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Marketer Acculturation to Diversity Needs:

The Case of Modest Fashion Across Two Multicultural Contexts

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Abstract

Intersecting neo-institutional and acculturation theory, this paper investigates how national acculturation ideologies inform attitudes towards modest fashion, comparing the United Kingdom and French contexts. Modest fashion, an emerging market phenomenon with roots in the conservative notion of 'modesty', has been a controversial cultural flashpoint.

We analyze public discourse towards modest fashion using UK and French press media articles through content analysis. The UK press shows institutional work towards the legitimization of a modest fashion subfield, integrated within the global fashion field. The French press shows institutional work involving heterogenous actors, where modest fashion is framed as destabilizing the Western fashion field, and stigmatized. Theoretical and managerial implications are considered.

Our work contributes to acculturation and multicultural marketplaces literature by showing how, in contexts that are similarly multicultural, large-scale institutions can structure markets in

widely different ways, and shape the realm of opportunities for marketers to cater to minority needs.

Keywords*: Neo-institutional theory; Acculturation theory; Multicultural marketplaces; Modest fashion; Context; Institutional work*

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1. Introduction

This manuscript explores how national acculturation ideologies (the ideals and doctrines that societies draw from to organize the 'living together' arrangements between mainstream and other groups: Bourhis et al., 1997) shape the opportunities for marketers to serve minority groups in multicultural contexts. It does so, using the case of modest fashion in the United Kingdom (UK) and France. Modest fashion is a recent trend that integrates the attributes of modesty within mainstream Western styles. It is also commonly referred to as 'Muslim fashion' in view of Islam's reference to modesty in life and dress, although modesty is deemed desirable by various consumers and by the followers of several religions besides Islam. Recent media coverage presents modest fashion as a rapidly growing element of fashion markets in many countries (Thomson Reuters, 2016). Yet, the industry's recent attempt to introduce it into mainstream segments has prompted highly contrasted reactions across national contexts. In particular, in the UK, it was primarily seen as a marketplace phenomenon and was integrated within mainstream fashion; in France, it was construed as a broader, societal phenomenon that prompted strong, polarized reactions from a broad range of actors in various spheres (e.g., business, political, legal, socio-cultural) and was not integrated within the mainstream marketplace. These developments raise the question of how marketers can acculturate to growing minority needs in various culturally diverse contexts.

A number of acculturation studies consider how national context shapes mutual acculturation between groups (e.g., Luedicke, 2015; Veresiu and Giesler, 2018; Bourhis et al., 1997; Kipnis et al., 2013). In particular, recent marketing literature (Luedicke, 2015; Veresiu and Giesler, 2018; Johnson et al., 2017) highlights the importance of national acculturation ideology; however, it has not yet examined how variation in national acculturation ideologies impacts the manner mainstream actors can meet minority needs. Our research addresses this gap by comparing two similarly multicultural contexts (UK and France) to understand how the same fashion trend can yield very different responses. The UK and France have similar levels of cultural diversity but subscribe to different national acculturation ideologies. The

UK subscribes to a civil ideology where various culturally bounded values are assumed to exist within the private sphere and to be represented in consumption. France subscribes to an assimilation ideology, where culturally bounded values are expected to be dropped for the values of 'the nation', deemed to be universal (Bourhis et al., 1997).

We use neo-institutional theory (NIT – e.g., DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Jepperson, 2002; Scott, 1995) as a theoretical lens. We conceptualize national acculturation ideologies as large-scale institutions (Hampel et al., 2017) that culturally justify, normalize and regulate the cultural expression and interactions of minority and majority groups within a national context. The NIT lens enables us to show how national acculturation ideologies inform the action repertoires of multiple actors (marketers, consumers, activists, media, political, cultural) and therefore frame the patterns of marketer acculturation to needs among minority groups. We analyze 126 press articles dealing with two sets of modest fashion-related events in the UK and France. This enables us to compare how needs in a minority group are framed and addressed, and to capture the coalitions of actors that shape the field of fashion and the emergent subfield of modest fashion in each context.

The work is relevant given the calls for more research on 'context' (Askegaard and Linnet, 2011; Demangeot et al., 2015; Karababa and Ger, 2011; Veresiu and Giesler, 2018) as a means of understanding consumers in multicultural settings. We are thus able to better grasp how specific national acculturation ideologies influence acculturation between mainstream and minority groups (Veresiu and Giesler, 2018). In this respect, the 'Muslim market' has been identified as a major emerging, transnational segment presenting specific opportunities and challenges for marketers in Europe in several sectors, including banking, food and fashion (Adomaitis and Razvadauskas, 2017). While distinctive needs among a sizeable, growing consumer segment are identified, it remains unclear how effectively they are being, or can be, addressed.

The question of mainstream markets' ability to accommodate minority needs and trends is important from two perspectives. First, it is essential for realizing economic growth opportunities through initiatives that spark innovation. Second, it is fundamental to the successful integration of minorities and the overall well-being of culturally diverse societies,

given the many innovative benefits that occur when minority and mainstream groups come together through consumption (Demangeot et al., 2019; McCraw, 2012).

