Fermented Craftsmanship in the Bottle

Practices of Entrepreneurship Linked to Passion, Work and Territory

By

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Introduction

In recent times, artisanal production has experienced a renewed interest (Bell & Vachhani, 2020; Naudin & Patel, 2020; Ocejo, 2017; Thurnell-Read, 2019; Ratten, 2022), transforming 'neo-craft' industries, small-scale artisanal producers such as artisanal coffee roasters, cider makers, craft brewers, potters, gin distillers, barbers, tattoo artists and whole animal butchers (Land, 2018; Scott, 2017), into an economic sector capable of taking its place and legitimacy in the contemporary economy, founded on the principle of authenticity as a cultural conception of value, distinction, meaning, recognition and status production (Bell et al., 2019; Land 2018; Ocejo, 2017; Beverland & Farrelly, 2010), positioning itself in open opposition to industrial and standardised production.

Craft breweries are part of this wave of small 'craft brewing enterprises' that initially emerged in the United States and have spread worldwide (Pozner et al., 2014; Carroll, 1985; Elzinga et al., 2018). These breweries promote products made by the hands of brewers, reinforcing a strong sense of identity with the place where their breweries are located. Brewers highlight the place of origin of their ingredients and the regions where their products are sold. These elements create and promote a sense of authenticity, i.e., the idea that a product has integrity, uniqueness and exclusivity as indicators of its quality. In this way, a product can be considered authentic because it is handmade, comes from a unique place and is produced by brewers who create material products with qualitative authenticity.

The craft beer market fits into the rise of independent markets and specific industries, such as coffee, artisanal cheese and organic products (Murray, O'Neill, 2012). It is argued that this differentiation is crucial for creating new businesses to enter existing markets as consumers gradually seek specific product types. In the case of craft beer, consumers are looking for local beers and unique labels. In addition to

being locally brewed, local beers offer unique flavours, ingredients and production processes that are unavailable through national distribution (Spracklen et al., 2013; Gatrell et al., 2018).

'Craft' brewing is associated with a defined profile, which is perceived through discourses that emphasise values such as quality, variety of styles offered, visual identity and market position, in contrast to large brewers. This movement implies rejecting the concept of 'industrial' and a preference for craft, creating an oppositional dynamic that demarcates the boundaries and specific relationships between the parties involved (Callon; Meadel; Rabeharisoa, 2002).

The rise of craft breweries has greatly expanded the range of products for consumers, providing them with a wide range of new beers, flavours, and tastes. As a result, the demand for craft beers has prompted industry organisations and local breweries to diversify their marketing strategies (Danson et al., 2015), fostering the rise of beer festivals in several countries (Cabras, 2017).

In Europe, the map of beer production has changed dramatically over the last thirty years. On the one hand, there has been the takeover and concentration of traditional industrial beer production (Cabras, Higgins, 2016; Hasman et al., 2021), while on the other hand, there has been a boom of microbreweries as a socio-cultural response of consumers and local producers to the global standardisation of production and taste (Schnell, Reese, 2003; Swinnen, 2017).

Beer is the world's most popular beverage, and the Old Continent has a long tradition of it, which has contributed to the development of an industry that in 2020 became a world leader in terms of both volumes produced and value generated. In 2021, 12,704 active breweries were registered in Europe (BoE - Brewers of Europe, 2022), including large multinational companies and small local microbreweries. The number of breweries is growing steadily, with an increase of 65% in 2015-2021. France has the most prominent breweries, followed by the United

Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Italy, which ranks sixth (Unionbirrai-ObiArt, 2022).

In 2022, the number of brewing companies in Italy reached 1,326, employing 9,612 direct workers. Compared to 2015, the sector grew by 104% in terms of factories and 22% in terms of employment. The sector's growth has been steady, especially in the number of factories, especially in the case of microbreweries, without interruption, even during the pandemic period.

Despite the absence of precise data on the craft characteristics of the breweries, it is possible to indirectly deduce this information by looking at the size of companies according to the number of employees. Through this analysis, the coexistence of two 'souls' in the Italian production system emerges, with a limited number of large breweries flanked by an increasingly significant number of small breweries, of which 51% of the national total are sole traders (Unionbirrai-ObiArt, 2023).

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in agricultural breweries, which have become an opportunity since 2010, when brewing and malting were included as viable activities in the primary sector. In 2015, there were just eighty breweries, but by 2022, this number had increased to 290, accounting for 22% of all breweries in the country and employing more than 1,000 people (Unionbirrai-ObiArt, 2023)

In 2020, the pandemic caused by the new coronavirus directly affected the brewing industry worldwide, creating uncertainty for both macro- and microbreweries. Beer sales have virtually ceased due to the closure of pubs, restaurants and breweries to contain the spread of the virus. This prompted brewers to reinvent how they market beer, changing the distribution process by expanding direct sales and home deliveries. In addition, changes were made to the type of packaging to prevent the spread of the virus and to address the scarcity of certain types of packaging (Pitts et al.; Witrick, K., 2021).

