



Fermentations of authenticity: the construction of quality, taste, and price in the craft beer market in Brazil

Fermentações de autenticidade: a construção da qualidade, sabor e preço no mercado de cervejas artesanais no Brasil

Fermentaciones de autenticidad: la construcción de calidad, sabor y precio en el mercado de la cerveza artesanal en Brasil

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ABSTRACT

In this article, we examine the process of enhancing craft beers through brewers' narratives about quality and authenticity and establishing recognition and reputation through craft beer competitions and festivals. We conducted in-depth interviews with microbrewery owners, conversed with consumers and brewers, observed craft beer festivals, and monitored posts on brewery Facebook pages. We explore narratives about the various processes involved in building authenticity and quality in the craft beer market, highlighting the production of unique and exclusive styles in small batches with carefully selected ingredients and the brewery's origin and local identity. These narrative elements contribute to cultivating a culture centred on experiential consumption and the differentiation of craft production from mass production. Additionally, they lead to recognition through beer competitions and consecration through award certificate ceremonies and bottle labels, which validate the reputation and quality of beers produced by artisanal brewers.

Keywords: craft beer, quality, authenticity, market, taste, price.

RESUMO

Neste artigo, examinamos o processo de aprimoramento de cervejas artesanais através de narrativas de cervejeiros sobre qualidade e autenticidade e estabelecimento de reconhecimento e reputação através de concursos e festivais de cerveja artesanal. Realizamos entrevistas aprofundadas com proprietários de microcervejarias, conversamos com consumidores e cervejeiros, observamos festivais de cerveja artesanal e monitoramos postagens nas páginas do Facebook da cervejaria. Exploramos narrativas sobre os vários processos envolvidos na construção de autenticidade e qualidade no mercado de cerveja artesanal, destacando a produção de estilos únicos e exclusivos em pequenos lotes com ingredientes cuidadosamente selecionados e a origem e identidade local da cervejaria. Estes elementos narrativos contribuem para



cultivar uma cultura centrada no consumo experiencial e na diferenciação entre a produção artesanal e a produção em massa. Além disso, eles levam ao reconhecimento através de concursos de cerveja e consagração através de cerimônias de certificado de premiação e rótulos de garrafas, que validam a reputação e a qualidade das cervejas produzidas por cervejeiros artesanais.

Palavras-chave: cerveja artesanal, qualidade, autenticidade, mercado, sabor, preço.

RESUMEN

En este artículo, examinamos el proceso de mejorar las cervezas artesanales a través de las narrativas de los cerveceros sobre la calidad y la autenticidad y establecer el reconocimiento y la reputación a través de concursos y festivales de cerveza artesanal. Realizamos entrevistas en profundidad con los propietarios de las microcervecías, conversamos con consumidores y cerveceros, observamos festivales de cerveza artesanal y monitoreamos publicaciones en las páginas de Facebook de las cervecías. Exploramos narrativas sobre los diversos procesos involucrados en la construcción de autenticidad y calidad en el mercado de la cerveza artesanal, destacando la producción de estilos únicos y exclusivos en pequeños lotes con ingredientes cuidadosamente seleccionados y el origen y la identidad local de la cervecía. Estos elementos narrativos contribuyen a cultivar una cultura centrada en el consumo experiencial y la diferenciación de la producción artesanal de la producción en masa. Además, conducen al reconocimiento a través de concursos de cerveza y la consagración a través de ceremonias de premios y etiquetas de botellas, que validan la reputación y la calidad de las cervezas producidas por los cerveceros artesanales.

Palabras clave: cerveza artesanal, calidad, autenticidad, mercado, sabor, precio.

1 INTRODUCTION

The craft beer market has attracted the attention of researchers, magazines, newspapers, and blogs from different parts of the world, especially in Brazil, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Italy. Academic publications from various fields, such as Sociology, Anthropology, Tourism, Marketing, Economics, Management, and Communication, seek to understand the growth of the craft beer market, including analysing the role of new consumers (Thurnell-Read, 2015; Pozner, Desoucey, Sikavica, 2014), the markets for other products



considered artisanal (Ocejo, 2017; Paxson, 2011), the creation of new jobs (Hughes, 2012; Neff et al., 2005), the dynamics of small breweries being acquired by large economic groups (GARAVAGLIA, SWINNEN, 2018), beer culture promotion festivals and events (Thurnell-Read, 2016; Cook, 2018; Cabras et al., 2020); in short, there are hundreds of publications seeking to savour the experiences of this market.

