

## ARTICLE

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Translated version

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S0034-759020200106>CRAFT AND COMMERCIAL DIMENSION IN  
CONSTRUCTING A BEER MARKET*Dimensões artesanal e massificada na construção do mercado cervejeiro**Dimensiones Artesanal y Comercial en la Construcción del Mercado Cervejero*

## ABSTRACT

Recent studies have shown that market construction is a dynamic process involving multiple actors in hegemonic and alternative positions. To understand the interconnection of these positions, the study aims to analyze how the dynamics of configuration and reconfiguration of a market frame the hegemonic and alternative positions in a multidimensional system. Using an interpretative approach, we examine the Southern Brazil (Rio Grande do Sul state) brewing market to describe the interconnection of craft (alternative) and mass (hegemonic) dimensions. We observe a constant process of overflowing and realignment of tensions and practices that enable the coexistence of different dimensions. Results allow theorizing about a specific type of connection—covalent—between the multiple market dimensions, in which the practices of actors repel and attract both dimensions constantly, without definitive stabilization around a single dimension.

**KEYWORDS** | Market dynamics, market practice, market dimensions, covalent bonds, beer.

## RESUMO

Estudos recentes têm evidenciado que a construção de mercados é um processo dinâmico gerado por múltiplos atores em posições hegemônicas e alternativas. Buscando compreender a interligação dessas posições, o estudo tem como objetivo analisar como as dinâmicas de configuração e reconfiguração de um mercado resultam num enquadramento das posições hegemônicas e alternativas em um sistema multidimensional. Por meio de uma abordagem interpretativa, toma-se o mercado cervejeiro do Rio Grande do Sul como contexto para analisar a interligação das dimensões artesanal (alternativa) e massificada (hegemônica). Identifica-se um processo constante de transbordamento e realinhamento das tensões e práticas capaz de preservar a coexistência das diferentes dimensões. Os resultados permitem teorizar sobre uma forma distinta de ligação entre as dimensões de um mercado, denominada covalente, na qual as práticas desempenhadas por atores repelem e atraem ambas as dimensões constantemente, sem que ocorra a estabilização definitiva em torno de uma única dimensão.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE** | Dinâmicas de mercado, práticas de mercado, dimensões do mercado, ligações covalentes, cerveja.

## RESUMEN

Estudios recientes han evidenciado que la construcción de mercados es un proceso dinámico generado por múltiples actores en posiciones hegemónicas y alternativas. Buscando comprender la interconexión de esas posiciones, esta investigación tiene como objetivo analizar cómo las dinámicas de configuración y reconfiguración de un mercado resultan en un encuadramiento de las posiciones hegemónicas y alternativas en un sistema multidimensional. Por medio de un enfoque interpretativo, se toma el mercado cervicero del sur de Brasil (estado de Rio Grande do Sul) como contexto para analizar la interconexión de las dimensiones artesanal (alternativa) y masificada (hegemónica). Se identifica un proceso constante de desbordamiento y realineamiento de tensiones y prácticas capaz de preservar la coexistencia de las diferentes dimensiones. Los resultados permitieron teorizar sobre una forma distinta de conexión entre las dimensiones de un mercado—llamada covalente—en la cual las prácticas desempeñadas por actores repelen y atraen ambas dimensiones constantemente, sin que se produzca la estabilización definitiva en torno a una sola dimensión.

**PALABRAS CLAVE** | Dinámicas de mercado, Prácticas de mercado, Dimensiones del mercado, vínculos covalentes, cerveza.

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## INTRODUCTION

The construction of markets has been described as a process involving different agents (Dolbec & Fischer, 2015; Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013) who can shape a new socio-material structure (Callon, 1998; Martin & Schouten, 2014). Understanding this process involves recognizing the dynamics that constantly configure and reconfigure a market (Giesler & Fischer, 2017). For example, in their study on the organic food market, Thompson and Coskuner-Balli (2007) found that, inasmuch as these food products are an alternative option to conventional foods, they tend to be co-opted by the hegemonic market, unless the alternative dimension is reconfigured into a new market with different practices, meanings and ideologies. In turn, Martin and Schouten (2014) noted that the configuration of an alternative socio-technical structure created a new dimension in the motorcycle market, called *minimotos*. However, in the case described by Martin and Schouten (2014), the alternative dimension does not conflict with the hegemonic dimension, and is intentionally subsumed into it. A similar phenomenon has been identified in other studies on the fashion (Dolbec & Fischer, 2015; Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013), beer (Kjeldgaard, Askegaard, Rasmussen, & Østergaard, 2017) and restaurant (Weijo, Martin, & Arnould, 2018) markets.

These studies reveal that market construction involves emerging and hegemonic dimensions which give them a multidimensional character. Considering the demand for understanding the market as a complex relational system (Giesler & Fischer, 2017), just as important as describing the oppositions and co-optations that result in new markets or in emerging dimensions being subsumed by the hegemonic market, is recognizing processes that preserve this multidimensionality. The reason for this is that understanding about markets is based on describing either its mainstream side, its architecture (Fligstein, 2002), practices (Kjellberg & Helgesson, 2007) and actors (Callon, 1986), or the counterculture in terms of resistance (Thompson & Coskuner-Balli, 2007) and constraints (Hietanen & Rokka, 2015). Few studies describe the connection between both sides and, especially, how they can coexist and preserve their multiple dimensions.