Due to restrictions, interventions, and problems in the tourism sector, breweries' activity was significantly reduced. COVID-19 significantly impacted the catering sector, as most states implemented regulations limiting personal contact and the spread of the virus. The sale of draught beer has been completely stopped due to the closure of bars, restaurants, and clubs (Pitts & Witrick, 2021).

According to the survey conducted by Rodríguez et al. (2022), beer appears to be the preferred drink during social occasions, such as in bars or restaurants in the company of friends, accompanied by small meals or snacks. Consequently, beer consumption significantly decreased during lockdown and closure periods at these venues. Furthermore, according to a study conducted by Laguna et al. (2020) in Spain, a decrease in alcohol and tobacco consumption was observed during lockdown. The authors suggest that people may have tried to adopt healthier lifestyles when health became even more critical during this closure period.

Several recent studies have analysed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on small and micro businesses. In the context of the craft beer market, research by Cabras et al. (2023) found that the closure of pubs, bars and restaurants meant the loss of an essential sales channel for craft breweries. Consequently, these breweries had to redefine their business models, shifting a significant part of sales to individual customers through websites and online platforms and seeking local communities' support. According to this study, craft breweries were most significantly affected by the COVID-19 epidemic due to the severe restrictions imposed on the retail and related sectors. The disruption of their usual networks and interactions with customers compromised the ability of many small breweries to react with innovative ideas and explore alternative solutions. In contrast, larger, more established brewers with traditionally strong supply chains and ownership portfolios were better equipped to respond resiliently.

In January 2022, when all restrictions were removed, some breweries expected an accelerated recovery of the economy. However, they have

not yet experienced the business relief they expected. Besides the reduction of tax incentives provided by the government, they started having to repay loans. In addition, rising inflation, declining investment and the conflict between Ukraine and Russia further aggravated the situation. These factors led to a significant increase in brewing costs due to rising energy and fuel prices and difficulties in the supply chain, mainly due to the shortage of barrels. All this has further reduced the profit margins of craft breweries (Cabras et al., 2023).

According to Gordon-Wilson (2021), the pub sector, which sells beer and other alcoholic beverages, has also been negatively affected by the continuous regulatory changes to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The author argues that the impact of the virus on craft beer production was brief but significant, causing wasted stock and financial losses. In addition, pub staff were subjected to wage deduction schemes. From the consumers' point of view, drinking in pubs is both a functional and symbolic act. The functional element can be replaced by home or online consumption. However, the symbolic aspect, which relates to the bar experience and its social and physical aspects, is difficult to replicate or replace.

The main challenges exacerbating the effects of the pandemic are changes in customer behaviour and increasing competitive pressure on the market. Consumers are replacing alcohol consumption in restaurants or pubs with online 'social drinking' or other activities that do not involve alcohol. Breweries and distilleries are struggling to stay in the market by adapting their strategies and marketing methods. Traditional distribution and communication channels are replacing more modern and innovative forms (Nissen et al., 2020; Brewer & Sebby, 2021; Enz & Škodová-Parmová, 2020).

Craftsmanship, according to Sennett, is "a special human condition of engagement" that "suggests ways of using tools, of organising bodily movements, of thinking about materials that remain alternative and viable proposals for conducting life skilfully" against a model of life and production based on the modern detachment of body and hand. This

definition resonates with Ingold's (2013) indication of craftsmanship as a comprehensive expression of all forms of knowledge underlying human making and, according to Marchand (2010), of craftsmanship as an expression of the embodied knowledge underlying the manipulation of materials. In this sense, the concept of craft also refers to artisanal professions, particularly those that require the manipulation of raw materials to prepare and create new products (Fontefrancesco, Costa, 2023).

According to Ocejo (2017), artisans present their products through interaction with customers and try to instil similar beliefs in them through a 'teaching service', in which the product's physical qualities are described along with its philosophical and social values. For this reason, many craft businesses, such as breweries, open their doors to curious customers who can witness the craft work on-site through formal tours, guided tastings or informal interactions.

Studies by Paxson (2012), Cope (2014), Thurnell-Read (2014) and Ocejo (2017) offer empirical evidence that craftspeople emphasise the benefits of their work as embodied, skilled and self-expressive. Furthermore, artisans highlight the importance of communicating craft objects. As Cope (2014) suggests, storytelling is one of the critical elements of each of their products, as artisans need to tell their own story and that of their sector in order to give value to products that for a long time were only available in cheap, low-quality, mass-produced versions.

The reasons for the success of the 'neo-craftsman' sectors seem to be much more related to consumer trends, even though they benefit from technological development in both the production of goods and their marketing. Production is still mostly rooted in manual labour and face-to-face sales. Handicrafts are still a labour-intensive industry, part of the 'industrial economy' growing globally in different forms and intensities (Arvidsson, 2019). Indeed, handicrafts seem to have adapted significantly to suit the taste of cosmopolitan and culturally omnivorous middle-class consumers (Johnston & Baumann, 2007; Smith Maguire, 2018).

