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Conceptual Interpretations of the Role of Craft Production in the Global Development Strategy of Small Agricultural Entrepreneurship

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ABSTRACT

Russia's full-scale armed aggression against Ukraine, launched in February 2022, has caused unprecedented structural shocks to the national economy: destruction of production infrastructure, disruption of logistics chains, mass displacement of population, and a sharp decline in purchasing power. These developments have systematically affected all sectors and types of economic activity, driving a shift in strategic priorities and entrepreneurship development strategies. Developing effective strategies for ensuring the economic resilience of small enterprises has become critically important. Business practice has prompted an active search for innovative production models, with craft businesses emerging as one of the most dynamically developing segments. The scientific and practical relevance of this study lies in providing a conceptual interpretation of the role of craft production in the global strategy of small agrarian entrepreneurship development. The purpose of the article is to propose conceptual interpretations of the role of craft production in the global strategy of small agrarian entrepreneurship development, to construct an analytical toolkit for assessing enterprise resilience, and to formulate recommendations for targeted state support. According to regional assessments, craft enterprises demonstrated comparatively higher adaptive persistence relative to large producers in 2022–2024, owing to localized supply chains, flexible business models, and strong community ties. The entry into force of Law No. 3817-IX (draft law No. 10346) from January 2025 marked the first step toward systemic deregulation for such producers. An Integral Resilience Index for craft enterprises (IRc) is proposed as a quantitative instrument theoretically grounded in the microfoundations of dynamic capabilities theory. Craft distillation is capable of generating added value 5–10 times higher than raw agricultural production. Craft production performs multiple macroeconomic functions under crisis conditions: ensuring community food security, preserving rural employment, generating a local economic multiplier, and supporting regional diversification. The proposed resilience matrix provides an operational tool for state support agencies, with differentiated measures depending on the IRc level. State support should be built on an ecosystem model based on deregulation, financial instruments, clustering, and digital transformation.

KEYWORDS

craft production, small agrarian entrepreneurship, resilience, sustainability, Integral Resilience Index (IRc), dynamic capabilities, food security.



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Концептуальні інтерпретації ролі крафтового виробництва у глобальній стратегії розвитку малого аграрного підприємництва

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Збройна агресія Росії проти України, що набула повномасштабного характеру з лютого 2022 р., спричинила безпрецедентні структурні потрясіння в національній економіці: руйнування виробничої інфраструктури, порушення логістичних ланцюгів, масове переміщення населення та різке скорочення купівельної спроможності. Це системно впливає на всі без винятку сектори і види діяльності, наслідуючи зміну стратегічних пріоритетів, а також стратегій розвитку підприємницької діяльності. Формування ефективних стратегій забезпечення економічної стійкості малих підприємств набуває критичного значення. Практика господарювання зумовила активний пошук інноваційних виробництв, серед яких активний розвиток належить крафтовим бізнесам. Актуальністю в науково-практичному контексті відзначаємо здійснення концептуальної інтерпретації ролі крафтового виробництва у глобальній стратегії розвитку малого аграрного підприємництва. Мета статті – запропонувати концептуальні інтерпретації ролі крафтового виробництва у глобальній стратегії розвитку малого аграрного підприємництва, розробити аналітичний інструментарій оцінювання стійкості (резильєнтності) підприємств та сформулювати рекомендації щодо адресної державної підтримки. За регіональними оцінками крафтові підприємства демонструють порівняно вищу адаптивну резистентність, порівняно з великими виробниками у 2022–2024 рр. завдяки локалізованим ланцюгам постачання, гнучким бізнес-моделям та міцним зв'язкам із громадою. Набуття чинності Закону № 3817-IX (законопроект № 10346) з січня 2025 р. позначило перший крок до системної дерегуляції для таких виробників. Запропоновано інтегральний індекс резильєнтності крафтового підприємства (IRC), як кількісний інструмент, теоретично обґрунтований через мікрофундаменти теорії динамічних здатностей. Крафтова дистиляція здатна генерувати додану вартість у 5–10 разів вищу порівняно з сировинним агропромислом. Крафтове виробництво виконує множинні макроекономічні функції в умовах кризи: забезпечення продовольчої безпеки громад, збереження сільської зайнятості, генерація локального мультиплікатора та регіональна диверсифікація. Запропонована матриця резильєнтності забезпечує операційний інструмент для органів державної підтримки з диференційованими заходами залежно від рівня IRC. Державна підтримка має будуватися за екосистемною моделлю на засадах дерегуляції, фінансових інструментів, кластеризації та цифрової трансформації.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА

крафтове виробництво, мале аграрне підприємництво, резильєнтність, стійкість, інтегральний індекс резильєнтності (IRC), динамічні здатності, продовольча безпека.

