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The Acculturation Process of New Products through Known Products. Interpreting Ethical Certification of Diamonds through the Lens of Organic Food Produced in Italy

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ABSTRACT This study aims to highlight the use of the peculiar interconnection between two different production sectors, specifically the diamond and the food sectors, in order to show the cultural interpretations given to the certification of diamonds presented by consumers. These latter, while buying Canadian diamonds, have little knowledge of the real working conditions of miners in mines in

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Canada. Thus, they passively accept as truthful the jewellers' claims in presenting ethical diamonds on which they base the moral purchasing decisions that also enable them to distinguish ethical diamonds from other non-certified diamonds. Drawing inspiration from studies on framing related to the analysis of language, the study shows how "frames of familiarity" linked to cultural ideas of food production sectors managed to incorporate "frames of novelty" in relation to Canadian diamonds, which are still niche products in Italy, on the part of a socio-cultural community of consumers who were thus able to increase the perception of trustworthiness with regard to these products. Thus, this research demonstrates that interpreting the certification of Canadian ethical diamonds through the lens of organic food produced in Italy, which is a label that generally refers to meanings of careful, respectful, and high-quality processing, allowed the Italian consumers interviewed to perform an act of acculturation of diamonds mined in Canada.

KEYWORDS: Canadian ethical diamonds, Italian organic food, frames of familiarity, frames of novelty, Italian ethical luxury

Introduction

Ethical consumption has been defined as the attitude of private users to be involved in sustainability to address the contradictory relationship between an ever-growing market and the planet's limited resources (Csikszentmihalyi 2000). Thus, the concept of ethical consumption defines a conscientious way of consuming and purchasing products that respond to certain ethical issues with regard to fair wages, workers' rights and safety, and also covers the protection of the natural environment (Starr 2009). Although some certified ethical and sustainable products, which are mainly sold in retail shops (Transfair e.V. 2018a), have been steadily increasing worldwide (Berki-Kiss and Menrad 2022), some goods, whether in food, clothing, or jewellery, still constitute a niche market (Bissinger and Leufkens 2020) that needs more study. Therefore, in order to stimulate social and environmental sustainability and increase the competitiveness of ethical and sustainable trade, an in-depth analysis of the interpretations and motivations that drive consumers towards this type of purchasing is also needed (Berki-Kiss and Menrad 2022). The research produced so far has mainly focused on the perceptions of labels of products certified as sustainable (Klaehre, Eike, and Joachim 2017), the segmentation of consumer groups according to their preferences regarding product attributes (Berki-Kiss and Menrad 2019) or the willingness to pay higher costs for such goods

(Rombach et al. 2018). Despite the importance of these studies, little attention has been given to analysing the psychological needs that such purchases may fill (Berki-Kiss and Menrad 2022). Furthermore, even fewer have explored consumers' cultural interpretations of the ethical certifications that accompany luxury goods and diamonds in particular.

Among the studies which have analysed the implications of increased consumer interest and engagement in purchasing with ethical and sustainable certifications, some interesting ones have shown how the consumers who choose products with such certifications are primarily motivated by concerns about health and environmental protection (Lazzarini et al. 2016), supplemented by preferences about the geographical origin (Stefani, Romano, and Cavicchi 2006), information related to quality (Galati et al. 2015), brand (Di Monaco et al. 2004) and product costs (Aschemann-Witzel and Zielke 2015).

