Article – Open section

Communicating craft
Builders on Instagram

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Abstract

This article presents an exploratory study of the communication practices of professional tradespeople on Instagram, a topic that has received little scholarly attention so far. The research is based on mediatization theory and maps the communicative practices of "ordinary" Danish carpenters and woodworkers in the building industry through an emergent coding scheme quantitative content analysis. The study analyzes the content that these tradespeople share as well as the textual characteristics of their posts and the engagement they receive from their audience. The findings indicate that both groups primarily use Instagram for marketing and promoting their work, showcasing images of ongoing or completed projects. While woodworkers receive more engagement than carpenters in terms of likes and comments, overall interaction from the audience is relatively low. The study also explores other types of communication, such as professional discussions, personal reflections, and engagement with societal/political issues, which are limited in both groups. This baseline study contributes to our understanding of the mediatization of craft as reflected in the communication practices of tradespeople on Instagram. Further research is needed to explore the motivations and experiences of tradespeople on social media platforms in more depth.

Keywords
Tradespeople, craft, social media, Instagram, carpenters, woodworkers

Introduction

On 6 June 2023, Casper Kjerumgaard, a Danish carpenter and carpentry-related con-
tent creator, celebrated surpassing 140,000 followers on Instagram (Kjerumgaard, 2023),
illustrating the increasing popularity of craft and craftsmanship on Danish social media.
While Kjerumgaard is a prominent example of a tradesperson posting on Instagram,
he is not alone. Other lesser-known profiles, such as woodworker and floor treatment
specialist Michael Wurstbauer (@schleifkunst) and woodworker Snedker Freja (@elm-
snedker), have amassed small but dedicated followings of approximately 4,000 and 5,700,
respectively, for their woodworking posts, while household name social media influencers
like Cathrine Wichmand (@cathrinewichmand, 82,400 followers) and Signe Wenneberg
(@signewenneberg, 102,000 followers) post about home improvement, traditional build-
ing materials, building preservation, and craftsmanship to broader audiences.

   Although the exemplary profiles mentioned above are professional (or at least
very adept) content creators, social media are also used by many "ordinary" small and
medium-sized enterprises (Danmarks Statistik, 2023), as platforms like Instagram have
become primary channels for potential customers and other interested parties looking for
information about craft and tradespeople (Malesev & Cherry, 2021).

   This points to craft being increasingly mediatized, broadly entangled with media,
which influences and shapes its practices and meanings (Couldry & Hepp, 2017). It is
worth noting that mediatization does not only concern practices that are directly medi-
ated through Instagram and other media but rather affects all practices in a given societal
sphere, in direct and indirect ways (Hjarvard, 2008). As networked publics, Instagram and
other social media are, however, central contexts where mediatization is visibly playing
out; in the case of craft, social media allow tradespeople to communicate and interact
with audiences in new ways, whether these audiences are potential customers, peers,
policymakers, or organizations.

   Audiences, on the other hand, may potentially use social media to learn about craft,
craftsmanship, and the professional lives of tradespeople, which is significant, not least at
a time when skilled workers are in short supply (Bielefeldt, 2023) and the Danish govern-
ment pushes for more young people to take up vocational training (Frederiksen et al.,
2022).

    However, despite these developments and potentials, little research has examined
the communication of tradespeople on social media. What little research exists is mainly
found in the business literature on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and exam-
ines factors motivating or limiting their uptake of digital and social media (Suryani et al.,
2021), for example, the promise of cheap and easy social media marketing, branding, and
customer relationship management (Atanassova & Clark, 2015; Juniarti & Omar, 2021;
Lupo & Stroman, 2020; Meier & Peters, 2023). Concrete communication practices after
adoption are often not examined, and as regards the construction industry specifically,
studies are rare (but see Malesev & Cherry, 2021).

Drawing on mediatization theory, this article examines the communicative practices of professional tradespeople who use Instagram to communicate with external audiences. Since this field has only had limited scholarly attention, it is the ambition of the article to provide an initial systematic mapping of central categories of content. To this end, a content analysis using an emergent scheme codebook (see Neuendorf, 2017) is conducted on Instagram posts from Danish carpenters and woodworkers in the construction industry. The article addresses the following research questions: How do builders communicate with external audiences on Instagram? What are the central categories of their communication content, how prominent are they, and what communication strategies do they express?

Builders

The builders whose posts have been included in this study intentionally align with the Danish industry code 43.32.00 "Tømrer- og bygningssnedkervirksomhed" ("joinery installation") (Erhvervsstyrelsen, n.d.). Keeping in line with this code, furniture makers (møbelsnedkere) and companies specializing in floor laying and floor treatment are not included in the analysis. This categorization was complicated because Instagram does not require tradespeople to post in their own or their business name, making it impossible to map profiles to businesses or company categories precisely. Also, there is a good amount of variability in the tasks that builders do since a carpenter may one day produce a wooden terrace and the next make a piece of free-standing furniture; the former would allow inclusion into the dataset while the latter would not. To address these challenges, a textual analysis of profiles was combined with visual inspection of the first nine images on a given profile, and those profiles found to work at least partly on a building site were included.

In data collection (see below), posts using hashtags #tømrer (carpenter) and #snedker (woodworker) were saved. Although similar in many ways, carpenters and woodworkers may differ somewhat in the orientation of their work. Carpenters often do heavier and perhaps less aesthetically pleasing work, such as constructing or repairing roofs, installing plaster walls, or renovating or building whole houses. Woodworkers, on the other hand, typically work with various forms of finishing, such as trim or built-in furniture, which is often more aesthetically pleasing in a traditional sense. Since the groups have similarities and differences, they will be treated separately in the analysis.

Instagram

Instagram is a multi-modal social media platform focused mainly on visual communication, although the functionality and communicative affordances continue to evolve. It allows users to communicate through images, videos, multi-photo/video carousels, text,

hashtags, direct messaging, reels, stories, and more (Laestadius & Witt, 2022; Leaver et al., 2020).

