Conflicting coexistence of legitimation and delegitimation logics in a revived market: The case of a traditional clothing market

Fatima Regany, Ahmed Benmecheddal, Meriam Belkhir, Souad Djelassi

To cite this version:

HAL Id: hal-03492943
https://hal.science/hal-03492943
Submitted on 17 Oct 2022

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L’archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire HAL, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d’enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution - NonCommercial 4.0 International License
Conflicting Coexistence of Legitimation and Delegitimation Logics in a Revived Market: The Case of a Traditional Clothing Market

Fatima Regany (Corresponding author)
Assistant professor
University of Lille and LSMRC, France
e-mail: fatima.regany@univ-lille.fr
telephone: (33) 3 20 73 08 05

Ahmed Benmecheddal
Assistant professor
University of Lille and LSMRC, France
e-mail: ahmed.benmecheddal@univ-lille.fr
telephone: (33) 3 20 73 08 05

Meriam Belkhir
Assistant professor
University of Sfax (Faculty of Economic Sciences and Management), Tunisia
Laboratoire de recherche en marketing (LRM)
e-mail: meriam.belkhir@fsegs.usf.tn
telephone: (216) 23 53 04 67

Souad Djelassi
Associate professor
University of Lille (IUT « C » Roubaix) and LSMRC, France
e-mail: souad.djelassi@univ-lille.fr
telephone: (33) 3 28 33 42 74

© 2020 published by Elsevier. This manuscript is made available under the CC BY NC user license
https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/
Conflicting Coexistence of Legitimation and Delegitimation Logics in a Revived Market:

The Case of a Traditional Clothing Market

Abstract

Research on market shaping highlights the capacity of actors to influence a market by
legitimating/delegitimating a consumption practice. This literature emphasizes the
institutional work of actors in creating or transforming a market. However, little attention has
been paid to the consequences for market shaping when some institutional actors endeavor to
disrupt a market while others seek to maintain it. Drawing on a qualitative study of the
Tunisian Sefsari clothing market, we show that actors in the dominated market logic can
revive the market by working institutionally in response to institutional forces disrupting the
Sefsari market. The market studied is shaped by a relationship between two opposing
institutional logics that translates into an institutional complexity conveying identity tensions.
By exploring market shaping as an outcome of dialogical legitimation/delegitimation work by
institutional actors, our findings contribute to existing theorizations of market shaping and
have a number of managerial implications.

Keywords: market shaping, institutional logics, institutional work, disrupting market,
maintaining market, revived market
1. Introduction

Marketing and consumer research have shown increasing interest in market shaping (Gollnhofer, 2017; Hietanen & Rokka, 2015; Kjellberg & Helgesson, 2006, 2007). A recent cultural approach to understanding the market theorizes it as a political and social process, affected by the environment existing outside the firm or industry (Giesler, 2012). Adopting this approach, some researchers define market creation and transformation as a market-driven legitimation process (Chaney, Ben Slimane, & Humphreys, 2016; Dolbec & Fischer, 2015; Ghaffari, Jafari, & Sandikci, 2019; Giesler & Fischer, 2017; Humphreys, 2010; Scarabotto & Fischer, 2013) in which a consumption practice is legitimated when it is socially, culturally and politically acceptable within a given context (Johnson et al., 2006; Suchman, 1995).

Consumer research stresses the capacity of actors to impact market shaping by legitimating or delegitimizing a consumption practice (Dolbec & Fischer, 2015; Ertimur & Coskuner-Balli, 2015; Kjeldgaard et al., 2017; Scarabotto & Fischer, 2013). Various scholars have studied market shaping as an outcome of actors’ institutional work (Baker, Storbacka, & Brodie, 2019; Dolbec & Fischer, 2015; Ghaffari, Jafari, & Sandikci, 2019; Lawrence, Leca, & Zilber, 2013).

Such research is valuable for understanding the role of actors’ institutional work in creating or transforming a market (Dolbec & Fischer, 2015; Ghaffari, Jaffari, & Sandikci, 2019; Humphreys, 2010). However, little attention has been paid on the consequences for market transformation when certain actors work through institutions to delegitimate a consumption practice, leading to the disruption of a market while others endeavor to legitimate a consumption practice in order to maintain the market. One exception in the marketing literature is the work of Baker, Storbacka, & Brodie (2019), who examine the disruption of a market as a result of the creation of a new one. In the Canadian context, the “old” circus market declined due to institutional work by actors wishing to innovate. Nevertheless, their
in institutional work was not intended to disrupt the old circus market. In our research, we are interested in actors who operate institutionally with the intention of delegitimizing a consumption practice and disrupting a market, along with the institutional responses by actors wishing to maintain the market.

Accordingly, we draw on institutional logics and institutional work frameworks, because they provide the tools to deconstruct the work of different actors engaged in disrupting or maintaining a market. That is, our research questions are: What institutional work is performed by market actors to delegitimate a consumption practice and lead to market disruption? What institutional work is performed by market actors to legitimate this consumption practice and maintain the market? What are the consequences for market shaping? It is important to address these questions because doing so will highlight the institutional work of actors to maintain the market in response to forces disrupting it. The market dynamics involved in this process have been little studied. While consumer research has investigated how actors create and/or change a market (Dolbec & Fischer, 2015; Ghaffari, Jafari, & Sandikci, 2019; Giesler & Fischer, 2017; Humphreys, 2010; Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013), there has been little work on how some actors tend to disrupt a market while others attempt to revive it. A second reason our research is important is that it augments knowledge of market shaping by showing how a weakened and threatened market can revive in another form through innovation. A third reason is that it sheds light on hitherto little studied new forms of institutional work carried out by actors who disagree with and oppose the legitimacy of a consumption practice.

To answer our questions, we carried out a qualitative exploratory study of the Tunisian Sefsari clothing market, currently undergoing major changes, that provides fertile ground for studying social market shaping. The Sefsari is an emblematic and traditional Tunisian woman’s garment that used to be very popular. Although demand for the Sefsari has steadily
decreased in recent decades, the garment is still produced and sold today. We conceptualize the Sefsari as constituting a market since it represents a “social arena where firms, their suppliers, customers, workers, and government interact” (Fligstein & Dauter, 2007: 107). We show that the Sefsari market depends on the mobilization of multiple actors, including consumers, public policymakers, researchers, craftsmen, designers, manufacturers, sellers, and suppliers. All these actors are involved in the shaping of the Sefsari market through their institutional work, either to disrupt it or to maintain it.

We organize our qualitative data around two conflictual institutional logics and two broad categories of institutional work developed by Lawrence & Suddaby (2006): maintaining institutions and disrupting institutions. The Sefsari is a niche market subject to different pressures and in which the disruptive forces are dominant. Our analysis reveals the coexistence of two opposing, and uncompromising, logics: the dominant emancipatory logic and the dominated traditionalist-hybrid logic. Within each of these a large array of actors engages in a set of institutional work either to delegitimate the Sefsari practice, and thus lead to its disruption, or to legitimate the practice leading, as an outcome, to maintaining the market. Those conflicting logics interact, since their actors are implicated in a dialogical relationship.

Our research contributes to the literature on market shaping. By exploring market shaping as an outcome of actors’ dialogical institutional work of legitimation/delegitimation, our findings reveal how a market can be maintained despite powerful disruptive forces threatening it. Indeed, efforts to legitimate a practice translate into the introduction of innovative products and solutions that revive the market in another form, as we will detail below. Furthermore, we show that a market socially shaped by the coexistence of institutional work of legitimation and delegitimation results in an institutional complexity that conveys identity tensions. Finally, this research makes a managerial contribution by proposing two
legitimation strategies: the isomorphic legitimation strategy and the branding revival legitimation strategy.

