



ASSESSING THE POTENTIAL FOR A GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION FOR THE RIBEIRÃO PRETO (SP) BREWING SECTOR FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE VIRTUOUS CIRCLE OF ORIGIN-LINKED QUALITY

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Abstract: Geographical Indications (GIs) play a strategic role in recognizing and enhancing the value of products associated with their origin by combining quality, tradition, and unique territorial characteristics. In Brazil, GIs may be applied to the brewing sector to preserve traditional production methods, promote tourism, and foster the local economy. The Ribeirão Preto, São Paulo, brewing cluster stands out as a promising case for obtaining a GI because of its historical legacy, cultural identity, and the quality of its craft beers. This study aims to assess the potential for a Geographical Indication for the Ribeirão Preto brewing cluster, which has favorable conditions to become a national and international benchmark. The analysis is grounded in the methodology of the "Virtuous Circle of Origin-Linked Quality," which integrates product qualification, the enhancement of local resources, and stakeholder engagement. Therefore, a GI for the Ribeirão Preto brewing cluster represents a strategic opportunity to leverage the region's economic development, strengthen its cultural identity, and consolidate the reputation of local beers in the global market. Accordingly, a geographical indication for the region depends on the synergy to be established among producers, the community, and governance bodies so that it may ultimately be recognized by the State.

Keywords: Brewing cluster; indication of provenance; local productive arrangement; craft beer; regional development.

ANÁLISE DA POTENCIALIDADE DE INDICAÇÃO GEOGRÁFICA PARA O SETOR CERVEJEIRO DE RIBEIRÃO PRETO (SP) SOB A ÓTICA DO CÍRCULO VIRTUOSO DA QUALIDADE LIGADA À ORIGEM

Resumo: A Indicação Geográfica (IG) desempenha papel estratégico no reconhecimento e na valorização de produtos associados à sua origem, unindo qualidade, tradição e características únicas do território. No Brasil as IGs podem ser aplicadas ao setor cervejeiro no intuito de preservar métodos tradicionais de produção, promover o turismo e fomentar a economia local. O polo cervejeiro de Ribeirão Preto/SP desponta como um caso promissor para a obtenção de IG dado o legado histórico, a identidade cultural e a qualidade de suas cervejas artesanais. Este trabalho tem como objetivo analisar a potencialidade de Indicação Geográfica para o polo cervejeiro de Ribeirão Preto/SP, pois esta reúne condições favoráveis para se tornar referência nacional e internacional. A análise está ancorada na metodologia do "Círculo Virtuoso de Qualidade Ligado à Origem", que integra ações de qualificação de produtos, valorização dos recursos locais e engajamento das partes interessadas. Portanto, a IG para o polo cervejeiro de Ribeirão Preto é uma oportunidade estratégica para alavancar o desenvolvimento econômico da região, fortalecer a identidade cultural e consolidar a reputação das cervejas locais no mercado global. Desta forma, a indicação geográfica para a região em questão está vinculada a sinergia que deve ocorrer entre produtores, comunidade e governança para então ser possível seu reconhecimento pelo Estado.

Palavras-chave: Polo cervejeiro; indicação de procedência; arranjo produtivo local; cerveja artesanal;

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1 Introduction

Geographical Indications (GIs) and Collective Marks have increasingly stood out as mechanisms for protecting and enhancing the value of regional products, ensuring the authenticity and quality of products that reflect their origin. In the brewing sector, these designations are essential for protecting production methods, regional ingredients, and flavors that reflect local history and territory.

According to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), GIs allow a product to be marketed distinctively, adding value and authenticity to its label (WIPO, 2020). In this sense, a GI is an essential tool for recognizing the quality and authenticity of products directly associated with their territory of origin and may serve as an instrument for regional development. In Brazil, this system has been used in sectors such as wine, coffee, and cheese, and may also be applied to the recognition of regions renowned for craft beer production.

The Municipality of Ribeirão Preto, in the interior of the State of São Paulo, is known as the "Capital of Draft Beer and Craft Beer"⁶, and part of its economic development and cultural influence has been linked to beer production and consumption (Ferreira et al., 2022). Throughout its history, the city has been nationally recognized for beer production and its tradition in this industrial sector, from the earliest local beer-production experiments in the late nineteenth century, through the large breweries of the first half of the twentieth century, to today's craft breweries. The Ribeirão Preto brewing industry has followed a trajectory marked by different phases, including periods of expansion and crisis, culminating in the current phase of significant achievements for the sector. According to Silva and Ribeiro, "[...] the local brewing industry faced market and regulatory challenges that, over time, shaped its production structure and encouraged the emergence of new forms of organization and cooperation" (2017, p. 119).

In recent years, the strengthening of a cluster of small craft breweries and microbreweries has boosted local production, leading to its recognition as a Local Productive Arrangement (Arranjo Produtivo Local - APL)⁷ by the State Government (São Paulo, 2022). This recognition strengthens the sector because, according to Machado and Pinto (2019), APLs contribute to the competitiveness and innovation of small businesses by providing a network of collaboration and

⁶ This recognition was consolidated by São Paulo State Law No. 18,006 of July 31, 2024, which declares the Municipality of Ribeirão Preto the "Capital of Draft Beer and Craft Beer" (São Paulo, 2024).