From the perspective of tradespeople, Instagram offers attractive opportunities for communicating about their professions due to its focus on visual communication, which lends itself well to displaying products and processes of craft and craftsmanship.

The platform also promises access to a large and engaged audience, with research from the Danish Broadcasting Cooperation finding that 34% of the Danish population aged 15-75 used Instagram daily in 2022; among the 15-24-year-olds, the number was 58% (DR Medieforskning, 2023, p. 14, no other subgroups mentioned). Among Danes above 12 who used Instagram in 2020, 58% were female, and 42% were male (Kulturministeriet, 2021, p. 34).

Literature review

Communication and craft

When the communication practices of professionals on social media have been examined in the literature, the focus has mainly been on groups for whom communication is a central concern and part of their job description; this is, for instance, the case with social media influencers/creators, journalists, and politicians (see, e.g., Leaver et al., 2020). The communicative practices of the latter, in particular, have been a topic of interest (Ekman & Widholm, 2017; Metz et al., 2020; Thorlacius, 2024).

However, the literature review undertaken for this research finds that the use of social media in the context of tradespeople appears to have been the focus of little communication research. This applies also to its connection with the specific theoretical perspective of mediatization.

For the review, peer-reviewed abstracts in the EBSCO Communication and Mass Media Complete database were queried broadly and openly for the keywords tradesmen, tradespeople, craftspeople, craftsmen, artisans, carpenters, woodworkers, and builders, which yielded no results relevant to the communication practices of professional tradespeople. Combinations of keywords craft, craftsmanship, woodworking, and carpentry with social media, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and mediatization likewise did not produce relevant results; some entries matched the keywords, but all were used in different contexts than the focus of this article (e.g., the craftsmanship of journalistic work and identity management online).

Turning to Danish language publications, searching for the single keyword "håndværk" (covering trade, craft, craftsmanship) in the Communication and Mass Media Complete database yielded no results. A full-text search conducted with Tidsskrift.dk (a collection of Danish peer-reviewed research publications) and the full-text search engine of the Royal Danish Library for combinations of the keywords sociale medier (social media), mediali-

sering (mediatization), Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube with håndværk, snedker, and tømrer similarly produced no results relevant to the research.

When evaluating the relevance criteria, it is essential to reiterate that this article focuses on the communication practices of "ordinary" professionals in the building industry and that the above review reflects this focus. Other strands of literature touch upon some of the same interests but do so from different angles. One is focused more on the cultural aspects of craft, social media, creativity, and makers (see, e.g., Gauntlett, 2018), which is not directly relevant to the purposes of this article. Another focuses more on marketing and branding in small businesses and enterprises (Drummond et al., 2020; Marotta et al., 2016), which the review turns to next.

SMEs and social media

With tradespeople's social media communication practices under-researched in communication studies, insights from adjacent academic fields were sought. Specifically, peer-reviewed literature on the adoption and use of social media in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) was examined. In Denmark, 53% of the 10,686 carpenter or wood-working companies (business code 43.32.00) active in 2021 had less than ten employees, 41% had none, and only a single company had more than 250 (Danmarks statistik, 2023). This places the companies predominantly in the microenterprises subcategory of SMEs as defined by the European Commission (n.d.).

Searches for peer-reviewed articles covering the period 2015-2023 were performed using the EBSCO Business Source Complete database with combinations of keywords "SMEs or small and medium-sized enterprises," "small business," and "construction industry" with "social media". The diverse international results of these broad searches were then evaluated based on their relevance to the present research topic and perceived cultural closeness to the Danish context.

The adoption and use of social media in SMEs is a topic that has received limited scholarly attention (Atanassova & Clark, 2015; Burgess et al., 2017), although interest has been rising recently (Cadavid & Valencia-Arias, 2022). Studies have focused mainly on the pre-adoption process and adoption impact on company performance (e.g., Pfister & Lehmann, 2023), while research focused on post-adoption use remains scarce (Suryani et al., 2021). Most studies that have examined the use of single social media in SMEs have focused on Facebook (Cadavid & Valencia-Arias, 2022).

In the context of SMEs, social media are most often used for external communication (Meier & Peters, 2023). Key motivations for adoption and use are that they enable low-cost marketing, provide increased visibility, new branding opportunities, and the potential for customer relationship management as well as meeting customer preferences (Atanassova & Clark, 2015; Juniarti & Omar, 2021; Lupo & Stroman, 2020; Malesev & Cherry, 2021; Meier & Peters, 2023). In addition, social media may increase intercompany cooperation, work knowledge sharing, and innovation among small businesses and

increase geographical and international reach (Cesaroni & Consoli, 2015; Etemadi et al., 2020).

SME adoption and use of social media may, however, also be motivated by a bandwagon effect, a feeling that one simply *should* be present on social media, or perceived competition rather than strategic considerations and planning (Burgess et al., 2017; Cesaroni & Consoli, 2015; Malesev & Cherry, 2021).

Key challenges to adoption have been found to be a lack of time, understanding, skills, interest, and perceived lack of usefulness (Burgess et al., 2017; Kraus et al., 2019; Lupo & Stroman, 2020). Also, the increased online interaction with current or prospective customers may sometimes be too much of a good thing, taking up too many resources (Malesev & Cherry, 2021).

One aspect of social media use of particular relevance to the communication of craft is the affordance of visual communication to present and promote in a tangible way a company's products or services (Lupo & Stroman, 2020; Malesev & Cherry, 2021). For SMEs using Instagram specifically, important factors that are found to influence the audience's perception of communication content are quality (e.g., image resolution), attractiveness (e.g., creativity, exclusiveness), interaction (e.g., comments, direct messages), and relevance (Suryani et al., 2021, p. 85).