In particular, this renaissance of artisanal consumption gives renewed social and academic relevance to a professional figure, that of the small and independent artisan, which industrialism and the Fordist system of economic organisation based on mass production and consumption seemed to have relegated to a state of obsolescence (Gerosa 2022). The 'neo-craft' industries have particularly attracted young adults to these new careers as professions that provide personal and lifestyle meaning, in which values such as autonomy, improvisation, creativity, competence, expressiveness, playfulness, local identity, a sense of pride in one's work, and emotional and embodied connections to place and practice are emphasised (Sennett, 2008; Carr & Gibson, 2016; Thurnell-Read, 2014; Ocejo, 2010).

The development and growth of microbreweries represent an opportunity for entrepreneurship in the craft sector. Through this dynamic, it is possible to study the incorporation of specialised knowledge, skills and expertise that occurs through labour practices. In addition, one can explore the pathways to becoming a beer artisan and analyse the relationship between entrepreneurship in the brewing sector, the local economy and the link to the local area. This sector offers a space for growth for entrepreneurs who wish to create and promote high-quality products while enhancing local resources and contributing to the economic vitality of territories.

The object of this study is to analyse craft work and the practices involved in incorporating the knowledge, skills, and specialist expertise of master brewers, exploring craft entrepreneurship as a profession.

It analyses the career of the master brewer as an entrepreneurial opportunity, investigating narratives regarding the authenticity and diversity of craft beers, job satisfaction and connection to the local area to understand the role of entrepreneurship in the industry and its impact on local communities.

The study is mainly based on ethnography, which allows us to understand broader issues by observing everyday events, practices,

and activities. In this research, we have integrated first-hand observations during festivals, pubs, and breweries, deepening them with in-depth interviews, documentation analysis, and financial and economic data. We also use digital ethnography to analyse narratives in posts on virtual information networks such as Facebook, Instagram and brewery websites.

Chapter I
Exploring contemporary craftsmanship: Learning, profession and entrepreneurship

The rediscovery of craftsmanship in the contemporary world: A review

In recent years, craftsmanship has not just received attention, and it has sparked a surge of interest in academic circles. This interest spans various dimensions- the materials used, manual labour, skills, and material culture- and is rooted in authenticity as a quality valued in contemporary culture. As Luckman (2015, p. 70.) aptly puts it, this surge is a 'revaluation of the craftsman ', a renewed appreciation for the relationship between thinking and making, and a celebration of the artist-author condition. It is a socio-cultural current that is gaining momentum, emphasizing values such as autonomy, improvisation, creativity, competence, expressiveness, playfulness, and a sense of pride in one's work (Sennett, 2008; Krugh, 2014; Carr & Gibson, 2016; Thurnell-Read, 2014; Ocejo, 2010), and significantly impacting the economy.

As we navigate the changing landscape of supermarket shelves, now adorned with diverse preserves, cheeses, olive oils, ciders, and craft beers, or as we immerse ourselves in the unique and exclusive offerings at a festival, we are not just passive observers. We are active participants in a social, economic, and cultural change redefining how we produce, sell, consume, and work. Our choices and actions shape this change, making us integral to the process.

In this context, manual labour is no longer undervalued, as in the last century, more and more people in different parts of the world are building their craft profession by articulating it with new lifestyles and, at the same time, developing a new working model and a new

economy. Many new artisans work in small, personal businesses: they are craftsmen who produce unique or limited products for a growing group of customers looking for unique, customised or niche products. These themes are explored in the most recent international academic production on craftsmanship, with which our research will dialogue. (See Adamson, 2019; Luckman & Andrew,2020; Marchand, 2016; McCracken, 2022; Ratten, 2022).

This new economy is not just a distant concept. It is a force that is reshaping our everyday lives, influencing how we think about family, workplace, and community. It is attracting a growing number of professionals, including you, who see in it the opportunity to build and create new careers, products, and markets. The experiences of these new professions-businesses, including yours, are not just shaping the economy, they are shaping our lives, making the territory more than just the place where we live, but also a hub of cooperation between small craft enterprises, fostering a culture of opposition to mass industry and bland, low-quality products.

In this context, the new professions articulate craft practices as a lifestyle integrated with an independent and cosmopolitan way of working that expresses their personal and social identity. The construction of this vocation is based on tangible, affective and corporeal dimensions of work that make it meaningful. The new craft professions are like a vocation that depends on a 'sense of art' based on technical skill, the ability to understand and communicate a 'specialised knowledge'.

Therefore, handicrafts combine production skills with the materiality of ingredients and local identity, skills, knowledge, and emotional and embodied ties to place and practice. Handicraft products have been associated with brand identification to ensure their 'authenticity', meaning they are exceptional and attract interest because of their economic and cultural significance (Ocejo, 2017; Smith Maguire et al., 2017).

Crafts are also part of the broader creative economy, as they share many common characteristics with other forms of creative work, including an emphasis on aesthetics, culture, and production characteristics (Banks, 2010; Warren & Gibson, 2013; McRobbie, 2016). Society is also growing to appreciate products made in small, unique, and singular batches instead of large-scale mass production.