Although there are important studies on ethical luxury purchasing published in marketing and consumer journals (Moraes et al. 2017; Carrigan, Moraes, and McEachern 2013; Rettie, Burchell, and Riley 2012), this area is under-analysed as well as the cultural factors that influence purchase choices of such products and in particular jewellery that brings ethical and sustainable certifications (Armano and Joy 2021) are little explored. In order to address this gap in existing literature, this research introduces a case study carried out within two Italian jewellery stores, respectively the Belloni jewellery store in Milan and the Righi jewellery store in Bologna that sell, to some of their customers defined by the jewellers as "ethical customers", diamonds extracted from Canadian mines that are internationally known for their ethical certification issued by the Government of the Northwest Territories (Hamilton and Cavello 2021). Specifically, this study aims to show the particular process of acculturation of Canadian diamonds by the participants in this survey that emerged during semi-structured, in-depth interviews with a sample of customers of the two Italian jewellery stores. Especially, this research shows how many consumers categorised Canadian ethical diamonds certification by superimposing a conceptual category known to them which is that of an Italian organic food label. Guided by the information that emerged in the interviews, in this study it was possible to understand how a particular cultural idea of certified organic food produced in Italy was used by the interviewed customers as a conceptual lens that referred on the one hand to food whose production involves respect for the environment, minimal use of pesticides and the absence of genetically modified organisms (van Bussel et al. 2022) and on the other hand as a concept that allowed them to describe their motivation for buying Canadian ethical diamonds rather than other types of diamonds.

This study, in order to understand the use of the peculiar interconnection between two different production sectors (the diamond and the food sectors) and the interpretations of certifications that were presented by the consumers, drew inspiration from studies on framing (Pan et al. 2020) related to the analysis of language (Parhankangas and Renko 2017) especially to focus on the micro-discursive processes contained in the interviews conducted with the participants in this research. Thanks to this approach, it was highlighted how “frames of familiarity” linked to cultural ideas of certain production sectors managed to incorporate “frames of novelty” in relation to unfamiliar products on the part of a socio-cultural community of consumers who were thus able to increase a perception of trustworthiness with regard to these products (Pan et al. 2020).

Theoretical background

Ethical jewellery: a portrait of study approaches

Research both on the purchase of jewellery and on the mining sector, in general, has highlighted how, especially diamonds, have been the subject of heated discussions since the 1990s by investigative journalism, activists, filmmakers, and researchers who have denounced harassment, especially in the African mining context (Schösler, de Boer, and Boersema 2013). In light of these considerations, reports were published such as, for instance, the one written by Global Witness activists and entitled “Rough Trade”, which exposed the problem of the subsidisation of civil wars in Sierra Leone, Angola, Liberia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (D’Angelo 2019) due to the illegal sale of precious stones (Hamilton and Cavello 2021). By introducing terms such as “blood diamonds” and “conflict diamonds” in articles exposing the problem of the illicit trade in African diamonds, and estimating the value of diamonds in numbers of victims rather than in dollars (Armano 2022), the message began to be spread globally that buying diamonds was tantamount to killing civilians from disadvantaged socio-economic groups (Le Billon 2006).

In the mining sector, faced with the threat of huge financial losses due to international boycott actions, the diamond industry had to recognise, since the 1990s, the role these stones played in financing conflicts (Hamilton and Cavello 2021). To avoid a further extension of boycotts (Armano and Joy 2022b), many multinational mining companies began to adhere to forms of certification in an attempt to curb these illegal trades. In 2003, the Kimberley Process (KP) was therefore enacted to ensure that the export of raw stones from signatory nations did not finance civil conflicts or international terrorism (Winetroub 2013). Nevertheless, it is now well known that the KP cannot guarantee that such frauds are avoided altogether, as rough diamonds are tracked to the polishing process but not to the end customer (McManus et al. 2020). As the African blood diamonds scandal informed public opinion (D’Angelo 2019), due to the positive

economic fallout from the diamond industry in the Northwest Territories, Canada offered companies in the industry the opportunity to claim that diamonds were traded in absolute legality (Hamilton and Cavello 2021). In this way, the term “ethical jewellery” also began to be introduced in reference to ornaments made both with conflict-free diamonds (the most well-known of which come from Canada) and with certified Fairmined gold mined mainly in small-scale mines located in South America (Armano and Joy 2021).

Various approaches address the study of luxury consumption such as the dualistic ontological perspectives that tend to separate the consumer from the social context (Schembri and Sandberg 2002). This perspective has been challenged by other theoretical approaches that fall under the so-called practice theory and instead consider the consumer connected to broader social, cultural, and economic practices that are able to influence their consumption choices (Reckwitz 2002). There are analyses that, in addition to assessing how social norms influence purchasing choices, also go so far as to interpret the consumer’s unconscious behaviour and psychological motivations underlying specific purchasing attitudes (Eagly and Chaiken 1995). Other research has attempted to segment consumers on the basis of geographical, cultural, psychographic, and psychological variables in order to gain a deeper understanding of their commitment to purchasing ethical and sustainable products (Rettie, Burchell, and Riley 2012). In this regard, various studies have shown that, in recent years, the purchase of ethical jewellery has increased in correspondence with the increased focus on fair and environmentally friendly labour policies (Finisterra do Paco and Raposo 2010).