Mediatization

This research positions itself within a mediatization framework. Mediatization is a concept used to critically examine how changes to media technologies are associated with changes to social and communication practices (Krotz, 2009).

The perspective underscores that social reality is shaped by media and communication (Couldry & Hepp, 2017) and introduces the concept of communicative figurations to enable "a practical, transmedial analysis of the changing communicative construction of mediatized cultures and societies" (Hepp & Hasebrink, 2015, p. 250). Communicative figurations may be defined as "patterns of processes of communicative interweaving that exist across various media and have a thematic framing that orients communicative action" (Hepp & Hasebrink, 2015, p. 258) and, at the most basic level, focuses our attention on groups of people – or institutions representing the agency of people – that come together (actor constellation) around some purpose (relevance frame) and perform communicative practices using a set of media specific to them (media ensemble) (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, pp. 57-78). A goal of mediatization research is then to study how communicative practices play out in the relevant figurations under study – in this case, between tradespeople and their audiences.

The focus of the mediatization perspective on technological and social change intuitively invites a *diachronous* approach to empirical research. However, the perspective is also used to guide research that examines the interweaving of technology and its appro-

priation *synchronously* at single points in time, as is the case in the present research (Hepp & Hasebrink, 2015, pp. 265-266).

Method

A content analysis of 500 Instagram posts was conducted to provide a summarizing descriptive overview of key dimensions in the data and their prevalence (Eskjær & Helles, 2015, p. 26; Neuendorf, 2017, p. 43).

Data was collected via hashtag searches for #snedker (woodworker) and #tømrer (carpenter) using a commercial service in March 2023. "Most recent" posts were collected to keep them in chronological order, and "top posts" were excluded because of their less transparent content selection criteria. The search for #snedker yielded 7,266 results from 19/10 2021 to 29/3 2023, and the search for #tømrer yielded 8,068 results from 10/7 2022 to 30/3 2023. The differences in period length are a result of the method of data collection, where a search was initiated and retrieval continued until Instagram stopped outputting results; this typically occurred after 5,000-10,000 posts had been collected.

Links to profiles and posts were collected alongside local copies of the text, hashtags, and metadata; coding, however, utilized live posts to stay as close to the original context as possible. Stories were not captured due to their transient nature, and videos in the reel format were not captured due to the tool's limitations during data collection.

Subsequently, the datasets were aligned so that the time intervals matched and merged into one file where duplicates were removed, and the data was randomized. The remaining 11,629 posts cover all uses of #snedker and #tømrer in the period from 1/8 2022 to 29/3 2023.

Of the 500 posts analyzed, 250 posts used the hashtag #tømrer (carpenter), and 250 used #snedker (woodworker); posts using both hashtags were excluded. While #snedker is used predominantly by Danish tradespeople, #tømrer is also used by Norwegian profiles, which had to be manually identified and filtered out. Furthermore, only relevant posts by carpenters and woodworkers were included, which means that, for example, posts about freestanding furniture were not included per the definition of builders. For carpenters, 1,036 posts were coded and filtered to get 250 posts matching the criteria; for woodworkers, the number was 734. This together makes up 1,770, or 15% of the population of 11,629 posts.

The unit of analysis was the post with all its content, where the presence or absence of categories of interest was examined across single or multiple images, video, text, and hashtags. As Laestadius and Witt point out, "removing an image from its caption and vice versa creates a significant loss of context" (Laestadius & Witt, 2022, p. 587), and a holistic approach was thus preferred.

While content analysis is often associated with the analysis of manifest content and a hypothetico-deductive approach (Bell, 2013, p. 13), this research used emerging category

formation and research questions where central practices were developed into categories through a close reading of the material (Neuendorf, 2017, pp. 108-110, 113). It was established early on that much of the posted content is relatively mundane. As such, it would not be beneficial to apply preconceived categories to the material as this would risk, on the one hand, using categories that are not present in the material and, on the other, applying categories that are too general to capture the complexity of what is there.

The emergent coding scheme is presented in Table 1. It aims to stay relatively close to the data and catalogue descriptively central categories of tradespeople's communication. This has resulted in a codebook, which spans *commercial* (completed work, ongoing work, explicit promotion, direct address, call-to-action), *professional* (educational content, work process steps, intra-professional discussion), *political* (issues broadly, green sustainability), *personal* (personal focus), and *representational* (apprentices, females, males, employees) aspects.

No.	Variable	Explanation	Values
Selection variables			
1	Danish profile	Is the profile Danish or not?	yes/no
2	Type of profile	Is the profile a carpenter/woodworker or not?	yes/no
Content variables			
3	Ongoing work	Is ongoing work presented?	yes/no
4	Completed work	Is completed work presented?	yes/no
5	Promotion of company or services	Are positive aspects of the company or work highlighted (in text)?	yes/no
6	Direct address to audience	Is there direct communication to the audience?	yes/no
7	Call-to-action	Does the post encourage users to buy goods or services?	yes/no
8	Educational content	Does the post explain how or why something is done?	yes/no
9	Work process steps	Does the post show steps of a work process?	yes/no
10	Issues broadly	Are broader societal/political issues presented?	yes/no
11	Intra-professional issues	Is an intra-professional issue presented?	yes/no
12	Green sustainability	Is the issue of green sustainability presented?	yes/no
13	Personal content	Are the personal experiences of a builder presented?	yes/no
14	Apprentices	Are apprentices presented?	yes/no
15	Female workers	Are female workers presented?	yes/no
16	Male workers	Are male workers presented?	yes/no
17	Employees	Are specific employees introduced?	yes/no

Table 1: Overview of categories.