1. Introduction

The ecosystem of the agricultural sector as a management mechanism is institutionally formed by business entities of various sizes and forms. Business activity in the agricultural sector requires special strategizing, as it is carried out in conditions of deep upheavals [42]. Business models are becoming more flexible, introducing creative solutions, creating products oriented towards stable target market niches. The development of small businesses, in particular business entities that implement craft production, plays a significant role in ensuring the sustainability and competitiveness of the domestic economy. This type of agribusiness combines traditional artisanal technologies with innovative value-oriented approaches [26; 48]. Craft enterprises are characterized by small-scale activities, the use of high-quality local raw materials, authenticity of products, and orientation towards a conscious consumer [40]. In the global strategy, business entities implement the capabilities of ensuring resilience, sustainability, and creating added value through creativity, uniqueness, and originality. Creating craft products and providing exclusive services has become an additional ability for farms and small agricultural enterprises to form sustainability in the ecosystem of the modern market. Entrepreneurial practices of craft production are implemented informally, in the aspect of carrying out non-permanent market transactions, which corresponds to the institutional model of “gray”, informal business. Under existing conditions, entrepreneurs consider such a model of business organization to be institutionally resistant to the turbulent shocks of the modern period. Entrepreneurial practices in the craft segment have strategic prospects, but first of all they need to be formalized by providing institutional certainty throughout the agri-food chain.

In the scientific literature, enterprise resilience is defined as the ability to maintain functional continuity, explore the business model and maintain value generation. The functional capabilities of achieving resilience depend on the relevance of business development strategies, the practicality of management decisions in organizing production and conducting market transactions to acquire added value.

The scientific problem is to develop theoretical and methodological principles for the effective functioning of small enterprises, to substantiate the role of craft production in the implementation of strategic priorities for the development of agricultural entrepreneurship and to ensure its sustainability in modern socio-economic conditions, because most research on sustainability was based either on the material of market recessions or on pandemic experience, and armed conflict is a different nature of the crisis [6; 35]. We note as a priority the scientific and practical task of substantiating the role of craft production in the global strategy for the development of small businesses. During war, resilience means concrete things: whether a company can continue to produce if a factory is destroyed, if it has to move, if its usual supply routes are cut off. An entrepreneur may lose a building, equipment, people, have no access to a bank account – and at the same time have to decide whether to continue doing anything at all.

After the full-scale Russian invasion in February 2022, the Ukrainian economy experienced shocks that it had not known before. The number of small businesses decreased in 2022 compared to 2018 by more than 105 thousand units (State Statistics Service data [12]). Over 2010–2023, the number of small businesses decreased by 12.2%, and medium-sized businesses by 33.0% [22]. According to UNDP estimates, the capacity utilization of SMEs in August 2023 did not exceed 53.4%, and small and microbusinesses demonstrated a higher rate of partial recovery compared to large enterprises [50]. Small agricultural businesses have always played a leading role in realizing the potential, primarily food self-sufficiency of the population, and this status remains a priority [24]. Their entrepreneurial activity also lays the foundation for restoring the investment potential of communities [20; 45].

In the period from January 2022 to July 2023, the number of newly created enterprises in the agricultural sector of Ukraine exceeded the number of liquidated ones. According to analytical reports, in 2022–2025, 5,966 new agricultural enterprises were registered, while 3,416 ceased operations. In June 2023, the total number of registrations of new individual entrepreneurs (not only in the agricultural sector) reached 31,477, which is the highest figure in three years. However, this surge is due to changes in the taxation system (abolition of the 2% rate for individual entrepreneurs of group III from July 1, 2023), and not to the growth of agricultural entrepreneurship. The share of agricultural individual entrepreneurs in the total number of registrations traditionally does not exceed 5–10%. Registration activity in the agricultural sector in 2023–2024 stabilized at 1.7–1.8 thousand new enterprises per year, while there was

a geographical relocation of business from front-line regions to western and central regions (Odesa, Kyiv, Lviv, Vinnytsia regions).

The socio-economic profile of newly registered entities is characteristic: the vast majority belong to small forms of business (up to 250 hectares of land), are small producers with minimal capital and local attachment, that is, exactly the type of entrepreneur that the concept of “craft” most accurately describes. Small/limited scale, local raw materials, artisanal skills and an emphasis on traditional production methods and direct access to a loyal consumer [17; 40] in wartime conditions turned from potential weaknesses into real competitive advantages. However, despite the growing practical interest, it should be noted that a significant part of producers operate outside the legal framework, and systemic tools to support the sector are still lacking.