Craftsmanship is primarily based on immaterial labour, or labour that produces images, ideas and emotions and is embedded in the material object (Bureau, Corsani, 1996; Dawkins, 2011). Priorities are set according to authenticity criteria, with a search for local or regional contextualisation. Other identifying characteristics are the artistic/aesthetic attitude, the emphasis on the individual personality of the producer, the historical and traditional connections of a product and the craft production method (Carroll, 2015; Johnston & Baumann, 2007).

In this context, the new professions articulate craft practices as a lifestyle embedded in an independent and cosmopolitan way of working that expresses their personal and social identity. The construction of this vocation is based on tangible, affective and embodied dimensions of work that make it meaningful. Ocejo (2017) argues that the new craft professions are like a vocation that depends on a 'sense of craft' based on technical skill, the ability to understand and communicate an 'experience'. Craftwork, therefore, combines production skills with the materiality of ingredients and local identity, skills, knowledge, and emotional and embodied connections with place and practice. Artisanal products have been associated with identity labels to ensure their 'authenticity', i.e. their exceptionality, and to arouse interest in their economic and cultural range (Thurnell-Read, 2014).

Craftwork is known to be deeply rooted in place and to respect local traditions, economies and resources (Miller, 2007). The workplaces of master brewers are fundamental spaces in people's lives, places of professional and personal learning and growth. The workplace is a vital environment integrated into the learning processes. It is a place where

innovation is increasingly prevalent, moving from the world of research into new ingredients and recipes to everyday life and work (Melacarne, 2020).

Most breweries use references to places and stories in the brewery name and on product labels. As Warren and Gibson write about the production of 'quality' plates on a small scale, customers who appreciate the "possibilities for customisation, the creativity of unique designs, the craftsmanship and the value of artisanal, 'handmade' work" (Warren & Gibson, 2013, p. 368). Handicraft work is currently at the forefront of taste and cultural change, as it involves not only the heads and hands of workers but also their subjectivity and personality (Bureau, Corsani, 1996). In this sense, it is a form of affective work that requires a high emotional investment (Gill and Pratt, 2008).

According to the analyses of Rossel et al. (2021, p. 97), in contemporary societies, legitimate culture can be identified by the prioritisation of authenticity criteria that include artisanal rather than industrial production, contextualisation in a local or regional context, and an anti-commercial attitude that distances itself from economic calculation. Other markings include a focus on the artistic and aesthetic aspect, a focus on the individual personality of the producer, the historical and traditional roots of the product, and an artisanal approach to production (Carroll, 2015; Johnston & Baumann, 2007).

According to Luckman and Andrew (2020), a central tenet of craft practice has been a deep respect for materials, an appreciation of them that includes reuse, and this sensibility continues to inform many craft practices today, as do the ideas of finish, quality and durable construction, which have a rich and long tradition in craft practice and are even more relevant in the age of 'fast fashion' and accelerated disposal. Handicraft production is also inscribed in an environmental consciousness articulated by the adoption of this form of income generation as part of a much broader approach to living all aspects of one's life in a way that reduces consumption and, thus, a personal environmental commitment. In this way, we can approach a circular

economy of craftsmanship through waste minimisation practices articulated with an ongoing relationship with the object and its materials, even after its current use is exhausted. The circular economy has challenged producers and consumers to think beyond materials through the entire life cycle of goods (Fletcher, 2014).

Likewise, the emphasis on the local within the craft market must be understood in a global context. In a context of increasing globalisation, there is a desire to reduce harmful production systems and to regain a sense of ownership and, thus, responsibility for the impact of production and consumption, as well as a sense of belonging to the place where craft products are made, just as discourses on sustainability are beginning to affect this sector as well. The impacts of climate change have influenced individual behaviour as much as the ethical behaviour of businesses. In this sense, the brewers' narratives reinforce that craft is "the great otherness of our culture" (Gibson, 2015, p. 35).

In most, if not all, sectors of the economy in the new millennium, markets have become increasingly globalised, disruptive and competitive. Technology has enabled advances not only in the means of production but also in the craft sector, as in other segments. It has led to changes in traditional distribution models, such as online shops, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this sense, craftsmanship is complex. Skills in professional practice have to be complemented by skills in other areas and require not only practice-based skills but also business knowledge, a set of entrepreneurial skills, such as the use of social media as a marketing tool, which requires the promotion of the identity of the producer itself (including the factory, the production process and the producer's skills) as part of the value to be sold (Luckman, 2015).

According to Lingham et al. (2022), craft brewing implies production in limited quantities, carried out by skilled artisans, where processing is not fully mechanised and follows a traditional method. The beer is brewed in a micro-brewery at a single location, and the characteristic

ingredients used are locally grown or produced if seasonally available and practical to obtain (Lingham et al., 2022).

In general, a dominant logic of passion is recognised in craftsmanship (Ring, 2020), as the entrepreneurial approach tends to "be secondary to the love of making and the passion for the craft, leading to an unease with notions of entrepreneurship and business sense" (Naudin & Patel, 2020, p. 2). Tensions, therefore, arise when the craftsman's passion for production, creative identity, motivation and sense of creative purpose collide with the demands of the entrepreneurial enterprise (Naudin & Patel, 2020).

