The Invisibility of Waste:

Unessay

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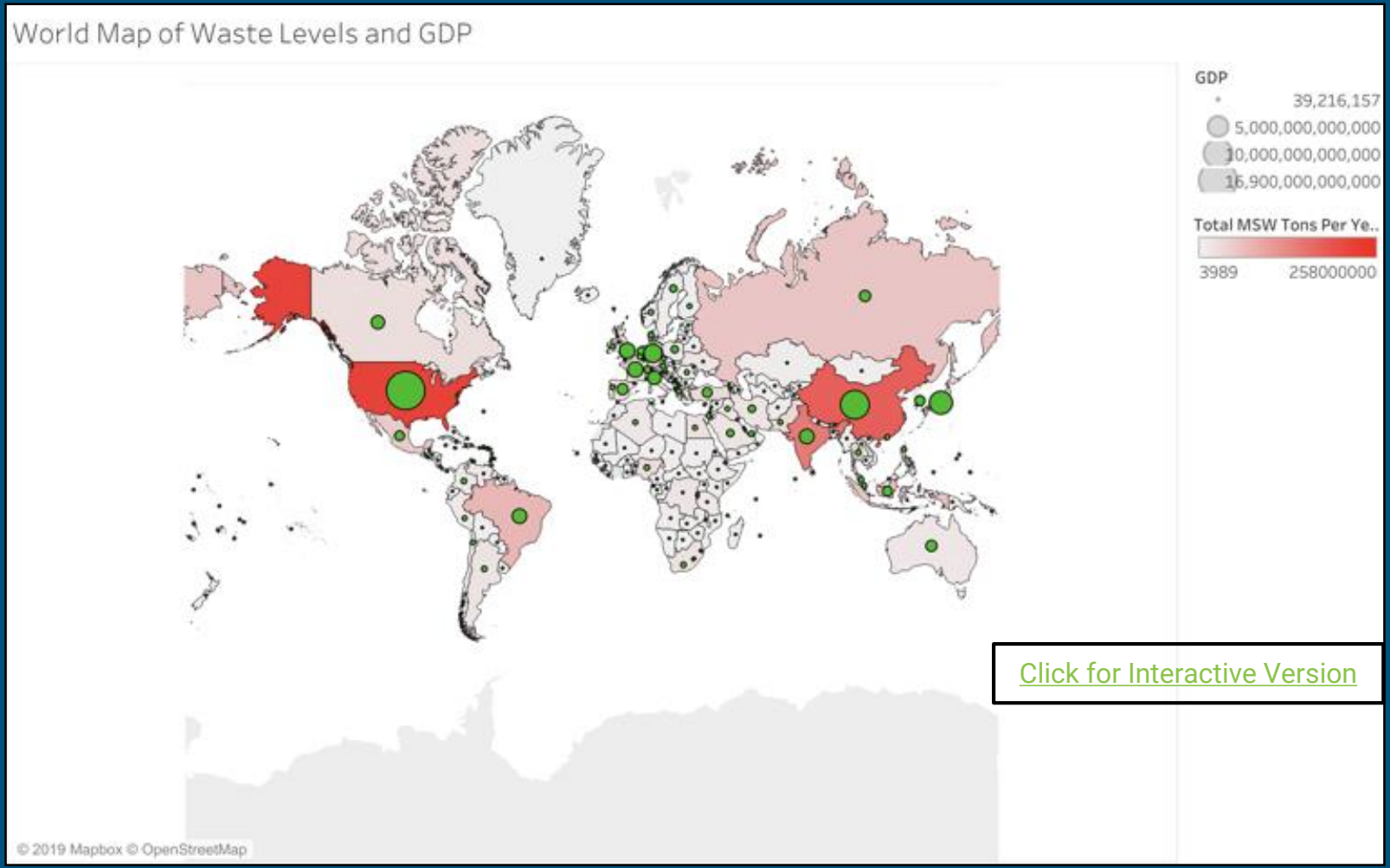
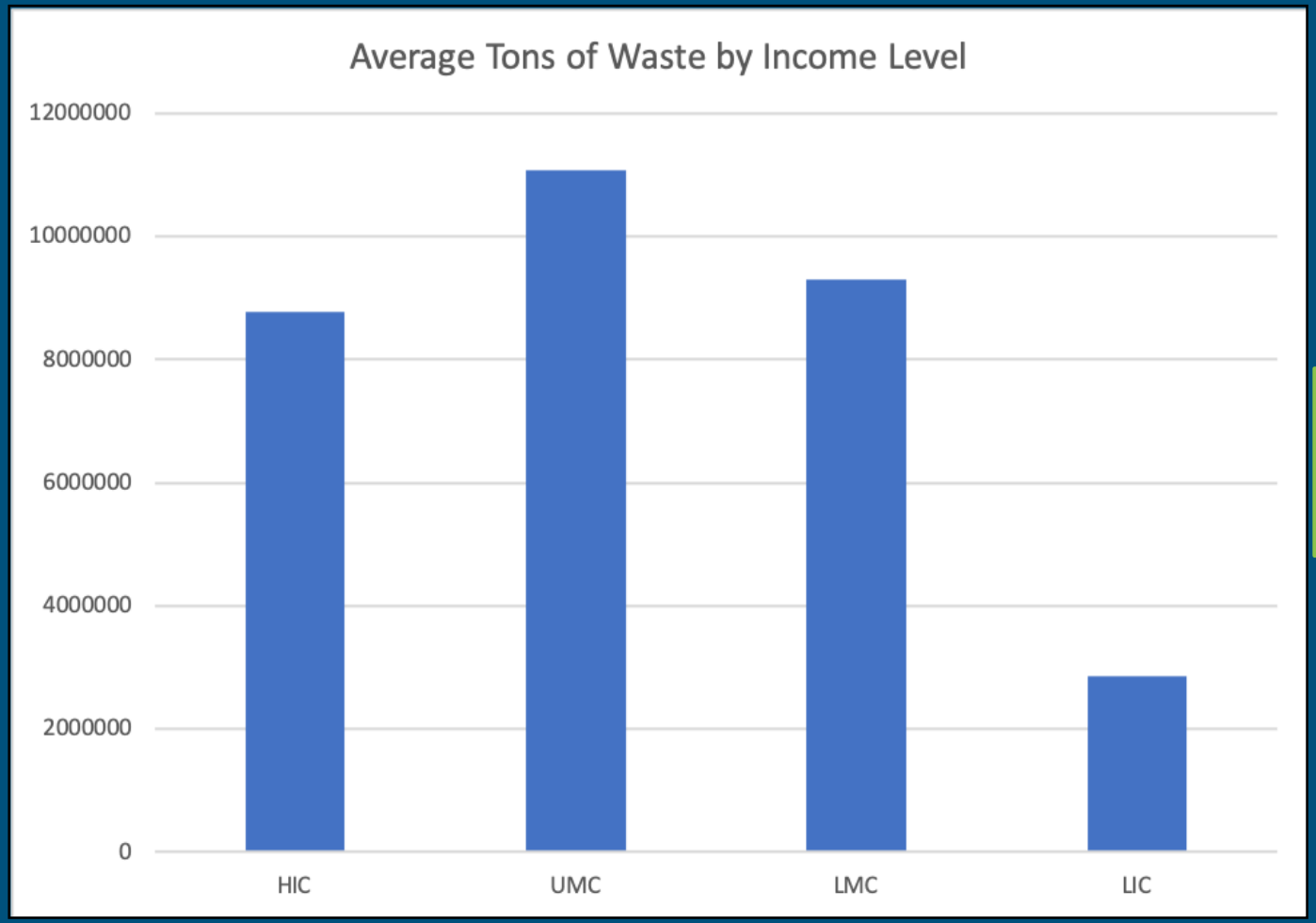
Introduction