2. Conceptual framework

Early research on market shaping explains the formation of markets as a social process that does not depend essentially on the company's strategy. Technological and social innovation, as well as the development and the spreading of new consumption practices, alongside their social, cultural and political acceptance, all contribute to the emergence of new markets (Humphreys, 2010; Martin & Schouten, 2014; Suchman, 1995). More recent work on market shaping has studied the changes within a market as an outcome of actors’ institutional work (Baker, Storbacka, & Brodie, 2019; Dolbec & Fischer, 2015; Ghaffari, Jafari & Sandikci, 2019).

Although research has highlighted the processes of market creation and transformation, the processes of market reduction and disruption are still little studied in the market shaping literature (Chaney, Ben Slimane, & Humphreys, 2016; Maguire & Hardy, 2009). Market disruption corresponds to a dynamic through which institutions are weakened or disappear. As we are interested in both market disruption and market maintenance, we focus on the delegitimation and legitimation of a practice. Delegitimation refers to the loss of legitimacy of an established organizational practice as a result of challenges due to the failure of organizations to reproduce previously legitimated organizational actions. This occurs when coercive work disrupts institutions (Fligstein, 1990), and where state and non-state actors disconnect themselves from certain sets of practices, technologies, rules or laws (Jones, 2001; Leblebici et al., 1991; Maguire & Hardy, 2009). Delegitimation also occurs through contestation between alternative institutions (Clemens & Cook, 1999; D’Aunno, Succi, & Alexander, 2000; Seo & Creed, 2002). As a result, the market concerned is disrupted.
To better understand market disruption and market maintenance, we build on the frameworks of institutional logics and institutional work and explore both the institutional logics underlying the work of actors whose aim is to either disrupt or maintain the Sefsari market, and the relation between these actors.

Institutional logics shape markets and define the rules that shape actors’ cognitions and behaviors in organizational fields (DiMaggio, 1988; Thornton, 2004; Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). They provide “organizational principles, vocabularies of motive, and a sense of self and identity to market actors, who can then further elaborate, manipulate, and use to their own advantage” (Friedland & Alford, 1991: 232). Logics are shaped at two levels: “at a societal level, social institutions such as state, family or the market prescribe unique organizational principles, practices and symbols and influence behaviors; and at the field level, when they create rules, meaning and the valuation orders that structure the decision-making and the practices of the players in a product market” (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999: 805). Scholars have focused primarily on markets shaped by a dominant institutional logic and have studied institutional transformation as a logic of replacement (Vargo & Lush, 2004). Recent research has explored hybrid markets shaped by several opposing logics (Ertimur & Coskuner-Balli, 2015). Such markets are composed of numerous practices, beliefs and rule systems and are shaped by multiple and often conflicting institutional logics. They evolve over time as institutional actors with different cultural capital and interests amplify or repress distinct logics (Sandicki & Ger, 2002; Scaraboto & Fisher, 2013). This evolution can be conflictual. Giesler (2012), for instance, suggests that the formation of a market might be understood through conflictual ideological dialectics represented by different actors and interests.

Scholars in organizational studies have introduced the concept of institutional complexity, defined as the presence and consequences of multiple logics with conflicting, or at least
divergent, prescriptions for behavior (Baumann-Pauly, Scherer, & Palazzo, 2016; Martin et al., 2017). Managerial issues have also been raised, in view of the multiple contradictory demands of institutional logics, shaped at macro and micro societal levels (Greenwood et al., 2010; Scott, 2008). This pluralism results in the need for managers to manage the contradictory or paradoxical demands of logics, particularly when the contradictions cannot be resolved and persist over time (Baumann-Pauly, Scherer, & Palazzo, 2016; Ertimur & Cokuner-Bali, 2015; Martin et al., 2017; Smith & Lewis, 2011).

Institutional logics infuse institutional work (Dolbec & Fischer, 2015). That is, the institutional work of actors can help make a particular logic dominant. Institutional work has been conceptualized as actions taken to create, maintain, or disrupt institutions (Baker, Storbacka, & Brodie, 2019; Dolbec & Fischer, 2015; Lawrence & Suddaby, 2009). Drawing on Lawrence & Suddaby (2006), we define three categories of institutional work: creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions. As we are interested in market maintenance and disruption, we focus our attention on institutional work that impacts it. Institutional work aimed at maintaining institutions “involves supporting, repairing or recreating the social mechanisms that ensure compliance” (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006: 230). Institutional disruption results from “attacking or undermining the mechanisms that lead members to comply with institutions” (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006: 235). Lawrence & Suddaby (2006) identify several types of institutional work aimed at maintaining or disrupting institutions. The institutional work relevant to the Sefsari market is shown in Table 1.

Our conceptual framework has framed our research questions, namely: the institutional work performed by market actors to delegitimate/legitimate a consumption practice; and the consequences for market shaping.

3. Context
The evolution of the Tunisian clothing market is closely linked to historical and socio-cultural forces and to religious and political injunctions. At the heart of the Mediterranean basin and originally populated by Berber tribes, Tunisia is a North African country that has been subject to multiple cultural influences over the centuries (e.g. Phoenicians, Romans, Jewish, Christians, Muslims, Ottomans, Arabs, French) (Bessis, 2015).

Tunisian society is today characterized by cultural pluralism (Bouhdiba, 1978). Influenced both by global Western and Middle Eastern cultures, it is undergoing major transformations. Tunisia stands out as a modern country, particularly since the major reforms to public education and the promotion of women’s rights implemented by President Bourguiba. His successor, President Ben Ali, was ousted in January 2011 following the social and political protest movement known as the Tunisian revolution, that has led to a comprehensive democratization of the country and to free democratic elections. The revolution has resulted in social, political and economic transformations and has led Tunisia to question its identity (Bessis, 2015).

As in many Muslim countries, women’s clothing is closely allied to political considerations. Throughout recent Tunisian history and more specifically starting from the advent of Bourguiba, the advancement and defense of women’s rights has been a leitmotiv. Tunisia observes national holidays specifically devoted to women – International Women’s Day on 8 March and National Women’s Day on 13 August, the date celebrating the implementation of the Personal Status code. More recently, some women are voicing their increasing concern that the rights won before the revolution will disappear and that they will lose their means of expression in the public sphere (Alami, 2013). Since the mid-1990s, Tunisian society has experienced a return to religious conservatism, expressed, for instance, by the emergence and pervasiveness of the Saudi Burqa, a woman’s black, full body-covering dress. Ennahda, the most popular Islamic party, which has been accused of trying to “re-Islamize” society (Bessis,
is committed variously to not reversing the rights won, to ensuring that the full body-covering hijab dress remains a personal choice and that women have the right to wear whatever they want, and to not amending the Status Code (Alami, 2013; Bessis, 2015). In pursuing the “modernization” of Tunisian society, both Bourguiba and Ben Ali introduced restrictions around the wearing of the Islamic Hijab headscarf. The current Ennhada party has lifted these restrictions.

This historical context has affected the evolution of women’s clothing practices in Tunisia as well as the associated clothing market. Since the 1970s the Western fashion model has established itself in Tunisia with the practices of women wearing pants and knee-length skirts, with above-knee-length skirts worn mostly in the capital Tunis and other urban areas (Beaugé, 2015). Research on the cultural globalization of clothing practices in Muslim countries has focused on the emergence of a fashion consumer culture (Ghaffari, Jafari, & Sandikci, 2019; Sandikci & Ger, 2010; Smaoui & Ghariani, 2011) and the “entrance to modernity” (Sandicki & Ger, 2002). Among the many issues and features associated with this emergence are the acculturation to the Western clothing style considered as a taste distinction and social class status, the evolution of gender representations (Ustuner & Holt, 2007), the evolution of Islamic fashion and the wearing of the veil (Sandikci & Ger, 2010).

