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PRINCIPLES OF NEOLOCALISM IN THE NAMES OF CZECH MICROBREWERIES

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Abstract

Microbreweries belong to a group of SME businesses, which among other things contribute to local economies and tourism which in turn supports sustainable development of municipalities and local areas. The presented article focuses on motives for choosing a microbrewery's name with regard to the use of neolocalism principles. The researched sample included all microbreweries in the Czech Republic established till end of 2022 year (506 by 31. 12. 2022). Primary and secondary data collection took place from January till March of 2023. We used regression analysis of panel data. Out of the researched sample (506 craft breweries), the influence of neolocalism has been proven in 65% of cases, another 14% of microbreweries are named after their respective founder, and the remaining 21% of microbreweries in the Czech Republic had a different driving factor for choosing their name altogether. Other factors possibly influencing the name of a microbrewery, such as the establishment year, whether or not the microbrewery has its own taproom or the area in which it is located, have also been examined. Out of these factors, only the existence of a taproom has been proven to affect a microbrewery's name.

Keywords: Local brand, Microbreweries, Neolocalism, Yer of establishment, District.

INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

During a time when a shift of paradigm can be observed – one away from globalization to a paradigm of sustainable development of local areas, a symptom of which is the effort of consumers to support local brands (e.g., Zeugner-Roth et al., 2015; Dušek, 2017; Pícha & Skořepa, 2018; Pícha, Navrátil, & Švec, 2018; Khan et al., 2023) – the term *local brand* is very often discussed. Locality is a concept with a long history in multiple disciplines, including philosophy, anthropology and sociology (Benjamin, 1936; MacCannell, 1973). This shared principle is labeled as neolocalism, which was first formed by an American geographer J.R. Shortridge (1996), who defined it as follows: "A deliberate search for regional traditions and binding residents to a locality as a delayed reaction to destroying traditional bonds within both communities and families in the USA." This idea, applied to the brewery industry, is being researched by Flack (1997) for example, who was the first to demonstrate this connection with the increase of microbreweries in the USA, which has been recorded in the 1980's and 1990's.

In his research, he argues that it is precisely microbreweries, the increase of farmers' markets, or local festivals that are examples of support upon realizing the importance of ties and connections to one's locality (Flack 1997). Schnell and Reese (2003) explain that microbreweries are a specific tool used to strengthen local identity. They classify the term neolocalism as a tendency of individuals or groups of people to separate themselves from homogeneity and populture. Subsequently, they create, cultivate and strengthen the connections of local communities, local identities, environment and ties to local economies (Schnell, Reese 2014). Holtkamp et al. (2016) state that neolocalism is the answer to homogenization of economies, city environment and that it is a deliberate attempt to create a new "sense of place", which is an attribute of community. Reid and Gartnell (2015) add that neolocalism does not only explain a connection between people and a place, but can also be used to restore traditions and values which have been connected to a locality in the past, but have since been broken, mostly because of globalisation. Craig et al. (2020) identified a strong link between neolocalism and local or regional development, particularly in the case of the food industry or tourism.

Herskowitz and Crystal (2010) recommend combining neolocalism with marketing and state that due to these qualities, neolocal themes and motives can be and have been deployed systematically in marketing as brand narratives to create a positive association with the product. Ikäheimo (2021) adds that with active storytelling forming the core marketing startegy, locality and the sense of place can be produced, reproduced and maintained in a multitude of ways to add distinctiveness to the product competitive marketing environment. Taylor and DiPietro's (2020) results suggest that enhanced neolocalism contributes positively to customer satisfaction.

The authors of this article were inspired by the following research: Ikäheimo, 2021; Schnell, 2013; Holtkamp, 2016; Debies-Carl, 2019, etc., which focuses on establishing and analyzing motives that lead to the selection and creation of brands by a specific group of SMEs, microbreweries. This article's topic is to explore, which motives lead to the creation of microbreweries' brand in the Czech Republic.

In the Czech Republic, just like in the rest of Europe, there has been a boom of microbreweries since 2010 (Březinová, Skořepa, 2019; Hasman et al, 2023). From 2010 until 2019, more than 350 microbreweries have been founded in the Czech Republic (Březinová, Havelka, Bartoš, 2019). By 31. 12. 2022, there are 506 established already. The overall production of the Czech brewing industry in 2022 was 20.5M hectolitres, with

microbreweries contributing 2.5% (Celní správa České republiky, 2022). The Czech legislation differentiates (as oppossed to Poland, USA or Slovakia) between a few different brewery types based on the volume of their production. The biggest group, industrial breweries, has a production of more than 500,000 hectolitres per year, followed by regional breweries with a production of up to 500,000 hectolitres per year. Then there are restaurant-type breweries with a production of up to 200,000 hectolitres per year and finally microbreweries with a production of up to 10,000 hectolitres per year (Novotný, 2004).

