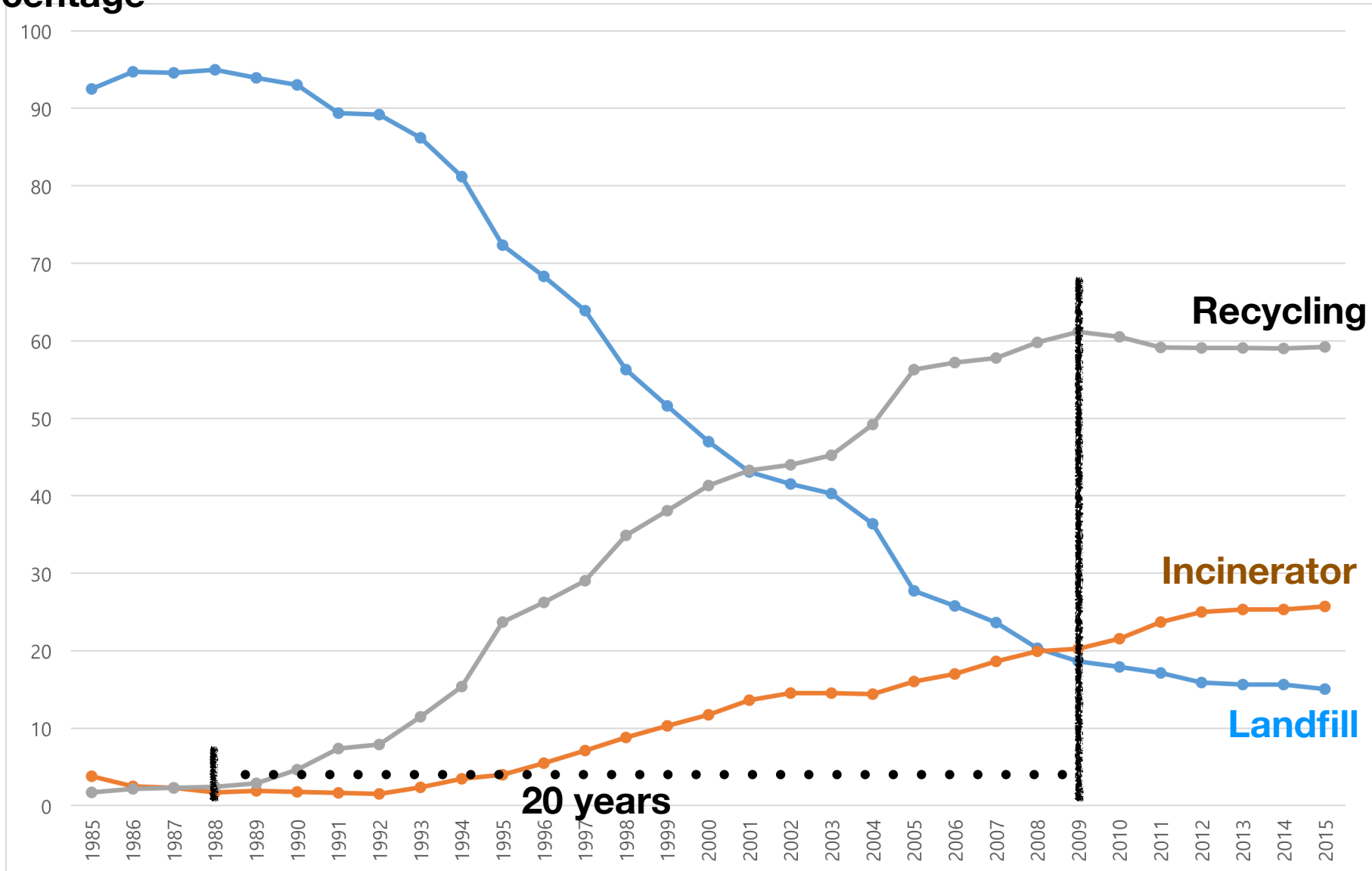
# Waste disposal in Korea

Tonnes/Day



# Successful recycling in Korea

Percentage

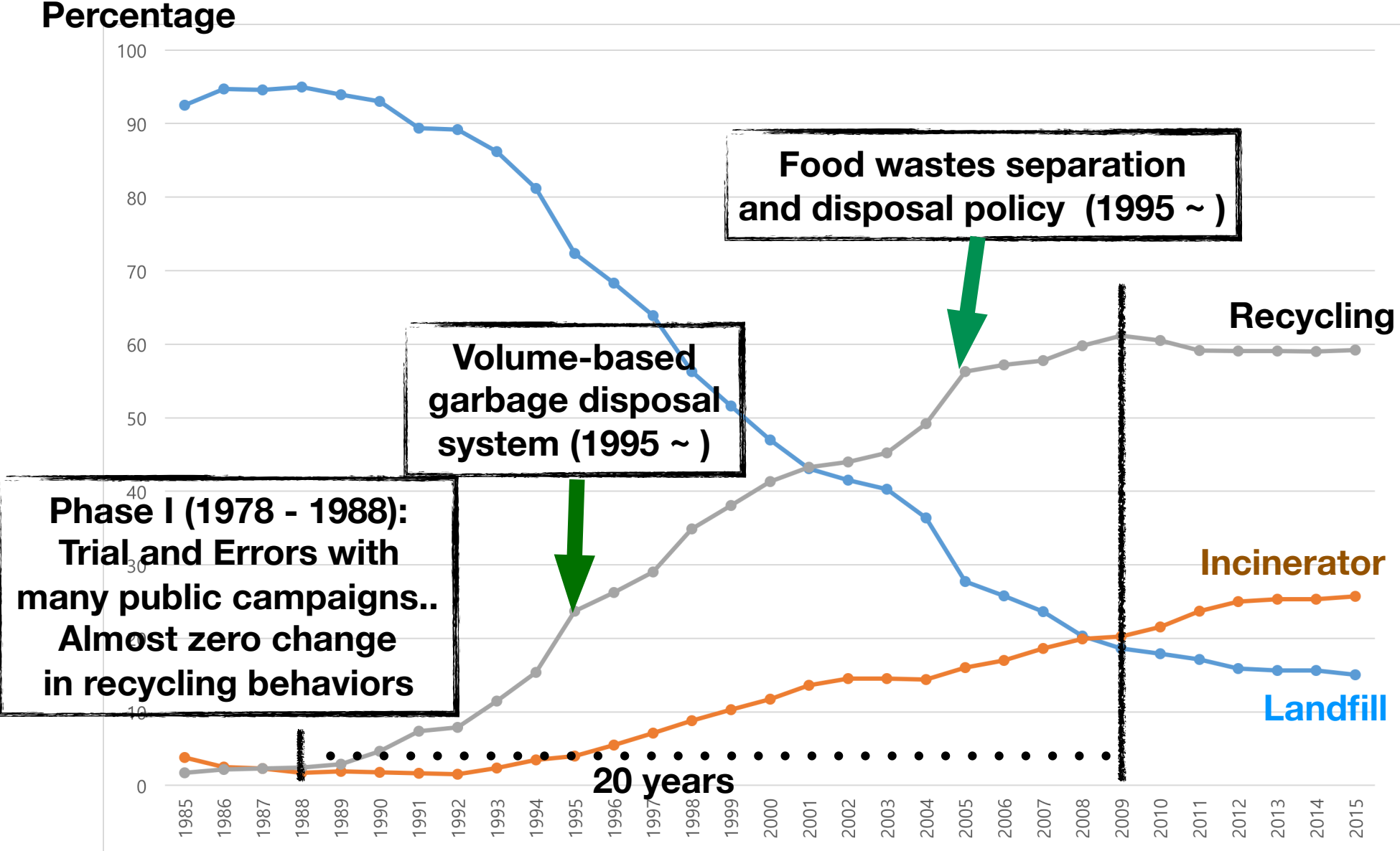


**How could you increase the household recycling rates from almost 0% in a country?**

# Theories of environmentally significant behaviors

- **Individual attitudinal** variables (e.g, values, beliefs, norms, cost-benefit analysis,...) (VBN theory (Stern et al., 1999)) —> *Campaigns, Public Relations, ...*
- **Contextual** variables (e.g., (in)convenience, policies, socio-economic-political situation,...) (ABC theory (Guagnano et al., 1995)) —> *Recycling policies, volume-based garbage disposal system, separation of food wastes,...*
- **Individual socio-demographic** variables (e.g., income, education, capacity,...)
- **Personal, social habit or routine**