Traditional clothing and associated practices have been questioned with the Tunisian “entrance to modernity” (Sandikci & Ger, 2010). These traditional practices have been sharply reduced because of the evolution of women’s lifestyles in Tunisia, with their access to the labor market and adoption of a modern way of life. Western clothing practices represent a form of capitalist emancipation (Ghaffari, Jafari, & Sandikci, 2019; Ustuner & Holt, 2007). However, traditional garments retain a special status in Tunisia and this is of particular interest for our research. For example, on 15 March every year, Tunisians celebrate their heritage by wearing traditional garments in public with the aim of preserving national identity.
(Chechia, jebba or Sarouel for men, Sefsari or Foutablouza for women, for instance). Our research focuses on the status of traditional garments and the market for traditional clothing. We have chosen to study the Sefsari market as representative of this traditional clothing market for women.

First recorded in the 16th century, the Sefsari is an ivory-colored dress, like a long veil covering the whole body (cf. Picture 1). It is usually handmade from natural silk and used to be worn by most Tunisian women (Ben Tanfous et al., 1978). Though still widely worn up until the 1990s, demand for the Sefsari has progressively declined since the 1970s (Dejoui, 2016). Nowadays it is still worn in the countryside and for traditional occasions such as weddings. The garment itself is handed down from generation to generation of women and may be seen as a conveyor of traditions and history, and whose use is not necessarily linked to religious practice (Nabli & Swiderska, 2008). As a multifaceted cultural heritage product, the Sefsari has different meanings historically, signifying modesty but also tradition (Nabli & Swiderska, 2008). Postcards sold in Tunisia often depict women wearing a Sefsari, as emblematic of authentic traditional Tunisian culture (Revault, 1967). Because wearing this traditional costume has declined since the 1970s, the country’s silk and craft weaving industries are at risk of disappearing (Dejoui, 2016). Nevertheless, the Sefsari still arouses the interest of consumers and its future survival is widely discussed in Tunisian society (Dejoui, 2106; El Gharbi, 2011).

4. Data collection and analysis

To address our research questions, we conducted a qualitative study based on several types of data and sources, including participant observation, in-depth interviews, ethnography and archives. This large array of data enables us to identify, in an iterative and incremental way, consumers, craftsmen, retailers, designers, and consumer associations, as well as
anthropologists and state regulators, as key actors playing a role in the transformation of the market.

To gain an in-depth understanding of practices and to explore actions undertaken to disrupt or maintain the Sefsari, we conducted in-depth interviews with these actors (McCracken, 1988). We further decided to carry out participant observation in order to understand the functioning of events organized by associations which publicly defend the Sefsari (Belk et al., 2013). The first set of data collected (archival, interviews and observation) led us to explore an active online community dedicated to the Sefsari. To supplement archival, interview and observation data, we then conducted a netnography (Kozinets, 2010). An overview of our data sources and their usage is provided in Table 2.

**Archival data.** From September 2017 to April 2019, we initially consulted online articles, the archives of the Tunisian national artisanal office, photos and videos, to grasp the larger context of clothing practices in Tunisia, including traditional clothing and Sefsari practices. These data cover major events, information, and public discourses around the Sefsari dating back to 1957 (one year after Tunisia’s independence) and continuing up to the present day. Using search terms such as “Sefsari”, “traditional garment in Tunisia”, “women and Sefsari”, “silk industry Tunisia”, we identified about 40 blogs, online magazine articles, archives and Youtube videos (see Tables 2 and 4).

**Interviews.** We conducted individual interviews (McCracken, 1988) with five types of actors in the Sefsari market: consumers (10), craftsmen (4), state representatives (4), designers/retailers (3), associations (1), archeologists and art historians (1), and ethnographers (2). The interviews were initially unstructured and conducted with craftsmen and government officials with a view to understanding the Sefsari context. As we began discerning the roles of the different actors in the Sefsari market dynamic, we were able to move on to semi-structured, exploratory interviews, sometimes with more direct and factual
questions addressed to consumers (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994). The interview guide was adapted to each group of actors. Interviews with craftsmen specializing in the silk weaving used in the design of the Sefsari focused on changes in their profession and know-how, their business network and their resources (e.g. raw material, state subsidies). The interviews concluded with a discussion on how they envisaged the future of their profession and the status of the Sefsari in the Tunisian society. An interview with the president of the Tourathna consumer movement (a major association for heritage preservation) focused on the meanings attributed to and conveyed by the Sefsari in Tunisian society, and how and why this group of consumers has emerged and what actions it is organizing. As experts, the archaeologist/art historian specializing in heritage preservation and heritage studies and the two ethnographers gave us an historic overview of the Sefsari, its use and symbolism across generations and its current status and likely future. Through interviews with people from the National Office of Tunisian Crafts (working under the auspices of the Ministry of Tourism and Crafts), we collected political discourses about the status of the Sefsari in Tunisian society. We also interviewed ten consumers (defenders and detractors of the Sefsari) and three designers, to better understand how they conceive of the Sefsari, the meanings and symbolism they attribute to it, their practices in terms of clothing in general and the Sefsari in particular. All interviewees were invited to describe how they disparage or promote the Sefsari, as the case may be, within their circles of influence, including online networks if applicable. In all, from April 2017 to January 2020, we conducted 25 interviews, each lasting between 45 minutes and 2 hours. Interviews were conducted in French or Tunisian dialect (then translated into French), audio-recorded and fully transcribed. Respondents were interviewed at home, in cafés or in their workplace (in the case of state officers, craftsmen and researchers), as well as by telephone or via Messenger (see Table 3).

*Participant observation and ethnographic interviews.* To gain a deeper understanding of
certain consumer movements strongly in favor of the preservation of the Sefsari as a heritage garment, two of the four authors participated in an annual event organized around the Sefsari by the Tourathna association. They were permitted to join the 2018 event by the association’s president, who informed the community of their presence. This annual event, the biggest event organized in Tunis, takes place on 13 August, National Women’s Day. Our main objectives were to be immersed into this consumer movement and to obtain a deeper contextualized knowledge and understanding of the ethics of the association and of the efforts made to promote and preserve the Sefsari. Spending time with the members of this movement during the preparations and throughout the event provided rich data about the meaning of this dress to this community and why they are committed to preserving it through their activism. It allowed the researchers to depict the emotions, such as excitement and pride, prevalent during such events and to capture some of their discourses and narratives through five ethnographic interviews (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994). It also allowed the researchers to witness the reactions and comments from “spectators” at the event, including any detractors. The event was covered by national TV and radio journalists. The march started from the narrow streets of the downtown area, evocative of traditional and ancient Tunisia, and ended on the famous avenue Bourguiba, symbolizing modern Tunisia. Women on the march wore the Sefsari and men wore traditional dress, and were accompanied by traditional musical troupes and songs. The participants, especially young women, were proudly taking photos and posting them on their Facebook pages or the association’s page. Group photos of the event were then taken to preserve it for posterity. The two researchers took field notes, talked to various participants, and filmed and photographed the event, having obtained prior written permission to do so from the association. (Pictures 2, 3 and 4)

Netnography. We conducted a netnography for more than 14 months (Kozinets, 2002, 2010) from which we collected online discourses and studied actions undertaken by individual
consumers, designers and consumer movement groups (associations) to promote and disseminate positive on-line discourses about the Sefsari, create a network and interact with other consumers (defenders and detractors of the Sefsari) on Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, YouTube and respected blogs such as Tuniscope (see Table 2). The observed blogs and discussion threads on social media such as YouTube and Facebook covered the period from 2008 to 2019. Following the recommendations of Kozinets (2010), we observed the online comments and interactions of blog readers and social media users, and read and archived published posts and comments. We also participated by asking questions and commenting online regarding some modernized versions of the Sefsari in order to trigger reactions and comments.

