

**Chapter 12 - CANADIAN ETHICAL DIAMONDS AND IDENTITY OBSESSION: HOW
CONSUMERS OF ETHICAL JEWELRY IN ITALY UNDERSTAND TRACEABILITY**

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ABSTRACT

Through an ethnographic survey of Italian ethical jewelers and representative customers, this study focuses on how the topic of traceability in the Canadian diamond industry is communicated and negotiated within two representative Italian ethical jewelry stores in Milan and Bologna. To better understanding communication strategies deployed by jewelers to convey the concepts of ethical jewelry, the authors explore themes related to traceability in the context of Canadian ethical diamonds (CEDs). A specific dominant narrative built around CEDs is identified that leverages customer concerns about the violation of the safety and human rights of workers on the diamond supply chain.

To more deeply analyze how information about the traceability of CEDs successfully mitigates consumer concerns about the ethics of jewelry supply chains, the authors explore the role of identity obsession (Remotti 2010) in ethical jewelry purchase decisions by Italian consumers. They further discuss rationales for the general resistance of many Italian jewelers to offering ethical jewelry in local stores, to better understand why, to date, ethical jewelry remains a niche market segment in Italy, with most Italian consumers unaware of the degrading environmental and sociological impact of such products as blood diamonds.

Keywords: Ethically sourced diamonds; Italian consumers; Sustainability; Canadian ethical diamonds; Blood diamonds; Identity obsession

12. 1 INTRODUCTION

Product traceability allows retailers and consumers to know where a product was produced and to trace its journey through tiers of suppliers until it is a completed product offered for sale. Thus, traceability embodies such concepts as supply chain, ethics, sustainability, transparency, and informed choice (Gurzawska 2020). In the jewelry industry, the most well-known traceability systems in relation to gold and precious stones involve specific certification programs (e.g., Fairmined gold) and traceability schemes substantiated by laser engravings of logos and alphanumeric codes on stones (e.g., Canadian ethical diamonds). The concept of traceability is commonly defined as "the ability to identify and trace the history, distribution, location and application of products, parts, materials and services" (Garcia Torres et al. 2019: 85). Such traceability is often seen as an indicator of quality (Bloemer et al. 2009) and as a feature able to influence consumption choices (Roth and Diamantopoulos 2009). The issue of blood diamonds, (also termed conflict diamonds), has underscored the significance of traceability. Mined in civil war zones, often in Angola, Congo, Ivory Coast, and Sierra Leone, among others, such diamonds have been used to finance war-related activities, as recounted in numerous reports (D'Angelo 2019), and featured in the plots of a multitude of television shows and movies (e.g., 2002's *Die Another Day* and 2006's *Blood Diamond*). Tiffany's has made its commitment to using only responsibly sourced diamonds in its jewelry collections a hallmark of its marketing campaigns and corporate ethos [<https://www.tiffany.com/sustainability/>].

Within the past two decades, many governments have taken action to curtail the flow of diamonds from conflict zones through special certificates. In 2003, an international initiative, the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS, known familiarly as KP), was created in 2003, with the mission of ensuring that the sale of rough stones exported by signatory nations did not finance civil conflicts or actions of international terrorism. Thus, KP-certified rough diamonds are still only exported and imported, within sealed packages, between countries that have joined the KP (Tripathi 2010). However, this certification can be susceptible to fraud, as it does not provide a

totally secure solution to stopping the flow of illegally sold diamonds; among other issues, the KP certification tracks rough diamonds only through the polishing process, rather than through to the final product being available for sale (McManus et al. 2020).

Canada, home to an active and growing mining industry in the Northwest Territories (NWT), has been involved with the KP from its inception, with the distinction of exporting diamonds mined in absolute legality; because Canada is free of civil wars, there are no links between mining and conflicts (McManus et al. 2020). In addition to their KP certification, Canadian diamonds also carry a certification signed by the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) that labels stones mined in NWTs as ethical diamonds, allowing consumers to know, unequivocally, not only the country of origin (CoO) but also the Mine of Origin (MoO) of the diamonds (Tripathi 2010). The Canadian diamond industry is thus a standard-bearer for ethical consumption (Gurzawska 2020) which, in turn, supports other values such as respect for the rights of the workers (e.g., work safety protocols, fair wages, and the like) involved along the diamond supply chain from the mine to the consumer (Tripathi 2010); and the safeguarding of the environment via monitoring by mining multinationals in the NWT of mine-related pollution.