In view of the above, the present study aims to analyze how a market's configuration and reconfiguration dynamics can result in framing hegemonic and alternative positions into a multidimensional market system. To that end, it is necessary to understand markets beyond a twofold exchange mechanism (a buyer and a seller), thereby recognizing a set of practices performed by a network of actors that result in the active modeling

of supply and forms of consumption (Araujo, Finch & Kjellberg, 2010; Callon, 2016; Kjellberg & Helgesson, 2007). These practices consist of temporary and imaginary frames directly linked to the context in which they emerge. We therefore chose the beer market in the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul as the context of our study. This market has relevant characteristics, given its historical construction based on a series of changes arising from the acquisition of local breweries by hegemonic business groups in the 1990's (Morado, 2009). In addition, Rio Grande do Sul is the state with the largest number of breweries in Brazil (Marcusso & Müller, 2019), which is due to the rise of a local craft beer scene (Cruz, Fonseca, & Castilhos, 2017).

This allows identifying the constitution of two distinct dimensions, one hegemonic and designated as mass production – characterized by beers produced on a large scale, using additives to reduce costs and speed up production processes – and another, alternative one called artisanal – characterized by a production process that is free of additives and slower in terms of brewing and maturation, which values the master brewer and is therefore sold on a smaller scale (Corazza, 2011). Unlike the concept of segments that predominates in the managerial marketing literature, market dimensionality is not limited to managerial practices of framing consumers within established groups; rather, it consists in a dynamic process of framing and reframing the entire market, its multiple actors and practices. Specifically, dimensionality allows identifying a particular form of connection between the multiple market dimensions which is called covalent connection, in which the dimensions coexist without stabilizing around the hegemonic dimension. In the following chapters, we detail the theoretical and empirical aspects evoked in this introduction.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Historically, market studies have sought to describe markets beyond a structural and functional model and have recognized the social and cultural aspects involved in their formation (Polanyi, 1957; Slater & Tonkiss, 2001). In spite of its difficult conceptualization, a market can be defined as a configuration of interdependent actors that dynamically and performatively shape practices and objects by means of trade (Araujo et al., 2010; Giesler & Fischer, 2017). The description of how this configuration is socially built has been more consistently sought by two main theoretical sets. The first of these, which is affiliated with the stream of studies known as Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) (for details, see Casotti & Suarez, 2016), recognizes markets as dynamic systems and highlights the role of consumers in building

and reconfiguring markets (Giesler & Fischer, 2017). The other one, which is known as Constructivist Market Studies (CMS), seeks to describe how actors with heterogeneous roles perform practices that constantly shape and reshape markets (Araujo et al., 2010; Harrison & Kjellberg, 2016). In common, the two perspectives recognize that different actors dynamically configure and reconfigure markets according to their hegemonic or alternative position, as detailed below.

## The hegemonic and alternative sides in market building

Albeit recent, studies describing markets as dynamic systems have highlighted countercultural processes that are inherently opposed to mainstream market development (Hietanen & Rokka, 2015). Thompson and Coskuner-Balli (2007), for example, have recognized, in the case of community-supported agriculture (CSA), a trade process contrary to the one prevailing in food purchasing. By building an alternative food exchange network, consumers take on an ideological battle to escape co-optation by major retail chains. In turn, Press, Arnould, Murray and Strand (2014) expanded these findings by demonstrating that not only consumers but also producers take on alternative ideological positions.

In exploring the fashion context, Scaraboto and Fischer (2013) demonstrated a contrary process in which consumers acted to legitimize an alternative dimension (fashion standards that differ from those established by the fashion industry) within the hegemonic market. In detailing the role of consumers in forming a socio-material structure of markets, Martin and Schouten (2014) described the emergence a minimoto market in the US and how this alternative dimension was subsumed into the network of actors responsible for building it within the hegemonic dimension. In another context, Weijo et al. (2018) identified the goal of those who organize the Restaurant Day festival in Finland, i.e., to make the Nordic restaurant market rules more flexible by creating an alternative dimension. This alternative dimension has a temporary, ephemeral character that is limited to the scope of its goals.

By revealing ideological and institutionalization processes of alternative dimensions in the market, these studies reinforce markets' multidimensional character. Even if ephemerally, these dimensions are built as the result of a network of actors engaged in practices that constantly configure and reconfigure markets (Hietanen & Rokka 2015). Understanding these practices involves, according to Kjellberg and Helgesson (2007), recognizing three types: a) exchange practices – these involve conducting individual operations through economic exchanges; b) normative practices

– through the formulation and reformulation of rules and norms regarding the behavior of actors in the market and how it should work; and c) representational practices – which can constitute the market's semiotic structure and the distinctions that shape a specific market..

Thus, the market practices model proposed by Kjellberg and Helgesson (2007) is useful to show how the process of constitution of this market multidimensionality occurs. This is clearly shown by the study of Hietanen and Rokka (2015), who used this model to describe the construction of an alternative dimension from constraint practices that oppose the expansion practices that predominate in the electronic music market. However, while previous studies recognize the market's multidimensionality, it is necessary to understand how these dimensions are constituted within a given market.

