Dan Seed ([00:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/8JD3vyKuPftQWRbx8J3AB8kzVEKpcN6t6pkC4KPanYP1MLovn-ia9ZMn1MZGK8R9dtAPInaQY2KjrvT5MFMMpL88Xu0?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=0.3)):

Hello and welcome to Big Ideas, a podcast from Texas State University. I'm your host, Dan Seed from the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. This month we're joined by Dr. Colleen Miles, an associate professor in the Department of Geography. Dr. Miles is a rural geographer and political ecologist with a multitude of specialties including wine, beer, and cider geographies, which honestly is my kind of research. And that's our topic of our discussion for this month. Dr. Miles, thank you so much for being here.

Colleen Myles ([00:30](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/moyPC9QqdF-sHt13xAS-5TzbT1sWPsrlWGlM6WL3W4bU3nlTbQuYiviVhlbvXVKg3JEoRexWGmelChROzjZ6RdBZdR8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=30.84)):

Oh yes, happy to be here. Thanks for the invitation.

Dan Seed ([00:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Z3GZG7wq0tbfUX_trOvC6TX3knGSpnsOcH0Q2hlyyvHTIN1-HSx2oQubDdAYoxb2IJtHyh6YJEzDWgHgU_MhJIOJ0f8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=33.99)):

Before we get into the topic at hand, why geography? What drew you to this field and why do you find it so interesting?

Colleen Myles ([00:40](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/_aiZxAB-xYip7wO0EsIoLxixnKOCHfi6pQVESe8iHPz3KkFEHI0l-cTyBlrxo7vbGIp__0v1ew5FPm6aBF4BF_OwJlg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=40.86)):

Why geography? That's the biggest question you can ask. I think if you know anything about geography, which maybe you don't, which is why you're asking, we like to call it a big tent. It's a field that can encompass physical, environmental issues, social issues, climate issues, culture, religion. It can encompass many different things. And so before I became a geographer, I had my first degree in geography is my PhD, so I came to it sort of late in my training, the research that I was doing as a master's student in a community development program. One of my advisors said to me, you're doing geography. And I was like, am I okay? Let me learn some more about that. And so I did and figured out she was right. So then I sort of steered myself in that direction and ended up getting moving into a PhD program in geography from that master's program.

Dan Seed ([01:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/hSX1lZuyjRgcQvgn_hVkvJ9UqWq-GaBVvZR7J8y00FDYunP_RYjyt3qzvPpR7aFDjP2utXtkgt8N1JC7hawQjmd68Rw?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=95.76)):

As you said, most of us are familiar with some form of geography. We've taken it in school at some point, what's located where, who's neighbors with who, et cetera. But the stuff that you do goes beyond the where and explores the how and why of geography as you touched on how it influences culture or how culture influences it as well. Correct?

Colleen Myles ([01:58](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/E8dbIeZR6Ghl8rFXh7Td8YTE1YsnYnQTg5_AdY5m69jfSjcm_-FYD69FmWFxxlvBTWH58424loaXOpvMgI28Tt4dnIk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=118.44)):

Yeah, exactly. I'm a human geographer or a cultural geographer, and so I very much deal with the people in place version of geography versus the more kind of environmental side I do. You mentioned I'm a politically ecologist, which is basically looking how people and environment and power are all sort of interrelated with each other and pulling levers across those domains. So definitely I am in the human end of that and the why and the how for sure. But that's true of environmental geography as well.

Dan Seed ([02:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/OXcrikzWGBv4TdiXTA7tk1EqGKO1xannQ2a5qIqTpqfus92zHm81_BTZZMgHbEWiUE0AvFSASJafvhLxN2PeMmXFOpk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=149.55)):

And one of the areas that you specialize in, as I mentioned, is wine, beer, and cider geographies, which are known as fermented landscapes. Explain this idea of fermented landscapes. What does that mean?

Colleen Myles ([02:40](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/anp4qbxlseaRTkne6O10KMUvkzgMko0xusW6Zh-VkXmo694Mto0EEBY1wYSF3lrUMv3xkBaqvMGENasxPvtTKMKZq5U?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=160.26)):

Yeah, so I had a book come out in 2020 and edited volume that I put together. I also either wrote or co-authored about five of the chapters in the book. So I also wrote the book in some sense, but served as the editor for that book. So my dissertation research that I did in a geography program, as I pointed out, was near Nevada Foothills of California, which is on the eastern edge of the state there. And I did a comparative case study of three different land use models that were going on there. So three specific instances of land use going on. And one of them was a ranch that had stayed a ranch from kind of the gold rush onward, and one was a ranch that had become a vineyard and a winery, and one was a ranch that had become a golf course. And I used those three different cases to construct an idea of rural identity and politics and how people's perceptions of the rural landscape influenced their land use decisions.