The first two variables are selection variables, allowing the analysis to focus on Danish builders. The remaining variables indicate whether a topic is present or not. This allows for applying multiple codes to a single unit of analysis while satisfying the requirements for quantitative analysis (Krippendorf, 2018, p. 165) and is an advantage due to the complexity of the material. Posts may contain several messages at once; they are multi-modal and differ in which modes are used in which combinations. A post can, for instance, present both finished and ongoing work simultaneously (e.g., in different pictures in a multi-picture carousel), and coding as one or the other would lose information and potentially be misleading.

The intersubjectivity of the codebook was assessed by double-coding 60 Instagram posts with another coder. Cohen's Kappa was calculated and showed acceptable levels of intercoder reliability > 0.8 (Neuendorf, 2017, p. 168). Subsequently, coding was conducted by a single coder (the author).

Results

In the following, results from posts using the hashtags carpenter and woodworker are presented separately. This is because there are both overlaps and differences between these sets of materials, which would be masked by pooling the two groups and treating them as one. Posts using both hashtags at the same time were excluded from the analysis.

Text and tags

In this first section, the content of the posts is summarized to provide an overview of the textual characteristics of the material. Common stop words (such as "and") were filtered out in Atlas.ti. Hashtags #snedker and #tømrer, which were used for data collection and are by definition present in all posts, were also excluded.

Posts by carpenters, on average, contain "39 words (median 27) and 11 hashtags (median 8); for woodworkers, the numbers are 34 (median 23) and 16 (median 16). Only 6% and 2% contain video (in-feed; reels were not included). That is, posts typically consist of a mix of images, text, and tags, with woodworkers using more hashtags than carpenters.

Posts by carpenters use emojis a total of 539 times versus 313 for woodworkers. Carpenters use fewer different kinds of emojis (92 versus 112) and use them more frequently; on average, they use an emoji 6 times (median 3) compared to 3 times (median 1).

The top 15 words and tags are presented for carpenters and woodworkers in Table 2 and Table 3.

Tømrer (carpenter)						**Snedker (woodworker)**				
Rank	Word (DA)	(ENG)	Count	Emoji	Count	Word (DA)	(ENG)	Count	Emoji	Count
1	nye	new	47	😁	43	egetræ	oak wood	33	😍	19
2	tag	roof	42	✅	26	køkken	kitchen	28	✨	16
3	kontakt	contact	25	🔨	26	ønsker	wishes	26	🌟	13
4	projekt	project	22	📞	25	indbygget	built-in	21	🟢	12
5	vinduer	windows	18	🖊️	18	nye	new	20	🖤	10
6	tilbud	offer	17	😍	16	hjem	home	19	🤎	9
7	tømrer	carpenter	17	🌟	14	skuffer	drawers	19	😊	9
8	hus	house	16	⚫	12	smukke	beautiful	18	👌	8
9	terrasse	terrace	16	⭐	11	kunde	customer	17	❤️	7
10	kunde	customer	15	👍	11	skabe	cupboards	17	❤️	7
11	kunden	the customer	15	🖼️	11	eg	oak	16	🖌️	7
12	arbejde	work	14	📩	11	kontakt	contact	16	👌	6
13	træ	wood	13	💪	11	opbevaring	storage	15	🤍	6
14	uge	week	13	😀	10	behov	needs	14	😁	6
15	gulv	floor	11	⚪	9	greb	knobs/handles	14	🙌	6

Table 2: Top 15 most used words and emojis by carpenters and woodworkers.

Tømrer (carpenter)				Snedker (woodworker)		
Rank	Hashtag (DA)	(ENG)	Count	Hashtag (DA)	(ENG)	Count
1	renovering	renovation	58	snedkeri	woodworking business	113
2	tømrerarbejde	carpentry	46	boligindretning	interior design	74
3	byggeri	building	43	boliginspiration	home inspiration	74
4	tømrerlivet	carpenter's life	43	indretning	interior design	73
5	håndværker	tradesperson	41	håndværk	craftsmanship	60
6	carpenter	carpenter	35	snedkerkøkken	bespoke kitchen	59
7	håndværk	craftsmanship	34	design	design	58
8	byggeprojekt	building project	28	interiør	interior	55
9	boliginspiration	home inspiration	27	danskdesign	Danish design	51
10	nyttag	new roof	25	interiordesign	interior design	49
11	tømrermester	master carpenter and contractor	25	møbelsnedker	cabinetmaker	46
12	nybyggeri	newbuilding	22	bolig	home/housing/interior	45
13	bolig	home/housing/interior	21	interior	interior	45
14	nybyg	newly built	21	inventar	furniture/furnishings	44
15	murer	mason	20	køkken	kitchen	44

Table 3: The top 15 most used hashtags by carpenters and woodworkers.

Taken together, Table 2 and Table 3 illustrate that even though carpenters and woodworkers share many common traits and tasks, they also differ in the words and tags they use, reflecting their professional specializations and focuses.

Carpenters tend to post about larger projects such as constructing new buildings, renovations, roofs, windows, and wooden terraces. When they use emojis to promote their work, they often use straightforward starry-eyed emojis and emojis that underscore the physical nature of their work, for example, the hammer, saw, and strong-arm emojis (the latter of which is used 23 times spread across different hues). They also put forth more invitations for contact and for customers to get offers for work. Both use the hashtag #boliginspiration (homeinspiration); woodworkers do so more often than carpenters.

Woodworkers generally focus more on smaller-scale work such as kitchens, built-in furniture, cupboards, or drawers, and highlight the bespoke nature of their products. They frequently mention the popular (and expensive) material oak wood and underscore the fact that posts serve as home inspiration while often labeling their work as design. Although the heart-shaped eye emoji tops the list, generally, there is more variation in the emojis they use, often choosing more understated emojis, for example, black hearts or similar.