Craftsmanship is based on technical competence, the ability to understand and communicate 'expertise'. It thus unites production skills with the materiality of ingredients and local identity, "a set of skills, knowledge and embodied and emotional connections of place and practice" (Thurnell-Read, 2014, p. 48).

In investigating craft work, learning, entrepreneurship and practices, we situate them in dynamic capitalist economies, characterised by incessant innovation and novelty, and in the imagination of future work (Becker, Bronk, 2019). They are distinguished by their creativity and openness to innovation, derived from the ability to improvise by following "the ways of the world as they unfold" (Ingold, 2010, p. 10). Therefore, we can say that crafts can contribute to forming and transforming alternative working methods. In this sense, craftsmanship has the potential to enable the 'breakthrough' that brings 'things into being' (Ingold, 2010, p. 10), which presents opportunities for innovation, inclusion and disruption.

It is also recognised that the craft economy requires mobilising both 'passionate labour' (McRobbie, 2016) and entrepreneurship (Luckman, 2015; Naudin & Patel, 2020). What remains limited is our understanding of these practice-based learning processes and how these experiences are adopted by craft masters in the development of their career paths and craft entrepreneurship.

According to Sgorla (2021), passion and work as a serious hobby, emerging practices and technologies in craft work reflect broader cultural, social and economic changes in work practices, forms of work and the relationship with it, policies and organisation of craft and creative industries in general, where entrepreneurial artisans seek a certain level of creative freedom to produce a new and distinctive cultural product.

The research is part of the dynamics of the craft economy, which is characterised by constant innovation and distinguished by creativity and openness to innovation, resulting from the ability to improvise, following the world's paths as they unfold. We can, therefore, argue that experiences in the craft economy enable the exploration of new ways of working and the imagination of future work, where the craft has the potential to enable the 'turning point' that 'originates things', which presents opportunities for innovation, inclusion and disruption (Beckert, Bronk, 2019; Ingold, 2010) and contributes to the development of alternatives for the future of work.

Craft beer market

The craft beer market has attracted the attention of researchers, journals, newspapers and blogs from different parts of the world, especially Brazil, the United States, the United Kingdom and Italy. Academic publications from different areas, Sociology, Anthropology, Tourism, Marketing, Economics, Management, and Communication, analyse the growth of the craft beer market, also assessing the role of new consumers (Thurnell-Read, 2015; Pozner et al.; Desoucey, M.; Sikavica, K. 2014), markets for other products considered craft (Ocejo, 2017; Paxson, 2011), the creation of new jobs (Hughes, C., 2012; Neff, G.; Wissinger, E.; Zukin, S., 2005), the dynamics of the acquisition of small breweries by large economic groups (Garavaglia, C.; Swinnen, J., 2018), festivals and events promoting beer culture (Thurnell-Read, 2016; Cook, 2018; Cabras, I.; Lorusso, M.; Waehning, N., 2020).

On the other hand, the development of the craft beer market fits into the context of the revival of craftsmanship as a counterpoint to the standardisation process and the growing rejection of mass-produced products in a globalised way through mechanisation processes typical of industrial production. The study fits in and dialogues with the growing academic production on craftsmanship in its various dimensions (the materials used, manual labour, skills, material culture) and also on the notion of authenticity as a quality valued in contemporary culture, composing what Luckman (2015, p. 70.) called "enchantment with the process of making". This global phenomenon has increasingly emphasised cooperative practices between craft organisations working together, consolidating a collective identity.

Worldwide, the craft beer market has grown exponentially in recent years, both in rural and urban areas, with the opening of microbreweries and the diversification of beer production. According to a study published by Fortune Business Insights, 'the craft beer market was $89.25 billion in 2019 and is expected to reach $190.66 billion by 2027'. In 1980, the number of breweries in the UK was around 142. Just over three decades later, in 2012, the number rose to 1,113. During the same period, the United States experienced even more significant growth: the number of breweries rose from 92 to 2,751; there are now around 1,300 microbreweries in Italy. Similar trends can be seen in many other European countries, such as Germany, Italy and Spain. They can be explained by strong concentration processes in the beer sector, which have left room for new entrants and created the conditions for niche markets, supportive policies for small entrepreneurs, such as tariff reductions and financial subsidies granted by local governments, and a higher level of sophistication in consumers' tastes, who are more inclined to try qualitatively different products (Cabras, 2018).

At the same time, according to Cabras and Higgins (2016), concentration in the global beer market doubled, with significant effects during the 1970s and 1980s. Several global conglomerates emerged due

to a series of significant acquisitions and mergers. In the United States, the continued expansion of Anheuser-Busch, Miller Brewing Company, Coors Brewing Company and Pabst meant that by the early 1980s, almost 75 per cent of the US market was in the hands of just four companies. In Italy, the market is dominated by five significant brewers (Heineken Italia, Birra Peroni, Birra Castello, Carlsberg Italia and Birra Forst). In Spain, over 90% of the market is concentrated in four large groups: Mahou, Damm, Heineken and Hijos de Rivera (Estrella Galicia).