([03:36](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/j1J1ECk0A9EJIaWVI5cmrRsJjBZ3zTV5ePjGHp0_Rlkb_P18Jk6m6ClMpkfhLGawalXntFFPqVufI1XL8rDKjpQro3U?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=216.43)):

And so during that period of time when I was doing that research, I was looking at wine as a sort of peripheral element of this study of rural landscapes. And so when I came to Texas State as a new assistant professor and you have to spool up a bit quickly to get some new research going, I thought there was this really interesting nugget there in that case about the winery because it was seen as a positive land use change, whereas the golf course was seen as a negative land use change. And I just thought that was a really interesting social or cultural dynamic going on there, that it was seen as a benefit to the community versus the golf course, which people took a little bit more critically. And so I thought, well, that could be kind of interesting. Let dig into that a little bit as my next project as I get going at Texas State.

([04:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/YxAKBQt2xUhvmUYd7RM2ugUuvTmzlk-B4wsz_E-rk5GEQac1Ol2u0TO94h_JkTTJtG2HRRVKRQo9iQJnDdIN6eDn_0s?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=265.78)):

And I put together through that on this thinking around how fermentation is a driver of landscape change, sort of a conceptual model around how metaphorical concepts of fermentation that kind of agitation and change that's going on can be a valuable way for thinking about landscape change. But then also literal processes of fermentation such as what happens with wine or beer or spirits. And so it started with wine a bit, but pretty quickly branched out into different kinds of ferments. And so that's what the book does. If you're curious, you can go check it out. I think it's a pretty interesting, accessible academic. As academic books go, I think it's pretty interesting and accessible because it's about a variety of topics, fermented things and how they relate to their environment and how people are relating to those environments and how fermentation is a part of that fun mix of things going on as landscapes are becoming and staying the same and changing and all those sorts of things. So in the book, there's examples using wine, beer, chocolate, cheese, all kinds of things are fermented

Dan Seed ([05:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/hVldFFPGF9n0kVFJXipjujKlBiXY27UrJ9AnaLLo6FJbfCKRkOKk9IgqfZEPtjZRn74cD4lGlVP-Rng5HHwLmKmtP_Y?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=328.96)):

In the name of the book. For folks that might be interested, it sounds really fascinating, the different topics, people that would be interested in geography, sociology, cultures, but also food and drink.

Colleen Myles ([05:41](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Iyf-aNgfi_TBKOoWhHdzNY48x101s1rCPwX-xriE9WxVXxEDoXmQIHoPd6FN99jTKv7ftlVvb0y32qyUdwgTlRK5E8Y?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=341.26)):

Well, it's called fermented landscapes. The subtitle is, I think lively processes of So environmental change, something like that. The lively part refers to how it's a play around this kind of multi-species thinking. That's like my latest shtick is thinking about how humans are part of a web of multi-species actors. And if we think about fermentation as a process of action and development and catalytic change, then the lively is a nod to that.

Dan Seed ([06:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/c3b72JQaDjDf55hOdAR2AIGd7ay95NLEGLVKC2lO-G39eRlp0u6NQVR_fGOW07ljHdaYgUDIC6YeBukCYOZ4B7i3E4k?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=371.06)):

And this idea of fermented landscapes and fermenting and brewing and whatnot is something that I'm sure throughout history folks can look back in terms of civilization and see these things pop up in cores of civilizations or to help better understand the civilization, I would imagine.

Colleen Myles ([06:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/tQXpSsRSy9Q9v6u_wTBYUXKAeKXU8oIXaU0fCf2xBq3OsO3Zzh7oPQVVfZb45wF_7g7xRmBKgJr3CVVWUKUtgFT3OvE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=388.58)):

Yes, exactly. There's longstanding evidence that fermentation is one of the very first components of how humans, so humans were nomadic and then they settled. And in the neolithic era started rudimentary agriculture and developing more sedentary or settled lives. And fermentation was one of the very first ways that humans were able to improve the preservation of food, improve the health of food, the quality of food. It was an important part of human development. And also some would say also have created opportunities for creativity and spiritual development and things like that because of the literal changes that happen in people's brains when you consume fermented things, whether they're alcoholic or not really.