⁷ "The Research Network on Local Productive and Innovative Systems (Redesist) defines Local Productive Arrangements (APLs) as a set of economic, political, and social agents located in the same territory, developing related economic activities and maintaining significant links involving production, interaction, cooperation, and learning" (REDESIST, 2004 as cited in Simonetti; Kamimura, 2017, p. 21).



support among local producers. Ribeirão Preto's microbreweries have therefore managed not only to survive crises, but also to thrive in an increasingly competitive environment.

Within the brewing sector, the Ribeirão Preto Metropolitan Region (SP) stands out nationally for producing high-quality draft beer and craft beer, establishing itself as a brewing cluster with its own identity. According to Souza and Almeida (2021), the city has consolidated its position as one of Brazil's main centers for draft beer production and consumption and, more recently, as a craft beer cluster. It therefore has potential for recognition as a Geographical Indication, a strategic tool for adding value to the product and reinforcing the reputation of its region of origin, which may help Ribeirão Preto distinguish itself in national and international markets and enhance the value of local production.

Accordingly, this study aims to assess the potential for registering a GI for draft beer and beer produced in the Municipality of Ribeirão Preto, São Paulo, based on the Virtuous Circle of Origin-Linked Quality methodology.

The study was motivated by the region's renown in beer production and by the availability of intellectual property instruments, such as GIs, suited to protecting the distinctiveness of products linked to their geographical origin, including Ribeirão Preto beer. It seeks to identify the factors that, under the legislation in force, would allow or prevent the recognition of a GI in this specific case.

2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical and conceptual review in this study encompasses an analysis of the applicable legislation, a literature review on the proposed topic, and a documentary survey to indicate the state of the art regarding the recognition of a Geographical Indication for Ribeirão Preto beer.

A GI is a legal institute of intellectual property - more specifically, industrial property - governed internationally by several treaties, including the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property, the Madrid Agreement (Brazil, 1975), the Lisbon Agreement (WIPO, 1958), and the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). In summary, it consists of using the geographical name of a country, city, region, or locality within a territory as a factor that distinguishes products and services from similar or related ones whenever a given quality, reputation, or other characteristic of the product is essentially attributable to its geographical origin, pursuant to Article 22 of TRIPS (Brazil, 1994).

In Brazil, GIs are provided for in Law No. 9,279 of May 14, 1996, known as the Industrial Property Law (LPI), Article 176 of which provides for the recognition of two types of geographical indication: Indication of Provenance (IP) and Denomination of Origin (DO), as addressed in



Articles 177 and 178 below:

Article 177. An indication of provenance is considered to be the geographical name of a country, city, region, or locality within its territory that has become known as a center for the extraction, production, or manufacture of a given product or for the provision of a given service.

Article 178. A denomination of origin is considered to be the geographical name of a country, city, region, or locality within its territory that designates a product or service whose qualities or characteristics are exclusively or essentially due to the geographical environment, including natural and human factors (BRAZIL, 1996).

According to Marins and Cabral (2015), the determining difference between the two categories is that, for an IP, the essential requirement is proof of the region's reputation or renown for the extraction, manufacture, or production of the product or service; for a DO, by contrast, the link lies in the direct influence of the environment on the product or service, and this influence must be demonstrated.

The LPI does not, however, govern the procedure for recognizing a GI. By virtue of the authority conferred by the sole paragraph of Article 182 of the Industrial Property Law, this matter is governed by INPI/PR Ordinance No. 04/2022 (INPI, 2022), the current regulatory instrument establishing the conditions for registering, receiving, and processing the two existing categories: Indication of Provenance (IP) and Denomination of Origin (DO).

A GI falls within the context of so-called distinctive signs, that is, what Mathély defines as:

[...] phonetic or visual means, particularly words or images, that are used in economic and social life to designate persons or companies, as well as the products or services they provide, in order to distinguish them and enable the public to recognize them (1984, p. 3 - free translation).

Collective marks also fall within this category. They comprise visually perceptible distinctive signs that identify products or services originating from members - such as entrepreneurs, workers, producers, farmers, or service providers - of a given entity, including associations, cooperatives, trade unions, or other collective bodies representing producers or service providers.⁸

According to Duarte et al., "[...] beer is a beverage fermented from cereals, especially malted barley" (2024, p. 110). It is a beverage resulting from a fermentation process, which is also found in other areas of human food production. However, according to the same authors, "[...] there may be no other product with such a significant cultural dimension, whose savoir-faire (know-how) has been refined by humankind not merely for centuries, but for millennia" (Duarte

⁸ This definition derives from Articles 122 and 123(III) of the LPI. Cerqueira states in the same sense: "Collective marks are those belonging to trade unions, corporations, and other associations of producers or merchants and are intended to identify the industrial or commercial products of their members" (1982, p. 795).



et al., 2024, p. 110).

A literature review was conducted using the Boolean parameters "Indicação Geográfica" AND "Cerveja" AND "Ribeirão Preto" AND "Polo Cervejeiro" in Google Scholar. The search returned 11 results, from which texts relevant to the objectives established here were selected. Other sources cited in those texts were then examined, together with books and dissertations.