Despite the increase in research on ethical luxury consumption, few analyses have focused on consumers’ cultural interpretation of ethical jewellery certification. Commonly, certification of a product is defined as the mechanism that ensures compliance with requirements regarding safety regulations and quality standards for which that product is distinguished (Isharyadi and Kristiningrum 2021). Certification, which is a legal requirement for pre-marketing, can be prescribed by the manufacturers themselves or by a third-party body that affirms that the products and the processes that support them conform to health, safety, environmental sustainability, and ethical attributes determined on the basis of pre-established standards (Fonseca et al. 2017). Certification also facilitates export and increases consumer confidence in the brand as verification of compliance with product-related standards is declared (Isharyadi and Kristiningrum 2021). As for the third party (which, for example, in the case of Canadian diamonds is represented by the government of the Northwest Territories) that certifies the product, it is well known that it is subject to international regulations that dictate the guidelines for the operation and impartiality of third-party entities (Amundsen 2022). These practices have also recently been supported by major

luxury brands. Indeed, Tiffany, in 2019, started to advertise the tracking of rough diamonds, mined in Canadian mines, in its product lines (Armano and Joy 2021). In this sense, the purchase of luxury goods is no longer just experienced as a desire to own a sought-after object but can be considered a consumption practice that is also welded with globally important social and environmental obligations (Spence 2007).

Analysis of the purchase of ethical jewellery in the Italian cultural context

In Italy, officially speaking about ethical Canadian diamonds (e.g. at jewellery fairs) can still be difficult. The Italian jewellery market is held by a few large entrepreneurial groups. Therefore, various jewellery companies, jewellers, but also consumers, may directly or indirectly hinder the introduction of new diamond varieties. Therefore, ethical diamonds sold in Italy are still niche products that need some sort of cultural translation in order for these luxury goods to be properly communicated to consumers (Armano and Joy 2021). Nonetheless, Italy can represent an interesting context of study for the analysis of the introduction of new luxury products mainly due to the fact that it has a long tradition, internationally recognised, linked to artisanal skills in the production of various types of artefacts and products exported worldwide. Specifically, Armano and Joy (2021) explain the understanding of ethical jewellery by Italian consumers through the concept of territorialisation (De Martino 1977, 2008) which can be conceived as a process of acculturation. The concept of territorialisation (“appaesamento” is the original definition coined by Ernesto De Martino, 1977, 2008) is explained in these terms by the two scholars:

“(It) denotes the opposition of spaesamento (which derives from the Italian word spaesato) that translates to “bewildered”; thus, territorialisation is the exact opposite of bewildered. In our analysis, the concept of territorialisation is useful in studying the stratified way in which new and old meanings are blended by our Italian clientele interviewees” (Armano and Joy 2021, p. 16).

Picking up on the reflections of De Martino, Armano and Joy (2021) outline the process of understanding Canadian ethical diamonds by Italian consumers as a process in which new meanings are gradually mixed with known meanings. The scholars state that, in this way, the knowledge process, expressed through linguistic and non-linguistic means, gradually expands the cognitive territory of customers by embracing new practices, new meanings, and thus also new niche products. In this sense, these are filtered by the culture to which the consumers belong. Nevertheless, consumers while buying Canadian diamonds, have little knowledge of the real working conditions of miners in mines in Canada. Thus, they passively accept as truthful the jewellers’ claims in presenting ethical diamonds on which

they base the moral purchasing decisions that also enable them to distinguish ethical diamonds from other non-certified diamonds.