## Translations in the dynamics of markets

The description of market interaction processes has found in Actor-Network Theory (ANT) (Latour, 2005) a powerful instrument, especially based on the studies of Callon (1986). In line with plane ontological concepts (DeLanda, 2006), ANT seeks to describe the relationship between subjects and objects within a specific field (market). Its merit lies especially in its ability to uncover social relationships and associations by describing institutions, procedures and practices. To that end, it maps controversies and boundaries in the relationship between the distinct actors forming a network of relationships and objects (Latour, 2005).

Such mapping allows describing the process of translation between groups, i.e., the way networks of relationships and objects become “stable” in the face of markets' fluidity and multiplicity (Callon, 1986, 2016). Translation consists of all displacements between actors, and in such displacements actors change, displace and translate their various, contradictory interests, in both symbolic and material terms (Tonelli, 2016). Thus, while translation involves movements generated by actors, it also transforms actors through their interactions (Callon, 1986). However, it is important to understand that translation is not limited to a connection of actors or a network of actors; rather, it is a connection that induces different elements to coexist by assigning them characteristics that can establish (more or less) stable relationships between the elements (Callon, 2016).

In this process, translations cause a flow of frames and overflows. Framing is understood as a process of establishing boundaries within which interactions between agents, objects and structures take shape (Callon, 1998). The frame is not

dependent on actors' instrumental and economic rationality; rather, it is a process rooted in the physical and organizational devices and laden with imperfections and failures (Araujo *et al.*, 2010; Callon, 1998). From this arise overflows, i.e., negative or positive externalities resulting from imperfections in the frames (Callon, 1998). Overflows can be involuntarily or intentionally generated in function of actors' reflexive motion (Leme & Resende, 2017).

Based on this, the theoretical proposal presented in this study recognizes markets as a dynamic system in which actors' practices (Kjellberg & Helgesson, 2007) cause constant overflowing and reframing (Callon, 1998, 2016). However, we suggest, in particular, that the translations resulting from this process do not necessarily reconfigure new markets (as Leme & Resende, 2017; Martin & Schouten, 2014, among others, have also found), but rather new dimensions that connect to each other within a single market while preserving its multidimensional character.

## METHOD

The construction of this study's empirical plan started from an interpretative gaze interested in understanding the construction of the beer market in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. In line with other studies (Cruz *et al.*, 2017; Kjeldgaard *et al.*, 2017), the beer market is here understood as the set of meanings and practices organized around beer and involving a market conjuncture and its historical changes. Moreover, in defining this market as a study context, we took into account the possibility of delimiting symbolic boundaries and the movements occurring within them (Dalmoro & Nique, 2017). Thus, the beer market in this state has particular features, initially at the margin of the process through which the national beer market took form, then moving towards incorporation into the national market, with the creation of Companhia de Bebidas das Americas (Ambev) in 1999 (Morado, 2009). This movement is complemented by that of craft beer producers pursuing local leadership (Cruz *et al.*, 2017). Thus, Rio Grande do Sul is characterized by being the state with the largest number of breweries in Brazil (186), which demonstrates the relevance of this market in the national scenario (Marcusso & Müller, 2019). This scenario, which involves a group of large, established companies and the emergence of numerous craft breweries, has allowed to clearly identify two distinct positions: the large national beer industry, which forms a nucleus where few actors control most of the market through large-scale distribution, and which is called in this study the mass production dimension;

(b) local breweries forming a nucleus with a multitude of small-scale actors, which are here called the artisanal dimension.

In analyzing this context, we were guided by process theorization (Giesler & Thompson, 2016). More specifically, the empirical work was conducted following a transformative perspective, i.e., it involved understanding events, activities and perceptions that reveal interconnections, demands and influences in the market configuration. The transformative perspective was found to be appropriate for this study as it focuses on variations over a process which are able to break the structure's inertia, yet are not strong enough to cause a rupture in the structure (Giesler & Thompson, 2016). Such variations do not aim to provide a historical chronology, but rather understand events that bring about market transformations. This theorization derives from a set of events which can confer a narrative and symbolic contours on the process (Giesler & Thompson, 2016).

Once we defined the context and the interpretative perspective, we conducted an immersion in this cultural field by means of two steps in order to explore the two dimensions and the movements of both groups of actors within and between these dimensions. The first step took place mostly from March to June 2017 and aimed to collect netnographic data by: a) monitoring virtual spaces that address the subject, such as blogs and vlogs; b) monitoring and participating in discussions on social networks (Facebook and a WhatsApp group) of the Association of Craft Brewers of Rio Grande do Sul (ACervA Gaúcha); c) building and analyzing a database (about 300Mb) with news stories, documents, government reports, books and scientific articles about the beer market around the world and in Brazil. Netnographic data were collected by the second author, and the observations were recorded in diaries and shared between the authors. It is important to note that the first author had no prior knowledge of the subject, while the second author had an artisanal producer's viewpoint (small production for own consumption). Data obtained in this first phase had a macro character, i.e., they helped us build an analytical logic and produce meaning about the market configuration (Giesler & Thompson, 2016).