By intersecting neo-institutional theory (NIT) and acculturation theory, the study contributes to marketer acculturation literature (e.g., Cleveland and Xu, 2019; Kipnis et al., 2014; Kipnis et al., 2019; Luedicke, 2015; Peñaloza, 1994; Peñaloza and Gilly, 1999). It unravels the broader belief systems that influence the actions of different actors in legitimizing or stigmatizing mainstream marketers' efforts to meet culturally- or religiously-inspired needs in a minority.

The work also contributes to literature on multicultural marketplaces (e.g., Cross and Gilly, 2017; Demangeot et al., 2015; Demangeot et al., 2019; Kipnis et al., 2013). It shows how national acculturation ideologies can explain divergent dynamics across contexts. Thus, it sheds light on why we do not observe greater degrees of convergence across markets that are similarly multicultural. The instance of minority consumers' needs being addressed by mainstream marketers is a case of reciprocal acculturation between mainstream and minority groups. In line with Luedicke (2015), Veresiu and Giesler (2018), and Johnson et al. (2017), the study demonstrates that marketing and consumption are essential public stages where this complex and stressful phenomenon of reciprocal acculturation between mainstream and minority groups plays out.

2. Theoretical Background

Within the fashion sector, cultural context is important because it determines the acceptability (or not) of clothing products for consumers in any given market, especially in multicultural contexts. For some groups in the Middle East, for example, traditional clothing, typified by modesty and loose fitting, is based on the norms and beliefs of Muslim faith (Moors and Tarlo, 2013). This upholds, informs and legitimizes certain consumption practices around dress within Muslim communities (Lewis, 2015). In multicultural societies, however, the dominant need of the mainstream group may lead to non-adoption of these garments for cultural reasons. This has consequences for marketers in sectors such as fashion because in culturally diverse societies, the interaction of fashion with culture has implications for social inclusion or marginalization (Lewis, 2015).

2.1 The Social Inclusion or Marginalization of Minority Groups in the Marketplace: NIT and Acculturation Theories' Contributions

Literature has drawn from both NIT and acculturation theory to consider how minority groups can see their needs addressed (or not) and become included (or not) within the mainstream marketplace.

Institutional theory perspectives in the marketing field (e.g., Scaraboto and Fischer, 2013; Sandikci and Ger, 2010; Kates, 2004) consider how and in what circumstances minority or marginalized consumers can gain agency and legitimacy to create choice and inclusion in mainstream marketing. Sandikci and Ger (2010) study the emergence of the 'tesettür' (a form of dress covering the hair, neck and body) as a new form of fashion in Turkey driven by new marketplace power dynamics. They show how consumers can overcome stigma by exercising both collective agency to rebalance power and personal agency by engaging with the marketplace's diversified offerings. Modern urban women interact with multiple actors to instigate market change, 'reinventing' and normalizing the tesettür through "parallel taste structures" (p. 29) and removing its stigmatizing association with rural and 'backward' identities. Scaraboto and Fischer's (2013) work on the 'frustrated fashionistas' explores how consumer mobilization can drive market dynamics and overcome the marginalization of plus-size consumer needs. The authors identify three mobilization triggers for increasing choice available to marginalized groups in mainstream markets. They develop a typology of the institutional dynamics likely to occur, depending on the relative legitimacy of minority consumers and how they want to see the market evolve. Kates (2004) takes the perspective of how marginalized consumers relate to mainstream brands. He draws on data collected from gay consumers to explore the way 'cultural fit' within stigmatized communities informs brand legitimization processes and consumption outcomes. If the abovementioned studies show how marginalized consumer groups can gain legitimacy and agency within a marketplace, they do not explain why, in multicultural societies such as the UK and France, sizeable cultural minority needs may remain under-served. Nor are they sufficient to explain why minority group needs are not always perceived as mainstream marketing choices and why not all

segments of the market are served equally to reduce the risk of marginalizing groups. To further consider these questions, we turn to acculturation theory.

Acculturation theory (e.g., Berry, 2008; Luedicke, 2015; Peñaloza, 1994; Bourhis et al., 1997) deals with the manner individuals, groups or societies handle the beliefs or stances of different cultures. It establishes that different strategies exist in dealing with several cultures co-existing in the same context. Recent works widen the focus of acculturation studies beyond one consumer group to consider the broader dynamics that lead to marginalization or inclusion in the marketplace. Relational acculturation literature (e.g., Kipnis et al., 2014; Luedicke, 2015; Veresiu, 2018; Veresiu and Giesler, 2018) considers how particular mainstream or minority groups adapt to one another and studies the process of consumer engagement/disengagement. Luedicke (2015) studies the evolution of inter-group marketplace behaviors and relations in a rural Austrian town. He shows that acculturation processes between minority and mainstream consumer groups are both relational and interactive: minority and mainstream groups develop adaptive behaviors. Luedicke (2015) shows that, over time, marketers develop various offers for minority groups. However, his study focuses on the relational configurations between mainstream and minority consumer groups. It does not consider how actions by other actors may also influence the dynamics.