Materials and methods

The survey was conducted between January 2020 and March 2022 and it is based on the content analysis (Aloisi et al. 2014) of 25 in-depth, semi-structured interviews that lasted approximately 45 to 110 min. The interviews, audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed, carried out both online and in-person, were conducted with two jewellers, Francesco Belloni, and Simone Righi, respectively owners of Gioielleria Belloni in Milan and Gioielleria Righi in Bologna, and 23 of their customers who had purchased jewellery set with ethically certified Canadian diamonds. Understanding how Francesco Belloni and Simone Righi communicate to consumers the importance of ethical certification of Canadian diamonds, the present research investigated and detailed the cultural interpretations of the Italian customers of the two jewellery stores who underlie their ethical jewellery purchasing choices.

Gioielleria Belloni started selling Canadian diamonds in 2005. However, the shop has a long history dating back to 1926 when the current owner's grandfather opened a shop in the centre of Milan to fix watches. Under Francesco, the Belloni jewellery shop began to engage in charitable activities, donating, from the early 2000s, part of the proceeds from jewellery sales to cancer associations, particularly on special occasions such as Christmas or Valentine's Day. In 2003, Francesco wanted to donate to the London-based Survival International, but the latter refused the offer when it learned that it came from the sale of diamonds in the Milan shop. The organisation had been boycotting the Diamond Trading Company and De Beers in Botswana for years because they had expropriated land from the Bushmen where diamond deposits had been found (Armano and Joy 2021). Members of Survival International then urged Francesco to consider Canadian diamonds, mined at the Ekati and Diavik mines in the Northwest Territories, as an alternative to African blood diamonds. Since 2010 Francesco Belloni also became a supplier of Canadian diamonds in Italy and his first customer as a jeweller was Simone Righi who creates jewellery, with Fairmined gold and set with Canadian diamonds, that he sells in his shop.

After conducting the initial interviews with jewellers, they collaborated in recruiting the other participants in this study by choosing, among their clients, those consumers who had purchased jewellery made from Fairmined certified gold and Canadian ethical diamonds.

Data analysis

To structure the data, the analysis was performed in two phases. In the first stage, through an inductive approach, codes were assigned to the collected data in order to extrapolate specific concepts from

the interviews. Subsequently, the codes were grouped into categories (Miles et al. 2019). The analysis was completed with a deductive approach through which the various categories were compared with existing literature (Assarroudi et al. 2018). In addition to using a data analysis protocol to identify common concepts extracted from the interviews, measures were taken to increase the validity of the analysis through continuous comparisons between the views of the interviewees and available data from studies on ethical luxury consumption (Lamoureux, Barbier, and Bouzdine-Chameeva 2022).

As the interviews progressed, it was interesting to note that most interviewees created overlaps between Canadian gemstones and a cultural interpretation of organic certified food produced in Italy. In order to understand this similarity, which is also useful for providing theoretical and practical insights for designing linguistic strategies suitable for presenting niche products to a specific cultural audience, it was essential to construct semantic maps modelled on the information obtained from the interviews. During the transcription and coding of the results, it was interesting to note that the majority of the interviewees raised ethical, safety, and sustainability considerations when purchasing a piece of jewellery set with a Canadian diamond, which increased their perception of product assurance at the time of purchase. Specifically, it was noted that, when choosing a particular piece of ethical jewellery, the concept of ethicality was often intertwined with an idea of security in the discourses of the respondents, while the concept of sustainability was mainly linked to an idea of wholesomeness (Lamonaca et al. 2022). In order to understand and describe the overlap between different production sectors (diamond mining and food production), that consumers used to explain their choice of buying certified ethical Canadian diamonds rather than other types of stones without certification, a polysemous approach was used (François 2008). The analysis showed that the traits which allowed for an inter-categorical connection between the macro-categories of Canadian ethical diamond and Italian organic food were, in particular, the concepts of certification and traceability of these products which, according to the consumers, allowed interlocutors to differentiate them from other non-certified and untraced goods within the same production sectors. Based on this reading, certification and traceability were conceived as domains (van Bussel et al. 2022), such as pivotal elements capable of structuring a unity that encompasses both Canadian diamond and Italian organic food. Starting from these domains and in relation to the macro-categories of Canadian diamonds and Italian organic food, the ideas, perceptions, and understandings of the consumers interviewed regarding these two sets of products were identified. Nine first-rate concepts were then extracted from the interviews (Van Werven, Bouwmeester, and Cornelissen 2015), i.e. very similar terms or arguments present in the interviews, understood not so much as complex and highly specific entities of language, but rather as meaning-bearing ideas

(Scarlini, Pasini, and Navigli 2020). The nine selected concepts correspond to the frequency with which the 25 interlocutors used these terms to talk specifically about Canadian diamonds, but rather about Italian organic food or to make explicit the parallels between these two categories (Figure 1).