Dan Seed ([07:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/kuy0Ua_IVtFAiqxWV3yRLIpoaR_BS6jliH2QCG-zdB_q3fP09Z0acSitr7Berh3gcBlTdUNzNRvX03r0l_yqEzVKI3s?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=437.57)):

And you recently finished research on one of these fermented landscapes, craft breweries or craft brewing with a focus on advocacy in craft brewing, which is really interesting. How did this all come about?

Colleen Myles ([07:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/9xZVzOVxe9ckDtj1ut2a6An9vXDVhakzb2Gi7ZJ1nIlHNxt-L0be5OfXSqhaUGMplJSRMkOU1e6ZS6mrMuVDDssxrYg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=448.82)):

Well, so I have done some, if you look at my cv, you'll see I've done all kinds of different things, but during the pandemic, so this has actually started before the pandemic, but it sort of was one, the pandemic did a lot of things. Some of them were good and some of them were bad. But one of the things that did was make us think about how we can do the research we want to do in a more restricted kind of fashion. I'm a very field work oriented person. As a geographer, we're very much interested in going and seeing the places and meeting the people and being boots on the ground, muddy boots, sort of conception of field work. And so I had been thinking about advocacy and craft brewing, which I mean, if you've been to a craft brewery, you have almost certainly fallen into an art exhibit or a pet adoption event, or they have a beer that's named after some special cause or maybe they're donating profits that day to some kind of an organization.

([08:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/9odDWjhLYvT9yI1SdyQbB9B9Zd3xGrT26mPIdHhora-oHeYCqUFv0uSBzR9XWeD6AlPDR2tlyLaygmi6jNCNYWU0MHM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=508.7)):

It's a really common part of the experience of being a consumer of craft beer. And so I had been looking at that and thinking about it and was like, how could I look at that more comprehensively to see what kinds of issues are maybe of interest or who's engaging those kinds of things? And given the background of fermented landscapes where I'm thinking about fermentation industries as actors within our communities and within our, I wanted to be able to be a little bit more precise and explore what are the specific elements that are interesting to craft brewers, for example. And you could do that from a consumer side. You could study consumers and see what they're most interested in supporting or something like that. But it's much harder actually to get a kind of representative view of consumers because there's so many of us. And so we were trying to think about a methodology that we could provide a broad ranging, comprehensive look at craft breweries and what they're doing and how they're doing it.

([09:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/AoP6XVR_NmRE7BPlohhIP60zCCklGjtBeovMrxqM7jJJd7xXtItrhC8Sw13Ic-qdIvt5_N-bdFHRtBacxJyMst-L9sc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=568.05)):

And so I have a lab of students, we call ourselves a lab. I don't have a physical lab, but I have a social group of students that we worked on projects together and things like that. And I work really hard to make sure that I'm doing work that has opportunities for students and helping students are part of my research process. We all work together. We're collaborators. I treat them as partners in that work. And so in my lab of students at that time, we were talking about this, and so we came up with this idea that what if we looked at brewery websites because that is voluntary data that's freely available. There's tons of breweries in the US currently, there's 9,000 craft breweries by most recent count, which is an absurd number. If you look at the history of growth of craft breweries, the past decade or two or even three now has just been exponential kind of growth.

([10:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/fFrSvX8E69NzGUN_OpCjuY4jpdcHw6xGYGRR3JiIvihjruw1yJL3UjImeqXDEDVtomujeL8TI3SOTE44M98bJbEVGVw?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=617.88)):

So there's plenty of them. So if we could figure out a way to pull a sample, a representative sample of those breweries, then we could apply some analysis to that and actually hopefully be able to say something about craft brewing in general, even though it would be much more difficult to visit every single craft brewery and talk to every single brewer and see what they're interested in. So we decided to do this qualitatively informed quantitative analysis of brew brewery websites, which just means we did a quantitative pull sampling of the brewery websites. We got the whole list of all the breweries from the Brewers Association, which is the national organization for craft brewers in the us. And then we did a sampling process to get a representative sample of those. And then the team of us visited every single one of those websites looking at each of the different pages on the website and coding for different kinds of instances of advocacy. And so if you read the paper that was recently published in the Annals of the American Association of Geographers, you can read the whole methodology, but the short version is we looked at a lot of websites and we tried to methodically, comprehensively look at what they were doing and how they were doing it. And we created a typology for how craft brewers are engaging with their communities and with their environments.