The development of the craft beer market is part of the context of the resurgence of craftsmanship as a counterpoint to the standardisation process and a growing rejection of mass-produced products through globalised mechanisation typical of industrial production. The study is integrated and interacts with the academic increasing output on craftsmanship in its various dimensions (materials used, manual labour, skills, material culture) and also on the notion of authenticity as a valued quality in contemporary culture, composing what Luckman (2015, p. 70) called "enchantment with the process of making." This global-scale phenomenon has increasingly emphasised cooperation practices among artisanal organisations, consolidating a collective identity.

Around the world, the craft beer market has grown exponentially in recent years, both in rural and urban areas, with the opening of microbreweries and diversified beer production. In the late 1990s, the diversity of beers in Brazil was shallow; the market was concentrated in a few breweries that primarily produced Pilsner-style beer. 2000, there were approximately 50 breweries, and by 2010, that number had jumped to 250. In 2017, the number of establishments went from 356 to 679. In 2018, the country gained 220 new breweries, and in 2019, another 320, ending the year with 1,209 breweries registered with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Supply (MAPA), distributed across the 26 federative units, a 36% growth compared to 2018, with 90% of these breweries located in the South and Southeast regions of the country.

In 2020, the pandemic caused by the novel coronavirus directly affected the brewing industry worldwide, causing uncertainty for both large breweries and microbreweries. Beer sales practically dried up due to the closure of bars, restaurants, and pubs as a means to contain the virus's spread, leading breweries



to reinvent their beer marketing, changing both the distribution process with an expansion of direct sales and home delivery, and the types of packaging (Pitts, Witrick, 2021). Nevertheless, according to the Beer Yearbook published by MAPA, in 2020, 204 new breweries were registered in Brazil, while 30 cancelled their registrations, representing an increase of 174 breweries, a 14.4% growth compared to the previous year.

Indeed, craft breweries are part of a wave of small "craft manufacturing" businesses that initially emerged in the United States and spread worldwide (Pozner, Desoucey, Sikavica, 2014; Carroll, 1985; Elzinga, 2018). These breweries promote products made by the hand of the brewer, reinforce a strong sense of identity with the place they are located, and emphasise the origin of their ingredients and the regions where their products are sold. These elements create and promote a sense of authenticity or the idea of a product filled with integrity, uniqueness, and exclusivity as markers of its quality. Thus, the product can be authentic because it is handmade, comes from a unique place, and is produced by brewers who create material products with genuine qualities.

Therefore, the craft beer market is part of 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 essential for creating new businesses to enter existing markets as consumers gradually seek particular types of products. In the case of craft beer, consumers are looking for local beer and unique labels. In addition to being produced locally, these beers offer unique flavours, ingredients, and production not available at the national distribution level (Spracklen, Laurencic, Kenyon, 2013; Gatrell, Reid, Steiger, 2018).

At the same time, there are various actions aimed at learning how to make and appreciate beer to create a "beer culture" through an identity with the artisanal, the authentic, and the notion of a connection to the local. This includes opening brewery-owned pubs, beer-tasting clubs, gatherings of homebrewing associations for the production and tasting of beers, brewery tours, and creating beer tourism itineraries in different regions of the country. In parallel, there are craft beer festivals, beer-related trips to visit the world's major breweries, beer



evaluation competitions, and the organisation of awards that grant a seal recognising the quality and adherence of a beer to a specific style. These actions build a culture of authenticity, quality, and differentiation between craft and industrial beers.

In this article, we explore the construction of authenticity and quality in craft beers through various narrative processes that emphasise small-batch production of unique and exclusive styles with carefully selected ingredients, the origin, and the local identity of the brewery. These narrative elements contribute to cultivating a culture of experiential consumption and differentiation from mass production, with recognition achieved through prestigious beer competitions and the presentation of certificates and seals at beer festivals. These seals will be displayed on bottles and event booths, legitimising the reputation and quality of beers produced by artisanal brewers.