What happens to your waste when you throw it in a trash can/recycle bin? This series of counter-maps and visualizations are an effort to make visible the mechanisms behind the world's (and Hamilton's) waste production and management to the best of our ability based on the available data. These visual aids help us see what happens to our collective trash- as members of the Hamilton Community as well as individuals residing in the United States and the larger global collective.

Worldwide Waste

World Map of Waste Levels and GDP





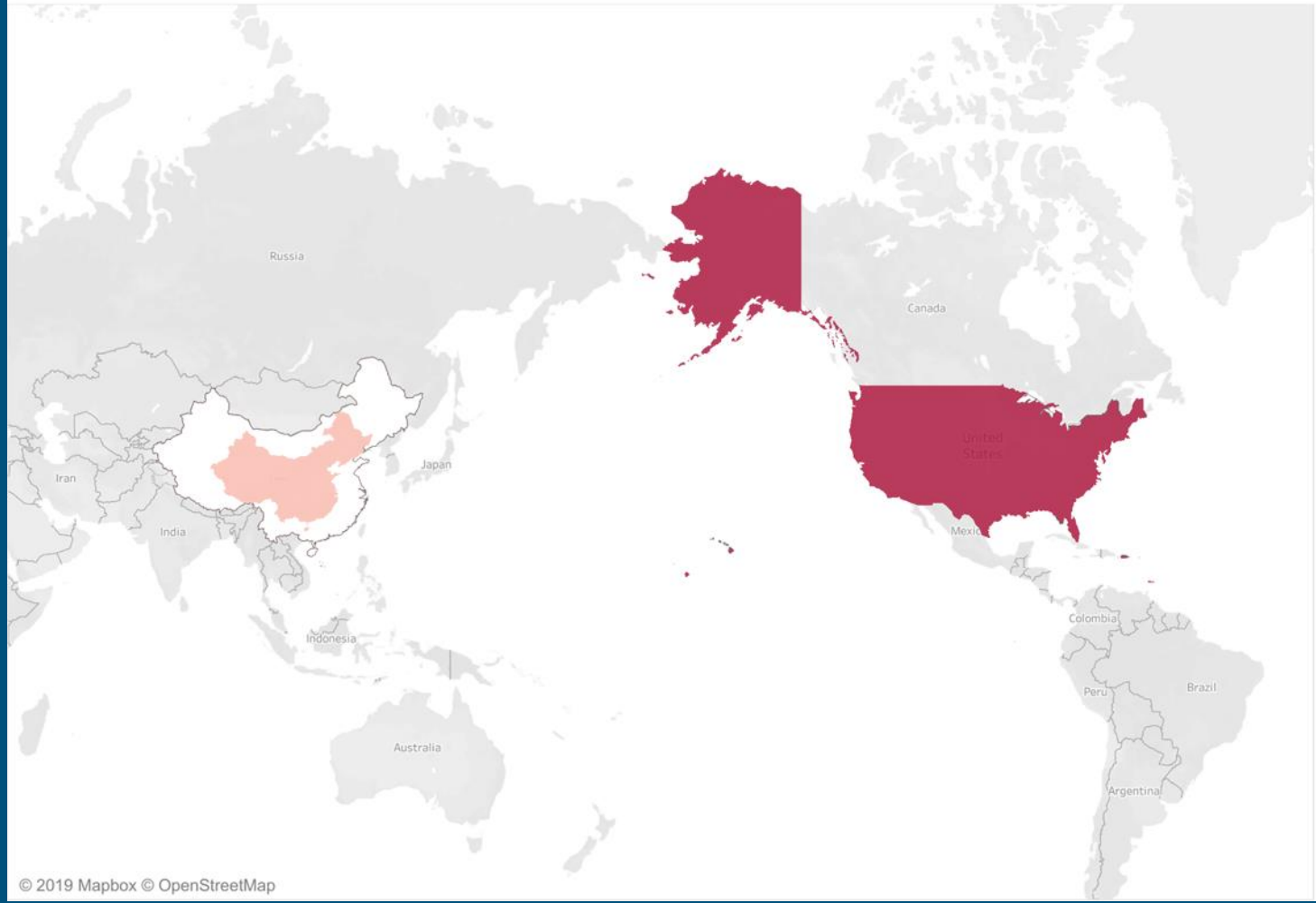
HIC: High Income
UMC: Upper Middle Income
LMC: Low Middle Income
LIC: Low Income