While most studies on the topic of traceability concern analyses of the discursive strategies of advertising campaigns on ethical jewelry, the present research, based on an ethnographic survey of Italian ethical jewelers and representative customers, focuses on how the topic of traceability is communicated and negotiated within two particular Italian ethical jewelry stores, Belloni Jewelers in Milan and Simone Righi Jewelers in Bologna.

The current study is part of a broader research project, in progress as of this writing, whose purpose is to explore, within a global context and using a multi-sited ethnographic survey, the cultural interpretations that different subjects (miners, the staff of multinational mining companies, members of Indigenous communities, consumers, and jewelers) give to the concept of CEDs extracted from the mines of Ekati and Diavik in the NWT.

Belloni Jewelers, a pioneer of ethical jewelry retailing in Italy, was the first store in the country to sell ethical diamonds mined in Canada, starting in 2005. In 2010 the store became a wholesaler of these diamonds in Italy; the Simone Righi Simone jewelry store in Bologna was the first of Belloni's customers to order them. While other Italian jewelers (in Rome and Florence) now purchase CEDs from Belloni Jewelers, we chose to focus on Belloni and Simone Righi because of their respective emphasis on traceability in diamond mining and manufacture. Our preliminary study aimed to analyze how information about the traceability of CEDs successfully mitigates consumer concerns about the ethics of jewelry supply chains, and to explore the role of what Remotti (2010) terms identity obsession (referred to hereinafter as IO) in the purchase decisions these consumers reach related to CEDs.

12.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of diamond traceability is frequently perceived as related to information governance (Bailey et al. 2016), in which information about a product, very often established by governments and corporations, undergoes a series of transnational transfers within value chains (Coff et al. 2008). Extant literature discusses such concepts as traceability for sustainability (TFS) (Garcia Torres et al. 2019) and ethical traceability (ET) (Coff et al. 2008), particularly in the context of luxury goods, to explain the need for consumers to be educated not only about the material aspects of a given product, but also about its impact sociologically (e.g., workers' rights, community needs, and animal welfare) and environmentally (Bradu et al. 2013). A focus on consumers' perception of luxury product traceability (Romani et al. 2013) notwithstanding, much remains unexplored; traceability is a relatively new concern. Tiffany, for example, only garnered the ability to trace all of the rough diamonds used in its product lines to known mines or reputable suppliers working with known mines in 2019 (<https://www.international.tiffany.com/sustainability/product/>). Such actions on the part of a celebrated luxury brand reflect evolving perceptions of the role of consumption, with the purchase

of luxury items no longer experienced as solely an expression of desire to possess beauty, and an appreciation of that beauty; rather, the act of consumption itself now sites individuals within a nexus of globally relevant social and environmental obligations.

(<https://www.tiffany.com/engagement/diamond-provenance/>). Marin et al. (2009) argue that consumer purchase decisions of luxury goods are influenced by guarantees of traceability, leading to brand loyalty and willingness to serve as informal brand ambassadors. Du et al. (2010) suggest that traceability, as a primary component of corporate social responsibility (CSR), is essential in creating a dialogue between companies and consumers, while Bhattacharya et al. (2009) see a pressing need for a more precise understanding on the part of stakeholders and consumers of the underlying processes driving the narrative of a product's traceability and subsequent consumer purchasing behavior. Such urgency is particularly relevant in relation to luxury goods and to understanding the underlying processes driving the narrative of traceability.

Any marketing narrative, whether in the context of luxury goods or other products, is designed to elicit an emotional reaction in consumers; in luxury goods, however, the elicitation is intensified, given that consumers typically purchase luxury items out of desire rather than need. However, when a product that is inherently unnecessary can be positioned as a force for good, its appeal can be appreciated on multiple levels, transforming an action of indulging the self into one of enhancing the self via the demonstration of morality, thereby conferring virtue on the individual who has chosen to take this action. A luxury brand can thus serve as an instigator for positive moral decisions (e.g., purchasing jewelry featuring a CED) that highlights the ideals of the brand's customers (Escalas 2004b).