Among the studies reviewed, Ferreira et al. (2022) is noteworthy. Its objective was to recover the history of beer in the city and demonstrate its relationship with the regional economy and culture through bibliographic research. The study also presented the current scenario surrounding the recognition of a Local Productive Arrangement and the development of projects involving companies, academia, and public authorities to support discussions on the recognition of a Geographical Indication (GI) and/or Collective Mark (CM) as a means of adding value and endorsing the region's production tradition. This occurred within the context of Call for Proposals No. 663/2018, through which the Innovation and Technology Transfer Agency (Inova) of the Federal Institute of São Paulo (IFSP) initiated GI registration projects with Local Productive Arrangements (APLs) in the State of São Paulo, with the Ribeirão Preto Beer APL assigned to the Sertãozinho Campus (IFSP, 2018).⁹

Rosalin (2019), in turn, demonstrates through a study of the Ribeirão Preto beer route in the State of São Paulo how tourism and consumption associated with specialty beers are used as planning tools to strengthen a city's economy. Based on studies of the spatial circuits of beer production in the State of São Paulo, the author finds that Ribeirão Preto has the largest number of operating microbreweries, in addition to strong interaction among various agents in the spatial circuit of beer production.

When beer is associated with institutes such as Geographical Indications and Collective Marks, the recognition or registration of these signs has been granted to only a small number of regions or entities.

With regard to collective marks, Belgian and Dutch Trappist beers are "[...] distinctive products produced under the strict supervision of Trappist monks and known for their excellent quality" (Duarte et al., 2024, p. 122). They are produced exclusively in monasteries according to centuries-old religious traditions. To safeguard the product's reputation and tradition, the collective mark "Authentic Trappist Product - ATP" is used¹⁰, distinguishing beer manufactured under the

⁹ Duarte et al. (2024), cited above, follow the same approach.

¹⁰ Authentic Trappist Product (free translation). Although the renown of the "Trappist" mark is more strongly associated with beer, other products such as bread, cheese, liqueurs, and religious artifacts may also be identified by the "Authentic Trappist Product" (ATP) mark, as stated on the website of the International Trappist Association (ITA, 2024).

supervision of monks in accordance with the traditional criteria they have preserved and cultivated, thereby guaranteeing product authenticity to consumers (International Trappist Association, 2024), as shown in the figure below:

Figure 1 - ATP Label



Source: ITA (2024).

Regarding geographical indications associated with beer, there are examples of foreign regions, all located in Europe, recognized as shown in the table below:

Table 1 - Geographical Indications granted in Europe:

Product	Region	Source
Lambic Beer	Brussels Region - Belgium	Belgian Beer Institute, 2022
Czech Pilsner Beer	City of Pilsen - Czech Republic	Czech Brewers Association, 2022
Munich Beer	City of Munich - Germany	Verband der Münchner Brauereien, 2019

Prepared by the authors

In Brazil, the INPI has not registered any GI for beer, either as an Indication of Provenance or a Denomination of Origin. Nevertheless, there are studies on the renown of certain beer-producing regions, such as Blumenau (Pellin, 2017), as well as legal recognition of regions as beer clusters, as occurred with the recognition of the Craft Brewing Cluster of the Nova Friburgo Region, in the State of Rio de Janeiro, by State Law No. 7,954 of May 14, 2018 (Rio de Janeiro, 2018).

3 Methodology

The methodology used in this research adopted a qualitative and exploratory approach, based on a hypothetical-logical-deductive method, insofar as the proposed objective involves assessing the reality of Ribeirão Preto's brewing sector against the legal requirements for recognizing a Geographical Indication.

To this end, a literature review and documentary analysis were conducted. Technical reports, academic articles, and institutional publications from organizations such as ACIRP, INPI,

and SEBRAE were reviewed. According to Gil (2002, p. 45), this type of research is developed on the basis of previously prepared material, mainly books and scientific articles, and its main advantage is that it enables the researcher to cover a much broader range of phenomena than could be investigated directly. The research was also supported by telephone and video meetings with producers, the Ribeirão Preto Commercial and Industrial Association (ACIRP), and SEBRAE Ribeirão Preto; an interview with Professor Jean Rodrigues, PhD, coordinator of the Ribeirão Beer GI project; and an interview with Francisco Mitidieri, Coordinator of the São Paulo GI Forum.

The data were subsequently related to the stages of the Virtuous Circle of Origin-Linked Quality in order to better visualize the potential of the GI under study. The Virtuous Circle, a methodology developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (Vandercandelaere, 2010), proposes a sustainable model in which the actions and activities developed by its stakeholders are directed toward adding value to products from specific geographical areas whose production is linked to local knowledge, customs, cultures, and natural resources, with a view to preserving the system for future generations. It consists of five stages: identification, qualification, remuneration, reproduction, and public policies, as shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 - Stages of the Virtuous Circle



Source: Vandercandelaere et al. (2010, p. 21).

The concept of the "Virtuous Circle of Origin-Linked Quality," illustrated in Figure 2, establishes a model that enhances the value of local products by associating their characteristics with their region of origin, thereby creating a cycle of quality and recognition. According to Vandercandelaere et al., this virtuous circle "represents a sequence of interconnected stages that promote the identification, enhancement, and sustainability of products specific to a locality" (2010, p. 27). The stages initially include identifying the local resources that distinguish the product, followed by qualification, which involves defining the rules and standards that characterize production. The third stage is promotion, in which recognition of quality and origin



is widely disseminated to increase the product's visibility and perceived value. Finally, protection entails creating legal mechanisms to ensure exclusive use of indications of origin. The model therefore provides a valid theoretical basis for analyzing the objectives proposed in this article.