A microbrewery in the Czech Republic is hence defined by a production of up to 10,000 hectolitres per year as well as by the way they brew beer, where the beer is brewed according to traditional recipes and is not filtered nor pasteurised. One of the symptoms of the societal shift from a global paradigm to one that supports sustainable development is a change in consumer behaviour, where the consumer prefers local products and foods (Pokryvčák, 2019; Craig et al, 2020). This results in the establishment of a large number of local brands and the use of neolocalism, which connects the sense of place and the product itself.

DATA AND METHODS

This research was motivated by Holtkamptov's (2016) study, which uses three indicators as identificators for neolocalism in microbreweries: 1) local names and images used in labeling and marketing; 2) environmental sustainability; 3) social and community engagement. In the presented study, the authors focus on the first indicator, the brewery's name. The research was carried out from January till March of 2023, and the websites for all the craft breweries established in the Czech Republic till 31. 12. 2022 were analyzed to assess neolocal practices. Authors looked specifically for branding (e.g., name of the brewery). If the information was not available, microbreweries were questioned via phone call or an in-person visit. Data from all 506 microbreweries were obtained this way. Subsequently, the data were edited and modified.

Data regarding a microbrewery's name were divided into groups based on frequency; 5 groups of answers were created. 1) name of a brewery based on the name of a municipality, its area or a street where the brewery is located. 2) name of a brewery is related to the municipality's history (historical event, historical person living in said municipality, historical monument in said municipality or its proximity, historical house/object that has been in the municipality longer than said brewery), 3) name of a brewery based on a unique natural

formation in said municipality or its proximity (cliff, tree, lake, animal or plant species, river, dam etc.), 4) name of a brewery based either on the owner, founder, one of the founders, brewers or related to the brewery's history. The fifth and last group includes all other answers that don't fit into any of the aforementioned categories. The obtained data were analyzed by content analysis and contingency tables. The results are divided according to selected segmentation criteria: year of the brewery's establishment (there has been a significant increase of microbreweries since 2010, therefore there are only 3 groups up until this year and each year is analyzed individually since then), a type of microbrewery (with taproom MR and without taproom MP) and regions of the Czech Republic where the brewery is located (D1 to D14).

The analysis of selected variables' influence on a brewery's name was conducted via regression analysis of panel data. The stationarity of variables plays an important role while working with panel data, as they are a combination of both time and cross-sectional dimensions. All of the variables have to be relatively stable around the mean value and time dispersion, otherwise, estimation of the regression model, in the sense of a seeming regression, might be distorted. The testing is carried out via Dieckey Fuller's test of unit root (ADF test). In the next step, specific estimation techniques are chosen. It is necessary to take into account the character of econometric model, the optimal character of provided estimates, the purpose of the estimated model, the difficulty of the method used both on quality and quantity of data and its robustness, but also the accessibility of adequate software and time and cost difficulty of the calculations.

Based on the estimated parameters of the econometric model, meaning both estimates of regression coefficients and estimates of stochastic parameters of random parts' distribution as well as observed values of the explanatory variables, the theoretical values of all explained variables are determined. This leads to the solution of the econometric model (Baltagi, 2008). The most famous estimation procedure for determining numerical values of parameters of a single-equation linear regression model out of one selected observation of all its determinable parameters is the method of least squares.

Considering the specific nature of the data, there was a need to use tools compatible specifically with the mentioned data type. Estimation of panel data can be carried out in three ways: using pooled regression model (Pooled Regression), a model with fixed effects (Fixed Effects Model) or a model with random effects (Random Effects Model) (Greene, 2003).

The pooled regression model is also labeled as a comprehensive model and its equation is as follows (for one explaining variable):

$$Y_{it} = \alpha + \beta X_{it} + \epsilon_{it}$$
 (1)

It is a standard regression model, where Yit is the explained variable, Xit is explaining variable and letters α , β mark coefficients, or rather parameters of the model. The letter ϵ_{it} marks a random part. Judging from the names, it can be expected that the explaining variable is going to explain (affect) the dependent variable and coefficient β is going to determine the effect of variable X on Y. This comprehensive model is not suited for most panel data (Baltagi, 2008).

The fixed effects model is used for modelling individual effects of an artificial variable. While this regression has a wide variety of explaining variables, it is still a regression model. For this reason, all information about regression models and the aforementioned regression equation also apply here.

$$Y_{it} = \alpha_N D_{it}^{(N)} + \beta X_{it} + \epsilon_{it}$$
 (2)

As opposed to the previous model, this one assumes a variety of cross-sectional units in absolute numbers, hence the need to create N different artificial variables for the fixed effects model, which are labeled as D(j), where j = 1,...,N (Baltagi, 2008; Green, 2003).