The main emphasis in marketing and consumer research literature has been on how members of minority groups acculturate to mainstream markets (e.g., Askegaard et al., 2005; Oswald, 1999; Peñaloza, 1994). Studies on how mainstream marketers and consumers acculturate to minorities are far fewer (Grier et al., 2006; Peñaloza and Gilly, 1999; Veresiu and Giesler, 2018). Grier et al. (2006) and Peñaloza and Gilly (1999) focus on the marketer/consumer dyad, and do not consider the large-scale institutions upon which marketer acculturation may be contingent. Yet, although many contemporary marketplaces are similarly composed of different cultural groups living side-by-side, the manner in which groups deal with one another's values, needs, goods or services differ between contexts. Recent studies have shown how the institutional arrangements of particular contexts lead to different acculturation outcomes. Veresiu's (2018) work uses the case of the Roma minority in Italy to explore how a European national acculturation ideology can influence

acculturation. Veresiu and Giesler (2018) explore how institutional market actors shape ethnic consumer behavior in a multicultural marketplace, using Canada as an example. This important work provides a holistic understanding of the different levels (macro, meso, micro) at which actors' institutional work contributes to the legitimization of differentiated behaviors towards immigrant and indigenous consumers. However, the question remains as to how different acculturation ideologies might influence institutional dynamics in similarly multicultural contexts.

Bourhis et al. (1997) and Berry (2008) suggest that, depending on a country's national acculturation ideology (i.e., the ideals and doctrines that societies draw from, to organize how mainstream and minority groups are to live together: Bourhis et al, 1997), intergroup relations may be more convivial or more conflictual. In their review of the institutional work literature, Hampel et al. (2017) point out that "large-scale institutions" and their "institutionalized practice across fields" (p. 37) have received scant attention. In particular, they indicate that such central notions in people's lives as race and gender have largely been neglected in institutional work scholarship. Similarly, we contend that national acculturation ideology is a key, yet little-researched, large-scale institution that may influence the realm of possibility for marketers to serve minority groups. It informs the norms observed within groups and the legitimization or stigmatization of practices within and across groups. Thus, it can explain the distinct dynamics we observe across similarly multicultural contexts. It has a major impact on individuals, communities and societies. It is enduring and is fundamental to understanding processes of legitimization and marginalization (Hampel et al. 2017).

Building on the works of Bourhis et al. (1997), Johnson et al. (2017), Veresiu (2018), Veresiu and Giesler (2018) and Scaraboto and Fischer (2013), we explore how different acculturation ideologies may explain how actors shape the field differently. We unravel how this leads to different ways of addressing minority needs across contexts. To do so, we draw from the conceptual apparatus of neo-institutional theory, as outlined next.

2.2. Intersecting Neo-institutional Theory with Acculturation Theory as a Framework for Unravelling Mainstream vs. Minority Legitimization Outcomes

Institutions are the elements of social life that guide individual and collective actors' beliefs and behaviors through templates for action, cognition, or emotion (Lawrence, Suddaby, & Leca, 2011). They shape and determine the rules under which societies operate and evolve and the practices that are legitimized within and across social domains (Scott, 1995; Suchman, 1995). Legitimacy is achieved when there is "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions" (Suchman, 1995, p. 574). NIT views legitimacy as essential to survival. It informs how other actors will engage with an entity, a group or a practice, making access to markets and resources easier or more difficult (Chaney and Ben Slimane, 2014; Hampel et al., 2017). Legitimacy is acquired through three 'pillars', when a practice is understood and accepted in regulatory, normative and cultural-cognitive terms (Scott, 1995; Suchman, 1995). NIT has proved powerful in exploring how different actors form coalitions within a field in their search for legitimacy at individual, organizational, community, and national levels (e.g., Hampel et al., 2017; Lawrence and Dover, 2015; Suddaby and Viale, 2011; Tracey et al., 2011). Consequently, the manner in which actor dynamics holistically shape the institutional landscape has significant implications for whether an emerging field or subfield becomes legitimized or stigmatized.

NIT posits that the process of legitimization is brought about by social interaction and negotiation between actors engaged in institutional work (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006; Scott, 1995; Weber, 1922, 1968). Institutional work is "the purposive action of individuals and organizations aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions" (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006, p. 215). Institutional work scholarship (DiMaggio, 1988; Hampel et al., 2017; Lawrence et al., 2013) addresses what actors try to influence, who they engage with, how they inform institutional practice, and how this can lead to legitimization or stigmatization (Hampel et al., 2017).

Importantly, an institutional lens and the notion of institutional work enable consideration of a broader range of actors and institutions in order to study how markets are shaped and evolve. Following Humphreys' (2010) seminal work on the legitimization of casino gambling and acknowledging the under-use of NIT in marketing, Chaney and Ben

Slimane (2014) spur further theoretical development by applying the three-pillar (regulatory, normative and cultural-cognitive) approach proposed by Scott (1995) to marketing. Through a review of institutional studies, the authors show how different forms of legitimization take place in three distinct situations: the construction of an emerging field, the maintenance of a mature field, and the destabilization of a mature field. They highlight how institutional work enables marketers or consumers to achieve legitimacy for practices, products or product categories, via positioning strategies and processes structured around the regulatory, normative and cultural-cognitive pillars. In a later article, Chaney et al. (2016) show the value of NIT in broadening the range of possible actions that marketers can take to gain legitimacy for consumption and marketing practices. However, both studies focus on marketers' institutional work rather than considering the various coalitions of actors whose work may affect the evolution of a field.