2 METHODOLOGY

In this article, we explore the shared and told stories as part of the strategic action in the craft beer market. Through these stories, we aim to capture the different elements that have shaped their experiences (stories of brewers, the process of making, the sense of place, consumption, authenticity, and gender-related aspects), which are utilised in forming the market.

During this research, we combined interviews and participant observation during fieldwork between 2017 and 2020, especially in the metropolitan regions of Porto Alegre Caxias do Sul and Rio Grande do Sul. We attended fifteen craft beer festivals held in Porto Alegre (RS), Caxias do Sul (RS), São Paulo (SP), Rio de Janeiro (RJ), Novo Hamburgo (RS), and Blumenau (SC), with a focus on events such as Cervapoa in Porto Alegre, Cervaserra in Caxias do Sul, the Brazilian Beer Festival in Blumenau, and the Mondial de la Bière in Rio de Janeiro. These events provided opportunities to meet and engage with brewers and consumers and to understand the significance of these events in shaping the market.



At these events, we engaged in informal conversations with brewery owners, identified the demographics of the attending audience, the beer styles available on tap, the layout of brewery stands, the most visited breweries, and, between tastings, discussed the craft beer market, the beers produced, style choices, and the backgrounds of brewery owners, production, and sales locations. We also observed the dynamics of operation, organisation, and layout of stands, the breweries most sought after by consumers, the construction of narratives about beer production, award ceremonies, tasting courses, and the various strategies used to differentiate themselves from the brewery next door.

Ethnographic conversations with brewery owners also took place at the breweries and pubs near the breweries. We followed the brewery's Facebook and Instagram posts and the profiles of selected brewers. Throughout fieldwork, we conducted twelve biographical and in-depth interviews, usually held at the brewery, with durations ranging from one hour to one and a half hours, recorded and later transcribed. The interviewees were predominantly male owners of microbreweries, aged between 30 and 45, with completed higher education. Additionally, they had other professions before opening the brewery and had previously brewed beer at home as a hobby, a characteristic also identified in studies in different countries.

In the analysis of the interviews, we prioritised narrative analysis, as "experience" is constructed through various forms of storytelling. This method of analysis also refers to a set of analytical methods for interpreting texts or visual data with a historical form through how people tell stories to help organise and make sense of their lives and experiences. Professionals and organisational cultures of "modern" complex societies are filled with narrative forms (Cortazzi, 2001), and storytelling serves critical social functions. Narratives carry moral force and can achieve social status and professional authority (Atkinson, Delamont, 2006). Thus, the narrative analysis provides the researcher access to the interpretative textual world of the narrator, who presumably, in some way, mediates or manages reality. Therefore, narrative analysis is a valuable research tool that complements other methods (Cortazzi, 2001).



3 AUTHENTICITY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CRAFT BEER MARKET

According to Boltanski and Esquerre (2016), artisanal products are not valued for their utility, as with everyday industrial products, but rather because they are new or different, and inevitably, due to their price. They are often associated with markers of identity that guarantee their "authenticity." Their supposed appeal comes from an "aura" surrounding them, which means that these products are exceptional and attract interest for their economic and cultural dimensions.

Authenticity does not exist in any fixed object effectively; it is crafted from narratives and performances. Craft brewers work not only on beer production but also on the construction and communication of meaning as part of the "enrichment process," as identified by Boltanski and Esquerre (2016).

The Ferrariana beer from Irmão Ferraro Brewery is produced once a year, with a batch of 2000 bottles of 300 ml, enriched through a narrative device in beer promotion, through posts on the brewery's Facebook page. The label highlighting the production of this specific batch for the Christmas season highlights some of its unique qualities and characteristics, such as being a Russian Imperial Stout with 14% ABV, a bitterness index of 81, dark colour, and aromas of coffee and chocolate.

As highlighted in a post on Dádiva Brewery's Facebook page about Brazilian Beer Day in 2019, "producing beers is inspiring stories. We take great pleasure in being part of the Brazilian beer scene and helping to tell this story to Brazilians and people worldwide."

An example of this process is the Perigosa Baby beer label, produced by Bodebrow Brewery in Curitiba. The label presents a narrative that tells the story of the brewery, related to the brewer-creator, who has a face, signs the beers, and posts videos and photos of the beer production process at Bodebrow daily, both on their profile and on the brewery's page and in friends' groups.