Worldwide Waste

These visualizations shows the average yearly tons of waste generated by countries of different income levels. The countries in a darker red supply a higher amount of the world's waste and the countries with larger green circles have higher levels of income. As you can see in the barchart, the countries with higher levels of income produce more waste but they also tend to not be the ones managing it and dealing with its consequences. The US and China are among the countries with the highest income levels, and highest amounts of waste. This illustrates how global production perpetuates inequality through the distribution of waste.

The United States and China

US-China


Waste Per Capita Per D..
0.430
2.243
Russia
Canada
United States
Mexico
Japan
Iran
India
Indonesia
Australia
Colombia
Peru
Brazil
Argentina
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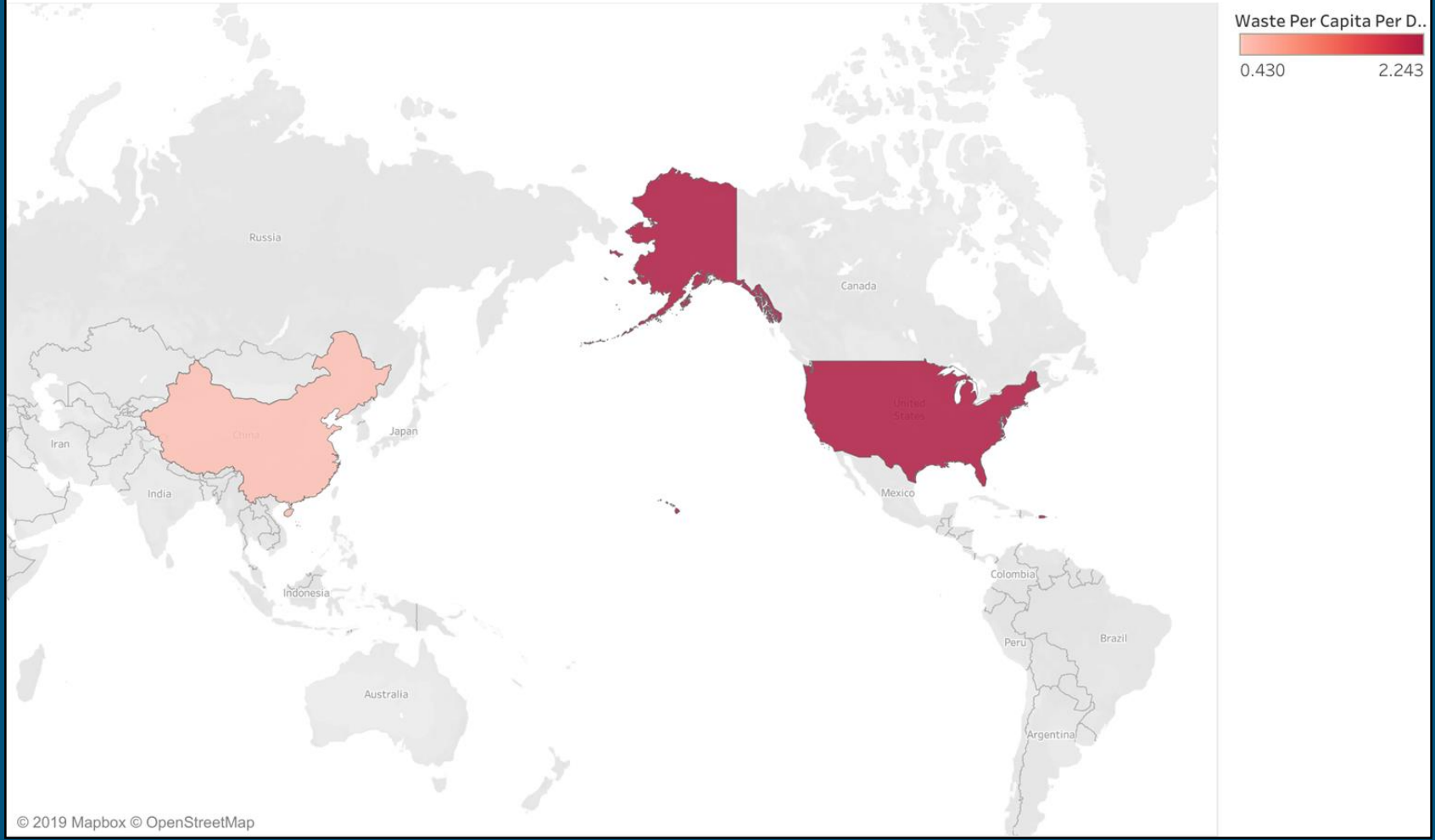
US-China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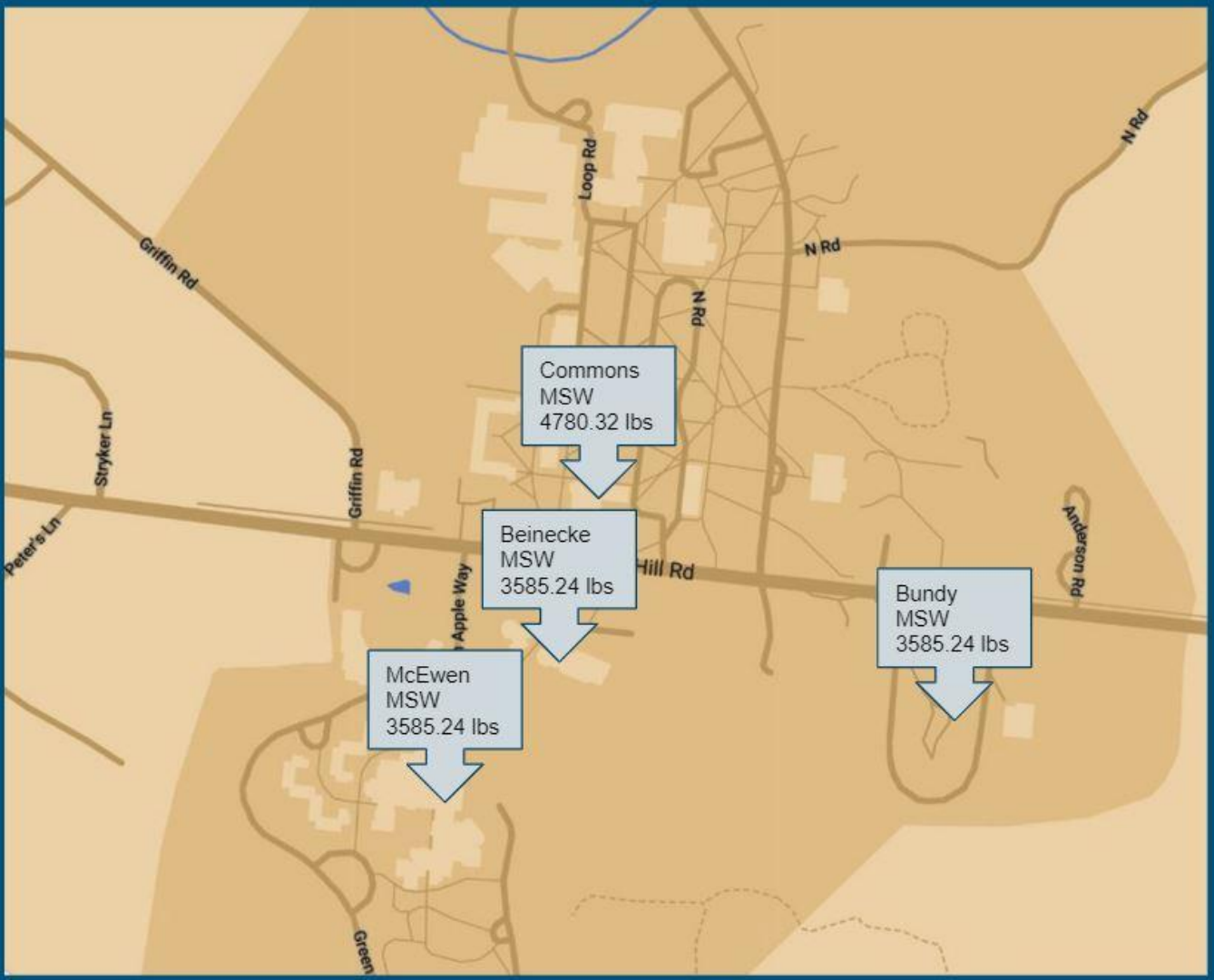
The United States and China