The random effects model does not use artificial variables, but it does assume that individual effects are random quantities. The random effect model can be expressed similarly to the Individual effects model using the equations:

$$Y_{it} = \alpha + \beta X_{it} + \epsilon_{it}$$
 (3)

where, however

$$\epsilon_{it} = v_i + u_{it}. \quad (4)$$

Random effects model can be expressed as a regression model, however, the random part of regression is different. It is a combined random part which was created by combining a random element of a specific observation in a cross-sectional variable and a random element which is a feature of a cross-sectional variable (Baltagi, 2008; Green, 2003).

A more formal recommendations regarding the suitability of each test are given by panel diagnostics, one of the most important ones being Hausman's test, which recommended to estimate the model using fixed effects for the chosen data sample.

The model of dependency of a brewery's name was construed using the following equation:

Name of the brewery_{it} =
$$\beta_0 + \beta_1 Year_{it} + \beta_2 TypMPMR_{it} + \beta_3 District_{it}$$

Where:

I marks a specific state in the range of 1,...,n,

t marks a specific year in the range of 1,...,t,

Year is the year of establishment

Typ MP/ MR the type of brewery MP-microbrewery with taproom/MR –microbrewery without taproom

District expresses the area/region where brewery is located.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This article discusses the different ways which influence how microbreweries in the Czech Republic choose their name and whether or not the neolocalism plays a role in this process. Microbreweries are classified as local producers, and their consumers are for the most part located in their immediate vicinity. There are numerous limitations stemming from their production volume, one of which is also the lack of finances for innovation or for creating their brand. This is one of the reasons why a considerable part of microbreweries choose or design their name and brand themselves, all the while using the principles of neolocalism, as confirmed by the following results.

47% of microbreweries in the Czech Republic have a name based on the name of a municipality (answer 1), 12% of microbreweries have a name related to their respective municipalities' history (answer 2), names based on a unique natural formation located in specific municipalities or their proximity (answer 3) can be seen in 6% of microbreweries while a name related to the founder (answer 4) constitutes 14% of microbreweries, and the remaining 21% have stated a different motive for their name altogether (answer 5).

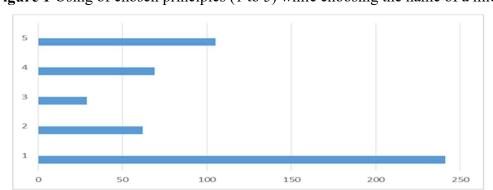


Figure 1 Using of chosen principles (1 to 5) while choosing the name of a microbrewery.

Source: Authors' own work

Suppose we were to combine answers 1 to 3 for a clearer ranking, as they all correspond with the meaning of neolocalism (a connection with a place). In that case, we can see that 65% of microbreweries were influenced by said principle when choosing their name. 21% of respondents have stated other reasons for choosing their name; names of breweries which were created based on a questionnaire for the inhabitants or an owner's attempt to make a joke can be found here (the intention to make a joke or be sarcastic constitutes 34% of this category's answers). The most bizarre case of brewery brand Hulvát (lout) was a reaction to the Czech presidents' inappropriate behaviour at the time. According to the selected segmentation criteria, the results of this research are presented in the following graphs, where the answers 1 to 3 are already combined. Consequently, motive 1 combines answers that use the neolocalism principle, motive 2 (name of a brewery based on the name of the founder) and motive 3 (other reasons). As for the years when the principles of neolocalism were most frequently used to establish a brand for microbreweries, 2013 and 2015 are listed. On the contrary, in 2020, less than 40% of emerging breweries have used these principles.

year of founding (in %).

100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%

2015

2014

■ motive 1 ■ motive 2 ■ motive 3

2016

2017

2018

2020

2021

Table 2 Using neolocalism principles while choosing the name of a brewery, differentiated by year of founding (in %).

Source: Authors' own work

1499 - 1999 2000 - 2004 2005 - 2009 2010

2013

2012

2011

30% 20% 10% 0%

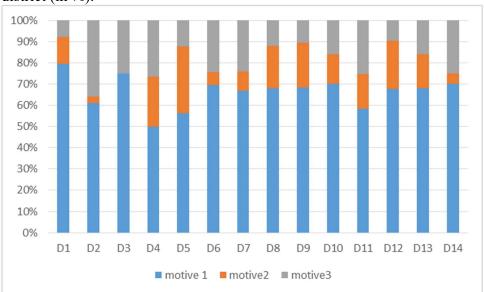
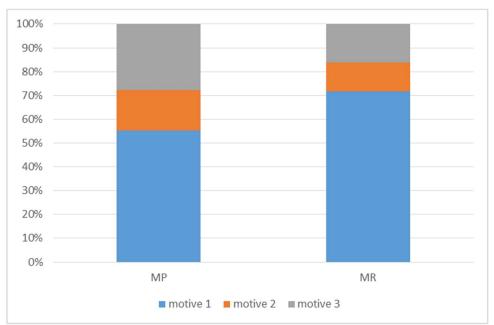


Table 3 Using neolocalism principles while choosing the name of a brewery, differentiated by district (in %).