A key mechanism for Carroll (1985) is the concentration of the market by a few companies, with the dominance of a market by a certain type of owner - in this case, large breweries dominating 90 per cent of the market. Large breweries do this by creating homogeneity in their product offerings, which in turn provides opportunities for new brewers who emphasise authenticity and the variety of styles on offer.

Studies on the craft beer sector indicate that most microbreweries remain very small companies with less than 5 employees, including the owners. The development and growth of microbreweries represent an important employment opportunity in local economic areas and can stimulate them with positive effects on local supply chains (Camra, 2013). This scenario suggests a virtuous circle of enhancing the craft beer market and increasing experimentation, resulting in increased quality and diversity, which can attract more markets. Despite microbreweries' reservations about the saturation of the sector, the overall perception of the sector's health is very positive. Data indicate that, despite the pandemic, the microbrewery sector has been resilient.

In 2020, the pandemic caused by the new coronavirus directly affected the beer industry worldwide, causing uncertainty for both macro and micro-breweries. Beer sales practically dried up due to the closure of bars, restaurants and brewpubs to contain the spread of the virus. They prompted brewers to reinvent the way beer was marketed, changing the distribution process with the expansion of direct sales and home deliveries, as well as the type of packaging, to avoid the spread of the

virus and due to the scarcity of certain types of packaging (Pitts et al.; Witrick, K., 2021).

This caution can be a valuable business asset in an industry characterised by creative and often hobby-based activities. Overall, however, the results of the study suggest that there is room for optimism in the sector. However, for individual companies, survival and prosperity will depend more on the quality of the product they produce for consumption and the efficiency with which they supply the market. As several studies have pointed out, microbreweries are not an easy industry to manage and margins can be tight. Changes in taxes and tariffs can have a strong impact on the profitability of microbreweries and policy makers can take this into account. Evidence suggests that this is a sector with a wide scope for innovation, increasing market share and helping to build an identity based on differentiation and quality (Danson et al., 2015).

In this context, craft breweries have meticulously developed and cultivated an opposing social identity that conflicts with the image of industrial mass brewing companies. In recent years, craft beer companies have succeeded in attracting a loyal group of consumers who share their social identity and actively participate in a market discourse that serves to further strengthen the collective identity of the craft beer industry The core of this discourse is centred on the sense of small-scale production, independence, creativity and high quality (Carroll; Dobrev; Swaminathan, 2002; Carroll; Swaminathan, 2000) and an identity opposed to that of large breweries that are perceived by the craft brewing community as engaged in the mass production of low quality, homogeneous and tasteless beer.

Small craft breweries that aspire to grow are faced with a dilemma: to remain true to the values of the industry while at the same time accepting expansion without alienating key local consumers. However, very little is known about how organisations in general, and craft breweries in particular, manage to solve the problem of growth and remain true to their micro-industry values while at the same time

maintaining relationships with the local community as a stakeholder and with the brewing community (Erhardt et all, 2022).

The bond between the local community and the founders of craft breweries has been highlighted as a key factor for the survival of craft breweries. For instance, nine out of ten professional brewers started their career as home brewers (Brewer Association), which further binds the brewing community, as the master brewer often has kinship ties with the local community (Flack, 1997). In addition, microbreweries have been more adept at responding to changing consumer tastes, as they represent a more discerning market; craft breweries can afford to be more adventurous in the styles of beer they produce, and this has increased their competitiveness, even though they sell at higher prices. From another point of view, microbreweries' growth is an example of entrepreneurship in this sector. On the other hand, large brewers, identifying microbreweries as a threat, have pushed large groups to launch their versions of 'craft' beer and use their financial and logistical capabilities to dominate this market. One strategy is the creation of joint ventures that have allowed large brewers to benefit from the expertise of smaller competitors (Smith Maguire, 2017).

We can sum up the core values of microbreweries in three: craftsmanship, authenticity and independence. They are symbolised by unique speciality beers, brewed in small batches and sold locally in brewpubs where the brewmaster engages with local customers by calling them by name. These core values of the industry resonate and are generally embraced by brewers with the local community, reinforced by compelling stories of the brewers' trajectories, the brewery's humble beginnings on a shoestring budget, from the founder's kitchen.

However, we still know very little about microbrewery organisations in general, the learning processes of brewing, researching new recipes and ingredients and running a small business, managing finances, accounting, logistics and supplies, exploring how master brewers resolve the dilemma between growing and expanding production and

staying true to the values of small-scale brewing, maintaining relationships with their community as key stakeholders, and brewing beers with the same flavours and aromas.

Introduction to the field of research: Apprenticeship, profession and craft entrepreneurship

Apprenticeship and craft practices

According to Ingold (2013), making reveals broader processes through which people acquire knowledge. Working with materials, feeling them, sensing them, observing them, listening to them and then paying attention to what they can teach us reveals what we learn by our openness to the world. The concept of making is particularly sensitive to the unplanned and indeterminate processes through which practice qualifies and develops as a type of learning while being practised (Ingold, 2013). The craft habitus combines a synaesthetic understanding of materials with an ethic of doing work well for oneself, where there is no strict separation between the spheres of pleasure and work since, in craft production, work is often confused with pleasure (Pais, 2014).