In our study, by focusing on the storytelling of Canadian diamond traceability as told by jewelers to Italian consumers, we investigate a specific narrative built around CEDs that primarily leverages customer concerns about the violation of the safety and human rights of workers on the diamond supply chain. Previous studies suggest that the narrative of the traceability of CEDs focuses on the protection of workers hired by multinational mining companies in NWTs and by

companies offering collateral services to mining companies (Armano and Joy 2021). Unlike CED narratives, those relating to the traceability of other precious metals such as gold (e.g., fairmined gold), emphasize pollution and community harm resulting from gold mining rather than workers' rights (Ibid.)

12.2.2 Obsessive Identity

By using the concept of IO (Remotti 2010) to understand how the issue of traceability is explained by jewelers and perceived by consumers, we see how traceability is the key element in determining jewelry customers' decisions to purchase CEDs rather than non-certified diamonds. Remotti states that individuals depend on the concept of identity in all areas of their lives. Zygmunt Bauman (2007), Remotti further argues that this obsession with identity is a specific component of contemporary times, and within the social sciences, which, until the 1960s, were concerned with such concepts as alienation, dialectics, and structure rather than identity. The concept of identity can be expressed in Remotti's (2010) formula $A = A$: "If I say that this clock is this clock I express the most indisputable truth of this world, I express an absolute certainty. The principle of identity is accompanied by the principle of non-contradiction, whereby A is not only equal to A ($A = A$), but is different from anything that is not A ($A \neq \text{not } A$)" (p. 3). Tracing the history of European ontological thought since the seventeenth century, Remotti further argues that the concept of identity has gradually been assumed as a psychological tool necessary for reassurance and certainty. In line with several philosophers of the 1700s (i.e., David Hume), the author further argues that in order to identify something, two essential elements are necessary: memory and imagination. In line with Remotti, (Park et al. (1994) and Brucks (1995) suggest that for consumers to truly understand the facts they learn about product traceability requires a competence comprising subjective and objective knowledge, which will have already been consolidated and will therefore allow consumers to recognize and store this information in memory. However, because memory by its nature has gaps (Remotti 2010) it is insufficient to reconstruct, on its own, the history of CEDs. Therefore, imagination fills the gap, ensuring that the path taken by the diamond from the MoO to

the jeweler's display case is clearly understood. Customers simply trust the information given them by the jewelers, with their imaginations activated by the storytelling about traceability fleshing out the facts with which they have been presented. It must be emphasized, however, that the customers we interviewed did not fully accept the traceability narrative as an objective certainty, but rather as a highly probable assumption. Nevertheless, the accuracy and authority of the information conveyed by jewelers through CEDs' traceability storytelling ensures that this narrative is perceived as a sufficiently reliable source to guide consumers' purchase choices (Chen and Huang 2013). Concurrently, storytelling about ethical jewelry allows consumers to attribute an inherently higher quality to CEDs that differentiates them from non-certified diamonds. The materially higher quality of CEDs may in fact be visually distinct from non-CEDs, since a diamond's characteristic flash and prismatic color will likely be brighter and have more depth when the cutting, polishing, and setting of a diamond are done by skilled artisans, who are typically more likely to experience good working conditions than their less skilled counterparts. However, such differentiation may not be apparent to an untrained eye; an experienced jeweler will see what an inexperienced customer will not.

12.3 METHODOLOGY

To understand how storytelling narratives about the traceability of CEDs drive customers' purchase choices and how the application of the IO concept allows us to understand such behaviors, our ethnographic research, following an interpretive approach (Joy et al. 2014), was conducted from 2020 through early in 2021, in the ethical jewelry stores Belloni in Milan and Simone Righi in Bologna. Fourteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with both jewelers (Francesco Belloni and Simone Righi) and twelve of their customers, predominantly male, who purchased jewelry featuring CEDs. The owner of Belloni jewelers helped us in contacting some of his customers who were willing to be interviewed. Their ages ranged from thirty and over; all were Italians by birth and currently resident in northern and central Italy, except one interviewed who was resident near Naples. All interviews lasted about one hour and were conducted directly in the

stores. We also visited jewellery stores in Milan and Bologna where jewellers showed us some articles of ethical jewellery.

