

ABSTRACT

RESEARCH PAPER: Finding Community at the Bottom of a Pint Glass: An Assessment of Microbreweries' Impacts on Local Communities

STUDENT: Maxwell Dillivan

DEGREE: Master of Urban and Regional Planning

COLLEGE: Architecture and Planning

DATE: May, 2012

PAGES: 99

The primary aims of this study were to: 1.) determine the conditions which are optimal or detrimental for microbreweries to exist, and 2.) analyze and evaluate the specific beneficial impacts microbreweries have on communities and neighborhoods. Microbreweries and neighborhood taverns play a social, psychological, cultural, and economic role in our local communities which is largely under overlooked. This role is suggested to be in accordance with a movement toward an increasing appreciation for local called "neolocalism." Using a case study approach, demographic and economic characteristics were analyzed of several neighborhoods in major cities (Chicago, Portland, San Francisco, and Milwaukee) which revealed higher densities, greater percentage of 25 to 34 year olds (the "creative class" according to Richard Florida), and higher rates of education attainment were most pervasive in neighborhoods which supported microbreweries. Interviews of microbrewery owners and patrons revealed microbreweries foster a sense of community, have a higher level of responsibility to the community, and function as social and cultural anchors of the community.

However, microbreweries today face a series of zoning, land use, and licensing hurdles which this study argues are endemic to attitudes toward land use planning and alcohol consumption which are antiquated.