By incorporating the macro-categories of ethical Canadian diamond and Italian organic food, related to each other through the certification domain that directly alluded, in the interviews, to the concept of traceability, a theoretical grid was constructed through which “emic” categorisations could be observed (François 2008).

As Figure 2 highlights most informants during the interviews tended to use the domain related to the concept of certification as a synonym for traceability. In fact, one customer of the Belloni jewellery store, answering the question: “Why do you think certification of a product is important?”, stated: “Traceability is a function of the product itself”. In this regard, many customers of the two jewellers, talking about Canadian ethical diamonds and creating similarities with their idea of organic food produced in Italy, seemed to generalise that certification also inevitably implied traceability along the supply chain (Figure 3).

Considering the first-rate concepts in Figure 2, it is therefore possible to understand not only what positive factors the interviewed consumers associated with Canadian ethical diamonds and Italian organic food, but also what they intended to boycott (Armano and Joy 2022b) or, in general, not to buy. It thus became clear that they were looking for goods that are produced on the basis of certain regulations that protect workers, the environment, but also their own health (Table 1).

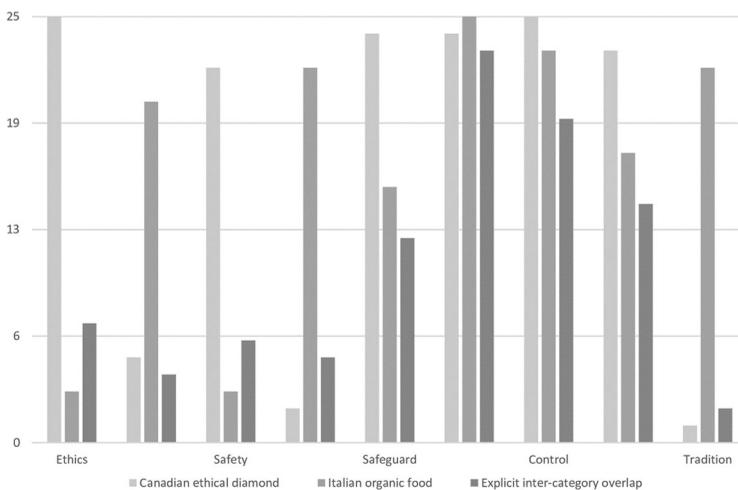


Figure 1
Frequency of terms used by interlocutors to talk about Canadian diamonds, Italian organic food and to create parallelisms between the two product categories.



Figure 2
 Nine first-rate concepts with reference to the Canadian ethical diamond and Italian organic food.

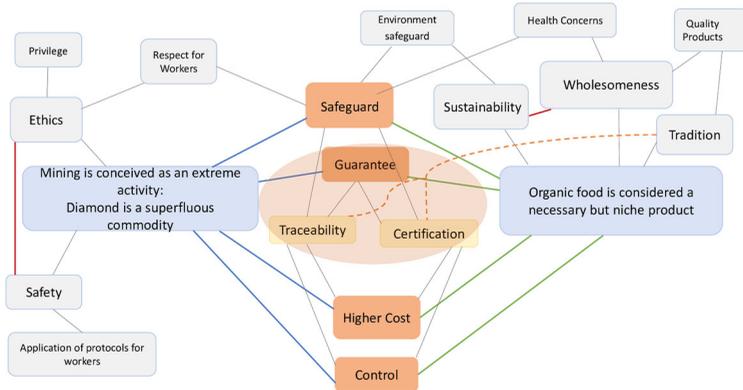


Figure 3
 Semantic map modelled on first-rate concepts extracted from the interviews.