Data analysis. The analysis was conducted in conjunction with data collection (Belk, Fischer, & Kozinets, 2013). Interview data were available in transcripts and netnographic data comprised selected posts, including bloggers’ comments and interactions, all available in textual word documents supplemented by pictures and shared in Dropbox, so as to be accessible to all the authors. To analyze textual data, we used the theoretically oriented coding and categorization process of constant comparison (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The authors coded the data independently using hermeneutic circles iterating between intra-textual analysis to establish individual narratives and inter-textual analysis to contextualize the narratives. In the first step, we undertook a general reading of all data to allow categories of characteristics to emerge and more specifically the two logics that guide the market. In the second step, we reread all data with the focus on the institutional work performed by actors within each logic and on the tensions that emerged. Data were interpreted through hermeneutic principles, with findings and theorization emerging through triangulation between the four authors, an iterative process, and constant reformulation of the authors’ conclusions (Thompson, 1997; Thompson et al., 1994).
5. Results

Our analysis highlights the coexistence of two opposing logics: the dominant emancipatory logic and the traditionalist-hybrid logic, each of them structured around different beliefs and rule systems, underpinned by utilitarian and symbolic drivers (DiMaggio, 1988; Thornton, 2004; Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). Within each logic, actors perform institutional work to either delegitimate or legitimate the wearing of the Sefsari and to disrupt or maintain the market (see Figure 1).

5.1 The emancipatory logic

Our analysis reveals that the emancipatory logic is structured around three values: social progress, women’s emancipation and economic efficiency. We define this logic as dominant since it is supported by powerful actors: public policymakers and social scientist experts. We explain that this dominant logic is guided by the belief that the wearing of a Sefsari is a backward step with regard to social progress and the women’s emancipatory movement in Tunisia. Our analysis also shows that this logic is expressed through two disruptive institutional work: disassociating the Sefsari from contemporary Tunisian culture and disconnecting economic support for the Sefsari market. These two institutional work make wearing the Sefsari socially, culturally and politically unacceptable and illegitimate (Humphreys 2010; Suchman, 1995). As a market-shaping outcome, this logic restrains demand, slows and reduces supply, and adds to the current disruption of the Sefsari market.

5.1.1 Disassociating the Sefsari from contemporary Tunisian culture

Actors engaged in this logic carry out disassociating institutional work (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006) that produces discourses to emphasize the incongruence between the values
conveyed by Sefsari-wearing practices and Tunisia’s wider social and emancipatory values. This incongruence contributes to a loss of normative legitimacy (Dowling & Pfeffer 1975). These discourses characterize the wearing of the Sefsari as an outmoded practice belonging to the past and attribute cultural, religious and political meanings to it. As the experts we interviewed explain, the Sefsari may be seen as a cultural heritage product to be “saved and valued” in museums and books.

“Women wore the Sefsari as a tradition. They could not go out without a Sefsari at the risk of feeling ‘naked’. It was part of them. It was social behavior rather than religious. Jews and Muslims wore the Sefsari in Tunisia, but with different head-dresses. We cannot keep the same thing for centuries.” (In-depth interview, Mahdi, anthropologist)

As early research has shown (Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006; Sherer & Lee, 2002), the actors who use dissociative techniques to disrupt the Sefsari market belong to the social elite. With a high cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984), anthropologists dissociate the Sefsari from the Tunisian contemporary cultural context. They produce “scientific discourses” that institutionalize the Sefsari as a product of cultural heritage. In the same way, some Tunisian women dissociate the Sefsari from the contemporary lifestyles of Tunisian women, but without attaching any religious significance to it. We define this as a type of contemporary cultural disassociation. Although these women identify themselves as religious, they believe that the Sefsari should “vanish from the Tunisian landscape”, because “we can no longer dress as our grannies used to” (Malek). Another respondent, Siham, who wears a head covering, points out that the Sefsari forces the wearer to hold the veil up with one hand, thereby restricting free movement. She therefore maintains that a return to wearing the Sefsari in its traditional form is impossible, inconvenient and incongruent with her lifestyle as “an active working woman”.

16
In contrast to these experts and consumers, some Tunisian women dissociate the Sefsari from the contemporary lifestyles of Tunisian women by attaching a religious significance to it. We define this type of disassociating as religious disassociation. The secular modernism conveyed in this logic and nested in this institutional disassociating work, discourages any material and symbolic expression of religion (Ghaffari, Jafari, & Sandikci, 2019; Jafari & McLaran, 2014; Thornton et al., 2012). Guided by the emancipatory logic, some Tunisian women see the Sefsari as discordant with their desired image and liberated and educated status.

“The Sefsari is like a Burqa. The function is almost the same – hiding [women’s] beauty and figure. Besides, the Sefsari is impractical, it holds you back. It's like submission. You are dependent on someone else. It's like you're locked into a garment.” (In-depth interview, Syrine, consumer)

Through this work of institutional religious disassociation, women engaging in a discursive process of distancing and detachment try to link the Sefsari to an undesirable foreign religious ideology. In linking the Sefsari to the Saudi Burqa, respondents underline the similar functions these garments endorse. The Sefsari is then perceived as a garment that hides the body and through which women are dominated by patriarchal rules (Afshar, 1998; Ghaffari, Jafari, & Sandikci, 2019; Mernissi, 1991; Said, 1978). For these women, the abandonment of traditionalist practices and engagement with a modern way of life is considered as a capitalist emancipatory transition (Thomas, 1988; Ustuner & Holt, 2007). From this perspective, Western-style fashion is accepted as a sign of social progress, whereas the Sefsari is perceived as retrograde.

We also found another type of institutional disassociating work that we define as political disassociation. Some women dissociate the Sefsari from the contemporary lifestyles of Tunisian women by defining it as opposed to Tunisian policy for the emancipation of women. They demonstrate their institutional disassociating political work by protesting online against
the marches and demonstrations that promote the Sefsari as a Tunisian cultural heritage product. In particular they protest against the day chosen for these events, which coincides with International Women’s Day (8 March) or National Women’s Day (13 August).

“If these events are reduced to wearing the Sefsari or to seeing other women wearing it, I prefer to stay at home. I can’t stand such things. Honestly, it’s nonsense. I’m wondering if these women have any idea about the meaning behind 13th August. Do they know what this date represents for Tunisian women?” (Blogger, netnography, Tuniscope blog)

For these consumers, wearing the Sefsari on that day to defend women’s rights is unacceptable since it underlines the incongruence between the practice and society regarding women’s political emancipation. They prefer to boycott the Tunisian Women’s Day because the Sefsari is opposed to political discourses favoring women’s emancipation. Through their boycott, they denounce the “folklorization” of a “noble” political cause. Furthermore, during the downtown march organized by the Tourathna association (involved in the preservation of the Sefsari), one passerby explained that “Bourguiba contributed to society’s progress, and we should resist any attempt by some groups to take Tunisian society back into the past”. In online comments and during interviews President Bourguiba was often mentioned as an emblematic figure of the emancipatory logic, who contributed to the political liberation of women by crafting policies against the practice of veiling. In other words, incongruent values and utilitarian characteristics act together to undermine the social and cultural institutional foundations of the Sefsari, rendering it unacceptable and illegitimate (Humphreys 2010; Suchman, 1995), while helping to restrain market demand.

5.1.2 Disconnecting economic support for the Sefsari market
The state is another crucial actor engaging in emancipatory logic by carrying out disconnecting institutional work (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). Public policymakers disrupt the Sefsari market by cutting off economic support. In so doing, they engender a loss of regulatory legitimacy (Scott 1991; Suchman 1995). Policymakers have ceased to provide economic support for the silk industry on which Sefsari production of depends, thereby slowing and reducing its market supply. Given that the Sefsari market is not performing sufficiently well, either because of a lack of demand or because of a gradually disappearing practice, this lack of support from state actors fuels the emancipatory logic and makes it dominant (Vargo & Lush, 2004). The decline in the market has been further accelerated by price increases and reduced production. Due to financial constraints, government actors are establishing priorities between heritage products and artisanal sectors. Interviews with the chief director at one of the governmental offices for handcraft sector development revealed the prevalence of an economic logic of withdrawal.