The development of a craftsman's mastery refers to a form that emerges from practice, during the process of incorporating a skill. Being a master craftsman refers to the social identity, to the skills that one has learnt to perform in that practice. The embodiment of a skill not only has the knowledge that describes their professional training, but that practical knowledge is a defining experience so that professional and personal identities are narrated as a passion that is formed in a personal pursuit of mastery and through which they will be recognised in their field of work (Ocejo, 2017). In cultural work, expertise is often associated with specialised knowledge of cultural forms and products, often possessed by art critics, art dealers and cultural intermediaries (Patel, 2018).

Practical learning reveals broader processes through which artisans acquire knowledge. In this research, I emphasise the importance of immersion in the social world of work, exploring the significance of

learning based on situated practice, where practices are shared between members, and of understanding what they are doing the skills, the production of quality products and what this means in their lives and for their communities (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Practices are communicated, understood and negotiated between practitioners mainly without words. Learning occurs primarily through observation, mimicry and repetition of exercises (Marchand, 2008), and through repeated practice attempts, and guided by their observations, the "feel" of things is gradually acquired" (Ingold, 2000). This conception of skill development is based on what Ingold (2011) calls 'enskilment', aiming at processual and interactive learning rather than passive reception of mental forms.

Craft brewers develop a specific relationship between the knowledge they have experienced in practice. In this way, the work of these brewers is not only a means to an end that transcends it, as their ideas of craftsmanship are based on a highly developed skill in which, at a given moment, the technique is no longer a mechanical activity, but one feels more fully what one is doing, using reflexivity that will give a much deeper meaning to this practice (Dubar, 2009).

What is important for the identity of craft brewers is how and when they use the process in their hands, or what personal elements they add to the production of special beverages, and how they distinguish their products from other beers on the market The distinctiveness of their products is not simply in their taste compared to other brewers, but also in the fact that they have produced that beer with their knowledge, through their research and experimentation with ingredients. This practice will give the beer its flavour and aroma; for craft brewers, this practice signifies the overall quality of the beer and validates the work they have done.

For Rodgers and Taves (2017), the craft brewer uses knowledge, practices, and technologies in a kitchen, garage, or cellar transformed into a scientific and technical space. According to Meyer (2008), the

transformation of home spaces into scientific laboratories is called 'boundary space', a combination of home and laboratory, or, seen another way, a space that crosses the boundary between amateurs and professionals (p. 45-46).

According to Paxson (2011, p. 117), "craftsmanship involves 'risky work' in which the quality of the product is 'continually at risk' throughout the production process". This risk can be introduced by human error or defects in the raw materials used. Industrial beer production tries to avoid both errors by compensating production and standardising materials.

In this process, brewers use not only physical skills, but also tacit knowledge (cf. Polanyi, 2000), which, often acquired through extensive practice and training, allows them to explore a range of sensory and bodily stimuli, to know what to do and, intuitively, when to do it. In this sense, the definition of 'craft' is 'an activity that involves the ability to make things by hand'. Campbell (2005) sees the term 'craft' as something produced 'by hand' or 'on foot' and directly under the worker's control. In this situation, the term 'craft' is related to an activity in which a product is designed and made by someone who "invests his or her personality in the object produced" (Campbell, 2005, p. 27).

To achieve this balance, craftspeople learn to work with, rather than against, the 'natural' variations that can be introduced by seasonality, ambient temperature and humidity, and malt and hop quality. The trick, as one brewer told me, is to 'observe what happened today and predict what might happen tomorrow, and from these predictions adjustments can be made'. Objective assessment of carefully observed environmental conditions and materials - temperature, refrigeration, pH of water, etc. - and meticulous recording (e.g. time spent by the malt in the kettle, in cooling and before entering the tank) are crucial because the idea is that one can and will go back to those notes to compare observed phenomena from one day to the next, from one observation to the next, to correct a failed batch or to decode a success (Paxson, 2012).

Unlike the industrial production process based on a fully automated, computer-assisted production process. Recipes are programmed into computers, and beer production occurs continuously according to a pre-programmed plan. The brewery workers assist in transforming malt into beer in a hygienic process. In contrast, the knowledge and skills related to beer production occur outside the brewery in research, label design and quality control. To begin with, industrial brewing filters organic variables, pasteurises them to kill microorganisms, standardises contents and homogenises flavours. Industrial beer looks, feels and tastes the same from batch to batch, mainly because a lot of work goes into standardising beer from batch to batch and because quality control dictates uniformity of the final product.

According to Gherandi (2000, p. 61), participation in practice is a way of acquiring knowledge in action but also of changing or perpetuating that knowledge and producing or reproducing society', what Bourdieu (1990) calls practicality, participating in practice and learning the logic of it.

According to Billett (2001), learning is a process that relies heavily on the active interpretation and construction of what individuals experience, including their mediation of the experiences provided by the social and physical world; the social world contributes fundamentally to what is mediated. This is perhaps more true than when learning is culturally and socially derived knowledge, such as when people prepare for specific occupations and the particular factors that shape performance requirements in specific work environments.