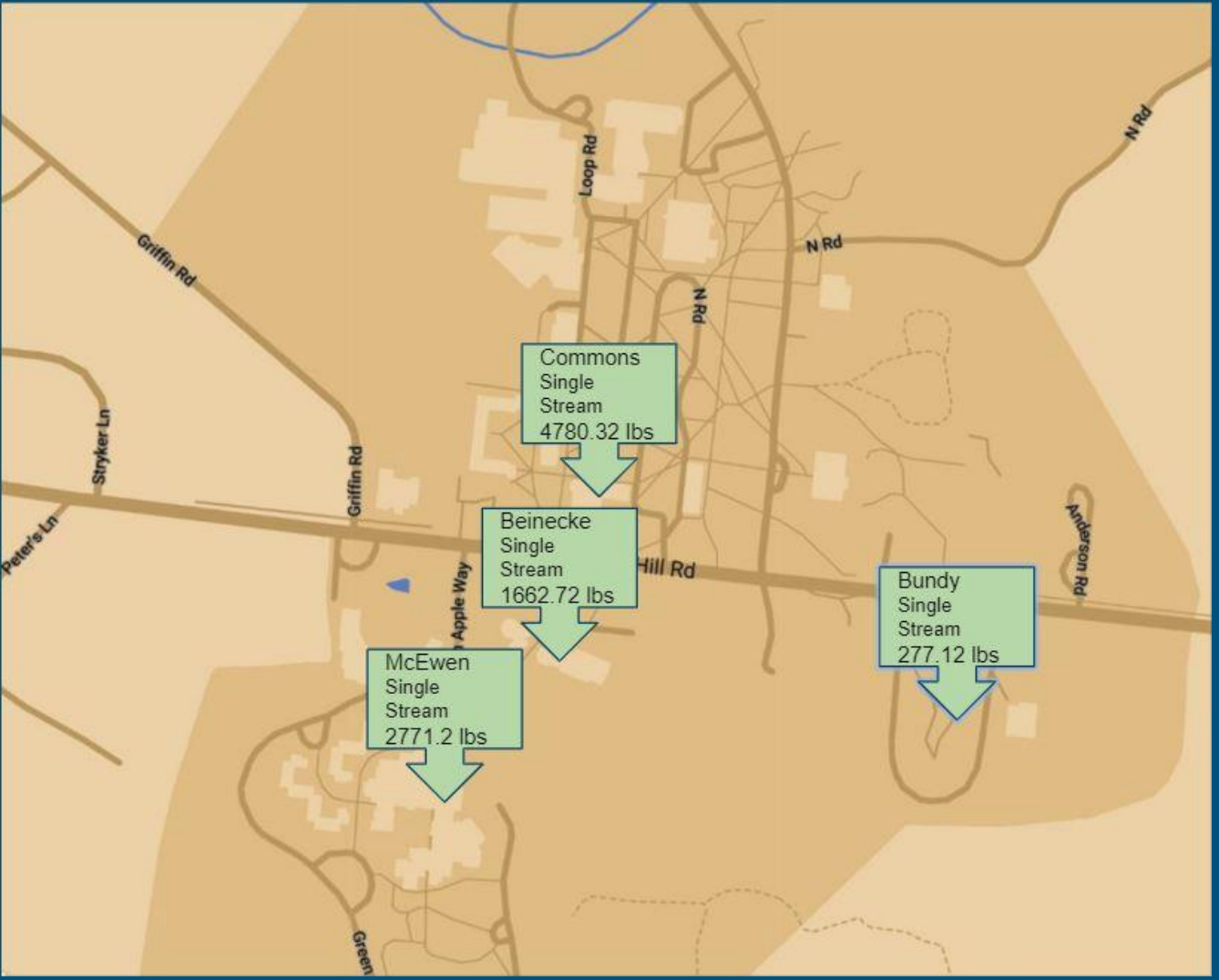
This visualization compares how much waste was produced by a person in a day in China and the United States, measured in kilograms (2016). Although both countries are among the world's largest economies, the United States produces disproportionately more waste than China. Our counter-map adjusts the size of the countries based on their citizen's average daily waste output.

According to a news article by NPR, till 2017, China received 1/6th of the recyclables from the United States as export, helping it manage its trash. "In the new millenium the project of transnational capital seeks to transform China into a world factory" (Ngai 2005: 78). A part of job of this 'world factory', in the context of waste management, is to gain capital from recycling others' trash.

Hamilton College Campus Waste Management



Hamilton's waste that gets Taken up and sent to the Oneida Herkimer Municipal Solid Waste Authority (OHMSWA)



Hamilton's waste that gets put into single stream taken to OHMSWA

Hamilton College Campus Waste

- Hamilton's facilities management does not collect or organize the waste material on campus.
- Waste
  - The buildings/people that create waste self-segregate (own trash/recycle/landfill bins)
  - Custodians take waste stream to dumpsters (Bliss or Waste Management) deliver to OHMSWA
- Food waste
  - Dining halls self segregate
  - Before May 7th 2019 → Crane farm
  - Post May 8th 2019 → OHSWA anaerobic digestion
    - Anaerobic digestion:
- Other materials
  - Cram & Scram
  - Sell