Recent marketing literature is starting to address this line of enquiry, considering the role of various actors (e.g., the media, consumers, culturally diverse families, marketers, political actors) in shaping markets. Humphreys and Latour (2013) consider the role of media frames in legitimating/delegitimizing online gambling practices. Yngfalk and Yngfalk (2019) study how not-for-profit organizations legitimize their institutional work by developing hybrid practices around not-for-profit activities versus commercial ambition. Using the case of the 2015 refugee crisis in Europe, Gollnhofer and Kuruoglu (2018) examine the collective actions of diverse actors that unfold in response to the institutional failings of state and welfare actors to show how institutional activity can facilitate the emergence of temporary markets.

Two studies (Johnson et al., 2017; Cross and Gilly, 2017) consider how the cultural diversification of societies challenges institutions and actor dynamics. Cross and Gilly (2017) study the longevity of the US institution of Thanksgiving by considering how cultural diversity within families affects the institution. They find that the institution endures because a shared understanding of Thanksgiving meals is maintained while change and innovation brought about by non-US family members enable the institution to evolve, thus ensuring its continued legitimacy and its longevity. The interplay between tradition and opportunities for

change is also facilitated, outside the family, by the media and market actors. Johnson et al. (2017) study how a marketer's decision (to offer halal meat exclusively in some outlets) is seen as a strategy destabilizing the large-scale institution of secularism and activates much institutional work to normalize and defend mainstream power and privilege. The authors show the importance of the social, political, and historical dimensions of a marketplace in shaping public discourse that can focus on practices at different levels: the micro level of consumption practices, the meso level of marketer practices and the macro level of societal practices.

Building on the works of Chaney and colleagues (2014; 2016), Johnson et al. (2017), and Cross and Gilly (2017), and intersecting NIT with acculturation theory (Bourhis et al. 1997; Berry 2008), we consider the broad coalitions of actors involved in institutional work regarding the legitimization/stigmatization of modest fashion. We aim to understand how and why these processes play out differently in the UK and France.

According to Bourhis et al.'s (1997) interactive acculturation model and Berry's (2008) model of societal acculturation strategies, contexts adopting a pluralist, or multicultural, ideology expect minority groups to mingle with the mainstream group. It enables them to adapt to the context's prevalent culture while retaining their own and encourages more consensual relations. Contexts adopting an assimilation ('melting pot') ideology expect minority groups to adopt the values and behaviors prevalent in that context and drop those of their culture of origin. Inter-group relations may then be problematic because of the high demands placed on minority groups to change (Bourhis et al., 1997; Guimond et al., 2013).

Bourhis et al. (1997) further suggest that the national acculturation ideology for the UK is characterized by what they describe as a 'civic ideology' where state policy is guided around "nonintervention in the private values of specific groups of individuals including those of immigrant and ethnocultural minorities" (Bourhis et al., 1997, p. 373). In such a context, acculturation orientations are likely to lead to consensual relational outcomes. In France, the Republican ideology, a variant of the assimilation ideology, "invokes the notion of the equality of 'universal man' as a legitimizing tool for the suppression of ethnocultural differences" (Bourhis et al., 1997, p. 374). In this situation, mainstream/minority acculturation

orientations are likely to lead to conflictual relational outcomes (Bourhis et al., 1997). Figure 1 uses Bourhis et al.'s (1997) framework to show how national acculturation ideologies between the UK and France differ and how this is likely to inform relational outcomes.

INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE

3. Method

Using the case of modest fashion in the UK and France, the study explores how national acculturation ideologies shape mainstream marketers' ability to acculturate to diversity by serving minority groups' needs. To do so, we analyze public discourse as presented by print media articles. The media play a key role in framing issues for the public and hosting competing institutional discourses (Gurevitch and Levy, 1985; Humphreys, 2010; Johnson et al., 2017), enabling the study of how the institutional work of different actors shapes a field through different legitimacy claims. Media content analysis (Macnamara, 2005) was deemed the most suitable methodological approach, given that interpretive content analysis enables researchers to code, trace, map and interpret the evolution of multiple discourses and arguments (Ginger, 2006).

3.1 Research Setting: The Emergence of Modest Fashion in European Markets

Modest fashion is one of many new forms of fashion that keep arising in the global apparel market. It is also one of the fastest growing fashion trends, with Muslim women leading global demand for modest fashion ranges (Thomson Reuters, 2016). It has penetrated every level of the fashion industry, from luxury (e.g., Dolce & Gabbana), to mainstream (e.g., Marks and Spencer) and fast fashion (e.g., Uniqlo) brands, which recently launched modest fashion ranges, or the inclusion of forms of modest fashion in brands' representations (e.g., H&M). It emerges from the rise in economic power and visibility of the 'Muslim segment' in Turkey or the Gulf countries for example, and in Europe (Adomaitis and Razvadauskas, 2017). It also enjoys wider accessibility via the internet and online shopping and wider exposure through the emergence of fashion influencers via social media (Pemberton and Takhar, 2021). Modesty is a quality of appearance variously encouraged by Islam, Judaism and Christianity; it is pursued to various degrees by members of these religions (Blackwell, 2016). Modest fashion is also viewed as a welcome alternative to the 'hypersexualization of

women' seen in other global fashion trends (Islamic Fashion and Design Council, 2016). Yet, it has had mixed reception in the marketplace (Palmer, 2018).