2. Literature Review

Conceptual interpretations of the role of craft production in the development of small agricultural entrepreneurship and the definition of strategic aspects of its positioning are determined historically and evolutionarily. The origins of craft agrarian business are positioned based on the analysis by Smith A. [28] of the causes of the wealth of nations (how specialization is transformed into value, because without this question it is impossible to understand why an artisan can sell more expensively than a factory), interpretations of entrepreneurship and the functionality of economic ecosystems by R. Cantillon (he added the figure of an entrepreneur as a person who takes on the risk and receives not a salary, but profit or loss for it) [5]. These ideas remained disparate for a long time, until the research traditions of agrarian economics, food systems and entrepreneurship theory found a common language. Theoretical and methodological aspects of determining the role, significance, and economic functionality of craft production in the entrepreneurial ecosystem were formed at the intersection of theories of entrepreneurship, production management, deployment of productive forces, innovation, and food systems. Craft gained methodological recognition in the creation and dissemination of knowledge by developing the concept of “alternative food networks” (AFN) as opposed to industrial production systems [39; 44]. Renting et al. [39] substantiated the role of short supply chains in the development of regional agri-food systems. Sonnino & Marsden [27; 44] clarified this thesis and showed that the effectiveness of AFN is determined not by the fact of alternativeness itself, but depends on the institutional environment and the degree of localization, and investigated the role of “qualitative turn” in the value chains of food systems, which constitutes the theoretical basis for the price positioning of craft products. Tregear [48] drew attention to the gaps, i.e. the unsolved problem of scaling, because the mechanisms of niche craft producers entering the wider market remain theoretically insufficiently developed and still form the basis for understanding craft as a form of AFN.

Quantitative research on the craft sector gained momentum in the 2010s, primarily based on materials from the brewing industry. Nave et al. [31] conducted a systematic review of 132 publications and found that research attention is concentrated around four themes: industry dynamics, marketing and branding, consumer behavior and sustainability. Rivaroli et al. [40] in a meta-analysis of 36 studies found that “craft” is consistently associated with quality and authenticity, and price is a signal that transmits information to the consumer about the unique quality characteristics of the product. Thurnell-Read [47] sociologically explored the concept of craft as the identity of the producer and the materiality of labor in microbreweries, i.e. for the producer it is an element of identity related to the materiality of labor, and not a technical standard. Prados-Peña et al. [37] in a bibliometric analysis of 894 articles, proved that the principle of sustainability is cross-cutting across the entire spectrum of craft research. The broader context of craft entrepreneurship is revealed by Tuitjer [49], who showed the inextricable link between production and networks of interaction of small food businesses (small food businesses grow when they build networks of interaction between producers), and Fernández Bellver et al. [14], who in an analysis of 1379 studies confirmed the role of craft production as a factor in local development, employment and tourist attractiveness of the region regardless of the size of the market.

The resilience of craft breweries to external shocks has been studied mainly in crises in stable economies, through the prism of pandemics and market shocks. Waehning et al. [51] found signs of adaptability of British craft breweries during COVID-19, emphasizing the role of network ties, i.e., tight network ties and the ability to quickly reorient sales were more important than size or financial reserves. Andersen & Christensen [3] obtained a similar result for Danish microbreweries and showed

the strategic importance of regional embeddedness for the survival of microbreweries. Cabras et al., [7] confirmed the significant regional economic footprint of craft breweries during the crisis period. However, none of these works simulate the situation of armed conflict. A pandemic is primarily a restriction of demand and logistics, and an armed conflict leads to the physical destruction of property, forced evacuation, lack of electricity and water, and the impossibility of even predicting whether it will be possible to open production at all tomorrow. In terms of its consequences, this is much more destructive than any pandemic restrictions. This scenario is more destructive in terms of its consequences compared to pandemic restrictions.

In Ukraine, the study of craft production is still in its infancy. Kolodyazhna [17] laid the theoretical and methodological foundations of craft and substantiated that craft agricultural production is an independent object of research, and not a subdivision of the general theory of small business. Feyer [13] carried out a detailed analysis of 87 enterprises in Transcarpathia, and this database still has no analogues in other regions. Miklovda and Pityulych [28] described the structure and dynamics of craft entrepreneurship in mountain communities. Burak [5] outlined the gaps in understanding craft production of plant products. Morozova and Khmil [30] revealed the essence of craft production in Ukraine and ways to promote products, namely the lack of validated indicators of “craft” as a key methodological problem and the lack of panel data on SMEs, underdevelopment of compliance and limited scalability, and we agree, because without such indicators any analysis will remain descriptive. Zhegus and Davydenko [52] note that over 70% of the grain and oilseed crop harvest is traditionally exported without processing; that is, the added value “leaks” outside the borders of agricultural holdings every year. – which forms a structural demand for craft processing as a mechanism for maintaining added value.