One surprising use of hashtags was the popular #tømrerlivet (#carpenterslife), used in 17% of posts by carpenters. Although there is variability in its use, this hashtag is often used in posts where unpolished snapshots are taken of job sites or work. The hashtag appears to be a way of communicating the varying everyday life of carpenters – a form of diary – and simultaneously implicitly expresses a sense of pride in the work that makes up this life. This way, the hashtag may function to legitimize posting content that is, to most, neither particularly interesting nor photogenic and risks breaking with the expectations of the audiences on the platform. In comparison, #snedkerlivet (#woodworkerslife) was used only once in the material.

Regarding engagement, posts by carpenters, on average, have 19 likes (median 14) and 1 comment (median 0). Woodworkers have 42 likes (median 24) and 2 comments (median 0). That is, there is generally only a little engagement from the audience in both groups, but on average, woodworkers have more – and more unevenly distributed – interaction than carpenters.

Commercial aspects of communication

Table 4 presents a combined overview of the results of the content analysis.

No.	Variable	Carpenters	Woodworkers
3	Ongoing work	46%	18%
4	Completed work	63%	86%
5	Promotion of company or services	62%	61%
6	Direct address to audience	34%	29%
7	Call-to-action	21%	12%
8	Educational content	14%	7%
9	Work process steps	12%	5%
10	Issues broadly	9%	10%
11	Intra-professional issues	3%	4%
12	Green sustainability	7%	6%
13	Personal content	3%	5%
14	Apprentices	8%	5%
15	Female workers	2%	6%
16	Male workers	29%	10%
17	Employees	9%	0%

Table 4: Results of content analysis (n=250 per group).

The most prominent categories of content found in the material are those that are most directly commercially focused. The most prolific type of content is images of work. 84% of carpenters' and 94% of woodworkers' posts contain ongoing or completed work, making it the most common category. Breaking this down, carpenters' social media posts feature images of completed work in 63% of cases, compared to 86% for woodworkers. Ongoing work is presented in 46% of carpenters' posts and only 18% of posts by woodworkers (see Figure 1 and Figure 2).
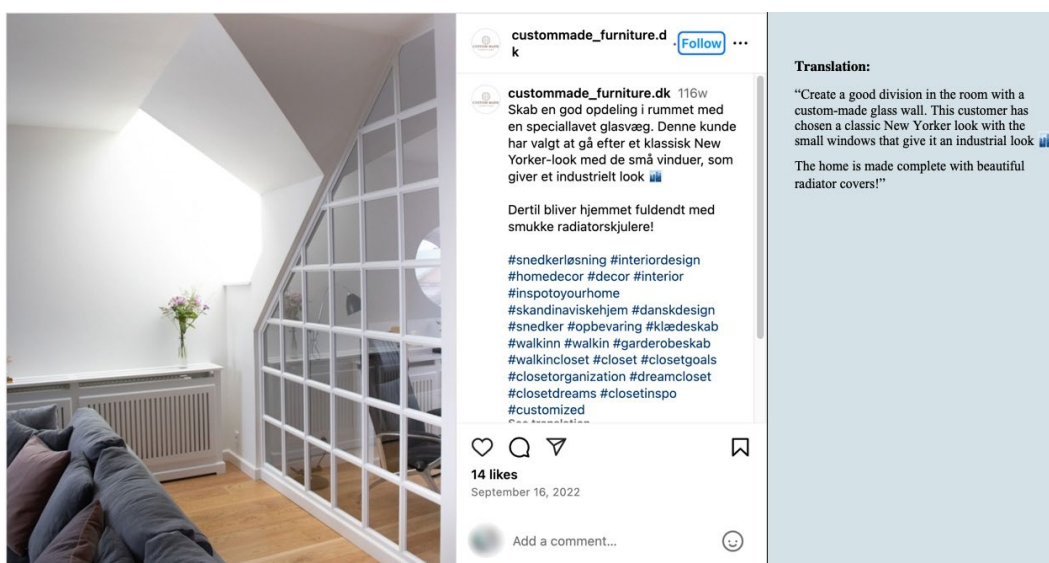
Figure 1: A woodworking company's profile showing and promoting completed work.
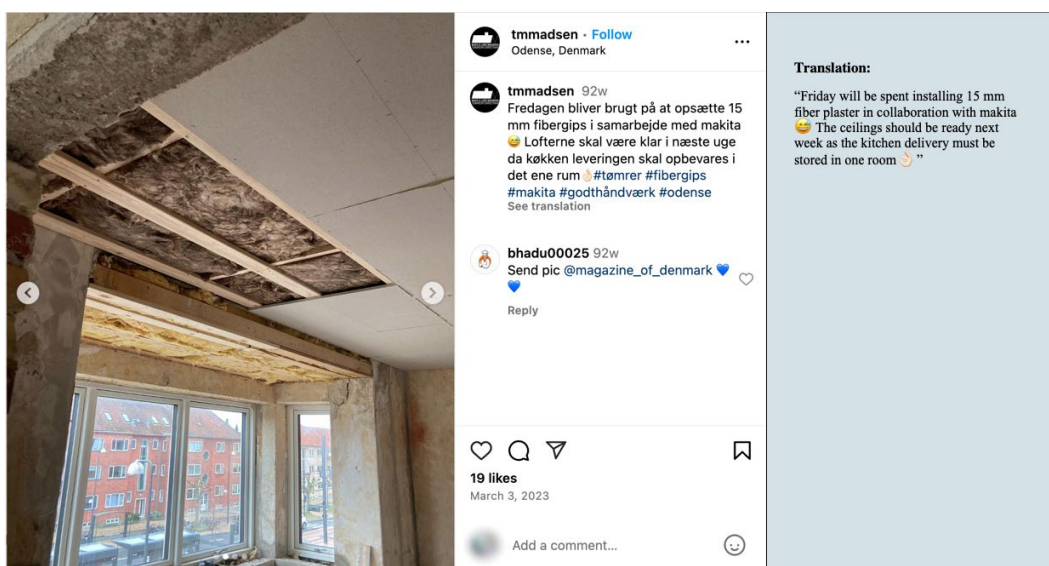

Figure 2: A carpenter's profile showing an example of ongoing work.