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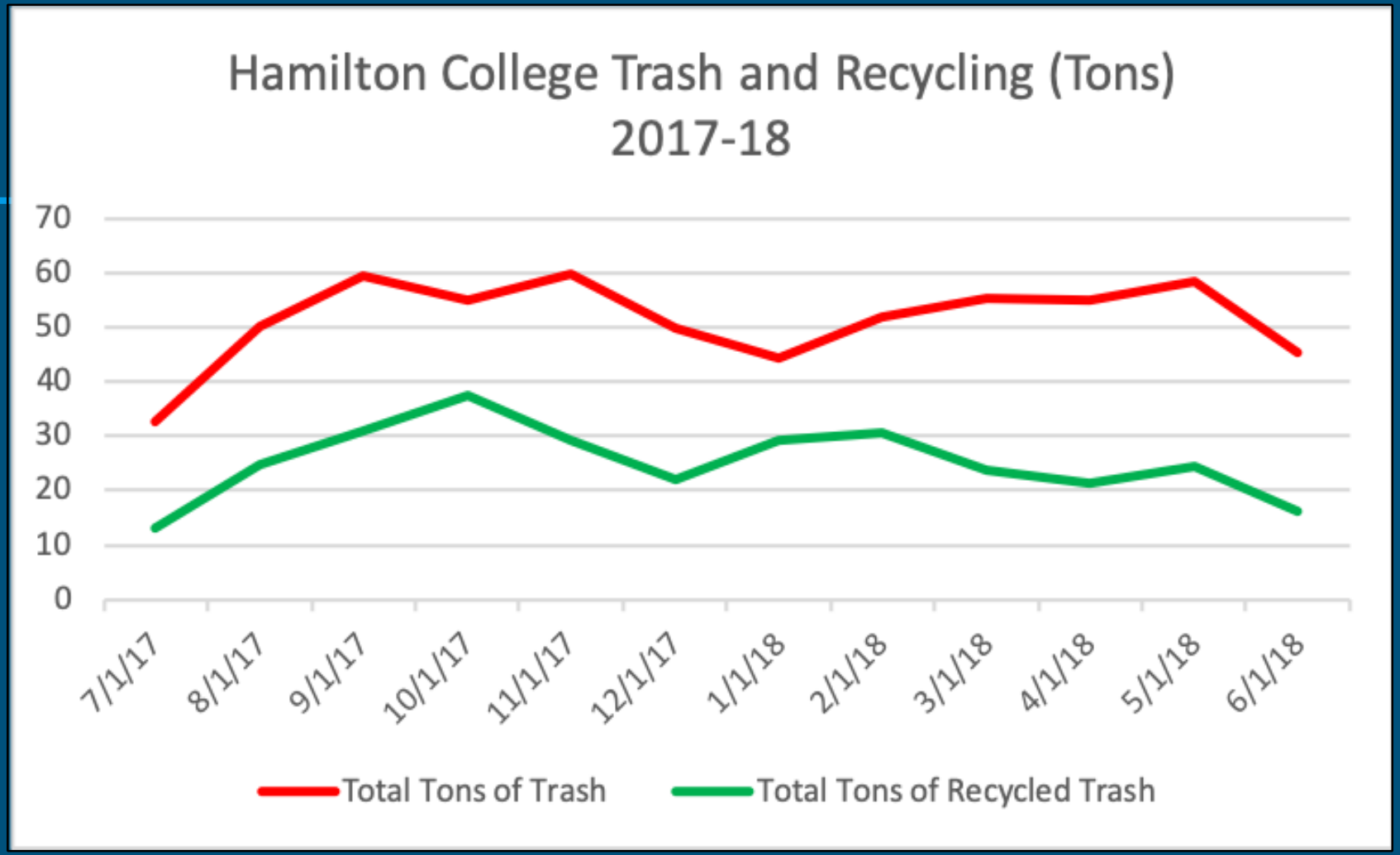
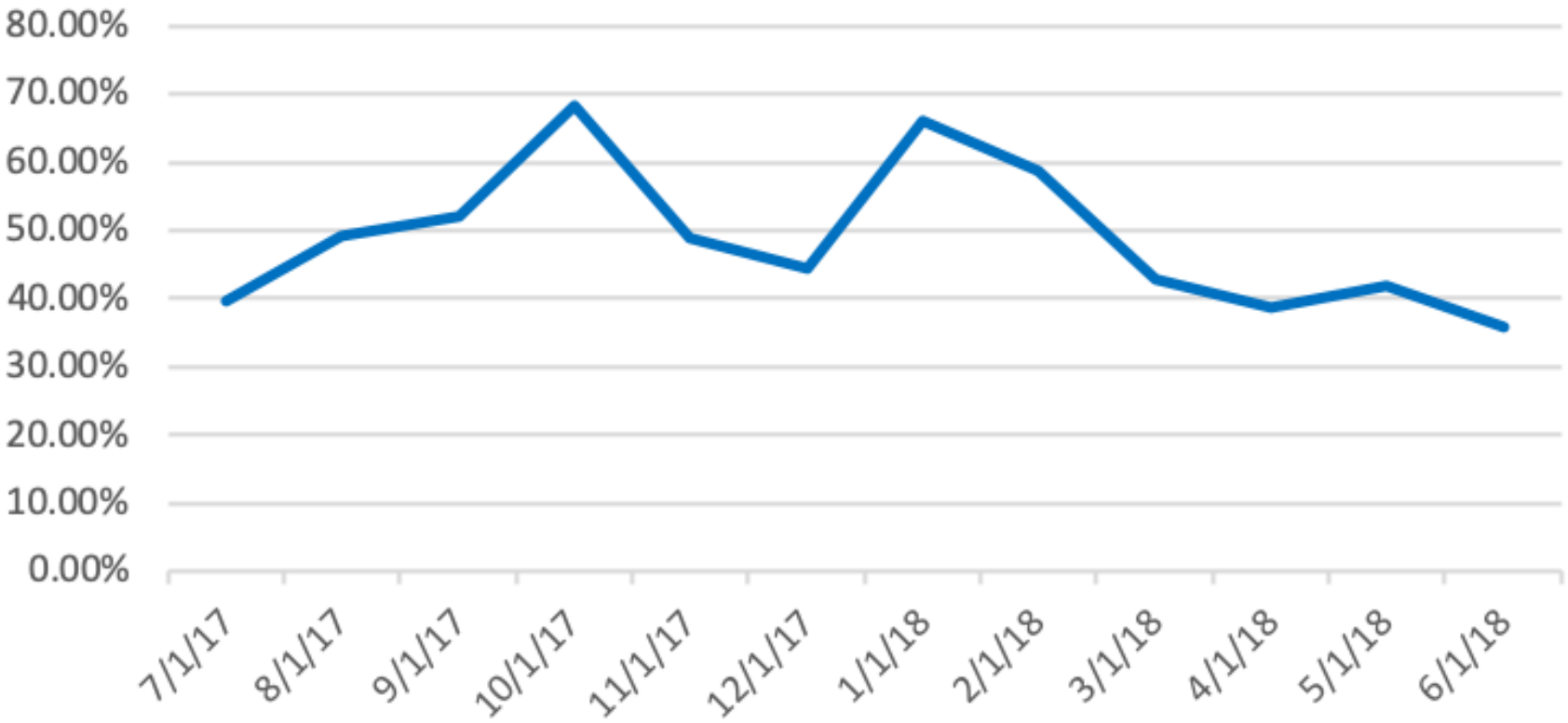
Hamilton College Yearly Waste and Recycling