The resource approach explains the success of an enterprise by what it possesses, namely rare assets, patents, unique competencies. But a craft producer, as a rule, does not have any of these assets in sufficient quantities. The theory of dynamic capabilities of Thies, Pisano and Schuen [45; 46] offers another explanation: competitive advantage is determined not by the stock of resources, but by the speed of their regrouping in response to environmental changes (recognition of environmental signals, mobilization of resources and reconfiguration of the operating model). This is where the structural advantage of craft enterprises is revealed, because where an agricultural holding spends months on coordination and readjustment, a small cheese factory or brewery changes its assortment in a week.

3. Problem Statement

The purpose of the study is: conceptualization of the role of craft production in strategizing the development of small agricultural entrepreneurship with the identification of methodological principles for ensuring and assessing the resilience of small enterprises based on the identification of aspects of resilience; positioning the tasks of state support for the sector. Hypothesis: small enterprises in whose activities organized craft production demonstrate resilience compared to large producers in wartime due to the local embeddedness and flexibility of business models, and not only situational factors or regional specifics, and they should be measured and supported purposefully.

4. Methods and Materials

The methodological basis of the study is based on a systems analysis, an institutional approach, as well as on the use of empirical methods and statistical analysis. A systems approach is needed because craft production cannot be understood in isolation from the broader entrepreneurial ecosystem, as it is closely related to tourism, local markets, and public initiatives. Institutional, because the key barriers to the development of the sector are of a regulatory and legal nature. A comprehensive approach allows not only to describe the phenomenon of craft production, but also to conceptualize its role in shaping the global strategy for the development of small agricultural entrepreneurship. The following methods were used: theoretical generalization; comparative analysis to compare craft and mass production models; structural and functional analysis; institutional analysis of the regulatory and legal framework; and case study – for illustrative validation of IRC on typical enterprise profiles.

To quantitatively assess resilience, the Integral Craft Enterprise Index (IRC) was developed with four blocks theoretically grounded through the microfoundations of dynamic capabilities [2;11]:

financial stability (F), operational flexibility (O), market adaptability (M), and institutional integration (I).

A fundamentally important methodological limitation is that official Ukrainian statistics do not distinguish “craft enterprises” as a separate category under the KVED. Therefore, quantitative assessments are based on regional studies (87 enterprises in Transcarpathia [13]; over 400 producers of CraftUP Ukraine [33]) and industry reports (AgroPortal.ua, etc.). The use of industry reports and sectoral analytics instead of administrative registers is due precisely to the lack of the corresponding KVED category, i.e., this is a limitation of industry statistics in general, and not of this study. According to UNDP recommendations [50], it is advisable to use index and profile methods to assess sustainability in the absence of panel administrative data.

5. Results and Discussion

Mass production and craft compete according to different rules. The industrial producer reduces the cost through scale, that is, the more units, the lower the price per unit. The craft producer consciously rejects this logic and wins differently, through the uniqueness of the product, the emotional connection with the brand and the loyalty of the buyer, who is difficult to lure with price and who over time becomes a “brand advocate” [40], that is, the price positioning of craft products is much less sensitive to market conditions than that of mass analogues. Prados-Peña et al. [37], as already noted, established that the principle of sustainability is pervasive for the craft sector on a global scale. According to the conclusions of Raharjo et al. [38], the efficiency of artisanal production is determined by the qualification of the producer and the quality of the process organization, and not by the production scale.

The structural difference between the two models in the military context is presented in Table 1. Comparative data on relative resilience are based on regional studies of Transcarpathia [13; 28], and not on a national sample – due to the lack of an appropriate statistical category.

Table 1. Comparative characteristics of craft and mass production in the conditions of a war economy

Characteristics	Craft production	Mass production
Competitive advantage	Differentiation, uniqueness, authenticity [40]	Price, scale, standardization
Relative sustainability 2022-2024 (regional estimates [19, 42])	Comparatively higher adaptive persistence by estimates	Lower – especially for large manufacturers with extensive logistics
Sales channels	Local, direct, social media [49]	Network retail, export
Relocation	Fast (days), low costs	Slow, often impossible
Local multiplier (LM)	1.5–1.8 [39]	< 1.0 (revenue leakage)
Generated value added	5–10 times higher compared to raw materials	Minimal processing, raw material orientation [52]

Source: Formed by the authors based on [13; 17; 18; 22; 25; 39; 40; 49; 52].