From an NIT perspective, modest fashion is an interesting subject for study, since it represents a strengthening collective identity (Pemberton and Takhar, 2021). Due to their rising size and economic power, Muslim consumers are an important minority group in western countries. Mainstream/minority group research is also interesting from the perspective of acculturation theory (Berry, 2008; Bourhis et al., 1997), since different national acculturation ideologies may lead to divergent social structures and relations between groups. Hence, dynamics within the institutional field of fashion may unfold differently across national acculturation contexts.

3.2 Research Contexts: UK and France

In the planning phase of the project, an important consideration is the selection of appropriate contexts. The UK and France, two markets of interest for global fashion brands that need to consider whether similar strategies can be applied to them, are pertinent contexts for several reasons. First, they are characterized by different national acculturation ideologies. As discussed, the UK follows a civil ideology and France follows an assimilation ideology (Bourhis et al., 1997). Second, they have similar population sizes with similar degrees of cultural diversity and sizeable Muslim minorities. The UK's Office for National Statistics records non-whites as constituting 13.8% of the total population in 2014 (Institute of Race Relations, 2020). In the absence of ethnicity statistics in France (collecting data about individual's ethnicity is illegal due to France's 'universalist' principles), estimates vary between 11 and 20% of the total population (Motet, 2017). Pew Research (2012) estimates the Muslim population in 2010 to be 4.4% of the UK's and 7.5% of France's total population. Third, these contexts are relatively close geographically and economically, with strong trade partnerships. In 2016 (the year of the phenomena under investigation), the UK was France's fifth trade partner (World's Top Exports, 2017), and France was the UK's third trade partner (World's Top Exports, 2017).

3.3 Study Design

To study the institutional dynamics surrounding the emergence of modest fashion across the two contexts, we focus on two 'catalyst' events, one in each context, which generated much debate. The first event consists of a series of modest fashion initiatives in the UK by leading brands in March 2016. The initiatives include the launch of a 14-item 'abaya' (a light coat covering women from shoulders to ankles) collection by Dolce and Gabbana, the appearance of a covered model among other culturally diverse models in an H&M advertisement, the launch of a 'modest wear' collection by Uniqlo in partnership with a modest fashion activist blogger, and the offer of a range of burkinis (three-piece swimming suits) in some Marks & Spencer stores. The second event is the attempt, by a number of French coastal town mayors, to legally ban the wearing of modest wear on their towns' beaches in August 2016. The selection of two events, one in each country, within the same year, enables a cross-country analysis of the dynamics shaping the field in reaction to the same events.

Our data consist of articles from the UK and French print media published within a two-month period following the initial sets of events. Given our focus on the institutional work of a broad range of market and societal actors competing for legitimization, print media articles constitute a most appropriate datum for several reasons. First, media can be considered as shapers (Tuchman, 1978) or gatekeepers (McCracken, 1986) of meaning-making: journalists influence the legitimization of market practice through selection, evaluation, and realization (Humphreys, 2010). The actors they choose to cite or mention (through selection), the topics they choose to cover (through realization) and the manner they choose to interpret different trends (through evaluation) participate in the legitimization or stigmatization of particular viewpoints, relegating others in the background.

Second, although online and social media are emerging as highly influential sources of alternative discourse (Johnson et al., 2017; Pemberton and Takhar, 2021), our dataset is restricted to print media because they are accessible to a broad general population (Tuchman, 1978), they remain more trusted (Kiousis, 2001) and are more memorable (DeFleur et al., 1992). They are also perceived as more authoritative and therefore act as a more pervasive legitimizing force (Humphreys, 2010). Although print media reflect a certain viewpoint (typically the educated fraction of a country's dominant group), they are also expected to

provide a broad account of news phenomena (McCracken, 1986) and cover a broad range of actors through their investigative practices. Third, print media constitute archival data and provide a more reliable picture of various actors' institutional work and legitimacy claims than other forms of data, such as interviews, which rely on memory (Johnson et al., 2017).

3.4 Data Collection Method and Analysis Strategy

Our data collection protocol entails several steps. A first step consists of identifying the relevant news articles in news.google.co.uk (for articles published in the UK press) and news.google.fr (for articles published in the French press) through keyword searches by the authors in skype contact throughout a set day in November 2016. Keywords consist of the terms variously used to describe the two events, such as 'modest fashion', 'muslim fashion', 'pudic fashion', 'burkini ban', and their French equivalents. This step led to the selection and download of articles published in March and April 2016 (for the modest fashion launches in the UK) and August and September 2016 (for the attempted modest wear bans on some beaches in France). The two-month period is both necessary and sufficient to capture the full series of articles related to the events; as verified, the publication of articles related to these events had ceased in the third month. Further screening of the dataset ensures the removal of several articles from media other than print media (e.g., blogs, online only media, newsletters). Table 1 provides an overview of the study's dataset, which consists of 126 press articles published in print media, with a total of approximately 85,000 words. We note that the French media published nearly three times as many articles as the UK media. As discussed later, we attribute this large difference to the fact that the emerging phenomenon is primarily framed in the UK as a market event, whereas it is framed in France as a societal one, prompting more debate and coverage. The articles originate from nine different UK media titles covering a broad spectrum (e.g., *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Guardian*, *New Statesman*, *Metro*) and 22 different French media titles in France, also covering a broad spectrum (e.g., *Le Figaro, Liberation, Le Journal du Dimanche, La Croix, 20 Minutes*).