Relationship marketing aims to establish, maintain, and develop networks, relationships, and interactions with customers and other partners at a certain level of profit so that the goals of the parties align through mutual exchange and promise fulfilment: "[...] the organisation works with consumers to create, deliver, and share value" (Boltanski, Esquerre, 2016, p. 50). This approach is actively used to attract and retain different segments of visitors and, if possible, make "friends" or "members," patrons, or volunteers.

While enriching one of its beers, Bodebrow Brewery created a unique recipe, partnered with the band Iron Maiden, and produced a specific recipe of the IPA style, with a name and label that linked the beer to the band. The beer had limited production for the band's South American tour. At all the shows, the brewer and owner of Bodebrow were present, demonstrating his commitment to promoting the beer, associating his face with the brewery and the band, posting photos and videos of the shows, conveying the story of the brewery that made a unique partnership with the famous Rock group.

Authenticity is not a thing in itself; it does not reside as an inherent property within an object. Instead, authenticity is a negotiated solution arising from the authenticity regime that involves conventions for assessing provenance: where something was made, how, by whom, when, and under what conditions (Smith Maguire, 2018, p. 1). Aesthetic ideals are closely linked to genre, origin, and the creative process. These ideals group around an innovative and autonomous producer, equipped with technical skill and specialised knowledge, seeking meaning in their work, and on the other hand, something physical that, in various ways, evidences dimensions of heritage, tradition, nature, and craftsmanship (Ocejo, 2017; Sennett, 2008).

Kovács et al. (2013) define authenticity as "the honest or the real" and code the concept in terms such as expert, skilled, traditional, and historical. These definitions seem to conflate the authenticity of individuals and regional communities with their traditions. A greater recognition of the multiple meanings of authenticity is needed. The importance of authenticity has continued to grow with the increasing homogenisation and standardisation resulting from mass



production and the proliferation of interests and tastes that have accompanied post-modernity (Lindholm, 2008; Beverland; Farrelly, 2010). Consuming authentic products has become a means of expressing one's authenticity (Beverland; Farrelly, 2010).

According to Carroll and Wheaton (2009), authenticity relates to something made using appropriate techniques and ingredients chosen by qualified personnel. It requires mastery of production, knowledge, skills, and techniques and demands special training, learning, and experiences. Authenticity thus implies a system of socialisation to transmit tacit knowledge and skills and a degree of professional autonomy and self-management that requires identifying and using appropriate tools, supplies, and ingredients.

While previous studies on authenticity in consumer culture have focused on consumers and their perceptions of what is or is not authentic (Beverland; Farrelly, 2010), in this study, breweries identify themselves as small and independent and make "claims of authenticity" (Ocejo, 2017, p. 69) through narratives used to add meaning and value to their products.

Stories are used to add differentiated value to craft beers. These stories appear on labels, award seals from competitions, website materials, partner pubs, factory visits, and beer festivals. In addition to these elements, the size of the brewery can be a defining factor of its identity and philosophy since it determines not only its annual turnover but also the uniqueness of the product and the brewer's personality. The narratives of craft beer producers communicate claims of authenticity, and in doing so, they create value; these narratives provide insights into contemporary developments of ideals about work, consumption, and material culture and contribute to discussions about authenticity, craftsmanship, and valorisation.

When entering a craft brewery at any time of day, it is likely to encounter one or two members of the local beer community for a chat or a favour. The local beer community members are constantly exchanging information to taste each other's beers, even in the most mundane conversations (chitchat). We observed this during fieldwork on a day of observation at Ferraro Brothers Brewery. At that



moment, the brewer was talking to a brewer from another brewery, discussing the beer-making process and assisting him in identifying a product defect.

Per Carroll and Swaminathan's (2000) study, microbreweries brewing their beers were considered more authentic and faithful to traditional production methods. Furthermore, Carroll and Wheaton (2009) provide further guidance, specifically regarding food producers. The authors argue that from authenticity emerges the subcategory "craft authenticity," in which the construction of authenticity is related to the extent to which a food and beverage producer seems to reflect the expectations of their category based on production methods, tools, and labour employed.