4 Discussion and Results

This section presents and discusses the research results in order to identify the elements that may enable the recognition of a Geographical Indication for craft beer and draft beer produced in Ribeirão Preto.

As a distinctive sign, and in the specific circumstances examined here, a GI is preferable to a collective mark because the former belongs to the community of producers in a given country, city, region, or locality within a territory (Article 182 of the LPI), whereas a collective mark belongs exclusively to the association, trade union, cooperative, or other representative entity of the producers affiliated with it.

In the case under examination, Ribeirão Preto and its surrounding region lack an entity representing the associated beer producers. This factor not only precludes the use of a collective mark as a distinctive sign for local beer production under Article 128(2) of Law No. 9,279/96 (LPI), but also prevents recognition of the Geographical Indication (GI). This is because such entities act as procedural representatives¹¹, and are the parties with standing to apply for registration before the INPI¹². In addition, these entities have the authority to monitor compliance with the rules of the Technical Specifications Document and the production-control structure, observance of which by producers is a sine qua non condition for using the sign (Melo, 2019).

Recognition of a Local Productive Arrangement (APL) for Ribeirão Preto's brewing sector (São Paulo, 2022) demonstrates the territory's renown as a production center by associating the product with the locality - a fundamental premise of Geographical Indications and their legal framework. From another perspective, the GI would constitute an exclusive asset for local producers, distinguishing their products from similar goods produced in other regions. In this sense, the APL would serve as a support and sustainability structure for the distinctive sign,

¹¹ Pursuant to Article 14 of INPI/PR Ordinance No. 04 of January 12, 2022 (INPI, 2022), an association, trade union, or any other entity legally authorized to act as such - for example, a cooperative - may serve as a procedural representative, provided that it is established in the relevant territory and represents the collective body entitled to apply for registration of the geographical indication, under Article 14(1) of the Ordinance.

¹² It bears repeating that the procedural representative is not the holder of the GI right, which belongs to producers established in the locality; nevertheless, it is the party with standing to apply for registration before the INPI. This arrangement derives from procedural law, under which, as a general rule, "[...] a person only has standing to claim a right of which that person is the holder. Procedural substitution constitutes extraordinary standing, through which someone claims something owned by a third party [...]" (Melo, 2019, p. 62). This is consistent with the dual nature of a GI, which, according to the author, has characteristics of a collective good within the region protected by the geographical indication, while also being considered an exclusive good because suppliers outside the GI locality may not use it (Melo, 2019 as cited in Silva et al., 2023, p. 1345).



whereas the GI would represent recognition of the arrangement's competitive success, confirming the articulation between companies and the environment in which they operate.

Finally, in the absence of evidence and studies indicating that Ribeirão Preto beer is distinguished by factors associated exclusively or essentially with the geographical environment - including natural and human factors - the possibility of recognizing the GI as a Denomination of Origin is ruled out because the requirements set forth in Article 178 of the LPI (Brazil, 1996) are not present. The study therefore focuses on the potential for recognition as an Indication of Provenance¹³.

4.1 The Territory: The Ribeirão Preto Metropolitan Region and the History of Beer

Established by State Complementary Law No. 1,290 of July 6, 2016, the Ribeirão Preto Metropolitan Region (RMRP), located in the interior of the State of São Paulo, comprises 34 municipalities grouped into four subregions and seeks to establish a new political and institutional arrangement (Gomes, 2022). It consists of the following municipalities: Altinópolis, Barrinha, Batatais, Brodowski, Cajuru, Cássia dos Coqueiros, Cravinhos, Dumont, Guariba, Guataporã, Jaboticabal, Jardinópolis, Luís Antônio, Mococa, Monte Alto, Morro Agudo, Nuporanga, Orlândia, Pitangueiras, Pontal, Pradópolis, Ribeirão Preto, Sales Oliveira, Santa Cruz da Esperança, Santa Rita do Passa Quatro, Santa Rosa de Viterbo, Santo Antônio da Alegria, São Simão, Serra Azul, Serrana, Sertãozinho, Taiúva, Tambaú, and Taquaral (São Paulo, 2016).

The subregions referred to in Article 3 of State Complementary Law No. 1,290 of July 6, 2016, are organized as follows:

Table 2 - Subregions of the RMRP:

Subregion	Member Municipalities
Subregion 1	Barrinha, Brodowski, Cravinhos, Dumont, Guataporã, Jardinópolis, Luís Antônio, Pontal, Pradópolis, Ribeirão Preto, Santa Rita do Passa Quatro, São Simão, Serrana, Serra Azul, and Sertãozinho
Subregion 2	Guariba, Jaboticabal, Monte Alto, Pitangueiras, Taiúva, and Taquaral
Subregion 3	Cajuru, Cássia dos Coqueiros, Mococa, Santa Cruz da Esperança, Santa Rosa de Viterbo, and Tambaú
Subregion 4	Altinópolis, Batatais, Morro Agudo, Nuporanga, Orlândia, Sales Oliveira, and Santo Antônio da Alegria

Prepared by the authors based on São Paulo (2016).