“As a governmental institution, we can no longer continue importing silk and distributing it to craftsmen as before. It’s no longer a profitable sector. And on many occasions, we have advised the main actors (craftsmen) to diversify their activity and to switch from silk weaving (exclusively producing the Sefsari) to wool weaving, for example. They simply want to continue relying on the government. But things have changed and we can’t reverse the process. Silk is now imported by private actors, so those craftsmen who want to continue weaving silk and making Sefsaris should be able to pay the high price.” (In-depth interview, Bilel, chief director of a governmental office for handcraft sector)

This economic withdrawal is criticized by craftsmen who are engaged in discussions with the powerful state actors. From their perspective, the preservation of the Sefsari helps protect a
Tunisian skill – the know-how of silk weaving – viewed as part of Tunisia’s cultural heritage. Declining market demand for the Sefsari has accelerated the loss of their expertise. They also regret not being able to transfer their heritage knowledge capital to a new generation that is not interested in acquiring this vanishing skill.

“On many occasions, we’ve approached governmental institutions for assistance. We’ve asked them to find solutions, to help our profession and prevent its disappearance. Unfortunately, they are unwilling to preserve this knowledge, our profession or the Sefsari as a product.” (In-depth interview, Hichem, craftsman)

State actors have adopted a neo-liberal approach to the Sefsari market. They use their power to select and decide on priorities with regard to heritage preservation. To illustrate this point, we cite the example of the Khomsa d’Or national annual design competition for the creation of a traditional garment that can be modernized and contribute to the preservation of the national heritage. The Sefsari is excluded from this competition in favor of other heritage traditional products.

“Every year, we decide on a competition theme, focusing on specific traditional apparel. Participant designers are requested to revive the selected apparel. Over the nineteen editions, we have focused on many traditional types of apparel, which has contributed to an increase in demand for them over the past years, such as the Jebba. Regarding the Sefsari, we haven’t included it as a competition theme so far.” (In-depth interview, Karim, chief director of a governmental office for handcraft sector)

State actors have introduced and implemented entry barriers to some products presented in this competition by imposing the condition that the raw materials used must be Tunisian, local and not imported. This condition is a way of indirectly slowing and cutting back the market
supply and disrupting the market, because nowadays the Sefsari is mainly made from imported silk. In other words, the regulatory institutional foundations of the Sefsari are disrupted by indirect sets of state policies (Humphreys 2010; Suchman, 1995).

5.2 The traditionalist hybrid logic

The dominated traditionalist-hybrid logic is structured around three values: a nostalgic (re)construction of the past, the preservation of cultural heritage and Tunisian identity, and adapted utilitarian convenience. We define this logic as a traditionalist hybrid market logic because, as we demonstrate in this section, it is “conservative in values but avant-garde in consumption practices” (Sandicki & Ger, 2002: 3). That is, the values that structure this logic are a combination of the wish to return to a traditional practice while adapting it to the present context. Actors engaged in this logic attempt to revive the market by carrying out a set of maintaining institutional work in response to the institutional work that are disrupting the Sefsari market. This logic embodies three institutional work: enabling innovative use and a revised version of the Sefsari to emerge; valorizing the Sefsari; and engaging in a celebration of the Sefsari. Through their work, the actors do not seek to undermine the dominant emancipatory logic and its powerful proponents such as state actors, but have chosen to engage in a dialogue with it, to present arguments and to come up with innovative solutions. As agents of institutional change, their aim is to counterbalance the dominant logic and legitimate the practice as a defense of their Tunisian identity. As a market shaping outcome, this logic leads to the maintenance of the Sefsari market and its revival in a new form, with an innovative use and version of the product, and a new positioning. The practice is rehabilitated and restored by changing the Sefsari into a luxurious and exclusive product subject to greater demand.
5.2.1 Enabling innovative use and a revised version of the Sefsari to emerge

We define efforts made by designers to maintain the Sefsari market as an enabling institutional work (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006) that legitimates the practice. They contribute to the development of what they call “the new Sefsari”, an adaptation of the product and its associated use. In recent years, fashion designers such as El Ghanja, Boho Chic and Siwar Ben Cheikh have emerged on the scene as some of the most creative in terms of modernized traditional artisanal clothing (see Picture 5). They benefit from wide media exposure. We observed online that their creations and garments are highly publicized, especially on social media, and are frequently worn by celebrities (see Picture 5). Through their work, designers innovate and create new Sefsari models to facilitate new institutional routines and ensure institutional survival that reconciles the past and present.

“The Sefsari: it’s our heritage, our tradition, our craft, our product. To innovate, we dig into our history, we look for old photos, fashion photos, what Tunisian women wore in their daily lives, we read, we go to museums, to exhibitions. We talk to our mothers and grandmothers to find out what they used to wear. We mix past and present, but we keep our heritage. We do various things to get inspiration.” (Farah, designer and retailer)

In response to those who disassociate the Sefsari from contemporary Tunisian culture, such designers have modified the product to make it more consonant with the values and current lifestyles of Tunisian women. Designers create new versions that they consider more convenient and “glamorous”, but without “denaturing” and “falsifying” the original version, in order to retain its original character, which is “soft, white and silky” (Sarah, Boho chic brand, designer and retailer – see Picture 6). They seek to enhance “the beauty of the silk material” (Farah), and even transform the Sefsari from its original use by designing white Sefsari-style dresses that can be worn on their own. Some Sefars are accessorized with
hoods for instance, while other versions maintain the traditional spirit (a veil placed over dresses) but with the addition of some colored accessories. Consumers we interviewed (such as Haifa, Nesrine, or Khouloud) expressed a strong interest in these revisited versions, that they describe as attractive and compatible with their outfits. In response to cultural disassociating institutional work, designers are making an effort to shift congruence and isomorphism between values conveyed by the Sefsari practice and the larger society, so as to make it culturally acceptable (Humphreys, 2010; Suchman, 1995). Through their enabling work, designers introduce new institutional arrangements, which allows the survival of the Sefsari. Furthermore, due to the lack of economic support for the Sefsari market, leading to increased silk prices increase and the decline in the practice, the market has transformed the Sefsari into a luxury product.

"The decline [of the Sefsari] has led to a form of nostalgia. It has become unusual, and like any rare product it has become even more valuable. Suddenly it has become a luxury item. It is being revisited. It has increased in price. Luxury has taken it up and offers it to women from wealthy backgrounds, whereas previously it was the daily traditional clothing of Tunisian women in the public sphere. I have the impression that it has now become the clothing of middle class women, and is largely reserved for the private sphere, for special evenings where we like to reconnect with its traditions and assert a taste for authentic and precious things. That's luxury. It’s as if we are recreating a little Tunis from the start, a high-end trend, somewhat exclusive, in a very glamorous form.” (In-depth interview, Malek, consumer)

To illustrate this, Farah says that “formerly, 85% of women used to wear the Sefsari when my grandma was young, nowadays 10% of women buy a Sefsari”. She adds that before the summer, which is the wedding season, the orders she receives increase by 50%. The original
Sefsari, which is a piece of sewn silk fabric, is sold for around 130 dinars (42 euros), whereas the revisited version costs around 500 to 600 dinars (160 to 200 euros).

Our analysis reveals that the Sefsari market has evolved and changed in response to its institutional disruption. Before interest in it faded, the Sefsari was an everyday garment used in public spaces by most women in villages and urban areas. Those who currently defend its rehabilitation have transformed its usage and symbolism so as to link it to contemporary Tunisian culture. The enabling institutional work of designers has given the Sefsari a new positioning and a different meaning. It has now become a luxury product for private occasions, appreciated by the wealthiest fringe of the Tunisian society and viewed as a sign of taste and distinction (Bourdieu, 1984).