12.4 FINDINGS

12.4.1 Analysis of Ethnographic Data

The storytelling about CED traceability incorporates and articulates the following: the meaning of the MoO, which offers consumers assurance both of a given provenance, and that environmental norms were not violated; the knowledge of the material characteristic of a given stones, from the rough diamond to the final product; the guarantee that mining in Canada has no connection to funding conflict, and the certainty, according to those we interviewed, that regulations for worker safety were applied throughout the diamond supply chain. In addition, traceability allows diamond mining to be located within an economically developed and industrialized mining country such as Canada, rather than in economically poor countries in Africa such as Botswana and Namibia, and gives interlocutors and consumers the perception of higher value, not so much material as intangible, of Canadian diamonds compared to other diamonds (Brun et al. 2012).

Because CEDs are not a common purchase in Italy, broadening the target market will require a narrative that helps consumers—those already sensitive to sustainability and ethics and those who are not—to fully understand the difference between CEDs and diamonds mined in conflict areas. The fewer consumers know about the pitfalls of the diamond trade, the more they need to be informed of the benefits of ethical diamonds, through a narrative built ad hoc whose main theme is the traceability of the stone.

12.4.2 Traceability Communication Strategies

During our interview with the Milanese jeweler Francesco Belloni, the challenge of positioning CEDs within the jewelry industry emerged:

"In Italian jewelry fairs, it is impossible to talk about ethical diamonds. There is great difficulty in spreading this alternative to ordinary diamonds. There is a sort of code of silence on this issue." (Francesco Belloni). The questions that arose in our minds were as follows: why is there a code of silence? Why are other jewelers in Italy resistant to CEDs? We are aware that the introduction of new products is, in general, a complicated challenge; indeed, it follows complex processes of interaction among people, knowledge, policy, and market. Notably, as regards a niche product, like CED, it may stay at the fringes of the luxury market and have difficulties being culturally assimilated. In Italy, we noted that the jewellery market is held by few big business groups who can control the entire market. It becomes clear that various different actors (jewellery companies, jewelers, as well as consumers) directly or indirectly hinder the successful introduction of new varieties of diamonds.

To introduce CEDs to potential customers, Belloni and Simone Righi deploy a communication strategy that emphasizes the assumption of respectful behaviors in all actions, modeling such behavior (in the case of Belloni, through charities (e.g., donations to associations that assist cancer patients, funded by ethical jewelry purchases in their stores (Armano and Joy 2021)). In fact, as jeweler Simone Righi of Bologna explained to us, the business of selling ethical jewelry relates to his personal values:

"My path as a man has been to be a conscientious objector. That's why I don't want to sell diamonds that finance civil wars. Also, I am a volunteer in my city and help people who are economically needy. I use renewable sources in my company. Insofar as I can, I try to operate as fairly as possible. In the area of jewelry, I, therefore, support those who provide alternative options. The choice to sell ethical diamonds was a natural one for me."

Storytelling that broadcasts and reflects the jewelers' own personal values connects them on a highly personal level to the product they sell. In doing so, the narrative that leverages traceability allows consumers, with the aid of the emotional-narrative transport of the jewelers, to become familiar with the products. Indeed, some authors (Spinelli et al. 2015; Graulau 2008) note that the

communication strategy with which a product's storytelling is constructed is typically focused by eighty percent on emotional content; only the remaining twenty percent attempts to build and expand brand awareness (Danner et al. 2017). For niche products such as ethical jewelry, the narrative theme about traceability, which also evokes MoO (Graulau 2008), is crucial to emotional reassurance and thereby drives consumers towards the choice of CEDs.

How can the meaning of traceability be conveyed concretely to consumers? In addition to evangelizing on the subject for his customers, Belloni regularly makes appearances at educational facilities to discuss ethical jewelry:

"I have been invited to many design schools in Milan that are famous all over the world... the Milan Polytechnic, Catholic University, and the Brera Academy in Milan. There I explained to the students the possibility of designing their own jewels incorporating the logic of ethics. In this way they can distinguish themselves from others and can also have more income" (Francesco Belloni).

Both jewelers agree that information about CEDs should be available not only in their stores, but also at conferences within fair trade fairs. While CED narratives offered in jewelry stores have a ready audience, since store customers have already expressed interest in CEDs, attendees at professional trade conferences may be new to the topic. The strategy of using the conference as a channel for disseminating data, in addition to reaching a wide audience, gives the information formality and thus greater narrative power, as the topic attains cultural as well as commercial ramifications.