Although the concept of tradition was used by the informants interviewed only in reference to the production of certified organic food, it was noted how it could constitute that subtle common thread linking, through the domains of certification and traceability, the food sector and the diamond production sector when choosing to purchase a Canadian ethical diamond. In this sense, the concept of tradition could be conceived as an enthymeme which is an implicit statement that allows for subjective interpretations (Van Werven, Bouwmeester, and Cornelissen 2015). In this way, the idea of tradition possesses a rhetorical power that would allow for a process of acculturation of a new niche product introduced in Italy, such as the

Table 1 Emerging issues from the first-rate concepts related to the Canadian ethical diamond and Italian organic food.

First-rate concepts	Canadian Ethical Diamond	Italian organic food	Canadian ethical diamond and Italian organic food
Ethics, Safety	<p data-bbox="264 1371 290 1446">Ethics:</p> <ul data-bbox="290 1031 738 1446" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="290 1164 343 1446">• Importance of protecting mineworkers. <li data-bbox="343 1089 455 1446">• The privilege of the economic possibility of purchasing a luxury product that represents an unnecessary good. <li data-bbox="455 1031 626 1446">• Sense of guilty because clients' economic status allowed them to own an asset derived from the (often exploited) labour of other disadvantaged socio-economic groups. <li data-bbox="626 1031 738 1446">• The idea of responsible care implied behaviour capable of curbing irresponsible conduct through ethical purchasing choices. <p data-bbox="738 1371 764 1446">Safety:</p> <ul data-bbox="764 1031 850 1446" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="764 1031 850 1446">• Confidence that protocols for the protection of workers are respected in Canadian mines. 		

(Continued)

Table 1 (Continued)

<i>First-rate concepts</i>	<i>Canadian Ethical Diamond</i>	<i>Italian organic food</i>	<i>Canadian ethical diamond and Italian organic food</i>
<i>Sustainability, Wholesomeness, Tradition</i>		<p><u>Sustainability:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associated with environmental impact (i.e. carbon emissions and the consequent loss of biodiversity) <p><u>Wholesomeness</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthiness related to the benefit of organic food in reducing the risk of allergic diseases and obesity, due to a lower level of pesticide residues as compared to foods not labelled as such. A sense of reliability towards regulations that attempt to mitigate these problems was connected to a better taste and higher quality of food produced. <p><u>Tradition:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Related to the idea that locally produced food is more genuine. Well-established regional culinary tradition embedded in the eating habits of Italians. 	

(Continued)

Table 1 (Continued)

<i>First-rate concepts</i>	<i>Canadian Ethical Diamond</i>	<i>Italian organic food</i>	<i>Canadian ethical diamond and Italian organic food</i>
<i>Safeguard, guarantee, control, higher cost</i>			<p><u>Safeguard:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerning diamonds, clients tended to assume altruistic values towards other subjects (e.g. miners). When it was related to Italian organic food, they used to talk about the protection of the environment, thanks to the use of agri-food practices that avoid chemical fertilisers or intensive farming. <p><u>Guarantee:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certification and traceability of diamonds and organic food were the main elements to give substance to the value of ethicality towards mining workers and environmental sustainability.

(Continued)

Table 1 (Continued)

<i>First-rate concepts</i>	<i>Canadian Ethical Diamond</i>	<i>Italian organic food</i>	<i>Canadian ethical diamond and Italian organic food</i>
			<p><u>Control:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethical and sustainability standards were considered successful governance practices through the use of scientific parameters. <p><u>Higher cost:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers' perception of the possibility of control over all the steps of the stone along the supply chain increased their willingness to pay a higher cost for the purchase of these products.

Canadian ethical diamond. The acceptance of a product with a different cultural origin would, in this way, be interpreted by the ethical customers interviewed on the basis of a strong orientation linked to the culture they belong to, within which organic food constitutes a traditional concept deeply incorporated by Italians.