Dan Seed ([11:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/SV7ripSqMXRcliCK_F-ps6gIURcuGaTin7B7EU2INcAz6L6dHkn9dYhrCkBLAAQ2CZzfYdHXAxjzeYHcVkc-tagQ8LM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=697.83)):

And again, we're joined by Dr. Colleen Miles from the Department of Geography. And it's interesting that you mentioned the growth of craft breweries. When you look at the numbers, craft breweries really represent only a small sip of the total beer industry where they account for about 13% of production volume, 27% of retail sales, but their reach is wide and deep. I mean, even in our area, you throw a stone in Austin or the Hill country and you're going to find a craft brewery somewhere

Colleen Myles ([12:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/MQyxFqEby0884bLZQGl6TsaQvmuK_qR7IL_rvGCLZsbcyDQP6ahhBnvDLDA6bgknhnkekMy28ax-e0nqCHOd7OZzoik?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=727.42)):

That's a hundred percent correct. The cultural influence of craft breweries is, I mean, pretty fair to say massive in the United States. Beer is a tradition in the United States, all kinds of beer, including those sort of lighter colored, less alcoholic kind of beers that are very well known like Budweiser or something like this. So those have a strong cultural influence as well. But I would say the part of identity making that kind of people in place, part geography that I was talking about, craft breweries are very much a part of people's practical lives and communities and identities for sure.

Dan Seed ([12:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/2sfwA4o73Y7gmbidf8xFIUSR9hobo1K-9NcjMWAnpkhM1H7VdkqMLlN5_lZ4CYxVlWJXXflPebRhFY5amI6QQD157ss?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=762.13)):

In the advocacy that you looked at in this study, you touched on some of the examples, the pet adoption nights, the fundraiser nights, the specific beer cans that have messaging on them. When you looked at that, what were some of the most common ways that these breweries advocated or were involved in advocacy?

Colleen Myles ([13:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/UhNgjX9cRwpYTJtqE0V2ZMZa_2IbBW4secavKEI-72gtA8vLPw-lEJCLc_BoR_69RcuyHeonpDhexgHouW4QnfRLUvU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=782.44)):

Yeah, it was mostly the most common thing is that breweries would have environmental, what you might call environmental imagery in their labels or just used in the website because there's this sort of notion of being a kind of outdoorsy, healthy kind of active person or whatever, which is just kind of part of how people construct their identities. And so craft breweries are very much aware of that. And are it's a chicken or egg, are breweries cultivating that or are they responding to it? I think it goes both ways. So that kind of environmental imagery and place name, it's very common that beers are named after places and have geographic components to them. That's research that I haven't done personally, but it's very well established if you look into it. So place-based and environmental imagery and names, and then also these community oriented issues and events that are going on because whether you want to be cynical about it or not, craft breweries, they are businesses. They are trying to make a profit. But I think also the ethos for craft brewing is that it's independent, it's innovative, it's connecting to people. It's about being a part of something, and that's both for consumers and for brewers. And so this localized connection to place is very prominent in the craft brewing industry.

Dan Seed ([14:31](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/o_Z1LvY7VxSq5a1XO5UJFo2qfQFULSJ_Q4GWiaYHwH7o1vJBXLJ1vHBHFqalSVhBhGh8EggAvr8l1nOf1Bd0ErlIz_w?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=871.72)):

And it's interesting that you use the word ethos. What popped in my head, we have two young kids, six and four. There are plenty of Saturdays or Friday nights or whatever where we take them to a brewery. And I remember as a kid, you go to Bush Gardens and there's the brewery, this big factory, real kind of cold and do the tour and all that. But these kind of places, they're set up for families, they're set up for the community. They have games and playgrounds and concerts and all that. So it is a distinct ethos that you see. So when you look at that and you look at the way that there's that ethos and that advocacy in terms of the larger picture, what does that tell you from a geographical sense, I suppose, about how these breweries fit into the texture of society and culture as a whole, maybe across the country?

Colleen Myles ([15:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/2ZiUcpjAeHfVyD5GIOm8Y5CoFrQW5Hb2HgqJxGgX0XG9lNg_NvMCXUpxzJkmDGIH2MOeForecwpp6AfJ4QDkI72Cz0s?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=927.53)):

Yeah, so I'll say two things about that. One just to respond to that kind of feeling like a brewery, your local brewery is an extension of your living room or something like this. It's like a community space. In geography, we call those third spaces. It's like they're not exactly public and they're not exactly private. This is a public, well, it's a private space because a company owns it and it's a public space because anyone theoretically can go to it. But it also creates this hybrid sort of space where it's like it's a place you want to go with your family. It's a place you want to meet up with friends and things like that. So that geographically speaking, we might call that a third space. Also related to the national kind of trends that you might say, it's something that people ask a lot. They're like, oh, if you're looking at a representative sample or you're, you're not looking at all the websites, but at least a sampling of the websites that's meant to be representative.