According to Radoynovska and King (2019), craft authenticity is an extension of type authenticity, emphasising how something is produced and demonstrating its suitability for a specific category. Idiosyncratic authenticity expresses an actor's moral commitment to a particular set of beliefs common to moral authenticity. The more unique something is, the more idiosyncratically authentic it becomes.

According to Carroll and Wheaton (2009), authenticity is not a "real" thing or something that can be objectively determined but rather a socially constructed phenomenon. In this view, certain aspects of a product, performance, place, or producer are somehow defined and treated as authentic by audiences in a given social context. Empirical studies of authenticity attempt to document the specifics: which aspects are emphasised, at what times, which stories are used to justify them, how different groups interpret them, and which interests seem to benefit more (or less) from these interpretations.

In this sense, authenticity plays a role in the social construction of markets (Carroll; Wheaton, 2009; Frake, 2017; Kovács Et Al., 2013; Verhaal Et Al., 2017). Likewise, Fine (2004, p. 153) states: "The desire for authenticity now occupies a central position in contemporary culture. Whether searching for individuality, leisure experience, or material purchases, we seek the real, the genuine." Thus, provenance is one of the ways to offer authenticity to today's consumers through



quality statements that emphasise elements such as origin, production methods, and product heritage.

According to Smith Maguire (2018), through representations that align with the authenticity taste regime, the craftsman and the history of craftsmanship are exposed in the descriptions of artisanal products. Authenticity is portrayed, and products become authentic through situated evaluation and experience. Just because something is handmade (for example) does not necessarily mean it will be evaluated or experienced as authentic; taste regimes shape but do not determine assessments and experiences. Thus, the local, traditional, natural, or artisanal attributes of something (conventional expectations of artisanal products) are simultaneously a starting point for experiencing a sense of authenticity and a culturally legitimate foundation.

4 THE CONSTRUCTION OF QUALITY, TASTE, AND PRICE

Boltanski and Esquerre (2016) sought to conceptualise narratives to organise cultural value and attribute it to products and the individuals involved in making them, "enriching them" with value and a kind of aura that surrounds them, considering them exceptional. The recent resurgence of interest in craftsmanship emphasises these concerns about reestablishing connections and commitments between products, consumers, and producers beyond the rational market exchange. Thus, handmade objects are said to "offer a sense of the 'authentic' in an 'inauthentic' world" (Luckman, 2015, p. 68) and the possibility of re-engaging the consumer with the production process from which they have been alienated (Ocejo, 2017).

Craft beers are produced by real people who infuse personal values and emotions into their products. Artisans' care for making their beers has been described as a factor that differentiates artisanal and industrial products. As the Pale Ale brewer explained, "Sometimes it is not a difference in the quality of the product, but a difference in the time invested in a single product. I think that is the beauty of it because sometimes there are industrial products better than artisanal



ones." The time invested by artisans is related to their production processes, which are influenced by beliefs about personal authenticity.

Artisans often differentiated their products from industrial ones based on quality. However, they often mentioned quality without evoking any objective, measurable product characteristics or production methods but by reference to their dedication to quality. This pride is expressed in the skills and experiences required to produce good beers and the creativity to create new beers with new flavours. Personal values are often difficult to identify, and individuals may rely on emotion to guide their "true self" (Lindholm, 2008).

The "Ipa" Brewer describes this identity with beer, with making, with practice, with work:

For me, beer is a perfect blend of science and technology. Between culture and history. Between art and entertainment. It was all there for me. That's how I see beer. It's not just a drink to me. When I started to see beer this way, it made me want to do it more and more. [...] Before I started brewing professionally, I think I brewed over a hundred batches. It's not the same beer. I am trying different things.

In the case of artisan brewers, feelings of passion and pride were significant in stimulating their engagement with the market and as cultural resources to explain the differences between artisanal and industrial beers (Thurnell-Read, 2017).

Brewers declared in our interviews and communication outlets a deep personal commitment to authenticity, including their creativity and the uniqueness of their creations. Products are valued because of their inherent qualities, such as their ingredients and production methods, or their uniqueness. The value lies in a much more elusive sense of connection with their producers, in which consumption represents an appropriation of the lifestyles of the producers, idealised as free from the traps of modern, industrial, and consumerist society (Smith Maguire, 2018; Ocejó, 2017).