Discussion

Familiarity frame and novelty frame in the ethical jewellery sector in Italy

Both in reference to Canadian ethical diamonds and Italian organic food, the concepts of safeguard assurance, control, and higher cost were connected by most participants to the domains of certification and traceability which can be considered, in this study, as polysemic concepts. As such, they were able to mobilise altruistic values in reference to the mining context through the control of the use of safety protocols for workers and, at the same time, stirred reflections on environmental protection and concern for one's health when it came to organic food. Nevertheless, the concept of tradition connected to the latter macro-category in the discourses of the interviewees seemed to be an indispensable trait within a frame of familiarity to introduce frames of novelty (Pan et al. 2020) about the Canadian ethical diamond. Analysing the micro-discursive processes in the consumer interviews, it was possible to argue that the frame of familiarity in reference to Italian organic food, which constituted a culturally rooted category for the interviewees, created connections with the new product, i.e. the Canadian diamond, as it transposed onto the latter an appreciation associated with a known order. The familiarity frame provided consumers with a conceptual tool to quickly understand the value of the new object (Falchetti, Cattani, and Ferriani 2022). Giorgi (2017) suggests in this regard that in order to promote a sense of familiarity in the interpretation of a new product, an analogical correlation of different frames and concepts is indispensable to create a particular "blended mental space" (Cornelissen and Durand 2012, p. 152). Giorgi (2017) reflects on the importance of cultural codes as indispensable mechanisms for incorporating frames of familiarity into frames of novelty. In this way, the credibility of a product can connect to the cultural codes available within a social group. The main outcome of this can result in an appreciation of a new product by consumers (Jones and Livne-Tarandach 2008). The parallelism between organic food produced in Italy and Canadian ethical diamond proposed by the interviewees can be understood, using Giorgi's (2017) reflections, through a form of emotional resonance that results from a felt alignment, or contagion, between two production sectors by means of certain emotions that are elicited when particular desires are aroused in consumers. A frame of novelty, therefore, fails to achieve resonance if it lacks an emotional rootedness that engages with a frame of familiarity. Hence the importance of having frames in line with the dominant cultural values

within a social group that guides actors on what to care about and desires in a given institutional context (Creed, Rich, and Jaco 2014a).

The reflections made so far can be useful for a strategic use of language (Navis and Glynn 2010) that can prove to be an effective entrepreneurial tool in the effort to gain legitimacy and increase, as in this case, a new market related to ethical jewellery. Indeed, Navis and Glynn (2010) note the importance of introducing novelty features related to new products or innovations using language that gives them the appearance of familiar ideas, suggesting that entrepreneurial initiatives should describe “the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar” (p. 443). The present study therefore, in demonstrating the importance of using frames of familiarity concerning the certification of organic food produced in Italy to culturally encompass frames of novelty related to the certification of Canadian ethical diamond, may suggest linguistic strategies to circumscribe consumers’, and other stakeholders, attention to aspects of the product to influence their interpretations and actions towards an issue of interest (Giorgi and Weber 2015). In this regard, linguistic frames can be defined as a kind of filter (Lamont and Small 2008) that are based on the selective use of particular linguistic terms or styles that can be utilised to construct the meaning of a particular version of reality by a group of people, to gather their appreciation and to influence their behaviour (Pan et al. 2020; Giorgi and Weber 2015).

The use of linguistic frames in Italian jewellery to solve a need for control

In addition to analysing the meanings of first-rate concepts, a general need of almost all interviewees was noted, which concerned a psychological need for control that seemed to be filled by a guarantee provided by product certification. Various studies show the importance of storytelling to address this need (Bauerné Gáthy, Kovácsné Soltész, and Szűcs 2022; Nie et al. 2017). This need can be identified as an ethical issue to be resolved concerning the protection of mining workers along the diamond supply chain and a sustainability issue that sensitises people to avoid pesticides that damage the environment and health. Picking up on the reflections of Abdallah, Jean-Louis, and Langley (2011), a discourse that possesses a positive attractor capable of contrasting markedly with a pessimistic mood is therefore essential to fill this need. In the present case, the role of jewellers proved to be crucial in addressing the psychological needs of their ethical clients. Indeed, sellers proved to be very adept at articulating a solution capable of transcending consumer needs. In particular, jewellers intertwined the explanation of the characteristics of ethical Canadian diamonds with their private experiences as volunteers in local charities, in helping people in economic difficulties, in their respective cities. In this way, the narrative leveraging certification allowed the customers of the two jewellery stores to become familiar