The second step involved in-depth interviews. To that end, a semi-structured script was designed with 15 questions organized around three central subjects: a) an overview of the interviewees – “grand tour” (McCracken 1988); b) perceptions about beer production and consumption practices; and c) conflicts between the industrial and artisanal production models. The selection of respondents started with a person connected to ACervA Gaúcha. We then used the “snowball sample” technique in order to reach people with different profiles (artisanal producers, managers



and master brewers at large breweries, and market experts). By the tenth interview, the researchers found evidence of data saturation (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) as respondents' explanations were providing similar arguments. In order to confirm this, an additional interview was conducted, thus totaling 11 interviews of about 50 minutes each. Exhibit 1 describes the profile of each interviewee.

### Exhibit 1. Description of interviewees

Name	Time of involvement with the market	Type of involvement
Gustavo	20 years	Master Brewer, Microbrewery Owner
Olívio	35 years	Master Brewer, Microbrewery Owner
Michael	30 years	Master Brewer, Microbrewery Owner
Sandro	35 years	Consultant, Judgement Committee Member and Master Brewer
Marco	20 years	Brewery Distributor, Consumer
Bregon	25 years	Brewery Partner and Director
Mário	17 years	Member of Acerva Estrela, Craft Brewer
Djonathan	7 years	Consumer, Craft Brewer
Branco	7 years	YouTube (channel on beer), Craft Brewer
Paolo	5 years	Brewery Owner
Edson	3 years	Consumer, Craft Brewery Owner

Data obtained in the second phase had a micro character, i.e., they described mostly the interviewees' perceptions and experiences in the market. Once we finished that phase, we examined articles and news stories in our database in order to check the consistency of respondents' accounts – for example: accuracy about dates and the relevance of narrated events. This procedure was also useful to confirm the interconnection between the events identified in the macro analysis (e.g., the acquisition of local breweries by Ambev) and the micro-level perceptions provided by respondents (e.g., the meanings the actors attributed to these acquisitions). According to Giesler and Thompson (2016), the combination of micro and macro data provides a rich and varied empirical basis for theorizing the process.

Data analysis and interpretation followed the premise that data not only express interviewees' views, but they also articulate

the cultural system (beer market) of which interviewees are part (Thompson, 1997). To that end, we adopted the category analysis technique (Lofland & Lofland, 2015) and used the Nvivo software. The first author coded the interviews with terms that identify emerging, common narratives. The emerging codes were then reviewed in light of the netnographic data and were discussed between the authors in order to identify a sequence of key events. Later, data were grouped so as to form three categories: a) the beer market framing; b) dynamics of (re)configuration of an alternative dimension; and c) consequences of the market dynamics. Finally, we identified in each category the description of exchange, normative and representational practices (Kjellberg & Helgesson, 2007), as well as oppositions involving the multiple dimensions identified in the market.

## DATA ANALYSIS

The first step in analyzing data involved identifying the frame that shapes the market. Starting from a historical construction, the beer market has been characterized by multinational companies associating with national companies to form large conglomerates (Ambev, Heineken and Cervejaria Petrópolis) that account for producing and selling 98% of the beer consumed in the country (Cervieri, 2017). This production is predominantly formed by Pilsen beer, following an international standard of light beers with less malt complemented by unmalted cereals which, besides reducing production costs, results in a product that is lighter and more suitable to the taste of the population at large (Oliver, 2012). In addition, large brewers have a wide distribution and promotion system that can reach about 1.2 million points of sale, thereby marketing 13.3 billion liters of beer per year (Cervieri, 2017). These figures make Brazil the third largest beer market in the world in terms of volume and revenues (Marcusso & Müller, 2019) and this underscores a mass production, hegemonic dimension in the beer market.

However, this scenario involves boundaries and controversies (Latour, 2005) due to the creation of new breweries. According to Marcusso and Müller (2019), in 2010, there were 266 breweries registered in Brazil; by 2018, that number had grown to 889. These are basically microbreweries, brewpubs and regional breweries targeting local markets, producing different types of beer than Pilsen and focusing on the experience of consumption and quality (Lapoli, 2019). These characteristics allow establishing a clear boundary between the mass production dimension and this emergent one which is recognized as artisanal (Lapoli, 2019). The artisanal dimension shows an average growth

of 15% per year, while mass production beer consumption has remained stable or seen some decrease (Instituto da Cerveja, 2016; Lapoli, 2019). The explanation for this may be found in the emergence of a particular type of consumer called the “artisanal consumer”, who can apply skills and passions in the search for products developed and made by the same person as a form of reaction to the standardization of those mass-produced ones (Campbell, 2005).

Therefore, the beer market can be described as comprehending an evident hegemonic dimension associated with large, mass production companies, and an alternative dimension associated to the emergent artisanal production. Based on this multidimensional framing, we will next detail the process of configuration and reconfiguration of both dimensions in the beer market in the state of Rio Grande do Sul.