According to the brewer "Porter":



Fermenting is an act of resistance against this mass of easily accessible industrialized products; it is also about rescuing stories and emotional memories and developing our creativity. Fermenting is eating healthy food and enjoying the harvest. Fermenting is life.

The organisational form that shapes craft beer is, to a large extent, the market: evaluative standards are described in terms of taste, both in the sensory-perceptual sense and social distinction. Craft and taste are mutually constitutive, informed by social conventions embedded in a shared political economy. Collective taste formations make a market regime possible, but craft and taste are not simply market devices.

Karpik (2010) states that classifications and awards are essential to producing socially shared taste. In this process, intermediaries, including experts, critics, and consultants, play an important role in assessment practices (Karpik, 2010). Bessy and Chauvin (2013) described these professionals as third parties who organise supply and demand because their actions affect the perceived value of goods or entire organisations; in their words, intermediaries "are all engaged in evaluation activities that shape the market" (Bessy, Chauvin, 2013, p. 84).

According to Beckert and Aspers (2011), trust is established discursively by establishing validity claims about the quality that are confirmed or challenged by other actors or future events. Uncertainty is also reduced through conventions and devices legitimised and recognised for their ability to define commonly accepted qualities. Quality is not an inherent product characteristic and cannot be known at present due to the uncertainty of future development. In these cases, quality is based on contingent judgments through which actors in the field define quality.

According to Beckert and Musselin (2013), quality is not something given naturally but the result of a collective process in which products come to be seen as endowed with certain traits, occupying a specific position about other products; thus, they become "qualified goods and services."

The "Altbier" Brewer explains:



"When I set up the brewery, I had all the recipes catalogued. The brews. Everything I had brewed up to that point, ten litres, twenty litres, everything. I had everything catalogued. So I was around six hundred brews when we set up the brewery. I already knew by heart what would happen because the main thing is that you know what will happen if you mix malt A with malt C. What will the taste be like if you put 20% of one and 30% of the other? That is the main thing.

As Beckert and Aspers (2011) observed in the art market, quality judgments are made by actors in the field, informed by the judgments of other observed (and discursively engaged) actors and by the weight they have conveyed through their status and power. According to Aspers et al. (2020), markets, prices, and exchanges result from the mutual adjustment of many interactions and decisions - to buy or not to buy, to sell or not to sell - by those who trade in the market.

According to Aspers (2008), a commodity obtains its identity, that is, its value and price, from observable patterns of interaction between a brand and its users. Through interactions like these, actors, brand retailers, and consumers also manifest and reconstitute their identities and the identities of the clothing they wear. According to Callon et al. (2002), the operation of the quality economy involves the establishment of forms of organisation that facilitate the intensification of collaboration between supply and demand, allowing consumers to participate actively in the qualification of products.

Producer efforts are thus directed toward facilitating attachment between consumers and goods (Callon et al., 2002), suggesting ways to become part of existing practices or encouraging the development of new practices. Perceived quality in wines, perfumes, arts, music, foods, computer technologies, and even cars is only partially derived from their material characteristics. Their value largely stems from the symbolic qualities attributed to products based on interpretation. In the affluent consumer society, where functional needs are mostly met, the value produced in the economy increasingly resembles the kind of evaluation we can observe in the art market or the wine market (Beckert et al., 2017).

In the craft products market, producers work on the explicit valorisation that the artisanal process introduces (PAXSON, 2008), especially regarding



taste, a central quality of craft beers. The qualification of the palate's work is never complete, as the characteristics of beers continue to change from batch to batch and even from bottle to bottle. The uncertainty of taste understood as a contextual and relational encounter between the eater and the edible, can be cast as an opportunity to deepen the experience (Krzywoszynska, 2015).

According to the Brewer "Ipa":

The master brewer is like a chef. He has to go there, buy the ingredients, check the raw material setup, go to the field, to the glass, that thing about going there, visit the supplier and see how the guys are using the ingredient, to know how things are going. Analyse the raw material report that arrives, sample, and create a recipe based on the ingredients. You must know the ingredients to create a recipe. Otherwise, it is useless.