# Successful recycling in Korea





**What about  
governance factor?**

# Recycling system and governance challenges



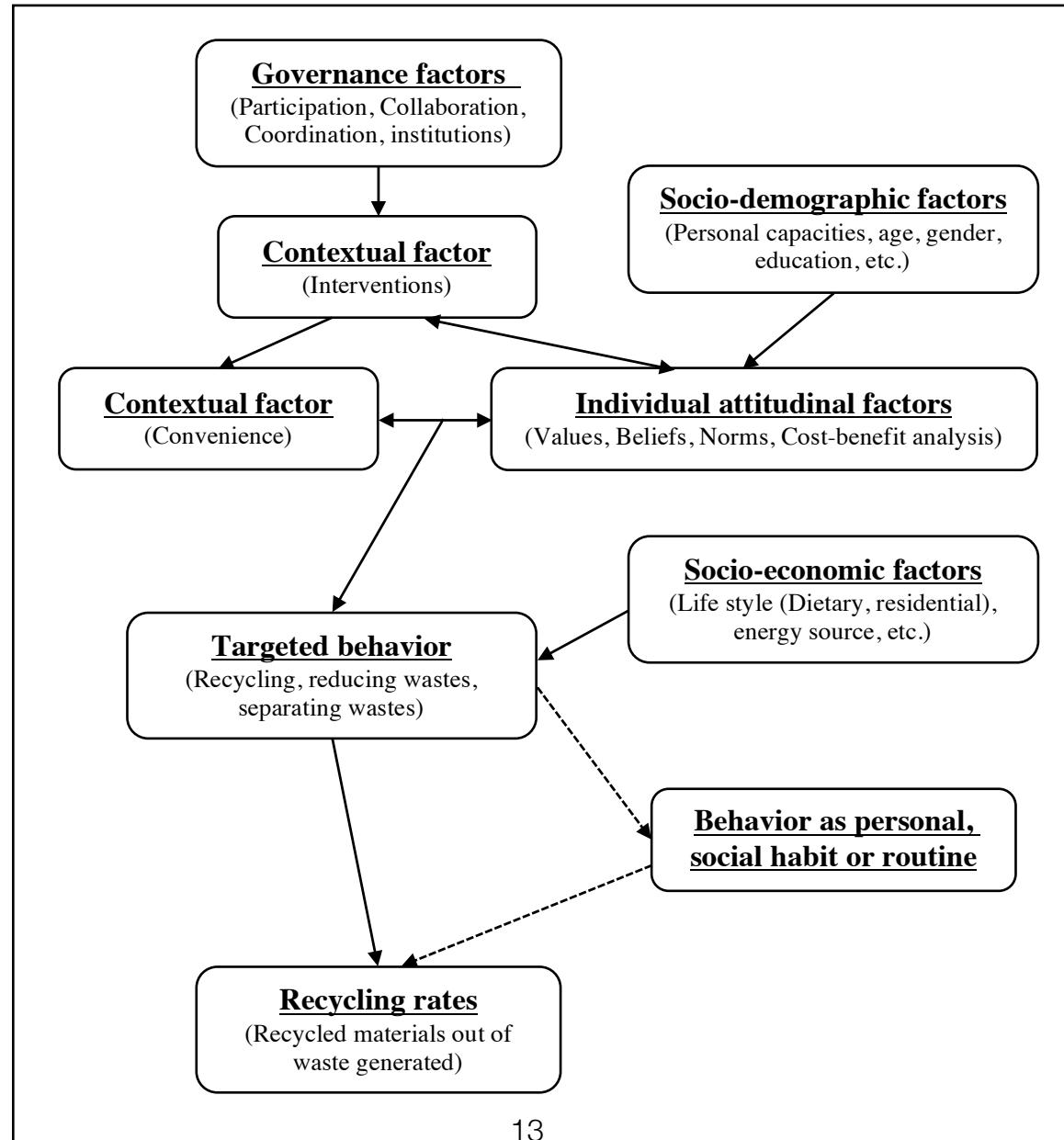
# Governance questions

- How could you identify the stakeholders in making recycling system work properly?
- How could you understand their interests (e.g., needs, concerns, hope, fear, desire,..) correctly?
- How could you make them contribute to making the system work?
- How to connect them in the system?
- How to make them collaborate effectively and creatively?

# Non-governmental stakeholders in a recycling system

- Citizens in and outside households
- Collecting and delivering workers (or companies)
- Manufacturers (product designs, wrapping,...)
- Recycling industries
- Civil societies
- ...

# My framework of governance-behavioral change (Recycling) in Korea



# Data and qualitative analysis

- All news articles from 1977-2018 related to recycling, separation wastes, ... in Korea
- Information on who did what with which ideas and when

# Temporary conclusions

- Korean stories in a nutshell
  - **government** (central ministries and local governments) **muddled through for thirty years since 1978 ~**
    - **trial and errors** pattern: pilot tests in a few locales —> evaluation —> expansion in larger scales
    - Without appropriate understanding of complicated, interdependent waste system in the first phase
    - without comprehensive coordination among important actors from the beginning
  - Expansion of roles and power of responsible ministry and departments (i.e. manpower, budgets, and influence in decision making inside the government)

# Example: volume-based garbage disposal system (since 1995)

- Made more citizens separate wastes in a relatively short period time horizon
- But, collected recyclable wastes were not recycled but stacked in repository
- Only a few dwindling recycling industries and lack of values of recyclable wastes in market



# Conclusions (cont.)

- Slowly connecting dots (actors) in waste system in larger scales (in terms of location) and more scopes (of materials)
  - **Non-government actors** (i.e., Korean housewives federation, environmental NGOs, scientists, businessmen) who initiated proactively and voluntarily
  - and are finally connected and consulted by the governments gradually

# Take-home lesson from Korean stories

- Connect dots in earlier phase and establish collaborative governance among stakeholders (doers and implementers, such as civil societies, environmental NGOs, industries, worker unions, other ministries,...) in a waste system
- Start small with more dots connected in a system and learn and expand...

**Thank you**