5.2.2 Valorizing the Sefsari

Actors enhancing the Sefsari carry out valorizing institutional work (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). In doing so, they aim to counterbalance the contemporary cultural disassociation by giving the Sefsari a positive image and viewing the maintenance of the market as a defense of their Tunisian identity.

“If we want to remain Tunisian, without being associated with imported cultures, we need to stick to our roots and to our very rich and varied culture and to take part in such demonstrations (events that promote the Sefsari). This is a good idea to show people who didn’t experience the Sefsari era what our traditional and regional garments are and that we need to stick to. This is part of our heritage and identity that we need to defend with pride.” (Netnography, blogger, leaders.tn)

Unlike previous research that underlines efforts made by actors to establish a cultural innovative consumption practice in a market in order to counterbalance a situation of domination or stigmatization (Ghaffari, Jaffari, & Sandikci, 2019, Sandicki & Ger, 2002;
Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013), our respondents consider the maintenance and rehabilitation of the practice, while adopting the revisited version of the Sefsari, to be a way of preserving a threatened individual and collective identity.

Whereas in the emancipatory logic the Sefsari is considered as a threat to the achievement of women’s rights, here it becomes a tool to oppose and combat the Saudi Burqa and to rehabilitate Tunisian identity. In addition, by valorizing the Sefsari, consumers undertake institutional work to dissociate the Sefsari from patriarchal values, thus responding once again to the dominant logic guided by gender considerations. In this sense, the Sefsari is not opposed to contemporary emancipated Tunisian women.

“Our culture is our pride. We can't deny this. I think you're misunderstanding something when the Sefsari is seen as traditional clothing. It is a mistake to see the Sefsari as a way of hiding women. It belongs to our history. You can be angry about many things, but not the Sefsari.” (Netnography, Farouk, Tunisian Youth blog)

Like Farouk, many actors valorize the Sefsari as providing Sefsari consumers with a moral status in defense Tunisian culture. Similarly, Farah (designer) emphasizes a more emotional discourse based on nostalgia and family history as the expression of a collective identity:

“Those who criticize the Sefsari are also turning their back on Tunisia, on a part of us, on our mothers, our grandmothers”. In support of her belief, Farah also describes the Sefsari as related to powerful Tunisian women who fight for their rights. The submissive symbolism of the Sefsari as seen by the emancipatory logic, as well as its incongruence with “modern” Tunisian women’s lifestyles, is rejected within this valorizing institutional work. That is, the Sefsari becomes “a mixture of modernity and tradition” (Farah). Although the westernization of clothing is associated with women’s emancipation (Ghaffari, Jaffari, & Sandikci, 2019; Sandicki & Ger, 2002; Ustuner & Holt, 2010), the valorizing institutional work allows the
Sefsari to be an alternative, and the expression of a free choice, as illustrated by the following on-line dispute.

Neila: “It is specifically to counter the garbage bag [term used by this blogger to describe the Sefsari] that some women want to wear it. Otherwise, apart from these symbolic occasions, it is still a veil, yesterday, today and tomorrow. A woman is a human being who does not need to hide.

Donia (response): "If I can give my opinion, the Sefsari is in no way oppression. I am a free woman who dresses as I see fit.” (netnography, Facebook)

Our data are characterized by several disputes like this. They illustrate strong disagreement among individuals on how they conceive of their Tunisian identity and how they conceive of an emancipated Tunisian woman. These disputes illustrate the tense dialogical relationships between two irreconcilable logics. Wearing the Sefsari is perceived by some consumers to be a threat to the identity of contemporary emancipated Tunisian women. By others, it is perceived to be positive and valorizing, and therefore helps to shift discourses, stress free choice and represent faithfulness to Tunisian roots.

5.2.3 Embedding the celebration of the Sefsari

We identify several actors and groups of actors such as associations that are actively engaged in an embedding institutional work (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). Actors create celebrations of the Sefsari in ceremonies such as International Women’s Day on 8 March, the day of traditional dress on 16 March, and the celebration of the introduction of the Personal Status code on 13 August. For instance, the Tourathna association organizes events such as their annual march on Bourguiba Avenue in Tunis. Another consumer movement organized a large protest march through the souk. The event, called “Kharjet El Harayer Bel Sefsari” (the

“In our movement, we strive to revive and contribute to the come-back of the Sefsari as a part of our heritage, our identity. It’s our way to fight against the imported black Niqab. If they assist us (the government institutions), the Sefsari will be reborn. If, for example, we organize a huge event around fashion with models wearing the Sefsari, it will come back. The Sefsari is very beautiful and chic, made from white or ivory-colored silk. It stands for good taste. It’s our identity.” (Ethnographic interview with a member of Tourathna Association, during the Sefsari march day)

By embedding the Sefsari in celebrations, actors aim to maintain the market. Through their work, actors shift discourses, share photos and communicate on social networks to stress the socio-historical values associated with the Sefsari as well as its role in portraying family and national identity. The online connectedness of such actors, as previous research has demonstrated (Dolbec & Fischer, 2015; Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013) is a powerful way to disseminate legitimation discourses, and to gain and galvanize support. As consumer activists, Tunisian women engage in a large range of actions to assert their self-proclaimed role of “rescuers of the Sefsari and its heritage and resistant fighters against foreign habits” (informal discussion with an activist of the Tourathna movement). These actions aim to maintain the Sefsari market by instilling the cultural, social and normative foundations of the Sefsari into Tunisian celebrations (Suchman, 1995).

6. Discussion

This research explores market shaping as an outcome of actors’ dialogical legitimation/delegitimation institutional work. Our study has identified two institutional logics
that shape either the disruption or the maintaining of the market. We show that these opposing logics – emancipatory logic and traditionalist-hybrid logic –, nested at field and societal levels, are embedded in a combination of beliefs and contradictory culture-bound symbolisms pertaining to the wearing of the Sefsari that involves external institutional forces such as gender considerations, religion, and identity issues. The meaning of wearing the Sefsari differs as a result of personal factors, political dynamics and market forces. Within the emancipatory logic, actors perform disruptive institutional work to delegitimate the Sefsari, whereas in the traditionalist-hybrid logic they perform a set of maintaining institutional work to legitimate it. While capturing new forms of institutional work performed by actors engaged in uncompromising and opposing logics and its consequence on market shaping, this research makes several contributions.

First, early market shaping research mainly focused on the process of legitimation (Dolbec & Fischer, 2015; Humphreys, 2010) driving market formation. In contrast, our research advances this literature by highlighting the disruptive institutional work that shape the decline of a market. We show that the disruptive institutional work of actors aim to delegitimate the Sefsari and decrease its market. By performing such institutional work, actors aim to make the practice socially, culturally, and politically unacceptable, corresponding to an institutional process of delegitimation (Maguire & Hardy, 2009; Seo & Creed, 2002). In doing so, they shape the decline of the market. Contrary to Baker, Storbacka, & Brodie’s study (2019) on the decline of the circus market, the Sefsari market has not disappeared as a result of the institutional work of certain actors to maintain this niche market.

Second, prior research on market shaping explains the processes of market creation by focusing on the work of activists (Giesler, 2012), consumers (Martin & Schouten, 2014) and institutional entrepreneurs (Baker, Storbacka, & Brodie, 2019). We complement this research stream by highlighting the maintaining institutional work of actors that call for a revival of the
market. Through their efforts and despite the institutional work of state actors and experts, these actors have argued for the revival of the Sefsari. Furthermore, they have introduced innovative versions of the product to safeguard the market. Through their work, these actors have changed the symbols associated with the practice, as is evident in particular in our research, by maintaining it as a defense of their Tunisian identity and by associating this minority practice with luxury goods. Note that these actors have high cultural, economic and social capital, which has enabled them to oppose state actors without being subject to oppression.