Per Gronow (2011), people would show their affiliation to a typical social group through shared taste or style and preserve their individuality. Notions of "good taste" and legitimacy tend to reflect the dominant group; tastes are stratified in legitimacy relative to the dominant group of "good taste" (Bourdieu, 1984, 1990). Categories of good taste are not static; conventions about taste are subject to negotiation by groups seeking to improve or defend their social position. Notions of good taste are, therefore, socially and historically specific, changing over time regarding the relative rise or decline of influence of different groups.

According to Bourdieu (1996), each field represents only one side of the market. Bourdieu suggests that encounters between actors in two distinct fields (for example, a field of consumers and a field of producers) occur due to the "homology between the producer space and the consumer space" (BOURDIEU, 1996, p. 249). Seen in this way, each "half" of a market is a field in itself, but each market is also situated in other adjacent fields and "embedded" in larger fields. Formal institutions and actors' tastes, perceptions, and positions must be altered as part of the market.

Alongside taste, another connection between craftsmanship and the market refers to quality. According to Paxson (2011), the quality of craftsmanship



raises the question of which qualities are valued as markers in a given craft. Becker (1978) suggests that market values - sales - should be added to the strength of structure and appearance in assessing qualified craftsmanship.

Producers establish networks and social relationships through craft beer production that add value to it as authentic beer. Brewer "Brow" recognised that his beer says more about people who want to connect with others through the product, "where they are made, and know the people who make them, and drink something locally made and fresh."

The consumer's concept of quality depends on their involvement: the greater it is, the more the tendency for objective quality (Charters, Pettigrew, 2006). What makes evaluating the quality of a beer complex is not only the existence of various producers producing various beers but also the fact that the taste and aromas of the products, even if they are of the same style, change at each brewery.

According to Beckert et al. (2014, p. 2), the perceived quality of wine, perfume, art, beer, music, food, computer technology, and even cars is only partially derived from their material characteristics. Their value largely stems from the symbolic qualities attributed to products based on the interpretation of products and consumers.

Bourdieu emphasises how symbolic values (symbolic capital) are formed in different social fields and how these values affect price formation (Bourdieu, 1996). His theory offers a general model of symbolic evaluation processes and price formation. It considers evaluation dissonances: "To gain a distinctive and profitable niche for themselves, producers must develop distinct strategies" (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 249-250).

Brewer "Gose" states:

The same brewer [...] who drinks Suricato, [...] Treze, also drinks the other beers. However, each one also has a very well-defined story. So, we are competitors, but not so much. Because we create all the prices, I make them in harmony with the brands. I know one has to be a little more expensive and another cheaper, but I do not have an IPA that costs fifteen and an IPA with the same similar alcohol content that will cost twenty-five, you know? So, within the portfolio, I can balance that.



Karpik argues that "price differences in uniqueness markets cannot be understood in terms of supply and demand" (Karpik, 2010, p. 209). Instead, prices are based on quality ratings produced in unique markets, resulting in a "concordance relationship" between relative prices and relative qualities (Karpik, 2010). For example, this concordance can be found in art markets, where experts such as critics and curators send signals about quality to consumers that structure the demand for art and increase its price level (Velthuis, 2003; Rössel; Beckert, 2013). Similarly, in wine markets, prices vary according to formal and informal terroir ratings where the wine is produced (Chauvin, 2013; Rössel; Beckert, 2013). As a result, consumers value not only the price and quality of certain products but also variety in general. With the consolidation of the microbrewery sector, craft brewers began to enter the market, filling niches of products not served by large breweries' homogenisation (Garavaglia; Swinnen, 2018, p. 19).

Brewer "Saison" states:

In our ideal, we would like the beer to be more accessible to everyone. People's idea is that the brewers are making a lot of money on the product, and what comes to us is very little. So, we would like it to be a fair trade issue.

Producers and consumers differ because producers are interested in profits, and consumers are interested in a product that suits their lifestyle. At the same time, there is a homology between the symbolic hierarchy of producers in a field and the hierarchy of social status of consumers (BOURDIEU, 1996, p. 115). However, products and services from a subfield of restricted production generally reflect the field's history; therefore, they are filled with preconditions for understanding. Only consumers familiar with the history and preconditions of the subfield can understand and enjoy its products (Beckert et al., 2014, p. 7).