([16:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/08T9lKAR7zqXa8Mzz7-p-kDiB51ToznnHoxjX0wRVXOcCHCA1P8JpbGdjebRvz3HEDz6Ahgj8lBZuxjVTROmDk9EtYM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=978.23)):

What can you say around regional trends or things like this? And it is possible to say some things like certain areas of the country might have different preferences around how much beer they consume. If you looked at the kind of scanner data, that's the actual purchasing data of consumers, you can maybe be IPAs or more popular here or stouts or something might be more popular here. And there are also sort of seasonal things like in the summer people want lighter colored, less alcoholic beer that's more crushable or session kind of beer. And in the winter, maybe they're more interested in darker colored beer or something like this. So you can say stuff like that. But the predominant answer that you find when you try to look at regional patterns is that in the US if you look at population distribution, the places that have the most people have the most breweries, it's like there's sort of a natural just spatial trend that's like where there are more people, there are going to be more craft breweries. Because craft breweries by definition are small and don't have that much relatively speaking to those big mega corporations, global corporations that produce beer. Their distribution is small, their production is small, and so there's going to be more of them to meet that demand of people that want to drink it in places that have higher population. So I hope that makes sense.

Dan Seed ([17:41](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Cy5HuJdcSEFzY5Q_TF4ODUh9Llo_K5dCPzHsrQWTHgFmD5Kh0MZve82QbUslJrxyxZSZX5WErwWFoCF4LZGfkcijfNA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1061.12)):

It does, and it does make sense. As I mentioned Austin, as it's grown, it feels like there are new breweries popping up all the time in this area, in the hill country as well, not only breweries, but distilleries and wineries. And as population grows, more of those kind of come in. And it's interesting too, I mean just observing here, right? In Austin and central Texas, we have a very outdoor culture, a very let's go places and do kinds of things. So it kind of fits here with that, again, that ethos or that idea of we're going to go out and we're going to do something outdoors and we're going to support local. That's a big thing here as well, which I would imagine would be kind of a thing that you would see in these places as well, that idea of how people view their world around them.

Colleen Myles ([18:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/U18r19G2mhWUMFx8Nt1SFz-wz9ASjD9IQUoaHlt6ZXqQxECyN8tq8mf59rmJnCbGEareC9PZmhJgcfXul9Z81PcISw8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1108.02)):

Yeah, I think you're correct about this area for sure, all those things you just said. But also I will say it is a trend in general that people that are sort of foodies or food oriented kind of people want to eat and drink things that they perceive as local. And that's not just Texas, that's all over the place. But I will say one super interesting thing, one of the things that really got me curious about beer, actually, I was looking at wine before, was that with wine, the thing about wine is that historically speaking, the grapes are grown and the wine is produced and consumers come to get wine in one particular geographic area. Now there's exceptions to that Texas being among them, but that's kind of the foundational idea of how wine works as a fermented product. Beer is made with just basic, there's only a certain set of basic ingredients that makes beer, water, and grain and hops and yeast, okay, now you can get water everywhere if you're lucky until the apocalypse, we can get water where we're at.

([19:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/ct_-WSulbIHgCOY7rE8L9ATvVnhSrQhCsBHvBZUvJp6FjUT7IGz2lcUE72RHdyrZ__HGrI5BHh62Yi_Eh65jl29NBsk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1175.52)):

And in fact, water's very heavy. And so it doesn't make a lot of sense to move water around. So water is almost always going to be, or is always going to be a local ingredient in beer grain, maybe it depends. Maybe there's grain production and maybe there's somebody striving to have a malt malting operation that you can grow the grain and then malt it close to where the beer is produced. That's possible. It's not always true. Hops are grown in very specific areas. It's hard to grow hops in Texas. It's hard to grow hops in different places, but there's craft breweries everywhere. Lots of places have craft breweries, but not everywhere is growing hops. And then yeast is these days like a very specialized, lab oriented kind of activity. And there's certain labs around the country and around the world that provide the yeast for breweries everywhere else.