To move from qualitative observations to measurable assessments, the Integral Resilience Index (IRc) was developed, which provides a link between the level of enterprise resilience and the corresponding state support instrument. The logic of IRc directly follows from the theory of dynamic capabilities, i.e. if resilience is defined by the ability to recognize change, mobilize resources and reconfigure the model, then it should be measured in the appropriate dimensions.

$$IRc = w_1F + w_2O + w_3M + w_4I$$

where: F – financial stability index (liquidity, profitability, margin, Cash Flow stability); O – operational flexibility index (product diversification, channel variability, speed of adaptation); M – market adaptability index (customer base stability, share of local sales, export diversification); I – institutional integration index (participation in clusters, cooperation with suppliers, access to government support).

Min-max normalization: $X_{norm} = (X - X_{min}) / (X_{max} - X_{min})$.

Two sets of weighting coefficients are used. Theoretical (adjustment) weights were calculated a priori based on general benchmarks of SME anti-crisis management [6; 35]: $w_1 = 0.35$; $w_2 = 0.25$; $w_3 = 0.25$; $w_4 = 0.15$. Basic (wartime-adapted) weights were adjusted to take into account the specifics of the war economy: $w_1 = 0.30$; $w_2 = 0.225$; $w_3 = 0.225$; $w_4 = 0.25$. Increasing the weight of the institutional block (from 0.15 to 0.25) is justified by OECD recommendations on the critical role of cluster and cooperative associations for the survival of small producers in crisis periods [4; 32]. The weight of the financial block was reduced from 0.35 to 0.30 not because finance has become less important, but because in the context of a systemic credit squeeze this indicator is less controllable and less differentiating between enterprises. The basic weights are the main set for analysis in this article; the theoretical ones are given to ensure comparability with studies using standard benchmark weights.

Threshold values: $IRc < 0.40$ – low level; $0.40-0.60$ – medium; $0.60-0.80$ – high; > 0.80 – strategic resilience. The ranges are heuristically determined based on benchmarks and calibrated to the military context; their refinement on a larger sample is the task of future research. The logic of IRc follows directly from the theory of dynamic capabilities: if resilience is defined by the ability to recognize change, mobilize resources, and reconfigure the model, then it should be measured in the appropriate dimensions.

Each subindex is the arithmetic mean of normalized indicators for 3–5 indicators of the block:

- Block F (financial stability), which includes the current liquidity ratio (with the caveat that in wartime conditions, abnormally high values (Current Ratio >5) often indicate not financial strength, but forced accumulation of liquidity due to the inability or unwillingness to invest, so we normalize this indicator not relative to an absolute benchmark, but relative to the industry median); profitability of sales; share of equity in liabilities; stability of cash flow (presence of positive FCF (free cash flow) for at least 9 months out of 12).

- Block O (operational flexibility): number of active product lines; number of sales channels; time to adapt the assortment to new conditions (days); share of production processes that do not depend on network power supply.

- Block M (market adaptability): share of regular customers; share of local sales (within 50 km); presence of an online channel; number of sales regions covered.

- Block I (institutional integration): membership in an industry association or cluster; cooperative agreements with suppliers; presence of an active state subsidy; participation in training programs, etc.

For illustrative purposes, the values of the sub-indices were determined based on a structured analysis of descriptive enterprise profiles in sources [13; 28; 33] with a scale for each indicator (0 = absent / critically low; 0.5 = satisfactory; 1.0 = excellent) and subsequent normalization. This approach is research-heuristic and does not replace the primary survey.

The lack of working capital and unprofitability led to the closure of more than 60% of small businesses in 2022–2023 (State Statistics Service; GIZ Ukraine). On this basis, the financial block initially received the highest weight $w_1 = 0.35$. However, the analysis of OECD recommendations on the critical role of cooperation and clustering in wartime conditions [4; 32] prompted a redistribution of the basic weights, so w_1 was reduced to 0.30, and the weight of the institutional block was increased from 0.15 to 0.25, which corresponds to the underdevelopment of institutional support mechanisms in 2022–2023 (although legislative changes in the field of support for small businesses and crafts may change this balance in future studies). The equal weight of O and M ($w_2 = w_3 = 0.225$) reflects a double vulnerability: capacity constraints and simultaneous loss of markets. Both sets of weights (theoretical and baseline) remain heuristic and require further calibration on primary data.