## Dynamics of configuration of a new dimension in the market

Commercial beer production in Rio Grande do Sul was marked by the influence of German immigration on recipes and inputs. Regional companies valued malt, which resulted in full-bodied beers, such as SerraMalte, which was characterized by an extra amount of malt, and high-fermentation Estrela Stout, produced by Cervejaria Polar. These characteristics resulted in a distinction from the rest of the country where low-fermentation beers predominated and were produced on a larger scale with unmalted cereals by national-level players such as Brahma and Antartica (Limberger, 2013). This scenario lasted until the 1990’s, when the creation of Ambev reconfigured the local market, starting with the acquisition or merger of different regional brands, as interviewee Olivio describes:

I worked for 20 years at Polar, in Estrela. It was a company whose essence was to produce quality beer. Not just Polar, we used to have very good beers in our state. There was Serramalte, from Feliz, and Original, in Montenegro. We used to have a lot of options of beer to pick from. When Ambev appeared, that was over... They bought and shut them all. Now, in Viamão, Ambev makes them all: Skol, Polar, Antartica. That changed the scene a lot at the time, because such a unification ended the natural competition between brands (Olívio, a master brewer and microbrewery owner).

The movement of acquisition of local breweries by Ambev as described by interviewee Olivio culminated in the market concentrating around one hegemonic player. The closure of factories also affected consumers in that they ceased to prefer the local production. Interviewee Marco describes this process from this viewpoint as a consumer:

In the old days, with Polar, people used to say that good beer was produced at Rua Pinheiro Machado, 347 [Polar’s address]. We used to be strongly connected to the brand and the product. When that was over, I ended up trying to continue to value local beer, with just a few small factories in the area. Of course, at first, I’d still consume commercial products due to the lack of labels and information. A few years later, my brother started an artisanal brewery and, from then on, I’ve always consumed artisanal beer (Marco, a beer distributor manager and artisanal beer consumer).

The imperfections and limitations left by the closure of local breweries and the introduction of mass offer caused an overflow, leading local players to seek alternative ways of production and consumption. Interviewee Michael, who works in the beer industry for about 30 years, comments that there was the desire to do something different, of higher quality compared to the standardized product that large breweries began to impose. A network of artisanal brewers was formed whose members were willing to rebuild the established offer standard: “We started the factory initially so we wouldn’t have to consume Ambev products anymore. I felt we could once again have good beer around” (Olívio, a master brewer and microbrewery owner).

The interviewers’ accounts show that the overflow involved, in this case, rather a willingness to make their own beer within expected quality standards than market conditions per se. The explanation for this may be in the fact that building alternative spaces involves cooperation and activism efforts capable of creating an infrastructure to support and solidify an identity that benefits such spaces (Rao, Morrill, & Zald, 2000). In addition, another relevant characteristic in this process was that the producer and consumer roles were broken (Humphreys & Grayson, 2008), since the interviewees report they were commercial beer consumers, but began to take on the role of producers.

The transformation of such oppositions and overflows into a new dimension involved different practices (Kjellberg & Helgesson, 2007). The first group involved building new exchange

practices. Gustavo reports that consumers were not used to consuming any other type of beer than Pilsen:

In the beginning, we weren't selling any Ale-type beer. The consumer thought that beer was stale as it was bitterer, more full-bodied. We gradually started to launch beer that was more full-bodied such as Brown or Vienna so the consumer would gradually get used to different beer profiles. Over time, the demand for stronger beer increased, and we followed that demand and eventually fostered it (Gustavo, a master brewer and microbrewer owner).

Such lack of knowledge on the consumer's side drove Michael to develop a package that would get consumers' attention, and he bottled his beer into what resembled a medicine bottle. In addition, because it was a product with living yeast in it, when people opened the bottle, they would hear it pop: "I believe it was the first beer that sold through audition... Besides its quality, of course, which has always been superior" (Michael, a master brewer and microbrewery owner). Thus, one can see representational practices being used as a complement to exchange practices as a way of distinguishing artisanal from mass production beer.

In addition, interviewees report that the representational practices performed by both producers and consumers earned estimation for local beer. Master brewer Gustavo stresses that, in the artisanal dimension, brand is not so relevant as a symbolic element, since consumption is guided by a local character. The interviewee sees local as an element that represents superior quality, since it allows knowing where the beverage is produced and having a closer contact with the brewer. In line with the accounts of other interviewees, Gustavo reinforces the master brewer's role in testing raw material, combinations and processes in search of new styles and quality production. Therefore, they are in a position to establish distinct representations for their products in relation to mass production ones.

The interviewees' accounts also refer to normative aspects involved in the practices of artisanal brewers. For them, artisanal production is characterized by following the "law of purity", which means producing pure malt beer, i.e., beer produced from water, malt, hop and yeasts only (Morado, 2009). The interviewees explain that even though Brazilian legislation allows including other inputs – especially unmalted cereals which are largely used in the production of mass-distribution beer – following the "pure malt" rule was necessary to reach a superior quality product. That

rule eventually took on the position of mediator (as described by Latour 2005), i.e., it makes it possible for invisible aspects to be named and take on a social meaning, making them "visible" and capable of being disseminated. By following the rule and spreading it in the products' labels, the brewers distinguished themselves from the large breweries that did not follow it.