([20:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/BAqh_cSNAEoZmQuWOzNZU8zV_ydBu1teuDb3kfY0BbpxyX8LHPorU8JRihvKTEp_cawDl27jYX97Z_JNkIRwOjtJwtk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1227.93)):

And so to me, this is what I was saying, I got me really interested in beer was like, how is it that beer is local? If you think about the brewery that's down your street, you think of that as a local product, get down to the actual ingredients. You're like, could this be made truly locally? And oftentimes it can't. And so one of my first papers I ever wrote about beer, I called it a material transformation, that these ingredients that are coming from elsewhere come into the brewery and through the craft, that's why we call it craft beer. The crafts person turns it into something local by fermenting it and by changing it, there's this catalytic moment of change, which is the metaphorical side, and then there's this literal fermentation that shifts that product, that's these disparate things into something else. And that's a local product called craft beer.

Dan Seed ([21:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/y7zCd7aiNyfW_Un94QByndz0E6p9Rkd4BIEWbstAE-G8av0ldaTquXRS9ZH_YDT7uuqvMhVJ3EKf62zefTpr2A9EM68?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1277.77)):

Interesting. So you've mentioned, and we've talked about the big brewers and then the craft brewers, and it ties into advocacy. Recently we've seen this happen where craft brewers are able to do this kind of advocacy and people show up, but we saw with Anheuser-Busch, they tried to do it of course, referring to the Dylan Mulvaney story, where we've seen Anheuser-Busch sales drop significantly after that promotion. There's that fierce backlash with a multinational beer, Budweiser and Anheuser-Busch and their products. But craft brewers, it's like an accepted part of the culture. Why do you think that backlash, we don't see that when this is happening on a daily, weekly basis at these craft breweries, this advocacy happening?

Colleen Myles ([22:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/cHqAvdeaDJXKR-76tW83-Re3REAG37TkEOkJkUQZe663EUoaoszkPNdtFdG05BIO6bcgI-nVTvd2iV9OSB90TH0kAr8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1328.47)):

I have not thought about that specifically. That's an interesting question, but I will say off the top of my head response is craft breweries are built on a certain community base that you start a craft brewery in. Like you said in Austin, there's all sorts of breweries, but if they're smart about it, they're going to be strategically thinking about the consumer base in that area. They're going to be thinking, who are the people that I'm going to be able to sell beer to? Now, probably if they had a certain kind of political ideology or social ideology or whatever, they wouldn't be wanting to locate in a place that they were very much in contrast with, because that doesn't seem like the way that a craft brewer and an investor and or an investor in a craft brewer would be like, oh, let's put our kind of very different selves into this place.

([23:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/ZpMbHNSGMNM8ehh0aNCnebtY6xDTx-JZPsEf5qdHJ6jSMy95ixfxpPY0RD9Af1nI8n-_DnamPWN6FjJUdyvt9gSaQFA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1380.13)):

You're trying to create synergy and energy around the product you're producing. And so I would say that there's perhaps there's less backlash around these kind of political or social or environmental initiatives that breweries might be putting forward or supporting because they know that they're building on something that already exists in the community rather than picking something that's going to be not interesting or acceptable to their group. I mean, that's one interesting response that I've gotten from the paper. We have this paper that came out, advocacy, it's called Brewing Change, actually, advocacy and Craft Brewing. And then the conversation piece is an offshoot of that, is that people say, well, isn't that just greenwashing? Or How do you know that what you're seeing on the brewery websites is real or whatever? And it's like, that's a fair point. That's one valid critique that if you only look at the websites, but you don't actually call them up and say, so really what are you doing?

([24:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/MCYLzO_ubgv_64aa9SUFZt6BYkE_KsxyfDpYCQGJcfIii34H89blqG4nXWnhXjIp3b3svOLwpFLjcY7a_lOgxNVWYhI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1441.82)):

But my take on it is that if you want to think of craft brewers as embedded in their communities, which is something we've seen as true for a number of decades now, then the website is just the way that the brewer is trying to connect with the consumer. That's one way that the brewery is trying to connect with the consumer. And so why would they want to misrepresent themselves? And then those issues that they're putting out on their website, in fact, it's more likely there will be things not on the website that they are actually doing because they're busy and making beer and dealing with customers and all this kind of stuff. So it's even more possible that more things are happening than even what's shown on the websites. But to this point about the greenwashing or something like that, that I feel like you can see it as a two-way street. The consumers are asking for something and the brewers are responding. And then if you see breweries as sort of political actors or social actors, they can inspire people to do more or to give money or to adopt a pet or whatever those things we were just talking about by creating that synergy and that energy, that fermenting that change, they're brewing, that change in their own communities.