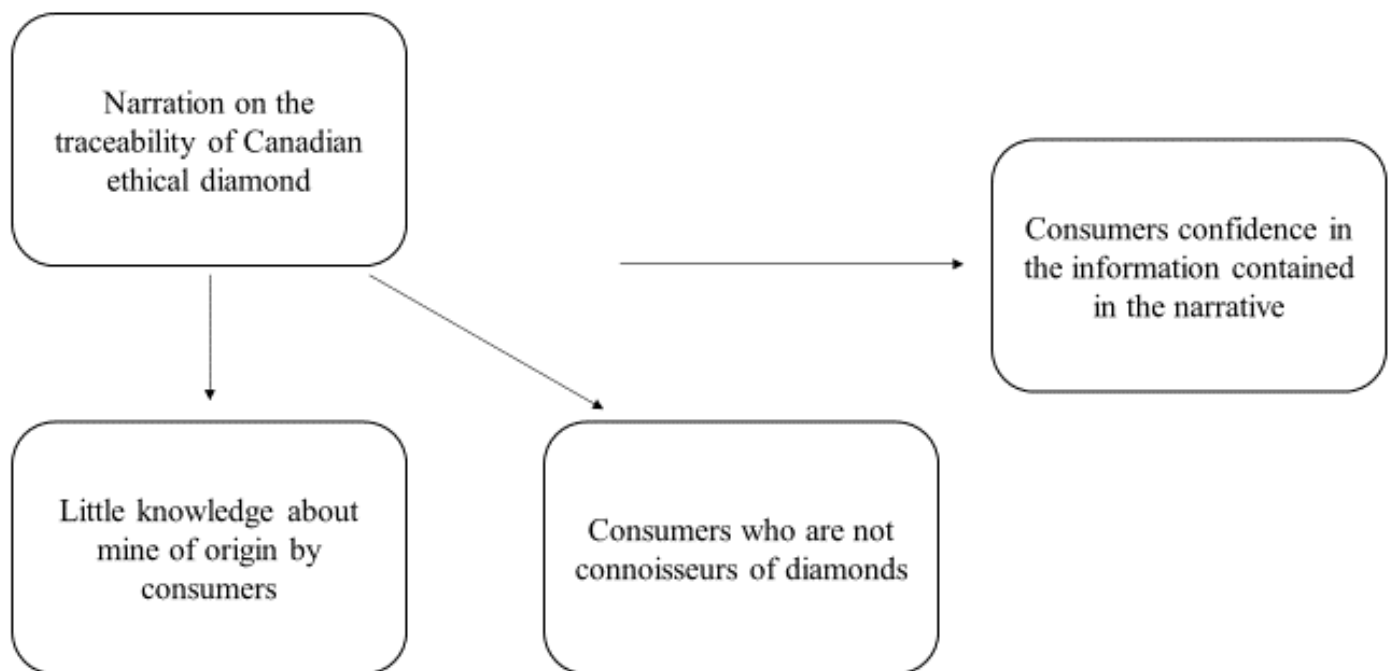
While jewelers at professional conferences will certainly be knowledgeable about diamonds, if not about CEDs, customers in jewelry stores may be in the dark about both. As one Belloni Jewellers customer stated:

"I don't understand anything about diamonds. However, I have always been a customer of Belloni Jewellers. Here I came to know that the Canadian ethical diamond is produced following professional ethics throughout the supply chain in which exploitation of all the workers involved is avoided. The finished product costs more because of these safeguards and I trust this information.

Nevertheless, I don't know the mines where these diamonds are extracted" (Luca, Milan, 30 years old).

This discourse, schematized in the figure below, makes it possible to unite the theme of CEDs traceability, ethical consumer trust in the information told by jewelers, and the concept of IO.

Figure 1 Conveyance of the concept of ethical diamond traceability to Italian ethical consumers



The knowledge gap about diamonds and MoO shown in Fig. 2 is filled by the imagination of the customer to whom the CEDs story is told, as another Belloni Jewelers customer explained:

"When I went to Belloni Jewelers, the Canadian diamond story was explained to me so all the qualms I had fallen away. When I returned home, I... read [more] information on the Internet. Then I returned to the jewelry store to pick up the ring I had ordered and with the jeweler we delved into some aspects of mining. It was this approach that convinced me to purchase a piece of jewelry that had an ethical diamond mounted on it. I have always known that many diamonds come from Africa, where there are inhumane working conditions. For this reason, I have always been very apprehensive about buying diamonds" (Gustavo, 39, Engineer, Monza).