According to Ebner and Beck (2008), configuring a market involves exchanges between different agents with different interests and perceptions. Thus, in addition to consumers' efforts to support the craft beer market (Koch & Sauerbronn, 2019), the configuration of the craft dimension within the beer market in the state of Rio Grande do Sul involved an overflow and a reframing into two distinct dimensions. In this process, we highlight the practices of local brewers in building this distinction between beer types recognized as mass production and craft beer.

## Consequences of the market's multidimensionality

Just like the food market, the construction of an alternative dimension did not configure a change in the hegemonic dimension (Press et al, 2014; Thompson e Coskuner-Balli, 2007). However, while for Press et al. (2014) the explanation lies in the ideological orientation of products, in the case of the market under analysis, the explanation lies in the dominance of the market by a few mass production breweries (Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service [Sebrae], 2015). The consequence of that is not an ideological dispute, but rather a re-alignment of different actors around the two dimensions:

The craft beer market grows exponentially. It develops a lot in the South due to the colder climate and easy access to inputs, and it has bothered large corporations a lot. You see new companies appearing each day with high quality beer. The large corporations have spotted this niche and they bought a few microbreweries (Bregon, a brewery partner and director).

As the interviewee stressed, mass production breweries began to follow the artisanal dimension's dynamics. Two key events related to that occurred when microbreweries Baden and Eisenbahn were bought by the Schincariol group and when Colorado and Wäls, two symbols of the craft scene, were bought by AmBev. However, unlike the cooptation processes which tend to re-align the alternative dimension to the hegemonic one

(Thompson e Coskuner-Balli, 2007), in these cases, efforts were made to conceal that connection between the large breweries and the small firms. For Corazza (2011), the purpose of concealing that connection is to keep the acquired companies' frame within the artisanal dimension. To that end, when Cervejaria Colorado's acquisition by Ambev was disclosed, the report stressed that the brewery's founder and recognized master brewer in the craft scene would continue to work in creating new products and ensuring their quality and differentiation. At the same time, the report stressed that Ambev's distribution capacity would expand access to the products, therefore benefiting consumers. As described by Chapman, Lello and Lippard (2017), the common narrative about artisanal producers is that they do not produce for profit, but rather for the pleasure of making beer, thus becoming symbols of the alternative dimension and capable of lending their trajectories in keeping an alternative discourse.

For the interviewees, the efforts made by large companies to preserve the alternative dimension are explained by their financial gains:

We (craft beer producers) gave them commercial ones (mass production) the market on a tray. Brahma Extra, Bohemia, Original, those used to sell at 2 reais, along with all the others (Skol, Kaiser, Antarctica, among others). The premium beer niche didn't exist. They all sold at 2 reais. We were selling craft at 7 reais. And we were selling it! So what those guys did, they created a premium beer niche, in between craft and commercial ones. They put into it those Brhamas, Bohemias at 4 reais, making twice as much as they used to. We gave them that possibility. With that difference, Ambev bought Colorado, Wähls. Just with that 2-real variation. That's a terrific deal, isn't it? (Michael, a master brewer and microbrewery owner).

By analyzing industry data, one can see that while the volume of beer sold drops, companies' revenues increase due to the sale of premium and craft beer (Cervieri, 2017). Consumption indicators point that consumers are drinking less – a decrease in per capita consumption – but they are drinking better quality, higher-price products (Koch & Sauerbronn, 2019; Marcusso & Müller, 2019). By aligning their exchange practices within an artisanal dimension, the major breweries end up expanding it by means of price reduction and greater distribution capacity. This exchange expansion process via price reduction and increased competition