Maciel (2017), from a subculture analysis, found that the high price of craft beer in non-craft beer is not a factor that blocks craft beer consumption by "aficionados" in the United States since this type of consumer compares craft beer with wine. Aficionados are described as consumers extremely committed to



the reality surrounding a particular product, always seeking to improve their skills through interaction with their peers or enrolling in courses and workshops related to the product (Strong, 2011).

However, for Gómez-Corona et al. (2016), price can be a barrier to the consumption of craft beers, although it is generally not stated directly by consumers. For some consumers, the price is reasonable; for others, it is a product only for special occasions. Finally, availability is also a barrier, as some consumers want to buy craft beer everywhere (restaurants, supermarkets, and convenience stores); for others, going out and looking for it in small speciality stores is part of the experience.

Craft beer consumers stand out as high-income consumers because, on average, this segment has higher prices than industrial and imported beers (Tremblay, C. H.; Tremblay, V. J, 2011), and also because higher income is associated with higher demand for variety and novelty, something that characterises the craft beer supply (Elzinga et al., 2015).

The evaluation of beer quality is not simply a matter of information. Instead, its quality is determined by a social process in a cultural production field (Bourdieu, 1996). Therefore, actors with a high endowment of cultural capital evaluate beer quality differently from consumers with low cultural capital. In the case of cultural products, the habitus also contains the consumer's taste, which is crucial for choices made between products from different subfields (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 174, 2005, p. 54).

The habitus itself is shaped by a person's social conditions, especially their class position. That is why Bourdieu states that consumers from different backgrounds differ in their tastes for music, art, food, wine, and, more recently, beer tastes (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 170). More precisely, consumers differ in terms of what they consume, how they consume it, and the quality of the experience linked to the act of consumption (Rössel, 2011).

Since the habitus is linked to the consumer's social position, other actors can infer that person's lifestyle and class position by observing their consumption behaviour. In this sense, beer consumption signifies an individual's lifestyle and



class position (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 175). Since cultural products are produced according to a logical competition, resulting in positions and niches for different products and producers, such products are well suited for expressing social distinctions.

In the view of Chauvin (2013), competition is shaped by official classifications but also by informal categories and numerical assessments of actions promoted by different sources and "entrepreneur reputation" (FINE, 1996). Prices are essential in this competition process, both as a product and as a means of reputation. Reputation is not the exclusive property of economic activity; it is a "fluid" that circulates between institutions, organisations, individuals, and products. In other words, reputation transfers are a fundamental status and economic competition dimension.

5 CONCLUSION

Breweries invigorate their products through storytelling, a market device that offers discursive flexibility and incorporates both the structures and logic of the existing hegemonic capitalism. It makes it possible to embrace new technologies and look towards the future. Stories of passionate self-investment in the brewery (echoed through narrative as a marketing practice and supported by shared stories of cooperation and opposition) serve as an alibi for concerns about profit maximisation and as a prophylactic against the modern malaise of rationalisation and joyless accumulation (Smith Maguire et al., 2018).

Such stories are of their time, as specific narratives require people willing to tell and listen to them to gain and maintain cultural visibility. The evident desire to hear these narratives of authenticity thus illuminates broader concerns with the dissatisfactions of modern work, consumption, and social life that have deep roots in sociological thought. These businesses and the narratives they disseminate have thrived during prolonged economic instability. If we follow Boltanski and Esquerre (2016), these businesses have become a central site for creating financial and cultural value through enrichment processes.



While previous studies on authenticity in consumer culture have focused on consumers and their perceptions of what is or is not authentic (Beverland, Farrelly, 2010), in this study, breweries identify themselves as small and independent and make "claims of authenticity" (Ocejo, 2017, p. 69) through narratives of the producers that they use to add meaning and value to their products.

The craft product has an original differential experienced at the production stage, enabling it to circulate in a broader market (regional, national, global) and maintain an identity as a "craft" commodity. Thus, the stories on the labels, ingredient identification, seals, and awards legitimise the originality of that craft beer and are seen as expressions of individuality, cultural discernment, anti-mass consumption, feelings, and distinction (Pozer; Desoucey; Sikavica, 2014).



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