A high percentage of posts explicitly promote their company or work. Specifically, 61% of carpenters' and 62% of woodworkers' posts contain such promotion. However, although this is a high percentage, it should be noted that this figure may not fully capture all promotional activities, as only text and not tags were analyzed because it is often difficult to determine if hashtags are promotional. For instance, while #danishdesign is a frequently used marketing term and can be seen as promoting, it is unclear if #design does the same. Additionally, hashtags are often copied from one post to the next and may lack contex-

tual relevance. Despite these limitations, explicit promotion is prominent in the posts analyzed.

Taken together, the above results support previous findings from the field of SMEs that the adoption and use of social media is often due to its promise of easy and low-cost marketing, increased visibility, and new branding opportunities.

Looking at audience engagement as an expression of customer relationship management, 34% of carpenters and 29% of woodworkers address the audience directly; this includes 21% and 12%, which invite the audience directly to get in touch (see, e.g., Figure 3). Only 15% of carpenters' and 18% of woodworkers' posts directly address the audience without making such calls to action. Although some stand out, most posts make little effort to build audience engagement beyond the occasional greeting ("Have a nice weekend!") or asking questions ("What do you think?"), and as we saw above, measures of interaction from the audience (likes, comments) are correspondingly low. With the caveat that only public communication is visible to the analysis (and direct messages are not), this indicates that although customer relationship management may be a general motivation for taking up social media among SMEs, it is limited in this group and context.

Figure 3: A woodworker's profile showing and promoting completed work and explicitly offering their services to the audience.

Professional, political, and personal communication

Looking beyond the most strictly commercial communication activities, the level of professional discussions, engagement with societal/political issues, and communication about the personal experiences or reflections of individual craftsmen, in general, is low.

Intra-professional discussions about the use of techniques, materials, the moral obligation of companies to train apprentices, and other professional issues occur in only 3%

of cases for carpenters and 4% for woodworkers. Educational content – that is, explanations, though not necessarily elaborate, of how or why something was done, the benefits of using a particular material, or similar – occur in 14% of carpenters' posts and 7% of woodworkers' posts. In 12% of cases, carpenters present their work process in a way that – while not necessarily intentionally educational – makes it possible to follow and understand the sequential steps involved; this happens in 5% of cases among woodworkers.

Societal/political issues occur in 9% of posts by carpenters and 10% of posts by woodworkers. This broad combined category was constructed because several issues were mentioned only once or twice in the material. Such is, for instance, the case with the hashtag #klogehænder (smart hands), which refers to both the embodied knowledge of the skilled professional and to the title of a book by prominent Danish politician Matthias Tesfaye discussing the important role of tradespeople in society (Tesfaye, 2013). Due to the current high level of interest in sustainability in the building industry, it was, however, decided to code for this aspect individually; 7% of posts by carpenters and 6% of posts by woodworkers mention, tag, or otherwise engage broadly with sustainability in the building industry, including energy optimization, sustainable insulation materials, upcycling, recycling, building to last, and similar. In most cases, the level of engagement with the topic is, however, superficial and consists of posts simply mentioning the word or using variations of the hashtag #bæredygtighed (sustainability). Some companies and highly engaged individuals stand out against this background as sustainability champions (see, e.g., Figure 4), but they are an exception to the rule.
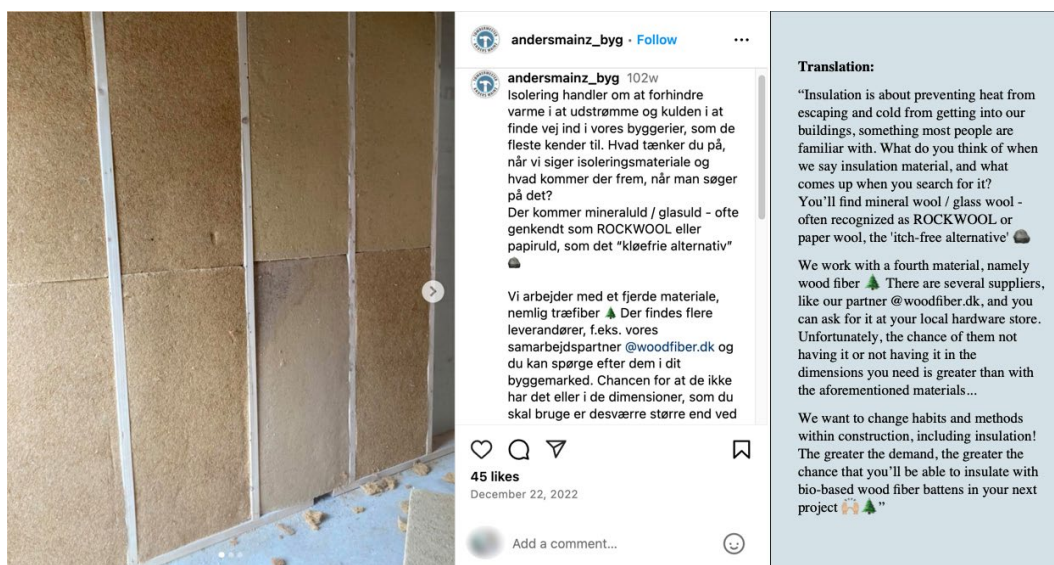

Figure 4: A carpenter's profile promotes green sustainability through bio-based insulation materials.

Communication about individual tradespeople's experiences or personal reflections occurs in only 3% of posts by carpenters and 5% of posts by woodworkers; Figure 5 shows an example of this form of communication. It should be mentioned, however, that although content is often not personal in the sense of being about personal experiences, this does not mean that the person posting is irrelevant to the communication or that the communication does not have consequences for the individual. The very act of posting on social media by companies or individuals involves selective impression management (Goffman, 1959), which may effectively result in storytelling and branding; for individuals, this may include an aspect of self-branding (Whitmer, 2019).