Third, research on market shaping has demonstrated that actors search for compromises when faced with multiple (and at times conflicting) institutional logics (Ertimur & Coskuner-Balli, 2015; Ghaffari, Jaffari, & Sandikci, 2019). In contrast to this research, we show that, in the Sefsari market, institutional logics are irreconcilable and uncompromising, but actors have engaged in a dialogical relationship that engenders change and resistance within the market. That is, actors shape the market by performing maintaining institutional work in response to the institutional work disrupting the Sefsari market. We assume that changes in the market occur due to the confrontation, dialogue, and interactions between logics. Pro-Sefsari actors respond to their opponents, some of whom react in turn to the actions implemented by the opposing camp. The traditionalist-hybrid logic is nurtured by this relationship as actors offer solutions, gain consumer support and develop revival strategies to counteract disruptive institutional work. This confrontation shapes institutional change in the Sefsari market. The delegitimation of the Sefsari practice faces resistance through the emergence of collective, consumer-driven actions by which actors such as consumers, craftsmen, designers and consumer movements act creatively and innovate to (re)appropriate the Sefsari as a symbol of their threatened identity. Accordingly, they implement argumentation strategies (Bauman-Pauly et al., 2015; Suchman, 1995). In this way the coercive rules and enforcement imposed
by regulators to support the emancipatory logic of delegitimation modify legitimation efforts. Pro-Sefsari actors engage in a dialogue and respond to the actors of the dominant opposing logic: craftsmen respond to the state, consumers dispute on-line, designers respond to detractors, defenders demonstrate publicly under the eyes of detractors.

Fourth, we show that a market shaped by a dialogical relationship between two opposing institutional logics results in institutional complexity that conveys identity tensions. The coexistence of actors’ delegitimation and legitimation efforts illustrates the fact that the relationship between logics is also expressed through actors’ institutional work (Martin et al., 2017). This increases institutional complexity, a phenomenon that results from the presence of contradictory institutional prescriptions of the opposing logics (Friedland & Alford 1991; Greenwood et al., 2010; Thornton, 2004). Scholars have shown that institutional complexity raises questions about how a dominant logic emerges, how an actor achieves autonomy or what an appropriate use of institutional prescriptions may be (Martin et al., 2017). In the present research, we introduce identity tensions as a further consequence of institutional complexity. The logic of maintaining the Sefsari market may be viewed as a betrayal of social progress and of women’s emancipation and what constitutes a contemporary conception of current collective Tunisian identity. In contrast, the emancipatory logic of the Sefsari market is considered by some actors as a threat to collective Tunisian identity penetrated by foreign and global influences. Similarly, the different interpretations of Sefsari practice drive, in contradictory ways, the collective goal of women’s emancipation. These profound contradictions have led to the conflictual coexistence of opposing market logics. Actors, as cultural intermediaries between logics, disagree on what constitutes contemporary Tunisia identity, thus giving rise to identity tensions.

Our research makes managerial contributions by proposing two legitimation strategies – the *isomorphic legitimation strategy* and the *branding revival legitimation strategy* – aimed at
managers operating in a declining niche market led by plural conflicting logics and where a group of market actors is calling for its revival. More particularly our research addresses cultural practice associated with a traditional cultural product or a “dormant” heritage brand operating in niche markets.

*Isomorphic legitimation strategy.* The literature has studied how new markets form through the process of diffusion and legitimation of innovative products or practices (Bower & Christensen, 1995; Chaney, Ben Slimane, & Humphreys, 2016; Gielser, 2012; Kim & Mauborgne, 2005; Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013). In our research we show that, to maintain and shift a market, innovative actions can involve adapting the functionality of traditional products and inscribing their symbolism in a surrounding set of meanings and practices in order to make them again attractive and desirable. It may be advisable for managers to sustain legitimacy through this process of institutional isomorphism, as stated by Yang & Su (2014: 723): “While individual constituencies may want brands to attend to their needs and focus on their beliefs, brands may need to symbolize their commitment to the norms, values, and beliefs of multiple social systems”. Managers can connect to a community of individuals who perform this institutional isomorphic work, that involves reconciling, conciliating or bringing nearer a practice to the current dominant set of meanings and practices (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Holt, 2002; Yang & Su, 2014). We identify this institutional work as an effort to connect the past to the present, undertaken in our research by designers and craftsmen when they propose revisited versions of the Sefsari (see Pictures 5 and 6) and deploy their creative capacity to shift this isomorphism.

*Brand revival legitimation strategy.* The brand can be nurtured by the plurality of interests and logics, for managers seeking a consensus which contributes to market creation and expansion (Ertimur & Cokuner-Bali, 2015; Giesler, 2012; Humphreys, 2010). The question we are trying to answer in the present research is how to revive a brand that navigates
irreconcilable logics, is viewed as belonging to the past and suffers from delegitimation pressures (Maguire & Hardy, 2009; Seo & Creed, 2002). In order to a cultural practice associated with a traditional cultural product or a dormant heritage brand, managers need to undertake brand revival legitimation strategies while shifting brand meanings. In line with the cultural branding approach (Holt 2004; O'Reilly, 2005; Schroeder, 2009), a brand is seen as being co-created, and brand meaning is shaped by the dynamic process of consumer interpretations. Brand revival involves triggering consumer memories that variously yearn for community, communicate something enduring and embody contradictory aspects (Brown et al., 2013).

The literature on brand revival identifies this strategy as the revival of a “dormant brand”, defined by Dion & Mazzalovo (2016: 1) as a heritage brand that is “no longer active on the market but which retain[s] potential”. The traditional, popular and mythic Sefsari belongs to Tunisian historical heritage and by extension can be established as a traditional brand (Bouzaien, 2012). When legitimating its usage – we compare usage to the brand experience – institutional actors valorize “its temporality, its orientation towards the past and its heritage characteristic” (Dion & Mazzalovo, 2016: 7). Retrobranding and brand revitalization are two cultural processes that aim to revive a brand. Retrobranding reinforces the association with the past and consists in combining old-fashioned product forms with contemporary functions so as to update the product. Brown et al., (2003: 13) stress that a brand suitable for retrobranding “must have existed as an important icon during a specific developmental stage for a particular generation or cohort. It must be capable of evoking vivid yet relevant associations for particular consumers” (which applies to the Sefsari in our research, because it evokes a personal and shared collective memory). Revitalization consists in keeping the product in its old-fashioned form, while bringing it into the present (Brown, Kozinets, & Sherry, 2003; Dion & Mazzalovo, 2016). We found in this research that in the maintaining
institutional logic, retrobranding and revitalizing strategies cohabit. Some consumers use the Sefsari in its nostalgic traditional form but adapt its usage to present times (it was previously worn on a daily basis by most women and it is now worn by niche consumers for private occasions such as at the *hammam* or weddings). Other consumers choose the innovative and revisited version of the Sefsari (see Pictures 5 and 6). To adapt to this strategy, managers can seek support among actors in the maintaining logic who are engaged in institutional work to revive the brand, thus enabling “consumers to live or relive an idealized, yet updated past” (Dion & Mazzalovo, 2016: 2). A temporal revisited version of the Sefsari stimulates demand and seeks economic profitability. In our research, the new up-market positioning of the Sefsari as a luxury product illustrates a practice characterized by evolution and change over time. Up-market repositioning is an opportunity for managers to revive the brand.

Finally, our research provides insights for future research. Although the context of this study is unique, our contributions can be applied to other contexts undergoing change and in relation to declining niche markets where the meaning of products and practices evolves and changes in response to actions by institutional actors. Further research could be undertaken to study consumption practices embedded within larger societal, cultural and political structures. For instance, there could be research on traditional markets that are undergoing change in response to globalization pressures and are (re)acquiring interest among consumers (e.g. the Japanese kimono, the Moroccan jellaba, the Spanish Feria dress etc.). Further research could also examine “dormant” delegitimated brands that utilitarian and symbolic values disconnect from their social environment.