According to the legislation (Article 2, items I-V), the main purpose is to promote:

¹³ Article 177 of the LPI provides as follows regarding an Indication of Provenance: "Article 177. An indication of provenance is considered to be the geographical name of a country, city, region, or locality within its territory that has become known as a center for the extraction, production, or manufacture of a given product or for the provision of a given service" (Brazil, 1996).

I - regional planning for socioeconomic development and improved quality of life; II - cooperation among different levels of government through the decentralization, coordination, and integration of their direct and indirect administrative bodies and entities operating in the region, with a view to maximizing the use of public resources allocated to it; III - rational use of the territory and of natural and cultural resources, as well as environmental protection, through control over the implementation of public and private projects in the region; IV - integration of the planning and execution of public functions of common interest to the public entities operating in the region; and V - reduction of regional inequalities (São Paulo, 2016).

The creation of a metropolitan region may be justified by its capacity to facilitate regional integration and optimize urban development management through appropriate public policies, while also contributing significantly to resolving conflicts that affect quality of life and, above all, to advancing economic activities.

Figure 3 - Map of the Ribeirão Preto Metropolitan Region.



Source: Geographic and Cartographic Institute (2020).

The RMRP has a strong economy comprising agricultural, industrial, and high-technology companies that particularly serve domestic and foreign food markets (Gomes, 2022). Beer production is part of this economy and has made the region a national benchmark as a brewing cluster (Cazarine, 2015).

According to Rubem Cione (as cited in Giorgi, 2017), the earliest reports of beer production in Ribeirão Preto date from 1878. Developed by physicians Joaquim Estanislau da Silva Gusmão and Luiz Pereira Barreto, the beverage was used solely for medicinal purposes and was not very palatable.

The history and brewing tradition of Ribeirão Preto are extensively documented and continue to be written by present-day breweries. The establishment of the Ribeirão Preto Brewing



Cluster, the events held in the region, and the awards won by breweries in the Ribeirão Preto Metropolitan Region in state, national, and international competitions suggest that brewing culture has extended beyond the municipal boundaries and reached the entire metropolitan region. For purposes of geographical delimitation in a GI registration, however, it is not yet possible to establish a continuous territory because some municipalities still lack prominent breweries. It is therefore accurate to state that the territory's reputation as a beer producer can currently be substantiated in Ribeirão Preto.

4.2 The Craft Beer Movement and the Strengthening of Regional Identity

Beginning in the 1990s, Brazil experienced a revolution in the brewing sector with the rise of craft beer. Ribeirão Preto, with its established tradition, was one of the first places to join the craft beer movement in Brazil, giving rise to a new form of recognition whose initial milestone was the founding of Colorado Brewery in 1996 (Ricarte, 2023?). Founded by Marcelo Carneiro da Rocha, Colorado was Brazil's second craft brewery (Ferreira et al., 2022).

Giorgi (2017) explains that the beer became famous for its innovative proposal to combine Brazilian ingredients such as coffee, rapadura, honey, Brazil nuts, oranges, star fruit, and others, thereby establishing its identity.

The Lund brewery, opened in 2009, should also be mentioned. This microbrewery further advanced the craft beer era by winning a gold medal and two silver medals in the Brazilian beer competition organized by the Brazilian Association of Beer Tasters (Cazarine, 2015). Invicta was subsequently founded in 2011 (Silva, 2014).

The three breweries formed the "Ribeirão Preto Brewing Cluster," described as follows:

The Brewing Cluster emerged in 2012 during a meeting at the Ribeirão Preto City Council under the name "Ribeirão Preto Brewing Industry Association"¹⁴. It brought together a group of 20 companies, including craft beer manufacturers, suppliers, distributors, bars, and restaurants from the city and the region. Its objectives were to reduce production costs, expand local business, and turn the Brewing Cluster (PCRPP) into a municipal tourist attraction capable of attracting resources and promoting local craft beer production. It comprised three breweries: Colorado, Invicta, and Lund [...] (Souza, as cited in Ferreira et al., 2022).

These data indicate that Ribeirão Preto is currently known not only for draft beer but also as a craft beer cluster, where the diversity of styles, flavors, and production methods attracts tourists and enthusiasts from throughout Brazil (Tiengo, 2022).

Ribeirão Preto beer and draft beer are distinguished not only by their quality, but also by

¹⁴ It is important to reiterate that, according to the interviews, no association representing the brewing sector of Ribeirão Preto or the region has been registered to date. Matters concerning the Brewing Cluster remain centered on ACIRP, the Ribeirão Preto Commercial and Industrial Association.



their strong connection to the regional context and to traditional practices adapted to the region's warm climate. As stated by Eder José da Costa Sacconi, adviser to the IFSP Rector's Office and a member of INOVA IFSP, recognition of a GI for Ribeirão Preto beverages would reinforce the preservation of the region's historical and cultural heritage associated with the brewing sector, adding symbolic and economic value to the product (Santos, 2018).

This reality generates economic and social impacts, as the proliferation of microbreweries and specialized bars has created direct and indirect jobs in the city. These include jobs in production, distribution, and sales, as well as marketing, design, events, and tourism. Ribeirão Preto has begun attracting tourists interested in learning about local craft beers through tours (Alves, 2023), festivals, and tastings.