To check the stability, two scenarios were analyzed with respect to baseline and theoretical weights. Scenario S1 strengthens financial dominance, therefore for baseline weights: $w_1 = 0.35$; $w_2 = w_3 = 0.213$; $w_4 = 0.224$, for theoretical weights: $w_1 = 0.40$; $w_2 = w_3 = 0.231$; $w_4 = 0.138$. Scenario S2 softens the financial emphasis, for baseline weights $w_1 = 0.25$; $w_2 = w_3 = 0.238$; $w_4 = 0.274$, and for theoretical weights $w_1 = 0.30$; $w_2 = w_3 = 0.269$; $w_4 = 0.162$. Additional scenarios (simultaneous variation of several coefficients) are the subject of further multifactor analysis.

In Table 2, for each scenario, the first value in the fraction corresponds to the basic weights of the scenario, the second to the theoretical ones.

Table 2. Sensitivity analysis of IRc to variation in weighting factors (two scenarios)

Company profile	IRc_6az. (w ₁ =0.30)/ IRc_theor. (w ₁ =0.35)	IRc_S1 (w ₁ =0.35)/ (w ₁ =0.40)	Δ S1, %	IRc_S2 (w ₁ =0.25)/ (w ₁ =0.30)	Δ S2, %	Level change?
Cheese factory (Transcarpathia)	0.570/ 0.585	0.570/0.582	0.0%/-0.5%	0.570/0.588	0.0%/+0.5%	No
Apiary + honey production	0.550/ 0.570	0.555/0.572	+0.9%/+0.4%	0.545/0.568	-0.9%/-0.4%	No
Craft brewery (Lviv)	0.659/ 0.673	0.660/0.671	+0.1%/-0.3%	0.658/0.674	-0.1%/+0.1%	No
Micro bakery (rural)	0.431/ 0.448	0.431/0.444	0.0%/-0.9%	0.432/0.451	+0.2%/+0.7%	No
Craft wine (relocated)	0.463/ 0.475	0.456/0.465	-1.3%/-2.1%	0.469/0.485	+1.4%/+2.1%	No

Note: None of the profiles changes the level of resilience when the weights are varied, confirming the stability of the IRc aggregation formula regardless of the choice of weight set. This conclusion concerns only the stability of the formula when the weights are varied and does not replace validation on primary field data.

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Based on the aggregated profile characteristics of enterprises from [13; 28; 33], Table 3 was constructed. The column IRc_base. / IRc_theor. allows us to directly compare the impact of the choice of a set of weights on the calculated index value for each type of enterprise.

Table 3. Calculation example IRc on typical profiles of craft enterprises in Ukraine

Type of enterprise [source]	F	O	M	I	IRc_bas./ IRc_theor.	Level
Cheese factory (Transcarpathia) [19, 42]	0.55	0.70	0.60	0.45	0.570/0.585	Medium
Apiary + honey production [19]	0.60	0.65	0.55	0.40	0.550/0.570	Medium
Craft brewery (Lviv) [18, 21]	0.65	0.75	0.70	0.55	0.659/0.673	High
Micro bakery (rural) [21]	0.40	0.60	0.45	0.30	0.431/0.448	Medium
Craft wine (relocated) [37, 42]	0.35	0.70	0.50	0.35	0.463/0.475	Medium

Note: $IRc_{bas.} = 0.30 \times F + 0.225 \times O + 0.225 \times M + 0.25 \times I$. $IRc_{theor.} = 0.35 \times F + 0.25 \times O + 0.25 \times M + 0.15 \times I$. The subindices are determined heuristically based on a structured analysis of enterprise profiles [13; 28; 33]; the calculations given are a calculation example (an illustration of the stability of the formula), and not an empirical test of the index.

Source: Formed by the authors.

According to the obtained IRc values, a matrix of state support instruments is proposed (Table 4). The matrix is the same for both sets of weights, since the threshold values of resilience levels do not change.

According to UNDP, as already noted, small enterprises with a local orientation restored production activity in wartime faster than large-scale structures [50]. IRc explains this by several interrelated factors. The production cycle of such enterprises does not depend on long-distance logistics, since raw materials are mainly local, and sales are carried out within 50 km. The assortment can be reoriented in a matter of days without capital-intensive changes to equipment. Regular customers, formed even before the start of active hostilities, provide a basic cash flow even in the event of a general decline in the market. Significantly, most craft industries can be provided with an autonomous power supply, which in conditions of systematic power outages becomes a basic condition for survival. Chouraf & Chafi [9] showed that lean production (lean principles) increase productivity without losing authenticity, i.e., efficiency and differentiation do not contradict each other here and

enhance the operational flexibility (block O) of craft enterprises, which usually do not have a financial cushion to eliminate errors in conditions of resource constraints.