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Interpretive content analysis is applied to the print media articles. Our analysis focuses on actors' endeavors to legitimize or stigmatize practices related to modest fashion. Since the

analysis deals with relatively complex arguments, some of which involve culturally laden meanings, manual, interpretive analysis is preferable to automated text analysis, as recommended by Humphreys and Wang (2018). The main objects of the analysis involve actors and their claims; verbatim quotes of press articles serve to illustrate the findings.

The coding of each article enables the identification of the legitimization/stigmatization claims reported, the actors cited or mentioned in these claims in order to derive the forms of institutional work at play. Seminal qualitative analysis guidance (e.g., Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Miles and Huberman, 1994) informs our analysis strategy as follows. First, the different practices concerned by actors' discourses are identified. Second, Lawrence and Suddaby's (2006) and Chaney and Ben Slimane's (2014) repertoires of institutional work serve to analyze the forms of institutional work carried out, in order to understand how the field is being shaped in each context. Third, the institutional dynamics around the acculturation to minority needs are compared across contexts to characterize their differences.

4. Findings

We present the findings in three stages, reflecting the analysis strategy just described.

4.1 Three Practices and Levels of Acculturation

The analysis reveals the existence of three distinct practices around which the contestation over the legitimization/stigmatization of modest fashion occurs. These three practices (consumption, marketer and societal) can be associated with three levels of analysis: the micro level of consumption, the meso level of the fashion industry, and the macro level of a society's ideological tenets. Due to space constraints, each practice is presented and illustrated through selected claims, in one or the other of the contexts.

The micro-level *consumption practice of dressing both modestly and fashionably* garners various legitimization/stigmatization claims. An example of how modest fashion is being contested as a consumption practice is in this UK article citing a British fashion blogger, Hana Tajima, who explains the reasons behind her collaboration with Uniqlo to create a modest fashion range: " 'I think especially at a time when Muslim women are the focus of sort of more negative press, it's important to have something that tells you about another side of being a Muslim woman'" (Brennan, 2016). Legitimization claims include, in

the UK, presenting modest fashion as the mere expression of an emerging need in multicultural societies, shared by some followers of several religions. Stigmatization claims include, in France, the argument that the concept of modest fashion would suggest that the women who do not dress modestly are 'immodest'.

Separate claims are made around the meso level *marketer practice of addressing modesty needs in fashion lines or marketing communication* and its meaning, as in the following French press quotation: "After Dolce and Gabbana and its abayas, the Japanese brand Uniqlo has decided to adapt to Muslim traditions" (Meunier, 2016). Among the claims legitimizing the marketer practice of launching modest fashion lines is the idea that it is a logical response to the rising profitability of the 'Muslim segment'. Among stigmatization claims is the argument that it represents corporate complicity towards those who promote the idea that women should hide their body from men's sight.

The macro level *societal practice of incorporating religious guidance on modesty in fashion* and its meaning for society as a whole is legitimized by some as facilitating inclusion and integration by bringing religiously inspired attire into the fashion sphere. It is stigmatized by others as threatening the universalism and secularism tenets of French society. An example of how the societal practice is contested appears in a UK press article that cites a modest fashion consumer as follows: "We live in a materialistic society where people are very shallow and conscious about their appearance. I choose to dress this way because it gives me freedom." (Fishwick and Guardian readers, 2016).

While the three practices are distinct and garner different claims, there are connections between them and some actors attempt to move the discourse from one practice to another. For instance, a political actor – then French Prime Minister Manuel Valls – is cited in several French press articles as stating: "The burkini is not a new range of swimming suit, a fashion. It is the translation of a political project that rests in particular on the enslavement of women" (Boutlelis, 2016). Here, he attempts to move the discourse from the micro level of the consumption practice to the macro level of the societal practice, where different types of legitimization/stigmatization claims can be made and different actors mobilized.

4.2 Comparing the Institutional Work Shaping of the Field Across Contexts

Analysis of the data permits a characterization of the field dynamics taking place in each context, by examining the prevailing forms of institutional work as they emerge from the data. In this section, taking each context in succession, we present the results of this analysis in terms of how different forms of institutional work shape the field differently in each context and provide examples of illustrative claims. The reader can refer to Table 2 for an overview of the field dynamics in the two contexts emanating from the use of different forms of institutional work carried out via a variety of claims made by different actors.

4.2.1 Institutional work in the UK context

Bourhis et al. (1997) suggest the national acculturation ideology in the UK resembles a 'civil ideology', whereby there is no intervention in the private values held by the individuals of different groups. It therefore provides scope for fashion consumptionscapes to reflect the needs and preferences of a broader range of cultures. As Table 2 evidences, our analysis reveals that in the UK context, most of the institutional work contributes to the legitimization of modest fashion as an emerging subfield of the overall global fashion field. It is framed as aligning with UK society, prompting the legitimate need for Western designers and marketers to engage in it to remain competitive. The UK press mobilizes global actors such as market research firms, designers, brands, and Muslim consumers and activists. It presents the consumers of modest fashion as the drivers of the emerging subfield, who are gaining agency and power in the process. In reporting attempts to ban modest wear from French beaches, the UK press 'isolates' the discourse in France by referring to the peculiarities of French society.