Regarding social impacts, the expansion of craft beer in Ribeirão Preto has led to cultural change, including greater appreciation of local production, flavor diversity, and the pursuit of more authentic beverage-consumption experiences. The local population has also become more involved in the beer production process, with growing interest in brewing techniques, tasting events, and specialty beer culture (cf. Duarte et al., 2024).

4.3 Ribeirão Preto Beer and the Virtuous Circle of Origin-Linked Quality

This subsection discusses the results based on the Virtuous Circle of Origin-Linked Quality methodology. Its initial stage for assessing origin-linked quality is identification, defined as the basis for collective action to enhance the product's value. This stage requires precise identification of the local resources needed for production, as well as identification of the link with the territory and the stakeholders involved (Vandercandelaere et al., 2010).

The territorial identity of a product such as craft beer is shaped by production traditions. In Ribeirão Preto, this tradition began with Italian immigrants, who lacked access to the beverages consumed by the local elite and faced difficulties producing wine because of the tropical climate. In 1891, the city's first brewery, A Rapaziada, began craft production (Ribeirão e Franca, 2022, online).

Livi e Bortoldi, another Italian-owned brewery and the third factory in Ribeirão Preto, received an award for quality in 1901, marking an important advance (Ferreira et al., 2022).

Another important milestone in the city's history was the opening of an IBBC branch in 1911. According to Giorgi (2017, p. 47), Companhia Cervejaria Paulista was founded in 1913, innovating draft beer production and helping consolidate Ribeirão Preto as one of Brazil's largest brewing centers. The city became known as the "Capital of Draft Beer," with traditional venues such as Pinguim (Símbolo..., 2016).



From 1913 to 1999, the large breweries established in Ribeirão Preto - especially Companhia Antarctica Paulista - served as drivers of employment, workforce specialization, and tax revenue, while also participating in public works and investment in the city (Duarte et al., 2024). At the end of this era, Companhia Antarctica Paulista merged with Companhia Cervejaria Brahma in 1999 to form Companhia de Bebidas das Américas, known by the acronym AmBev (American Beverage Company). Craft breweries then emerged, confirming the economic and productive importance of the brewing sector to the Ribeirão Preto Metropolitan Region.

In the dialogue between the premises of the Virtuous Circle of Origin-Linked Quality and the rules governing the recognition of a Geographical Indication, it is necessary to address the renown of beer production in Ribeirão Preto in order to assess recognition by the relevant consumer market and its capacity to associate the product with the geographical region.

Renown derives from the legal definition of an Indication of Provenance and must be proven during the registration proceedings before the INPI. Such proof is an essential requirement for recognizing an application for a Geographical Indication, as follows from Article 9(4) of INPI/PR Ordinance No. 04/2022¹⁵.

Accordingly, it is important to note that the production of the Ribeirão Preto Brewing Cluster is so significant that it was recognized by State Law No. 18,006 of July 31, 2024, which declares the Municipality of Ribeirão Preto the "Capital of Draft Beer and Craft Beer" (São Paulo, 2024).

The Ribeirão Preto Metropolitan Region hosts festivals dedicated to local beer enthusiasts. These events are important for increasing the visibility of the various beer styles produced in the region because they attract not only regular brewery customers, but also people interested in music, food, and social interaction.

Events such as Craft Beer Week and Craft Beer attract visitors from other regions, promoting the city as a tourist destination (Cerveja..., 2024). These events are publicized by local media, receive support from the respective municipal governments, and are included in the municipalities' official event calendars.

Breweries organize smaller exclusive events; however, collaboration is part of brewing culture because producers understand that craft breweries do not compete directly for customers. Together, they account for only 5% of Brazil's beer market, which is dominated by three major

¹⁵ Article 9. For purposes of this Ordinance, a Geographical Indication consists of an Indication of Provenance or a Denomination of Origin. [...] Paragraph 4. For purposes of an Indication of Provenance, a geographical name shall be considered to have become known when it is expressly mentioned by different sources as a center for the extraction, production, or manufacture of the indicated product or for the provision of the indicated service (INPI, 2022).



groups: Ambev (59.3%), Heineken (24.4%), and Petrópolis (11.3%) (Freitas, 2024).

Table 3 - Main events in the RMRP:

EVENT	SCOPE	EDITIONS
IPA DAY BRASIL	NATIONAL	11
CRAFT BEER FESTIVAL	STATE OF SÃO PAULO	2
OCTOBERSERT	METROPOLITAN REGION	2
CHAMPIONS BEER	METROPOLITAN REGION	1

Prepared by the authors

With regard to the renown of Ribeirão Preto beer and draft beer, two songs referring to the beverage and the city were performed by well-known artists and broadcast throughout Brazil.

The first song released was "Cantiga pra Ribeirão Preto" (1979), performed by Sérgio Reis and composed by Luiz Vieira, whose second verse stated:

My college studies, my youth singing amid mischievous and carefree conversation, over rounds of draft beer at the bar; I sow grain that the moon sprinkles with moonlight; I post a notice in the street that the night is an invitation to love... there in Ribeirão (Cantiga..., 1979).

The second song is "De São Paulo a Belém" (1998), performed by the duo Rionegro & Solimões. The composition by Maestro Pinocchio and Nilma remains familiar today and highlights a defining characteristic of each city along the route. For Ribeirão Preto, cold draft beer was selected for the line: "It was there in Pirassununga that I had a good idea: to stop in Ribeirão and have a cold draft beer [...]" (De São Paulo..., 1998), indicating the region's renown as a beer production center.