Gustavo's testimony reveals the relationship between the consumer's fear of making a wrong purchase choice and the trust engendered after listening to the storytelling about CEDs and gaining objective knowledge of the product. Many interviewees in our study had read online reports of working conditions in African mines. Taleb (2007) suggests that many people tend to educate themselves on a given subject by approaching it from subject areas with which they are already familiar. Armano and Joy (2021) demonstrate that the Italian ethical consumers they interviewed tended to compare ethical jewelry (unfamiliar) to Made in Italy products (extremely familiar), attaining comfort with the former by linking it to the latter. Our interviewees sought education through research that employed exclusionary thought processes: "I can't imagine Canadian mines, but I can say how I imagine African mines. Then from these I can guess how diamonds are extracted in Canada" (Umberto 50, Architect, Milan). Other Belloni Jewelers customers also gave a summary image of Canadian and African mines reconstructed through fragments of information retrieved from various sources:

"Very often in movies, like the one with Di Caprio, *Blood Diamond*, they talk about the digging of diamonds in Africa, in the Belgian Congo region, etc. where the working conditions are very bad. From what I have seen from the documentaries, little boys or children worked in conditions that were inhuman, extremely uncomfortable. However, knowing from various readings that ethical diamonds come from Canada, I know... that Canada is an evolved country as regards the care of workers, that it is a western first-world country with laws regarding the protection of labor. So, I imagine Canadian mines as industrial contexts similar to European contexts." (Mattia 43, Entrepreneur, Reggio Emilia).

Extant research suggests that the greater the desire to know about a given topic, the greater the confidence individuals will take in the information they find (Laurin, Shepherd, and Kay, 2010; van der Toorn, Tyler, and Jost, 2011). Moreover, Shepherd and Kay (2012) argue that in order to resolve an uncomfortable psychological state precipitated by a lack of knowledge on a given topic, people tend to legitimize and increase their trust in information that will make them feel more

comfortable. Our own participants appeared to be emotionally ill at ease when their lack of knowledge of CEDs was openly on display. Thus, it is possible to hypothesize that Italian ethical consumers' desire to increase their knowledge about CEDs is rooted in a desire to act in concert with their value system. As a Simone Righi customer reported:

"When I went to buy a ring for my wife... the jeweler told me why he started selling ethical diamonds. He explained to me the history of these diamonds and the story about traceability. The reasons why he offers his customers this type of jewelry met my ideals. I felt comfortable with him because we could understand each other. Then, in my case, I wanted to give my wife a gift with a ring on which to mount three diamonds symbolizing our three children. And the idea that these diamonds were also ethical and tracked convinced me 100% to make this purchase" (Luca, 58, Lower Bologna).

As Luca clearly states, the information on traceability in the narrative from the jeweler increased his confidence dramatically, allowing him to immediately reach a purchase decision. The concept of traceability not only allows consumers to differentiate CEDs from other diamonds, but it also enables them to connect the various parts of the supply chain in their imaginations by mentally picturing each step of the stone's journey from mine to consumer. In contrast to other stones without certification CEDs thus easily assume a connotation of identity, as each stage of the supply chain can potentially be made known. CED traceability offers a complete overview of a diamond's journey from mine to the customer, that through its transparency connects the endpoint—the customer purchasing jewelry featuring the diamond—to all those involved along the way, from the workers along the supply chain to cutters, polishers, and setters through to the jewelers. In so doing, CEDs take on unambiguous contours. Schlosser (2013) suggests the concept of purity in discussing CEDs, related less to the material qualities of the diamond than to a series of characteristics both physical and geographical that evoke an almost pristine Nordic environment (beyond extractive industrialization) in which CEDs are mined (Ibid.). Purity is further embodied by the CED itself in

accordance with value characteristics describing CEDs as ethically pure, i.e., morally correct in terms of worker rights (Remotti 2010) in the gemstone industry.