Actors employ various forms of institutional work to enhance modest fashion's legitimacy. Several groups of actors use *mimicry* (Dolbec and Fischer, 2015), associating the practices of an emerging field with existing practices to ease its adoption. For example, designers associate the desire to dress modestly with a search for comfort; UK media report the descriptions of a garment as follows: "It's lightweight so you can swim in comfort." (Beckford and Figueiredo, 2016). Such claims attenuate gaps between the emerging practice and existing ones (Hargadon and Douglas, 2001). Various actors also employ *theorizing* (Kitchener, 2002), providing new terminology to refer to concepts and practices and help establish them within the field. Consultancies, media and designers conceptualize modest

fashion as the market response to a ‘bottom-up’ social phenomenon. This phenomenon involves bloggers, social media users, activists, and reflects the changed power and presentation of Muslim women, hence normalizing its emergence. Some UK media frame modest fashion as a reflection of the multicultural character of the UK, as in the following headline: “Not just any burkini, it’s an M&S burkini: The ultimate proof Britain is truly multicultural as Marks splashes out on a Muslim swimwear range” (Beckford and Figueiredo, 2016).

UK media actors also contribute to the *construction of identities* (the definition of relationships between particular actors and the field in which the actors operate: Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006; Lounsbury, 2001). For instance, designers are framed as providing an innovative form of fashion within a global field, rather than limiting the field to minority needs. The designer associated with the launch of a modest fashion range at Uniqlo is quoted as saying: “ ‘For me, personally, I like this idea that someone from a completely different background or a completely different style could see a piece in the collection and think, ‘I could really work that into what I want to wear’ ” (Brennan, 2016). The designer, here, is suggesting that the modest fashion range can facilitate mainstream consumers’ acculturation by integrating elements of the modest fashion range into their dress. The UK press also reports institutional work in the form of *changing normative associations* (the re-making of connections between sets of practices and their moral and cultural foundations: Lawrence and Suddaby 2006; Townley, 1997). Media, designers and global consultancies evidence the increasing agency, role and buying power of Muslim women. They legitimize modest fashion as a mainstream form of fashion that provides this group with the means, like any other minority, of being included, visible and represented within the global fashion field. For instance, a UK press article associates Muslim consumers’ assertive actions with those of other, non-religion based, minorities, as follows: “Like plus-size and transgender bloggers and vloggers, Muslim influencers are also diversifying the fashion field. Many with fashion degrees and experience, have taken their approach to their websites.” (Sharkey, 2016). Media actors later reassert the normative associations of modest fashion prevalent in the UK by distancing them from those being developed in France. For instance, an article states: “At the

heart of the burkini row is the French principle of secularism, or 'laïcité', and whether it is being twisted for political gain. …In theory, the state is neutral in terms of religion and allows everyone the freedom to practise their faith as long as there is no threat to public order" (Chrisafis, 2016). Data also provides evidence of institutional work in the form of *constructing normative networks*, as groups form between actors in different organizations who develop practices that acquire the value of norms (Lawrence et al., 2002). Brands partner with modest fashion bloggers and emerging designers to develop new offerings and representations.

Finally, we also find evidence in our data of a form of institutional work that supports the pragmatic legitimacy (Suchman 1995) of modest fashion, which we label *rationalizing:* the provision of reasons that justify actions as making sense. In particular, media actors frame the emergence of modest fashion as logical, considering the rising needs, power and profitability of the Muslim segment globally. For example, an early UK press report states: "Global brands are waking up to the massive opportunities of the worldwide Muslim market but many still misunderstand or ignore the potential of a burgeoning sector that is young, highly educated and collectively has enormous spending power" (Sherwood, 2016).

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

4.2.2 Institutional work in the French context

Bourhis et al. (1997) suggest the national acculturation ideology in France resembles an 'assimilation ideology', where the state may intervene in some private values held by individuals of different groups when these contradict the values held as universal. Since dress is a public form of consumption and can carry multiple cultural meanings, it is possible that the state would interfere in its consumptionscape. The analysis of the French press articles reveals that modest fashion is the subject of an institutional dispute mobilizing two coalitions of actors pitting an incumbent Western fashion field against an emerging modest fashion subfield. As Table 2 shows, the stigmatizing claims (italics in the Table) of the incumbent actors of the Western field support institutional work to maintain and defend it against the modest fashion subfield, which they attempt to disrupt by framing it as 'foreign' and societally disruptive. The actors in the emerging subfield of modest fashion push back against

the incumbents' stigmatizing claims and develop their own claims to legitimize modest fashion. The literature (Chaney and Ben Slimane, 2014; Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006) suggests that institutional work to disrupt a field is typically carried out by newcomers in a field who seek legitimacy by destabilizing some mature elements. In our study, we find that the disruption work is carried out by both the incumbents and the emerging field's actors (as the lower part of Table 2 shows, as evidenced by a mix of legitimizing and stigmatizing claims).

The French press features different actors engaged in maintaining the incumbent, Western fashion field. Several groups of actors engage in *valorizing and demonizing* – promoting positive and negative examples that vividly recall the foundational norms of the Western fashion field (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006, Chaney and Ben Slimane, 2014). The demonizing is aimed at both the consumption and the marketer practice. Political figures and intellectuals frame modest fashion as hiding the body of women and therefore accuse marketers engaging in it of promoting a form of disempowerment. Pursuing the same aims, a philosopher and feminist calls on consumers to participate in the demonization of those marketers: "Feminist philosopher Elisabeth Badinter reacts to the controversy over Western brands (...) developing Islamic outfits. She 'thinks that women should call for a boycott of these brands' " (Focraud, 2016).