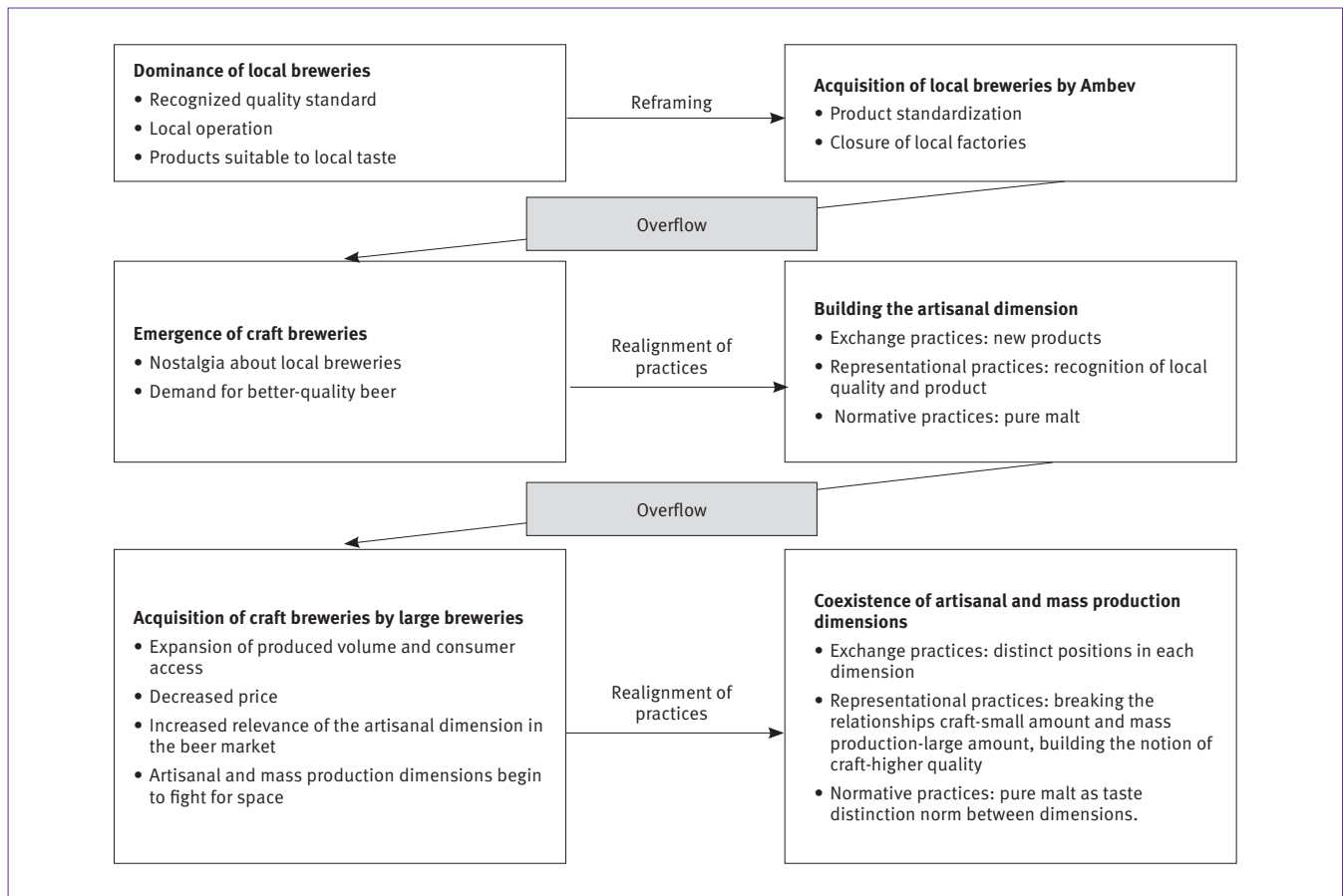
is evaluated differently among interviewees. While some manifest concern about local breweries' competitiveness, others see a win-win for all actors involved: "Now in the supermarkets, you'll find higher-quality beer at lower prices than a few years ago. I see this popularization of craft beer in a positive way for all market players" (Bregon, a brewery partner and director).

To the interviewees, the central point about preserving the artisanal dimension resides in the representational practices: "The word 'craft' is not clear for either the consumer or the producer. You don't have a clear distinction of what craft beer is, and that makes it difficult to segment the market" (Mário, a craft brewer). In their search for a definition of what "craft beer" stands for, the interviewees evoke the following notion: "It's a lot about the beer maker's soul. Craft is about how you see beer. I think that to be craft, the brewer must be more important than the business department" (Michael, a master brewer and microbrewery owner). Thus, brewery consultant Sandro thinks the entry of large breweries into the artisanal dimension does not represent the end of it, since artisanal is not associated with production volume, but rather with perceived quality and the importance of the master brewer in its production. To him, if large breweries keep the quality standard of craft beers, they will just reinforce the dimension. As Thompson (2004) described, representation is shaped according to a market's competitive characteristics, and it provides meanings and metaphors that serve the agendas of the different actors involved. Thus, the threat of losing the meanings attached to craft beer does not lie in large breweries acquiring craft ones, but in the artisanal dimension's ability to occupy a relevant space in the market's competitive dynamics.

Market space occupation by the artisanal dimension also involves normative practices of consumption of craft beer via taste adequation. To microbrewery owner Michael, consumers have changed their habits especially due to the dissemination of the "pure malt" rule and the quality standard resulting from it. By having contact with craft beer, they were instigated into a transformation of the taste, as stressed by craft brewer Djonathan: "The first time I consumed it (craft beer), I was automatically comparing it with the beer I had been consuming. I felt great quality difference, and now I consume craft beer only". As Carroll and Swaminathan (2000) observed, in the beer market, mass and craft producers act in establishing quality markers by mobilizing resources of taste. The "pure malt" rule is mobilized to educate the consumer and defy the perceptions formed in the mass production dimension; it is mobilized both by craft breweries and large breweries as they launch new products that comply with that rule. By way of summary, Figure 1 represents the practices identified within a flow of overflow and realignment.



Figure 1. Configuration and reconfiguration dynamics of the beer market in the state of Rio Grande do Sul



## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Firstly, our results allow understanding the overflow of the beer market in the state of Rio Grande do Sul based on key events related to the acquisition and closure of local breweries by Ambev. These events worked like forces that caused market structures to move towards a multidimensional market scenario. However, the re-alignment of market practices did not result in the emergence of a new market, as described by [Martin and Schouten \(2014\)](#), or in these practices being subsumed by the market's hegemonic side, as described by [Dolbec e Fischer \(2015\)](#). What stands out in this case is that the overflows and re-framings which, according to previous studies ([Callon, 2016](#); [Leme & Resende, 2017](#)), should cause market destabilization caused instead coexistence by means of representational and normative exchange practices capable of ensuring a distinction between the alternative and the hegemonic dimension. Thus, this multidimensionality is not due to market stabilization, but rather to the set of practices which can preserve that characteristic, even in presence of the constant reconfigurations that define the markets' dynamic character.

