

THE GEOGRAPHY OF IOWA'S
CRAFT BREWING INDUSTRY

An Abstract of
a Thesis

Presented to the
Department of Earth, Atmospheric,
and Geographic Information Science
Western Illinois University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

By
MEGAN L. LANDES

JULY 2018

ABSTRACT

Iowa's craft brewing industry was examined in terms of how the industry has expanded spatially, how the breweries are fostering neolocalism and providing a sense of place for their patrons, and if the size of the settlement they are in affects their use of local themes.

Cartographic analysis determined that the more densely populated places showed hierarchical diffusion patterns and less densely populated places showed contagious diffusion patterns. Temporal diffusion patterns became most evident in 2016. It was also determined that settlements with higher populations had more breweries than less densely populated places. However, locations with two or fewer breweries had populations ranging from approximately 500 to 98,000 residents so population is not a strong predictor in the number of breweries a settlement can support in Iowa.

Thematic analysis of brewery names, core brew names, and seasonal or limited release brews revealed the major themes used when Iowa's craft breweries are naming their breweries and beers were location, history, river/lake references, brewery branding, pop culture, and Iowa references.

Chi-square analysis was performed on the brewery names, core brews, and seasonal and limited release brews to establish if local themes were more likely to be used by breweries located in smaller settlements than those located in larger settlements. It was also used to determine which local themes were most used by the different settlement sizes.