Representation

At a time when society lacks builders, matters of representation in the communication of craft on social media are interesting to consider; a fundamental question is whether a young person considering a career in the building industry can see themselves represented in the communication they encounter online. In light of this, 29% of posts by carpenters show images of male workers or reference the names of male workers (not counting the profile name) compared to 10% of posts of woodworkers. Meanwhile, 2% of carpenters' and 6% of woodworkers' posts include names or images of female workers. In 9% of cases, carpenters' posts explicitly present and profile the company's workers, which occurs in 0% (one case) of woodworkers' posts.

In general, the material focuses on presenting the work itself, not the people doing it. This is particularly the case for woodworkers, who rarely present images of workers or make reference to them and do not profile their workers/employees. In terms of gender, the fact that carpenters refer to male workers substantially more than to female workers in text and visual content approximately reflects the uneven gender distribution within the trade: Statistics from industry organization Dansk Industri show that females made up 4% of builders who worked on construction sites in Denmark in 2021 (Søndergaard, 2021). For woodworkers, more references are made to female workers, but the percentages are so low that it does not make a material difference; it appears to be primarily a consequence of one or two companies posting frequently and posting their female names in the hashtags.

Finally, apprentices are referenced explicitly (it typically is not possible to identify apprentices from images or video alone) in 8% of posts by carpenters and 5% of those by woodworkers. Among carpenters, a slight majority of these posts are made by companies (12 out of 20) to show, for instance, activities for apprentices that they are currently training; this could be "master's day", where employers are invited to visit the schools where apprentices receive their theoretical education, or participation in the national apprentice championships in skills (http://skillsdenmark.dk/). Other companies mention apprentices or use the hashtag #lærling with limited context. Among woodworkers', most posts referring to apprentices (10 out of 12) are made by apprentices themselves or professionals

posting examples of projects they made while apprentices. While providing some insight into particularly the educational aspects of apprenticeship, in general, content showing the everyday lives of apprentices in greater detail is limited. Figure 5 shows an apprentice documenting his experiences as he travels abroad to learn his craft, which is an exception to the rule.

Figure 5: A carpenter apprentice's profile posts about his experiences working and training abroad.

Discussion

Communicative strategies of carpenters and woodworkers on Instagram
While there are many overlaps between groups in what they do (e.g., both install kitchens and build wooden terrasses), there are also differences. What woodworkers do is more often refined, aesthetically pleasing, fashionable, and generally accepted as tasteful: This content fits naturally within the polished context of Instagram. On the other hand, carpenters' work is often not aesthetic to the uninvited, mundane, coarse, and, while deeply necessary and important, in many cases, is outside of what generally counts as good taste or relevant in the realm of taste altogether. These differences, which resemble the distinction Bourdieu makes between the *sacred* and the *profane* spheres of culture (Bourdieu, 2004), are reflected in the communication practices of the groups on Instagram.

For both carpenters and woodworkers, the most prominent categories of content found in the material are those that are most directly commercially focused. Both groups use text to promote their work explicitly; woodworkers use tags more than carpenters, suggesting an effort to engage with a broader set of topics and communities via hashtag

marketing, exploiting pre-existing popular hashtags or trending topics (Bernard et al., 2019, p. 61). This is likely also a reflection that woodworking companies more often deliver finished and relatively standardized designs and products, whereas carpenters more often offer constructive services that less easily can connect with prevailing trends.

Carpenters show process more than woodworkers; they show more ongoing work, the steps involved, and explain more. Woodworkers focus more on the outcome of their work.

Carpenters show and make more references to specific workers – including apprentices – and they sometimes present and profile them as the face of the company, which very rarely happens for woodworkers.

Although specific hashtags such as #stolthåndværker (proudcraftsman) are occasionally used, and the joy associated with the work is sometimes mentioned, most often, professional pride is communicated indirectly. #tømrer and #snedker (and derivatives) both communicate belonging to a profession and imply a sense of pride in that profession – as does the very fact of showing one's work online. Carpenters make this more explicit with the use of #tømrerlivet (carpenters' life). On the other hand, use of the term "snedker" is itself used as a positive label connoting pride in one's work as well as promoting it; #snedkermade, #snedkerlavet (made by a woodworker), #snedkerkøkken (kitchen made by a woodworker), and the like all use the term to express a sense of careful and exquisite craftsmanship that is not equally present in the term "tømrer".

Generally speaking, there is limited interaction with the audience from both groups, although some posts contain more engagement than others. Woodworkers get more likes and comments than carpenters, which most likely has to do with the eye-pleasing nature of their work, which makes it easier to identify with.

Topics that are not directly commercial are also touched upon by both groups but are generally not prominent; intra-professional discussions, personally oriented content, and societal/political issues are limited in both groups.

It is perhaps the most surprising that so few posts are about sustainability, given the industry focus on this topic; in recent years, there have been international conferences for architects and builders in Copenhagen on building green, and trade publications have covered the subject extensively (see, e.g., mestertidende.dk, dagensbyggeri.dk). However, judging by the material here, sustainability is a low priority in the concrete communication between builders and audiences on Instagram.

Engaging with professional discussions, political issues, green sustainability, and personal communication, however, arguably does require more strategic effort than simply posting snapshots or stills of one's work in a catalog or diary format, which may explain why some are deterred from pursuing such topics.

Mediatization of craft

Although mediatization is fundamentally about how practices change as they come to depend in various ways on media (Couldry & Hepp, 2013, p. 197), it is, as mentioned previously, not uncommon to study mediatization *synchronously* through case studies (Hepp & Hasebrink, 2015), as has been the case in the present research. This limits the extent to which claims can be made about change over time but allows for examining snapshots of ongoing mediatization processes.