Another important component of the Virtuous Circle is product qualification, which ensures that the quality and authenticity standards associated with the GI are maintained. In the brewing sector, this entails rigorous quality-control practices and the use of techniques that reinforce local characteristics.

The quality of the draft beer and craft beer produced in Ribeirão Preto and the surrounding region has earned numerous awards, making these beverages nationally and internationally known for their innovative flavors and quality, as attested by the various prizes received by craft breweries in national and international competitions.

A recent highlight is Walfänger Brewery, located in Bonfim Paulista, a district of Ribeirão Preto. Its Altbier-style beer Sebastian received a gold medal and was named the World's Best Altbier at the London stage of the 2024 World Beer Awards (Melhor..., 2024). The brewery also holds medals for two other labels in the same competition: Albert - IPA and Heffe - Bavarian Style Hefeweiss (Cervejaria..., 2019).

Other breweries in the RMRP have received medals attesting to the quality of regional production. Salles Bier, from Sales Oliveira, won two gold medals at the 2021 World Beer Awards with Nigra and Lord - Oatmeal Stout and Imperial IPA, respectively - as well as the Best Beer in



Brazil award for Danube, a Vienna Lager (Cervejaria..., 2021). At the 2022 World Beer Awards, the brewery won a silver medal for the newcomer Labuta (American Pale Ale), another silver for Nigra, and a bronze for Lord (World Beer Awards, 2022).

Within the Virtuous Circle, the remuneration stage refers to the benefits that registration of the Geographical Indication as an Indication of Provenance would bring to the RMRP. In this regard, Eder José da Costa Sacconi has stated that GI recognition would support marketing by increasing the price paid by customers who recognize the product (Santos, 2018).

Research conducted by the Ribeirão Preto Commercial and Industrial Association (ACIRP) confirms that "[...] the creation of jobs directly linked to microbreweries in Ribeirão Preto increased by 400% over 10 years, with an average of 4.17 employees per brewery" (Grossi, 2018). The region also has the microbreweries that employ the highest average number of people in the State of São Paulo (Grossi, 2018).

Nevertheless, local input production faces challenges because inputs are generally imported from European and North American countries. On the other hand, initiatives involving hop cultivation and yeast isolation have already been observed (MAPA, 2020), creating jobs and increasing productive specialization in the RMRP.

Challenges related to competition with large brewing companies and the tax regime have also been reported. As explained by Gabriel, an ACIRP economist, craft breweries in the region "[...] pay 11 times more PIS per liter of beer produced, approximately 13 times more COFINS, almost five times more state industrial tax (ICMS), and more federal excise tax (IPI)" (Grossi, 2018).

Reproduction, the fourth stage of the Virtuous Circle, occurs through the transmission of knowledge and know-how. The Ribeirão Preto Metropolitan Region has already incorporated its characterization as a brewing cluster because the dissemination of draft beer and craft beer production lies at the core of its culture.

Producers actively promote local brewing culture, enhancing intangible heritage and strengthening the region's cultural identity. This effort is reinforced through participation in national and international events, which generates visibility for brands and their producers, fosters a sense of belonging, and contributes to the development of an increasingly professionalized sector.

Finally, regarding public policies aimed at developing brewing culture, the Ribeirão Preto Brewing Cluster was recognized as a Local Productive Arrangement (APL) by the São Paulo State Secretariat for Economic Development, Science, Technology, and Innovation (São Paulo, 2022). This recognition is intended to "[...] stimulate and facilitate microbreweries' access to important



public policies, credit lines, tax-rate reductions, and incentives for the structure and promotion of the Brewing Cluster" (Supera Parque, 2018).

Recognition of the Ribeirão Preto Beer Local Productive Arrangement is another significant initiative to strengthen the sector, with a focus on regionalizing production. An APL is a strategy that seeks to integrate companies, institutions, and governments in a collective effort to improve the competitiveness of a particular sector. In Ribeirão Preto, the beer APL brings together a series of actions to support the local production chain, from small producers to large breweries, with the aim of increasing the quality, innovation, and sustainability of beer production (Supera Parque, 2018).

ACIRP, SEBRAE, the University of São Paulo (USP), and the IFSP Sertãozinho Campus are organized around the APL, fostering research, development, and innovation for the sector. Through funding linked to the Brewing APL, the IFSP Sertãozinho Campus acquired a pilot brewery and a laboratory for analytical services, thereby supporting breweries with quality testing and trials (IFSP, 2021).

Incentives such as the technical brewing program offered by the IFSP Sertãozinho Campus since 2020 are intended to meet the region's high demand for people specialized in beer production. The Escola Superior de Cerveja e Malte and the Science of Beer Institute offer annual beer sommelier training in Ribeirão Preto and have already trained several people in the RMRP.

Short courses in craft production using small-scale equipment are also offered by SENAI Sertãozinho, breweries, and brewing-supply stores in Ribeirão Preto.

The regionalization of beer production makes distribution logistics less intensive in CO₂e emissions because production and consumption occur in closer locations. Given the importance of brewing to the regional economy, measures to protect natural resources - especially water, whose quality directly affects product characteristics - have intensified.