Table 4. IRc and recommended government support

IRc	Level	Risk	Recommended Support Tool
< 0,40	Low	Critical	Non-refundable grants “eWork”; tax holidays 12 months
0,40-0,60	Medium	Moderate	Loans “5-7-9%”; consulting support of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry; PDO registration
0,60-0,80	High	Low	Cluster initiatives of the State Agency for Tourism Development of Ukraine; co-export support; innovation grants
> 0,80	Strategic Sustainability	Minimal	Support for international branding; PDO promotion in foreign markets

Source: Developed by the authors based on the program documents of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine.

An important methodological caveat: due to the lack of an official KVED category “craft enterprises”, comparative indicators are based exclusively on regional studies and we cannot confirm the described trends on the all-Ukrainian sample. We observe higher adaptive endurance in specific regional contexts in Transcarpathia and the Lviv region. It would be a mistake to transfer these conclusions to regions with a different structure of agribusiness.

As of 2024, 87 craft enterprises operated in the mountainous regions of Transcarpathia [13]: 39 cheese and dairy farms, 30 apiaries and honey factories, 5 bakeries, 5 confectionery factories, 8 cosmetic workshops and 4 furniture enterprises [27]. Over 100 craft enterprises operated in the Lviv region [1]; the number of wineries increased by 70% in five years [2]. The craft beer market, despite an overall 2.2-fold drop in production, stabilized at ~\$10.47 million in 2024 with an average annual growth of 10% [29]. The scale of the crisis in traditional agricultural production emphasizes the contrast, as losses in crop production in 2023 alone amounted to \$2.71 billion; 6.7% of entities have completely stopped commercial production [52]. Against this background, craft processing is capable of generating added value 5–10 times higher compared to the input raw materials [23]. González-Córdova et al. [15] found for Mexican artisanal cheeses that PDO/PGI status increases the price of the product by 2–4 times – a similar logic is likely applicable to Ukrainian craft distillates and cheeses, although the direct transfer of this conclusion to the domestic context requires separate verification.

Law No. 3193-IX (entered into force in November 2023) introduced the concept of a “small producer of alcoholic distillates” with a license fee of UAH 780 instead of UAH 500,000. Law No. 3817-IX (adopted in June 2024 as draft law No. 10346; individual provisions entered into force in January 2025) established the “craft four”: small winemakers, small distillers, small mead makers, and small brewers and is a serious institutional step forward. Unified requirements provide for an e-license within 10 days, annual reporting and a 10-fold reduction in fines. According to estimates by the Craft Distillers Association, legalization will bring in over UAH 100 million annually [16].

It is important to logically reconcile the low values of the I subindex in the pilot profiles with the progressiveness of these reforms. The I value reflects the state of the institutional field as of 2022–2024. The regulatory effects of legislative changes do not instantly translate into real operational practice; that is, they have a certain time lag and have not yet been transformed into real institutional integration of micro-entities (months or even years usually pass between the adoption of the law and its assimilation by micro-producers). It is likely that the repeated measurement of IRc in 2026–2027 will show a noticeable increase in the I subindex for those who take advantage of the new opportunities.

Peshuk et al. [34] confirm that the standardization of technological processes and the protection of geographical indications (PDO) are key conditions for scaling the sector and without these two elements, the craft producer remains simply niche. Bahl et al. [4] offer a conceptual framework for a sustainable supply chain adapted to the post-crisis context. According to a study by the CraftUP Ukraine platform [33], among more than 400 surveyed producers, milk, meat, fruits and vegetables remain the leading processing categories; HoReCa forms an important sales channel, as the uniformity of the mass market menu opens a niche for authentic products. Geographically, Lviv and Dnipropetrovsk regions are the leaders in this sector, although sample data do not allow extrapolation of these estimates to all regions. In 2022–2023, when large distributors stopped deliveries due to the destruction of transport infrastructure, local craft producers, often unregistered and without any support, partially compensated

for the food shortage in remote rural communities [36]. Employment in the sector is sustained through self-employment and family entrepreneurship, which is particularly evident in communities where there used to be one large employer that has now ceased to exist [17]. For example, in craft brewing, each direct job indirectly leads to 17–30 more in related sectors [29], and the overall local multiplier for small food producers is in excess of 1.5 [18]. Markwick [25] documented a similar effect for Malta, where craft, when embedded in a tourist route, increases employment and keeps income within the local economy, which is directly reflected in the M block of the IRc index.