Hamilton College Trash and Recycling (Tons)
2017-18
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
7/1/17
8/1/17
9/1/17
10/1/17
11/1/17
12/1/17
1/1/18
2/1/18
3/1/18
4/1/18
5/1/18
6/1/18
Total Tons of Trash
Total Tons of Recycled Trash

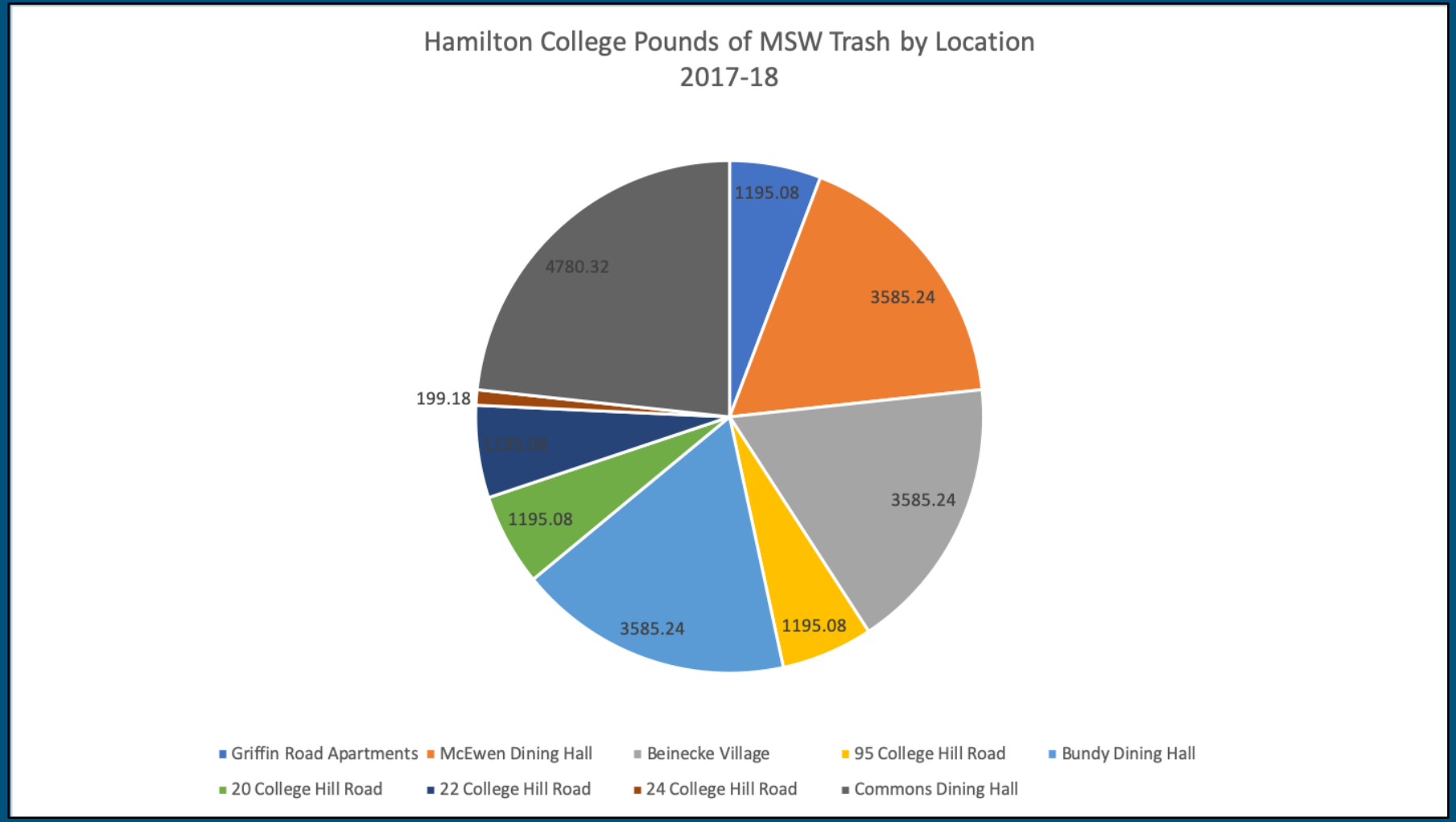
Hamilton College Recycling Rate
2017-18



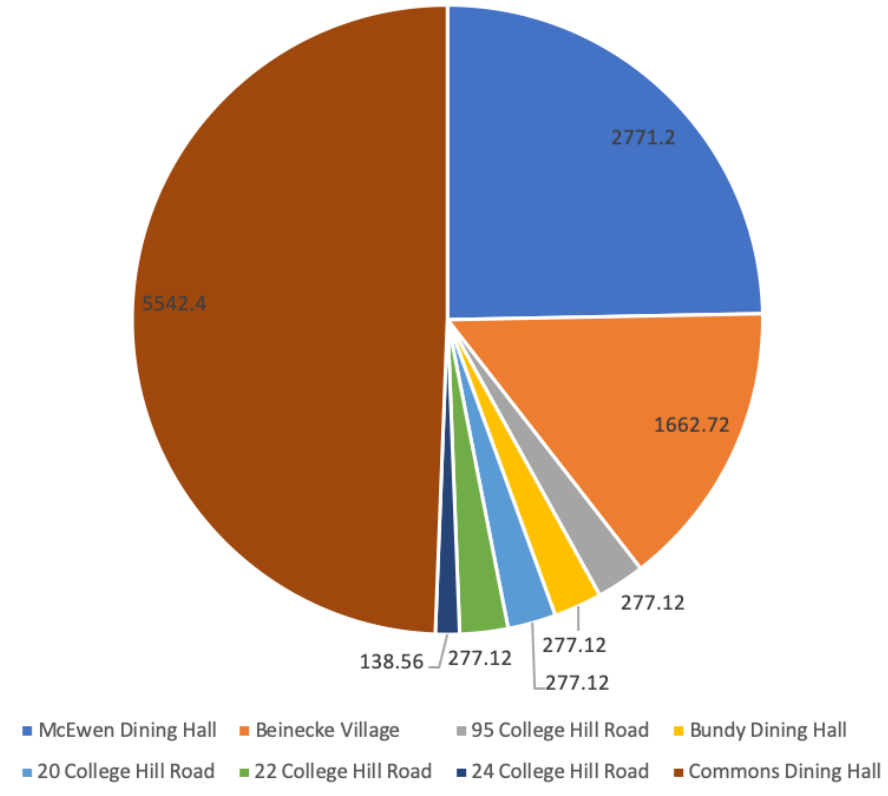
Hamilton College Yearly Waste and Recycling

The first line graph shows the monthly recycling rates in percentage from July 2017 to May 2018. The second line graph shows the monthly total tons of trash (red) and total tons of recycled trash (green) from July 2017 to June 2018. The recycling rate seem to change almost every month but on average around 50% of Hamilton's waste is recycled.

Hamilton College Waste and Recycling by Location


Hamilton College Pounds of MSW Trash by Location
2017-18
1195.08
3585.24
3585.24
1195.08
3585.24
1195.08
1195.08
199.18
4780.32
Griffin Road Apartments
McEwen Dining Hall
Beinecke Village
95 College Hill Road
Bundy Dining Hall
20 College Hill Road
22 College Hill Road
24 College Hill Road
Commons Dining Hall

Hamilton College Pounds of SSR Trash by Location 2017-18



Hamilton College Waste and Recycling by Location

These pie charts map the amount of Municipal Solid Waste and waste for Single Stream Recycling of different buildings at Hamilton (2017-2018). The Municipal Solid Waste goes to landfill whereas waste for Single Stream Recycling.

Conclusion

Our unessay project reveals the ways in which waste management is made invisible beneath the power structures of capitalism. There is an unequal relationship between who is consuming and who is managing the waste on both the individual level, as well as the country level in the cases of high-income countries versus low-income countries and the US and China. In addition, waste production and its improper disposal and management contributes to climate change and offers a channel into understanding prevalent global issues. Using counter-maps, makes the invisible, visible and highlights the true mechanisms and inequalities within both global, and local waste management.

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