According to Gherandi and Perrotta (2014, p. 135), practical knowledge proposes that 'knowledge is a practical realisation situated in the historical, social and cultural context in which it is produced'. Practices are a series of activities, recognised by those who practise them, that keep repeating themselves, i.e. they are practised, defined as "ways of doing things together" and supported by social processes in an ethical, aesthetic and emotional way (Gherandi, 2000, p. 5).

According to Paxson (2011), craft producers describe the tacit ability to collect and interpret sensory data and apply them practically as the art of making. Tim Ingold (2000, p. 357) argues that "as in any art, the skilled maker has an idea of what he is doing, the movement of which is continuous and subtly sensitive to the modulations of his relationship with materials". According to the author, his embodied practice moves through sensoriality, subjective evaluation, empirical conditions and materialities manipulated in creating a recipe.

The skills relevant to mastery include the talent, knowledge, and technical knowledge to do the work in the domain(s) relevant to solving the problems or tasks at hand. In essence, this component is the set of cognitive pathways the individual uses to solve a given problem or perform a given task. The larger the set, the more alternatives the individual has to produce a new combination. Combining ideas or products into new designs is particularly important for craft enterprises.

Therefore, the study of making as a profoundly material, social, spatial, and temporal practice must pay attention to the places and processes of production and, consequently, to the rootedness of making in the fabric of everyday life as a vibrant process of play, invention, and creative improvisation (Ingold & Hallam, 2007) and reveal broader processes through which people acquire knowledge in a practical way (Ingold, 2013).

Professionalisation

Ocejo (2017) argues that new craft professions are like a vocation that depends on a 'sense of art' based on technical skill, the ability to understand and communicate 'experience'. Craftwork combines production skills with the materiality of ingredients and local identity, "a set of skills, knowledge and emotional connections of place and practice" (Thurnell-Read, 2014, p. 48). Several contemporary studies on craft work suggest that craft production tends to experience individual

awareness. However, the effects of this awareness on individuals and their working conditions are still relatively unknown.

According to studies by Thurnell-Read (2014; 2018), many craft brewers in the UK left their professional careers to take up craft jobs in the brewing industry. These professionals were motivated to turn their hobby into a brewing career because they felt dissatisfied with their previous job and were attracted by the individual experience of brewing beer at home and thus making a tangible product, being in control of their own time, using their labour and being recognised and valued for their work. This sentiment dialogues with Arvidsson's (2009) argument, which suggests that in an age when individuals are encouraged to seek pleasure in the work sphere, the value of work is increasingly conceived in terms of identity, autonomy, flexibility and lifestyle rather than in monetary terms.

In most cases reported in the literature, brewers report that homebrewing was instrumental in their career change. Homebrewing is thus the starting point for discovering the pleasure of brewing one's beer through the exchange of bottles, entering the brewing circuit and joining brewing fraternities or associations (Rodgers, 2017). Even with the expansion of formal training spaces, such as free courses, diplomas, specialisation and the creation of specialised schools, most master brewers who own a craft brewery still brew at home with cans as a starting point.

According to Billett (2018), craft knowledge is a product of history, culture and situation; people must connect and engage with it to learn it. Artisans learn their craft through exposure to traditional production methods, hands-on learning and trial and error (Adamson, 2007). Craftspeople's work is an embedded practice characterised by emergent qualities, occurring at the interface between knowledge and practical application (Atkinson, 2013), i.e. what Sennett (2008, p. 9) described as "the intimate connection between the hand and the head", and is developed in the application of bodily skills, technical knowledge of

tools, techniques, trained sensory skills, knowledge of materials and stylistic preferences (Crawford, 2009).

Evidence suggests that authentic professional activities in which individuals engage in work contexts and their interactions during these activities generate both situation-specific and more broadly applicable professional knowledge, such as procedures, concepts and dispositions (Billett, 1994). In other words, these experiences are not limited to learning the professional skills required in particular work environments but are also skills that can be applied elsewhere. Through participation in work activities, individuals can acquire the conceptual, procedural and dispositional knowledge required for their work, including skills adapted to other circumstances in which the occupation is carried out (Billett, 2001b).

Handicraft professions, according to Richard Sennett (2008), are characterised by flexibility, creativity, pleasure, personal choice, connection to lifestyle and taste at the level of production and consumption. Furthermore, according to Howard S. Becker (1978), crafts are associated with aesthetic values and are characterised by the production of functional objects that have a useful purpose. Unlike automated production processes, where there is a high degree of certainty and standardisation of the result, handcrafted objects cannot be precisely predetermined. Craftsmanship is about celebrating the imperfections of executing thought by hand (Ullrich, 2004). The realisation of these values depends on the craftsman's expertise, whose 'virtuoso' skills result from continuous practice (Becker, 1978).

Master brewers, as authors of the recipes and thus responsible for the production of the beers, are seen to develop and perform specific work that is based on the concepts of skill and competence, the affective environment of the brewery and the result of their work in the form of beer, recognised and appreciated by others (Palmer et al., 2010). This skill in the work and its simultaneous affective attachment show a marked professional identity and practical and subjective involvement with the craft. In this way, the notion of craft is used by many brewers