When discussing if and how the mediatization of craft is playing out on Instagram in communicative figurations of tradespeople and audiences, Hjarvard's (2008) notion of direct and indirect mediatization is helpful. Direct mediatization is observed in the material when practices associated with craft, such as marketing and branding, are moved (at least partly) online and reconfigured in the process. With diminished barriers in terms of cost, access, literacy, and skills, tradespeople today can communicate with an extended audience on social media. Most of the tradespeople in the sample use Instagram simply to showcase their work or skills and to promote their business. Some larger businesses use it as a sort of remediated newsletter, publishing newly hired employees, incoming, ongoing, or finished projects, and similar. A few use Instagram in what appears to be a strategic branding effort by associating themselves with matters such as sustainability, preservation of historical buildings, training the next generation of tradespeople, or similar. Many, particularly small, businesses or self-employed tradespeople appear to use it less strategically in line with previous research that, in SMEs, there is sometimes not a clear strategy behind the adoption of social media (Burgess et al., 2017; Cesaroni & Consoli, 2015; Malesev & Cherry, 2021). A limited number of posts reflect a strategic engagement with the audience regarding customer relationship management; fewer reflect a successful one as measured by audience interaction. Taken together, the above illustrates that previous opportunities for communicating with the audience are *extended* – although not always exploited – and suggests that some practices (e.g., as regards how and where one advertises or shows examples of one's previous work to customers) may likely be (at least in part) *substituted* in the process, following Schulz's typology of mediatization processes (Schulz, 2004). However, this material cannot demonstrate such substitution firmly.

Indirect mediatization, where the meanings and practices of craft itself change is harder to identify. One way that indirect mediatization manifests itself in the material is that tradespeople have integrated social media expectations into their work practice. Taking the time while on the clock to document ongoing or completed work and, in some cases, documenting the steps of processes as they unfold to publish on social media is an example that work *accommodates* the requirements of media and, at the same time, indicates that there is an *amalgamation* of media and non-media practices occurring (Schulz, 2004).

As the above has shown, some tradespeople or companies, in addition to being masters of craft, also position themselves as champions of political issues, such as the

societal and professional responsibility to train apprentices, build sustainably, and the like. Others perform aspirational labor in what may be an attempt to establish a position for themselves as (micro) influencers, communicating their personal experiences to establish a connection with the audience, merging the personal and the professional. Although, in quantitative terms, such behaviors are not widespread, they suggest that expectations of the communicative roles of tradespeople may also be changing as media and craft become increasingly entangled. A detailed analysis of *how* such profiles communicate is an area that is fruitful for further, particularly qualitative, research.

Conclusion

This baseline study has explored the communicative practices and strategies of carpenters and woodworkers on Instagram, focusing on the textual characteristics of their posts, the content they share, and their engagement with their audiences to examine how ordinary Danish tradespeople communicate craft.

The analysis has revealed similarities and differences between these two groups. Carpenters and woodworkers use different words and tags in their posts, reflecting their specializations and focus. In line with their professional differences, carpenters tend to post more about larger projects, such as constructing new buildings and renovations, while woodworkers focus more on smaller-scale work, such as kitchens and built-in furniture. This difference is also reflected in the emojis they use, with carpenters using more straightforward and physical emojis, while woodworkers opt for more understated ones in line with the refined products they present. Posts by woodworkers, in general, contain more hashtags than carpenters' posts, potentially reflecting a more strategic use of this platform affordance for visibility or marketing purposes.

Common to both groups is that their posts are often characterized by a commercial focus. The most typical content category is images of ongoing or completed work, with carpenters showcasing ongoing work more frequently than woodworkers, who, on the other hand, present more completed work. Additionally, explicit promotion of their company or work is present in a high percentage of posts for both groups.

Regarding communication with an intra-professional, political, or personal focus, the analysis found limited engagement in these areas for both carpenters and woodworkers. Intra-professional discussions, educational content, and societal/political issues were only present in a low percentage of posts. Personal communication and reflections were also limited. Despite being a significant topic in the building industry, sustainability was not prominently featured in the communication on Instagram.

The analysis of representation revealed that posts by carpenters predominantly show images of male workers or reference male workers' names, reflecting the uneven gender distribution in the trade. On the other hand, Woodworkers make more references to female workers, although the percentages are low.

The analysis of engagement revealed that both groups receive relatively low interaction with their audience, but woodworkers tend to have more likes and comments compared to carpenters. This may be due to the more visually engaging and relatable nature of woodworkers' work.

The findings of this study contribute to our understanding of the mediatization of craft and how media – including social media platforms like Instagram – are entangled with the professional practices of tradespeople. The analysis showed examples of both direct and indirect mediatization reflected by the communicative strategies of carpenters and woodworkers.

The results align with findings from the literature on SMEs that the adoption of social media in this context is often motivated by low-cost marketing, increased visibility, and new branding opportunities, although, in some cases, it is used without a clear strategic focus. However, the same literature also points to customer relationship management as a potential of social media for SMEs, but such use appears less pronounced in the present context. Whether these patterns also characterize other groups of tradespeople is a topic for further research.

Furthermore, the research has been conducted in a Danish cultural context, and practices and strategies of communicating craft could differ in other regions and countries. On the other hand, the findings do, in many cases, align with findings from international research on social media adoption in SMEs, indicating that the perceived affordances of social media for craftspeople wishing to engage communicatively with a wider audience may be broadly similar despite potential cultural variations at the level of concrete practice.

It should also be noted that the analysis in the present research was based on a limited sample of posts, and using a quantitative method that inherently aims at reducing complexity may not capture the full range of practices and behaviors on the platform. Further research, particularly a qualitative study, is needed to explore the motivations, strategies, and experiences of tradespeople on social media platforms in more depth. Additionally, future research could examine the impact of social media on the perception of craft and craftsmanship by different audiences and stakeholders.

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