Dan Seed ([25:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/dSFFuVkUEECm2mnFDXbB8Ft-e28WmVMEexhhBypAIeSFm76W3bcw-QeBnN5BHE9ezftpU-W-yqjFPU-aPm3oPkAxkIk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1515.47)):

And to go with those comments or criticism, I suppose, that were brought up about looking at the websites and whatnot, you do touch on that in the conversation piece, which people can read if they want to@news.txstate.edu and look for the conversation in that you mentioned like any industry or part of an industry, there is room for improvement in the craft brewing industry. And your research shows that just 1% of the sample breweries that you looked at made direct donations of profits to causes. Instead, they relied on this consumer push either at the brewery or to buy products to benefit those causes. Why is that? Why is there such a little, or a small sample or a small piece of the pie, I guess, that they actually donate directly to these causes that maybe they support?

Colleen Myles ([26:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/9z6fCnHtzgzdFzyPeQWmyJf1Bqs-q4DRtkLJHLm19NlgQOuHSsUhEH8VBjpvGNuHIQW-ijob55CRyasm_fPrTiZ4ZiY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1566.86)):

Right, so that's a great question. Without talking to, so this was done as a kind of survey of existing, a volunteered data that breweries had put out. So without being able to directly ask brewers that, I can speculate though that it's related to the fact that craft breweries are, as I said, they're enterprises, they're businesses, they're trying to operate under relatively tight margins. We've had a lot of inflation going on. We mentioned the pandemic earlier, which had a huge impact on these kind of entities because of lockdown restrictions and things like that. This is true generally, but especially I think over the past five years or so, there's been economic pressures and public health issues that are going on. So there may be operating under pretty tight margins, and so how much they can give away is maybe limited, but I think it's maybe actually telling that even given that context, there are still breweries who are donating part of their profits even within that context.

Dan Seed ([27:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/pDOCic_zXO5TL4Ih_IokWg2Q62MDWmPz5DtuWPqmtjBofvv2muX3_M7IdsuzJWi_MmXxC1-7G1SXZ0TfnKKAFSmV7cA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1627.68)):

Of course, the challenge many breweries have kind of tying into that is the fact that so many of them, their products are only available on site. There are more and more here, especially where you're starting to see them pop up in convenience stores, liquor stores, h e b, but it's still a very small portion. So you're exactly right there with the margins, right? You've got to have people come out for a lot of these places in order to actually make the money, make the profit, and then have that additional money to be able to spend on these causes. Are there other areas where you look at the craft industry where you could say they could stand to step it up more than they have despite its generally activist culture?

Colleen Myles ([27:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Fgw2Ah4eS-ryfb6EMQowN1QehXzbMjMn48MP9ncIEhwDNT9RJfLnI9PzPMjRdtBWfX4j_HsGUmHvDZESeFMnUqY4vcc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1670.49)):

Yeah, so another paper, a book chapter, there's going to be the third volume of the Geography of Beer book coming out. So if you are interested in this kind of stuff, there's two whole books written about edited about the geography of beer, and then now a third one will be coming out later this year, and I have two chapters in that book coming out. And one of them is about women's issues in beer, basically. And so that's one area that has been in people's mind or people have been giving attention to it, but there's been some progress. But I think there's more room for improvement as you put it. And as I put it in the conversation piece is that the proportion of women that are in leadership roles and in brewing in head brewer roles and things like that is still pretty low considering that women are half of the population. So that's one area that I think is getting attention but could still use more kind of emphasis. And then like you said, those sort of other marginalized groups issues, L G B T Q I A people, people of color, that kind of stuff, that there are diversity initiatives and there are people that are definitely trying to make brewing more inclusive and more representative, but that's sort of like that process is slow, let's say.

Dan Seed ([29:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/8_oLMkJ9sxBzas871a391icWVPMfvk3LG8X7TwuVqOCvw-Nkkef8V7Ov2ykDtdqxL3ZmtkhogVT9Rz0ZRlMG2Mlellk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1749.12)):

And it's not unlike other industries. I mean, to be honest and frank, where progress is slow in those areas and initiatives have to come about and change is required and it takes time and hopefully that time speeds up when we're talking about those areas. So when you look at this advocacy that you're looking at in this study and big picture, the books and whatnot, tie it all together, how does all of this tie into a better understanding of society as a whole or maybe at least regionally across the country?