with the products also through an emotional-narrative transport that connected to charitable actions practised in everyday life. Some authors (Spinelli 2015; Graulau 2008) note that the communication strategy with which storytelling about a given product is constructed is usually based eighty percent on emotional content and the remaining twenty percent on technical explanations of the brand. For a niche product such as Canadian ethical diamonds in Italy, storytelling about ethical-sustainable practices that also involve the personal experiences of jewellers seemed to be a key element in building emotional reassurance, and thus increasing a feeling of control, that prompted consumers to choose certified products over other non-certified goods.

On the basis of the results of this survey, it can be argued that the process of acculturation of the Canadian ethical diamond in the two jewellery stores took place mainly due to the first-rate concept of tradition that the consumers interviewed used almost exclusively to refer to organic food produced in Italy. The rhetorical power of this concept seemed to be further reinforced, however, when it was coupled with consumers' psychological need for control. Therefore, based on the interviews conducted with the sample of Italian ethical consumers, the acculturation of the Canadian ethical diamond seems to be realised through the following formula:

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{Tradition} + \text{Psychological Need for Control} \\ &= \text{Acculturation of the Canadian Ethical Diamond} \end{aligned}$$

This study, therefore, demonstrates that interpreting Canadian ethical diamonds through the lens of organic food produced in Italy, which is a label that generally refers to meanings of careful, respectful, and high-quality processing, allowed the Italian consumers interviewed to align their perceptions and perform an act of appropriation of diamonds mined in Canada.

Conclusions and recommendations

In addition to empirically presenting peculiar cultural interpretations of a niche product, such as the Canadian ethical diamond in Italy, through a frame of familiarity, which in this specific case corresponds to the concept of Italian organic food, this study, in the awareness of presenting gaps related to its nature as a single case, intends to suggest further insights that should be filled by future research. Specifically, while this analysis has focused on the importance of the certification of origin of organic food and its tradition for Italian consumers to understand the Canadian diamonds' certification, one limitation of this investigation is that it has overlooked consumers belonging to different socio-cultural contexts in relation to which the symbolic material to be considered to understand the acculturation processes of a niche product might be different. Even a product such as the diamond embedded in the networks of a global luxury culture does not escape the interpretative variety of multiple local

socio-cultural contexts which the present investigation has failed to study.

Secondly, this investigation invites further proposals on the processes of negotiation and appropriation of the meaning, by consumers, of products that bring ethical and sustainable certifications even in reference to contested production sectors, such as mining.

Furthermore, if global consumers who purchase ethically and sustainably certified luxury products can respond with equal urgency to their need to respect the environment and protect socio-economic categories deemed fragile, studies should also strive to translate these global urgencies into local cultural categories. In particular, one indication that emerges is that various actors (e.g. multinational corporations, retailers, etc.) who attempt to contribute positively and honestly to the development of an ethical agenda also on a global scale, must always pay attention to the localisation of their marketing claims and thus how to culturally translate their value systems from time to time.

This research also did not explicitly focus on practical implications. Nevertheless, semantic maps such as those proposed in this study could be useful tools for identifying first-rate concepts specifically related to particular products from which to extrapolate certain needs that consumers would like to fill. On the basis of the reflections that emerged in this analysis, further research could increase methodologies to identify common traits emerging between products belonging to different production sectors. According to Pan et al. (2020), research results that focus on the use of familiarity frames to introduce novelty frames in relation to different product categories can be used to construct linguistic strategies in entrepreneurial initiatives.

The results of this investigation can also stimulate further analysis of the active role of intermediaries, which, in this specific case, was played by jewellers. Future research should, for instance, study the bricolage process that local actors, such as retailers and consumers, perform together to understand and incorporate unfamiliar products. This line of research inevitably leads to an awareness of the clear importance of the role of strategic marketing played by distribution outlets and new forms of interaction in physical spaces led by shop owners and retailers in general.

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