12.5 CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The anthropologist Mary Douglas, in her book “Purity and Danger” (1966), considers the importance of the concepts of purity, pollution, disorder, and danger in constructing social order. Order in society implies certain restrictions; from all materials available, a selection has been made. Disorder, on the other hand, spins patterns into chaos. While that disorder is unlimited, patterns are nonetheless still possible; disorder thus has the potential to be both dangerous and powerful (Douglas 1966). In this study, we noted that jewelers, particularly in trade fairs and formal contexts, were hesitant to discuss ethical diamonds because doing so would upset the existing order in the jewelry business: To embrace ethics in jewelry production is to accept significant changes in how workers who mine metals and gemstones and fabricate jewelry are treated. Such changes will inevitably increase the costs of production, which may not be offset by higher prices for consumers. The oft-discussed concept, typically in the context of apparel, of purchasing items of higher quality but in lower quantity can result in lower revenue for industry stakeholders.

The potential adjustments in jewelry production and manufacture in response to issues of ethical sustainability, in terms of environmental, economic, and social degradation, is to varying degrees also threatening current views of nature and culture, which are already under siege in a world actively experiencing the long-term impact of the industrial revolution. In response, as issues of sustainability and ethical behavior come ever more sharply into focus, extrapolating ethical questions relating to the production of food, apparel, and home goods, among many others, to include jewelry is a natural extension of such concerns.

In response to the above-mentioned issues, consumers we interviewed have a personal stake in sustainability, with their views evolving in tandem with their awareness. While our respondents were aware of issues associated with blood diamonds from various countries in Africa, they had not

heard about any unethical conditions for employees in Canada. They are therefore predisposed to accept as truthful statements by the jewelers, and to also assume that their own understanding of employee rights in countries such as Canada are correct. To a great extent, they are correct; Canadian labor laws are by any definition far stricter than their counterparts in less developed countries (D'Angelo 2019) and consumers in our study were well aware that social structures in place in Canada protect workers more than their equivalent in Africa (Le Billon 2006]. We therefore argue that narratives of virtue through consumption can lead consumers to feel they have the ability to buy what they believe in, that opening their wallet is in and of itself an act of power. Questions of authority arise: When consumers rely on experts (e.g., jewelers) for the knowledge to make moral purchase decisions, who will they ultimately consider trustworthy? If only a very few jewelers endorse ethical diamonds, will the value of their customers' ethical purchases fall (a particular sensitive issue, since CEDs are more expensive than non-certified diamonds)? As Douglas (1966) notes, it is not always easy to recognize existing authority. A sense of potential danger and disorder among consumers must be managed before ethical diamonds can become mainstream. Product traceability is one such mechanism that will help in this process.

In agreement with Remotti (2010), we can say that the concept of identity arises in a context of globalization, in which relations between countries, cultures and people are now complex. Our Italian ethical consumers deployed identity obsession as a psychological tool to hold on to the narrative about traceability which helped them act in a way that conforms to their ideals. Therefore, ethical participants were able to distinguish CEDs from other diamonds, even though their initial knowledge of the product was insufficient for making such distinctions; they were further limited by their fears of making poor purchase choices.

Remotti argues that: "Identity is the affirmation of our essence, or substance ($A = A$) and the difference is always a relating and comparing ourselves to others (we A are different from B)" (Remotti 2010: p. 11); we can similarly state, in relation to our investigation, that CEDs are easily identifiable (as they are tracked) and just as easily differentiated from other (untracked) diamonds.

In the ethical diamond, therefore, both characteristics of identity and difference coexist, but they do so less from a material point of view (given that a visual comparison of a rough Canadian diamond and an African diamond will likely not yield obvious differences other than to a professional jeweler, as discussed above); rather those differences appear in an intangible way. In fact, wearing a piece of jewelry with a CED rather than a non-certified diamond does not allow one to be explicitly recognized as an ethical consumer—any sense of virtue accruing to the consumer is therefore private.

In this article, we have addressed two important aspects of traceability narratives that can serve as a starting point for future analysis. On the one hand, we have seen the challenges jewelers face in positioning CEDS in the jewelry sector in Italy, seemingly due to the consequence of a difficult coexistence between jewelry products incorporating different values within the same sector. The concept of CEDS traceability serves as an identifying trait. On the other hand, we have seen how the relationship between traceability, the knowledge gaps of Italian ethical consumers in relation to MoO, and identity obsession used as a parameter of choice by CEDs consumers, reveals an unconditional trust, worthy of further investigation, as Italian ethical consumers make purchase decisions based on information narrated by jewelers.

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