Nemes et al. [32] compared local food systems in 13 countries during COVID-19 and found that such systems survived the crisis more easily than global chains. Danko et al. [11] transferred this logic to Ukraine and found that regions with developed cultural and tourist infrastructure showed higher entrepreneurial activity even in wartime. Lastovchenko [22] recorded that where large agribusiness reduced production or stopped, small farms survived and gradually became the only source of food and economic activity in the local areas. Despite the advantages, the sector remains systemically squeezed from several sides at once. Regulatory and legal uncertainty persists even after the 2025 reforms (the lack of a comprehensive cross-sectoral definition of a craft enterprise and the procedure for its creation/registration are still absent). Financial access is limited – bank rates for small businesses remain prohibitive, and government programs rarely cover producers without a clear KVED classification. At the market level, small producers have virtually no tools to enter the network retail without an intermediary (limited marketing potential of small producers). The lack of joint production sites and a cold chain limits cooperation opportunities. The technological threshold for entry is painfully high due to the cost of equipment and sanitary standards. According to CraftUP [33], only half of producers sell online, 67% call the lack of digital skills the main barrier, and 76% acquire these skills independently, without any institutional support. Lastovchenko [22] records an identical structure of barriers for SMEs in rural areas of post-war reconstruction in general – which confirms their industry-wide nature and the need for a nationwide, rather than sector-specific, response.

The Polish experience is the most relevant benchmark for Ukraine; after joining the EU (2004), the share of small food enterprises in total agri-food exports increased from 12% to over 28% by 2015 thanks to targeted ERDF grants and cooperative marketing models [4; 32]. This case shows that with systematic support for 3–5 years, most craft enterprises can quite realistically achieve IRc > 0.60.

Other countries provide no less useful lessons. The Italian model of industrial districts combines PDO/PGI protection with tourist integration and provides a sustainable price premium of 2–4× to the base price [10; 15], i.e., the geographical indication turns into a real protection against price pressure, and not just a marketing add-on. The French AOC model does the same for export markets (providing export attractiveness through geographical indications). The Hungarian experience is particularly interesting for Transcarpathia, because Tokaj and Transcarpathian wines have a common raw material base, which opens up the prospect of a common cross-border PDO brand [32]. The Japanese and Korean models of “craft food promotion” through integration into tourist routes and state digital platforms confirm that the systemic development of the craft sector requires a combination of institutional, financial and marketing tools; that is, integration into tourist routes through state digital platforms gives small producers access to an audience that they would never have reached on their own [10]. Kifjak [21] substantiates an ecosystem model for Ukraine in which the state, business and science act in synergy, not in parallel, and together form an innovative development space. Krasnorutskyi et al. [19] confirm that the brand of a craft product is a strategic tool for increasing the efficiency of an agricultural enterprise in the context of digitalization. Confirm: in the context of digitalization, the own brand of a craft product turns into a strategic asset of an agricultural enterprise.

6. Conclusions

Craft production is an effective mechanism for ensuring the resilience of small enterprises. Craft enterprises have a specific production model based on value differentiation, not price competition. Their structural characteristics – small size, dependence on local raw materials of the region, manual labor, local sales, flexible business models, which in peacetime looked like a weakness, became decisive advantages of resilience in the crisis conditions of wartime.

In addition to the purely production function, the craft sector performed in 2022–2023 a role that is difficult to quantify, but easy to notice in field observations: food security of communities,

preservation of rural employment, regional economic diversification, preservation of cultural heritage and generation of a local multiplier. Craft distillation and cheesemaking are capable of generating added value 5–10 times higher than the sale of raw materials, and the local multiplier of the industry consistently exceeds 1.5. It is not yet possible to realize this potential systematically. Regulatory unregulation, inaccessible lending, weak clustering, and low digital readiness remain unchanged and require comprehensive, multi-instrumental, rather than point-based, state support.

The proposed Integral Resilience Index (IRc) provides a quantitative tool for monitoring the resilience of craft enterprises and calibrating targeted state support, because it is impossible to develop targeted support without understanding where the enterprise is on the resilience scale. The index enables comparative regional analysis and dynamic monitoring of results over time. The proposed tool is a pilot assessment option that requires further testing and calibration on wider empirical arrays of primary data.

For Ukraine, with its raw material potential and growing demand for authentic products, in the strategic perspective, the development of craft production can become one of the vectors of post-war economic reconstruction, ensuring the diversification of the agricultural sector, employment growth and the formation of local centers of economic activity. State support should be focused on a long-term ecosystem model based on deregulation, affordable financing, clustering, export integration (promotion abroad) and digital sales, and not on point subsidies or other fragmented interventions.

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