Source: Authors' own work

Using neolocalism principles for differentiating by district did not reveal any substantial findings, nor did it confirm Tvrzník's (2019) study stating that foreign tourists consider Czech beer as the second greatest attraction in the Czech Republic following historical monuments. Based on the findings that 80% of tourists visit mostly the Czech Republic's capital, Prague, it would be a logical assumption that the principles of neolocalism will be used the least here, as the customers of breweries in the capital will consist not only of Prague's inhabitants but also the tourists, of which a large part does visit the capital specifically. However, district 10 (Prague) is not the area using neolocalism principles the least. It is D4, an area close to the Polish borders. These principles are being used the most in D1, which is a southern part of the Czech Republic.

Table 3 Using neolocalism principles while choosing the name of a brewery, differentiated by existence of taproom (in %). MP microbrewery without a taproom, MR microbrewery with a taproom.



Source: Authors' own work

The abovementioned graph shows that microbreweries with their own taproom follow the principles of neolocalism more often than microbreweries without a taproom. On the other hand, microbreweries without a taproom have a name related to the founder more often. This result confirms Taylorová's (2020) finding that explains this result by stating that taproom microbreweries' consumers mostly reside in close proximity of the brewery, and it is therefore advantageous to use neolocalism as it builds a relationship between the costumers and a place, in this case the craft brewery. This conclusion is also confirmed by the result of panel data analysis in relation to determining the influence of all researched variables on the motive for choosing a brewery's name.

The conducted analysis showed an influence of a brewery's type on its name, with the relevance level even reaching 0.01. The coefficient of determination is 0.360200; hence the presented model explains 36% of a given variable's statistical dispersion. The analysis did not label Other monitored variables as statistically significant for the brewery's name.

Table 1 Fixed effects model for the Name of the Brewery

Variable	Coeff.	Std. Error	t-ratio	p-value	
const	1,57829	0,287608	5,488	6,48e-08	**
					*
Year	0,0189315	0,0185525	1,020	0,3080	
TypMPMR	0,587576	0,155325	3,783	0,0002	**
					*
District	-0,0107854	0,0181031	-0,5958	0,5516	
R2	0,360200				
Adjusted R2	0,358790				
Prob (F-	0,001023				
statistic)					

Note: ***, **, and * represent statistical significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% levels, respectively. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Source: Authors' own work

Demonstrating the influence of a taproom's existence in a microbrewery on its name can be linked to building the loyalty of customers, who are mostly generated from a brewery's immediate vicinity. Let's take into account Taylor's (2020) study, where it is stated that neolocalism has a significant positive influence on relationship quality, and relationship quality has significant positive influences on place attachment and brand attachment. The result of our research makes sense.

CONCLUSION

Three main groups of microbreweries that have created their brand based on different motives can be found in the Czech Republic. Firstly, there is the connection to a place where the brewery is located – this has been used by 65% of microbreweries as their motive. The principles of neolocalism, which stem from each area's uniqueness and history, myths or folk legends, can be seen strongly here. The second group of microbreweries, precisely 14% of microbreweries in the Czech Republic, uses the name of their founder. The last group's motives for choosing their name are classified as other, and attempts at humor or the use of sarcasm can often be seen here. However, completely individual motives are also present. For example, in case of the Hulvát microbrewery, the brand was created as a protest against the inappropriate expressions of Czech president Zeman, who had used vulgar language in his official speeches.

The following studies confirm that microbreweries develop place attachment through the use of location names, local sites, historical events and/or other place features in the brewery name (Eberts, 2014; Holtkamp et al., 2016; Myles & Breen, 2018;). As such, craft breweries are "promoted and consumed as part of place" (Schroeder, 2020) and are a "very effective form of place-making" (Fletchall, 2016) given the connections to the local (e.g. imagery, naming) and the experiential nature of the activity itself (e.g. imbibing in the brewery). In short, neolocalism is used by craft breweries to attach value and identity to a commodity as part of the marketing process (Ikäheimo, 2021). These claims are in accordance to the results of our research.

Lastly, we can say that neolocalism is a strong factor influencing the creation of microbreweries' name in the Czech Republic.

Another research will focus on proving the influence of neolocalism principles in the microbrewery field on customer loyalty connected to a brand and beer labels. We also want to find the motives that led to the naming of large industrial breweries. Here only a minimal influence of the principles of neolocalism can be assumed.

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