Colleen Myles ([29:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/bOMMl-41Vq_VERaWiGnoDalFtbMNqqYsG-MLP7gqVms80U4VC6a36CuhrtBkFbkIsimUg3LRrGDLqJpVNy-BI3gJh9U?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1785.73)):

I would say that given the growth that we've seen in the craft brewing industry over the past several decades, as a person who is studying fermented fermentation, let's say, studying society and fermentation generally, you can't ignore it. It's sort of like the elephants in the room. There are people investing money and time and their heart and soul into these industries, and they are making, like you said, at this point, it's still proportionally sort of small, but increasing over time impact in the economy and certainly in their communities. And so for me, I feel like you can't ignore these actors when they're clearly making an impact. And also people like it and people care about it. And so I would say as a scholar, I have no trouble getting people to engage with my research topics, right? Because wine and beer and community and people and how families that go places and friends that meet up, it's like if you ask somebody if they have a favorite craft brewery or if they have a favorite beer or whatever, they're going to have an answer for you.

([30:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/pHFCOvdgz4lfYdUkQw5tfeeRnL35I-Yq0AfXkgLo3JC-tkz84auXW-H46WJ_cmPVMA7Tin0pCiDm5wIL1Eu9gD-LlpM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1852.81)):

And so if you can tie your kind of scholarly work around, say, advocacy issues or around diversity inclusion or around environmental change or something like this to something that most people have a personal interest and personal experience in, you're going to engage that audience. And so I've just really felt grateful that the research, let's say, I don't know, the trajectory of my research over time has led me to ever closer engagement with the public as scholars, as a university, you might be doing esoteric whatever kind of work that you maybe think is super interesting, but then when you try to bring that to laypeople, let's say educated laypeople, they may be like, okay, but who caress? So, but if you're talking about something that they are consuming themselves and that they are investing their time and their money in, then they can really get excited about that. And so I've been really glad that I've been able to make that kind of synergy again, use that word synergy happen in my personal career.

Dan Seed ([31:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/s14XT97Zsf2grEttsATKLHhyEYWRkIOcbWPuwOGI5o7Sv4tugSadpgwF9jXXb-0jKVGcs-pQO2y0DH4FT7L-dvBtCGs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1912.6)):

What's next for you? Obviously the book has a new version, but what's down the line in terms of research and areas for you to look at?

Colleen Myles ([32:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/zVE-ouFi8Wm-rgFe4zWFUj11EWPAT-KgwlVsKBPMawPLdC7Ho8bY5DsVjpg0yH-F7kHaftW99XgeX6QIcxXdwQxxjZ0?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1921.09)):

Well, the Geography of Beer book is actually edited by somebody else. So plug for them. They have their great editors too, Nancy Holst Paulin and Mark Patterson. But for me personally, I am writing a book, another book that hopefully won't be edited. I think this will be a solo authored piece, and it's going to be titled something like Fermenting Sustainability, how Taste Makes Place, something like that. Some of those words mixed together. But I'm looking at how there's this well established concept of terroir, which people might be familiar with, that has to do with how place makes taste, the environmental factors and cultural factors and how, for example, in wine, but in other foods and products as well, how the place and environmental characteristics shapes the taste of those products. And so I'm taking that and turning it on its head and thinking about how taste makes place. So this coming off of that idea of fermented landscapes, how and craft brewing and how different kinds of fermentation agents, both at the microscopic level and at the human scale level are changing communities and changing places and changing environments. And so how taste is a driver of those changes in, I'm doing a case study of Texas and also comparing it to Italy actually. So thinking about how we can ferment sustainability, it's a work in progress, but that's where I'm headed.

Dan Seed ([33:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Vis9ZkqQq-MYhfdU_OcdlXAlPfmYoemH-5L1cm_IosZTc35BERdm1KXl1GROST7jbHJyNc16O59UOuzPiPWvlq0qV2s?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2001.8)):

Very interesting. This is certainly research that, as you said, the average person can understand and appreciate and it affects their day-to-day life and their culture surroundings and whatnot. And it's just very, very interesting. And hopefully it gives people a different look at what geographers do, that it's not just place, it's not just maps, it's understanding these deeper issues. So Dr. Colleen Miles, thank you so much for joining us.

Colleen Myles ([33:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/21BofPw4SxZehnU9io0PmH2oCLpHwWZzbo4L0YJw6efper5hcEAn_ggnjPKFMBIYfIr5bpRgAQm9agYyl83zvvtbdT4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2028.92)):

Thank you very much for having me,

Dan Seed ([33:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/XxQyRPEKthHHiD_w5nN6SUKnggCpEXYHXHSsstrOq9c-4epDKwc7lT3vdKq6Nhv2rGqFR7QRGHABCjeKGiJBB7fwLOE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2030.66)):

And thank you all for listening and downloading our episode. We'll be back next month, and until then, stay well and stay informed.