**References**


Bouhdiba, A. (1978). *Place et fonction de l'imaginaire dans la société*


Kozinets, R. V. (2002). The field behind the screen: Using netnography for marketing
research in online communities. *Journal of Marketing Research, 39*(1), 61-72.


Lawrence, T. B., Suddaby, R., & Lea, B. (2009). *Institutional work: Actors and agency in
institutional studies of organizations*. Cambridge University Press.

discourse and institutional entrepreneurship in emerging institutional

Hardy, C., Lawrence, T.B., & Nord W.R. (Eds.). *Handbook of Organization Studies*

transformation of interorganizational fields: An organizational history of the US radio

Maguire, S., & Hardy, C. (2009). Discourse and deinstitutionalization: The decline of
DDT. *Academy of management journal*, 52(1), 148-178.

and individual responses: delineating the boundaries of partial
autonomy. *Organization Studies, 38*(1), 103-127.


dependency and institutional perspective. Academy of Management journal, 45(1),
102-119.

identity?, Handbook of Islamic marketing, 97-113.


article. Comparative studies in society and history, 30(3), 534-549.

marketing insights from the texts of consumers’ consumption stories. Journal of
Marketing Research, 34(4), 438-455.

co-optation and the ideological recruitment of consumption communities. Journal of
Consumer Research, 34(2), 135-152.

hermeneutic approach to understanding the cultural viewpoints that underlie


Table 1: Institutional work framework (adapted from Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional change</th>
<th>Type of work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disruption</td>
<td>Disassociation: making the practice as inappropriate from a specific cultural context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining</td>
<td>Enabling work: creating rules and practices to sustain an institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Embedding and routinizing: creating routines into actors’ life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Data sources synthesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data sources</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In depth interviews with multiple market actors</td>
<td>25 in-depth interviews with multiple market actors. Duration: 45 mn to 2h. Audio full transcription. 4 craftsmen, 4 researchers (1 anthropologist with previous responsibilities in heritage preservation, 1 arts designer, 2 ethnographers in heritage studies), 2 designers and retailers, 10 consumers (aged between 21 and 44, all women, from different Tunisian cities), 4 representatives of National Artisanal Tunisian Office (ONAT, ministry of tourism and artisanal crafts).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused on the history, practices and meanings attached to the Sefsari and the evolution of the market.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Observation</td>
<td>Participation in the one-day annual walk organized by Tourahtna, &quot;Sefsari day&quot; - August 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival Data</td>
<td>(News websites - Touristic websites - Historic websites - Designers' websites - Archives) Archives of the National Artisanal Tunisian Office (ONAT), archives ORTF, youtube, webdo, baya, kapitalis, tunisie.co, femmesdetunisie, L'économiste mahrébin, Fashionnetwork, rpms-tunisie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netnography</td>
<td>Blogs, forums, comments and photos posted. Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Youtube, Tuniscope</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: In-depth individual interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Akram</td>
<td>Craftsman</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hichem</td>
<td>Craftsman</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aziz</td>
<td>Craftsman</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hassan</td>
<td>Craftsman</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hédi</td>
<td>Association leader</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahdi</td>
<td>Anthropologist</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youssef</td>
<td>Design artist</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alia</td>
<td>Ethnographer</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salia</td>
<td>Ethnographer</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farah</td>
<td>Designer and retailer</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Designer and retailer</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilel</td>
<td>Representative of the National Artisanal Office (Director)</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karim</td>
<td>Representative of the National Artisanal Office (Director of the development of competences)</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aya</td>
<td>Representative of the National Artisanal Office</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marouen</td>
<td>Representative of the National Artisanal Office</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrine</td>
<td>Consumer</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siham</td>
<td>Consumer</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malek</td>
<td>Consumer</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wafa</td>
<td>Consumer</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khaoula</td>
<td>Consumer</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khouldoud</td>
<td>Consumer</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haifa</td>
<td>Consumer</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nesrine</td>
<td>Consumer</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabeb</td>
<td>Consumer</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meriem</td>
<td>Consumer</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Some Blogs and magazine articles about Sefsari

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="https://www.baya.tn">https://www.baya.tn</a></td>
<td>January 2017</td>
<td>Artisan's secours, un atelier direct des métiers en voie de disparition à Djerba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July 2012</td>
<td>Le Sefsari, une tradition qui disparait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="https://www.femmesdetunisie.com">https://www.femmesdetunisie.com</a></td>
<td>April 2016</td>
<td>El Ghanja revisite le Sefsari tunisien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January 2016</td>
<td>Le Sefsari, symbole de pudeur et d’élégance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="https://www.hellotunisia.com">https://www.hellotunisia.com</a></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Hello Sefseri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="https://www.leconomistemaghrebin.com">https://www.leconomistemaghrebin.com</a></td>
<td>March 2016</td>
<td>Le tissage du Sefsari : un métier, une passion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="https://www.marhba.com/forums">https://www.marhba.com/forums</a></td>
<td>June 2017</td>
<td>Sefsari en voie de disparition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="https://www.nawaat.org/portail/">https://www.nawaat.org/portail/</a></td>
<td>February 2011</td>
<td>Ni libertine, ni voilée</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="https://tunisie.co">https://tunisie.co</a></td>
<td>May 2016</td>
<td>Le Sefsari tunisien, une tradition perdue remise au goût du jour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="https://kapitalis.com/societe">https://kapitalis.com/societe</a></td>
<td>September 2011</td>
<td>Les tunisiennes envoilées : liberté retrouvée ou nouvel asservissement ?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1: Sefsari market shaping logics

Emancipatory institutional logic

- **Values**
  - Social progress, women’s emancipation, economic efficiency
- **Key drivers**
  - Abandoning the Sefsari to embrace social progress and secular modernism
- **Practice symbolism**
  - Body confinement, religious practice, social regression
- **Emblematic figure**
  - Bourguiba
- **Identity provider**
  - An emancipated woman, Tunisian identity
- **Main actors**
  - State actors, experts, consumers, on-line activists

Traditionalist-hybrid institutional logic

- **Values**
  - Nostalgic (re)construction of the past, preservation of cultural heritage, adapted convenience
- **Key drivers**
  - Reappropriation of the Sefsari as the symbol of a threatened Tunisian identity
- **Practice symbolism**
  - Authenticity, positive tradition, taste distinction
- **Emblematic figure**
  - The Tunisian woman
- **Identity provider**
  - A free woman close to her roots, Tunisian identity
- **Main actors**
  - Consumers, on-line activists, consumers associations, fashion designers, retailers, suppliers

Disruptive institutional work

- **Delegitimation efforts**
  - Dissociating the Sefsari from contemporary Tunisian culture
  - Disconnecting economic support for the Sefsari market

Market Shaping Outcomes

- **Market disruption**
  - Lower demand
  - Lower attractiveness
  - Call for a disrupted market

Maintaining institutional work

- **Legitimation efforts**
  - Enabling the new Sefsari to emerge
  - Valorizing the Sefsari
  - Embedding celebration of the Sefsari

Market Shaping Outcomes

- **Maintaining market**
  - Innovation
  - Stimulated demand
  - Greater product desirability
  - Upscale repositioning
  - Call for a maintained/revived market

Picture 1: The ancestral Sefsari – (source: Hello Tunisia)
Pictures 2-3-4: Participant observation – The Tourathna march – August 2018

Picture 5: Sefsari revisited by designer
(source:https://tunisie.co/article/7376/shopping/artisanat/sefsari-tunisien-314414)

Picture 6: the original version (source: the Tourathna walk - August 2018) and the revisited version of Sefsari (source: El Ghanja designer) http://backup.femmesdetunisie.com/ar/el-ghanja-revisite-le-sefsari-tunisien)