Based on the above, our results reveal how multiple market dimensions can coexist without necessarily being co-opted by the hegemonic dimension. Recent studies observed that actors' efforts to build a countercultural dimension tend to run out of steam as it becomes legitimized in hegemonic groups ([Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013](#); [Weijo et al., 2018](#)). In rare cases, these actors need to develop an ideological battle to avoid co-optation and create a new market based on completely distinct exchange mechanisms, as with community-supported agriculture ([Thompson e Coskuner-Balli, 2007](#)). With the beer market under analysis, the multiple dimensions operate in a process of attraction and repulsion: while the emergence of an alternative dimension attracts hegemonic actors' attention, the configuration of the artisanal dimension requires them to change a few practices in order to enter the artisanal dimension. That generates repulsion between both dimensions due to the realignment of practices in a specific way in each dimension, thus reinforcing their differences.

The explanation for this lies primarily in the gains that the coexistence of multiple dimensions provides both for the actors

originally linked to the hegemonic dimension and for the actors linked to the alternative dimension. In addition, unlike the food market described by Press et al. (2014), which requires actors to take on an ideological position in one or the other dimension, in the beer market, actors can circulate in both dimensions by adopting specific practices in each of them. That is because the distinction operates in the market's non-human sphere, i.e., in its materiality – craft beer versus mass production beer – rather than at the level of human and organizational actors and their ideology.

Based on these findings, we propose a new metaphor to describe the connection between market dimensions. Using the notion of covalent bond – which describes a particular bond between electrons in exact sciences (Lewis, 1916), we propose to describe a connection process in which one market can share a few practices while preserving other distinct ones. This differs from the previously observed form connection in which the realignment of practices causes them to be subsumed by hegemonic market producers (Thompson & Coskuner-Balli, 2007), consumers (Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013) and organizations (Martin & Schouten, 2014; Kjeldgaard et al., 2017), thus eliminating the initial distinction.

In line with Callon's (2016) view, the covalent bond between different dimensions configures a common market by sharing the same platform, which is identified through the beer product. The translation processes (Tonelli, 2016) between dimensions causes the connection of elements that produce market reality. Each actor, even though operating in more than one dimension, is responsible for bringing these elements in a distinct manner into each dimension with their own practices. These practices, albeit capable of ensuring the distinction between the markets, are not capable of changing the reality of the market as a whole.

The covalent bond metaphor can be observed in other markets that have an emerging dimension built from differentiation through quality, rather than quantity. We can use as an example the hamburger market in which companies operating in the mass production dimension have been trying to move around the artisanal dimension as seen with McDonald's, which has been recently trying to develop products closer to those offered by craft burger shops (Dearo, 2019). However, in the case of markets where distinction in production processes is not possible – e.g., organic food sold in street markets or in large supermarket chains – there is a tendency to present forms of traditional connection, thus resulting in the conventionalization of alternative products and brands (Lockie & Halpin, 2005) and their co-optation by the hegemonic dimension (Thompson & Coskuner-Balli, 2007).

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

By proposing a new way of understanding the dynamics of market framing and reframing within a logic of multidimensionality, this study contributes to the notion of a dynamic market system (Giesler & Fischer, 2017) and to the constructivist perspective to markets (Araujo et al., 2010). Thus, at the same time as it identifies actors' role and agency in configuring multiple dimensions, it recognizes the consequences thereof in structuring markets. Therefore, it contributes to the complex task of understanding markets while opening avenues for new studies.

As we reveal the boundaries and controversies that shape market multidimensionality, doubts remain about the sharing between dimensions. It also becomes important to detail the relationship between the human and non-human elements that form each of these dimensions. Thus, the idea of entanglement – a concept from exact sciences which recognizes an interconnection between objects and people so that each of these cannot be correctly described without mentioning its counterpart (Hodder, 2012) – could help describe objects' description and influence on the formation of each dimension. In the case of the beer market, material elements such as malt and label configure distinct positions within the network. Future studies can emphasize these elements in understanding market multidimensionality.

From the viewpoint of context, the consequences of the process of acquisition of craft breweries by large breweries still require clarification, especially in describing how craft breweries can remain competitive, considering large breweries' ability to incorporate practices from the artisanal dimension. The construction of discourses disseminated in the artisanal dimension can also be detailed to involve especially the construction of craft beer identity. This allows recognizing not only the dynamic processes of market construction, but also the concrete elements that establish, sustain and change these market shaping dimensions.

### NOTE

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## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The authors declare that they contributed equally in the paper development. The first author coordinated the conceptualization and theoretical-methodological construction, as well as conducted the theoretical revision. The second author coordinated data collection and preliminary data analysis. Final data analysis was performed jointly. Both authors combine efforts in writing and revising the manuscript.