State Complementary Law No. 18,006 of July 31, 2024, which declared the Municipality of Ribeirão Preto the "Capital of Draft Beer and Craft Beer," is likewise noteworthy. This governmental policy stimulates trade in these beverages and reinforces the possibility of reproduction.

In view of this, registering a GI for Ribeirão Preto beer and draft beer may benefit producers and consumers by attracting new markets and adding value to brands and products. A GI enables local producers to use recognition of the region to increase the competitiveness and visibility of their products, as they acquire the exclusive right to produce beer distinguished from competing products by its origin in the geographical area of the Ribeirão Preto region (Belas; Wilkinson, 2014). This distinction derives from the territory's renown as a producer of draft beer and beer.

Ribeirão Preto has thus consolidated its position as a brewing cluster in Brazil, and public policies play a crucial role in strengthening this distinctiveness. Initiatives intended to promote and expand the city's recognition in the sector include the São Paulo State Forum on Geographical Indications and Collective Marks (Brazil, 2023) and recognition of the Ribeirão Preto Beer Local Productive Arrangement (São Paulo, 2022). These elements are directly connected to the region's economic and cultural development, while also reinforcing local identity and promoting the sustainability of the brewing sector.

The São Paulo State Forum on Geographical Indications and Collective Marks promotes debates, studies, and actions that encourage the creation of a GI for the city's beer in order to enhance the particular features of local production. Recognition of a GI for Ribeirão Preto beer would help reinforce the city's image as a center of excellence in the brewing sector and ensure that local production is recognized and distinguished in national and international markets.

However, obtaining and maintaining a GI requires coordination among local producers, investment in quality-control infrastructure, and alignment with specific regulations.

Under INPI/PR Ordinance No. 04/2022, recognition of a GI as an Indication of Provenance requires the region to be known as a center for extracting, producing, or manufacturing a given product or providing a service. It must also have a procedural representative and a Technical Specifications Document delimiting the geographical area and describing the extraction, production, or manufacturing process of the product, or the provision of the service, for which the geographical name became known (INPI, 2022).

In addition to the efforts cited above, ACIRP currently owns the registered trademark "Polo Cervejeiro" under Application No. 912799862, registered with the INPI in 2024, as shown in the figure below:

Figure 4 - Registered Trademark of the Ribeirão Preto Brewing Cluster



Source: INPI (2024).



It is therefore evident that the establishment of a procedural representative is still advancing slowly. According to interviewees directly involved in projects to recognize the APL and in the feasibility study for a Ribeirão Preto GI, beer producers do not have their own association and are not organized into trade unions or cooperatives. At most, they belong to ACIRP, whose specific purpose is not solely to defend and represent Ribeirão Preto beer and draft beer producers. Moreover, ACIRP holds a service mark in its own name rather than a collective mark belonging to Ribeirão Preto beer producers.

For a GI application to succeed, the support network comprising producers, the community, and governance bodies must act to preserve the quality and authenticity linked to the territory. Thus, despite the product's renown and its connection with the region, producers still lack sufficient awareness and appropriation of these conditions, as well as the resulting formal establishment of a collective entity with standing to file an application for GI recognition.

Final Considerations

The analysis of the Geographical Indication (GI) potential of the Ribeirão Preto, São Paulo, brewing cluster highlights the importance of combining tradition, innovation, and territorial valorization to strengthen the identity of local products.

Applying the Virtuous Circle of Origin-Linked Quality methodology offers a strategic perspective for recognizing and strengthening the local identity of beer production and enhancing the unique characteristics the city can offer. The analysis also reveals that integrating factors such as the identification of natural and cultural resources, the qualification of production processes, and the engagement of producers and institutions is essential to building a robust GI. This model not only protects local heritage, but also generates positive impacts on the regional economy, tourism, and the product's international profile.

With regard to the identification of local products, the craft beer produced in Ribeirão Preto may be considered a genuine expression of its origin. It involves a diversity of local ingredients, such as the region's high-quality water, and the use of special techniques, processes, and ingredients aligned with a culture of innovation and experimentation strongly influenced by the city and its producers.

Recognition of a Geographical Indication guarantees exclusivity of origin, ensuring distinctiveness and quality control for products that effectively represent the region. It prevents goods from being merely labeled with the geographical name without complying with the established criteria or, at a minimum, originating in the territory identified by the products.

This distinctive sign may become a major attraction for consumers seeking quality and authenticity, while enabling local breweries to achieve a stronger strategic position in the



competitive craft beverage market. By strengthening regional identity and competitiveness, it can become a powerful marketing instrument with the potential to enhance the qualities and potential of Ribeirão Preto craft beer.

The potential for a Geographical Indication for draft beer and beer from the Ribeirão Preto Metropolitan Region is promising, not only from an economic perspective, but also for preserving local cultural heritage. Implementing the GI in conjunction with the principles of the Virtuous Circle of Origin-Linked Quality may help consolidate the region as a national benchmark in craft beer production, enhancing the value of both the product and the territory.

As demonstrated, there is potential for recognition of a GI in the Indication of Provenance category, given the region's renown in relation to the product. At present, however, the technical conditions required for registration do not exist, mainly because of the absence of a procedural representative and the need for precise territorial delimitation. Although Ribeirão Preto's inclusion is certain, not all municipalities in the region belong to the APL.

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