Ministers, cultural icons and some feminists engage in *mythologizing*, creating and sustaining myths regarding the field's history (Angus, 1993). They argue that the role of fashion designers is to 'showcase' women by bringing out their beauty. A press article reports: "The issue has not left the stars of the luxury industry indifferent. 'I'm outraged. I, who have lived with Yves Saint Laurent for almost 40 years, have always believed that a fashion designer is there to beautify women, to give them freedom, not to be the accomplice of this dictatorship that imposes this abominable thing that leads to hiding women, and making them live a hidden life,' Pierre Bergé said (…)." (La Croix, 2016). According to this 'myth', marketers engaging in modest fashion are stigmatized for irresponsibility and a lack of values. Several articles report the statement of the Women's Rights Minister, as here: "During this interview, the Minister [Rossignol] also lambasted brands selling Islamic

clothing as ‘irresponsible’ and ‘from a certain point of view promoting the hiding of women's bodies’” (L'Express, 2016). Fashion moghul Pierre Bergé is also widely reported as saying “Give up the money, have convictions!” (e.g., La Croix, 2016).

Diverse actors engage in institutional work aiming to stigmatize the societal practice of incorporating religious guidance on modesty in fashion. It takes the form of *deterring*, or establishing coercive barriers to institutional change (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006; Townley, 2002). In particular, several mayors of coastal towns gain press attention by making a decree banning the wearing of modest wear on their beaches or for swimming. One such mayor is presented as follows: “The mayor of Cannes, David Lisnard, …, may say in *Nice Matin* that ‘neither the veil, nor the kippah or the cross are prohibited’ and that [the decree] ‘simply [prohibits] a uniform that is the symbol of Islamist extremism’, the decree he signed on 28 July prohibits any outfit that is not ‘respectful of secularism’” (Cometti, 2016). By describing modest fashion as ‘the symbol of Islamist extremism’, the above claim denotes concurrent *demonizing* work, stigmatizing the practice on moral grounds. To support their deterring work, mayors also present the societal practice as liable to threaten public order in the wake of the terrorist attacks that had beset France in the preceding months. Interestingly, a counter-claim presented by the French President only appears in one UK press article; it does not appear in our French articles sample. The claim is framed thus: “Law banning burkini would be ‘inapplicable’ and could fuel Islamist attacks on France, warns Hollande in re-election campaign speech” (Samuel, 2016).

Finally, we find forms of institutional work typical of the disruption of a field carried out by two coalitions of heterogeneous actors. A first, incumbent coalition aiming to disrupt the emergence of modest fashion, includes several types of actors working to *undermine the assumptions and beliefs* (Leblebici et al., 1991) of modest fashion, pointing out that its core assumptions and beliefs are incompatible with the secular tenets of French society. Some feminists, political figures, designers and some Muslim women present modest fashion as an instrument of political Islam to defeat secularism and the universalism tenet of French society. The views of a philosopher/feminist are presented thus: “In her interview with *Le Monde*, Elisabeth Badinter takes on the ‘Islamo-leftists’ who accuse of ‘Islamophobia’ those who,

according to her, want the laws of the Republic to apply to all. The philosopher had singled herself out last January by saying that one should 'no longer be afraid of being Islamophobic'" (Le Journal du Dimanche, 2016). Here, she also engages in work aiming to *disconnect the sanctions* (Chaney and Ben Slimane, 2014) associated with Islamophobia, aiming to facilitate the further stigmatization of modest fashion.

Concurrently, French media show institutional work by an emerging coalition of heterogenous actors aiming to disrupt the incumbent field and assert the legitimacy of modest fashion. Some actors work at *disassociating the moral foundations* (Ahmadjian and Robinson, 2001) of the decrees attempting to ban modest fashion from beaches by framing the societal practice as an individual human right. Incumbent field actors' attempts at banning stigmatize Muslim women, as shown in this piece about the Education minister: "She considers that these bans mark a 'drift': 'I am thinking of the proliferation of anti-burkini orders [...] I think it is a problem because it raises the question of our individual freedoms: how far do we go to verify that an outfit is in accordance with good morals?' " (Alemagna, 2016). Some media also work at *undermining the assumptions and beliefs* of the incumbent Western fashion field by framing the ban attempts as antithetical to the moral foundations of French society. For instance, French press reports present the issue thus: "In one week, [the Nice municipal police] have fined at least 24 people, even banning a veiled woman from the beach. One scene in particular has shocked everyone. In a series of photographs taken last Tuesday by an independent photographer, a team of officers is seen issuing a fine to a woman lying on a beach on the Promenade des Anglais wearing a simple headscarf, and not a burkini." (Mouillard and Frénois, 2016). Some media also publish reflective pieces by reporting the bewilderment of international media about the same event. For instance, a headline states: "Overseas – between irony and incomprehension", and the reporters continue as follows: "To say the least, the case of the burkini and municipal decrees has not gone unnoticed abroad, from Qatar to the United States or Brazil. Across the Channel, the British tabloid *Daily Mail* published an article on Tuesday, which states that 'the burkini ban in France threatens to turn into a charade', accompanied by five photographs that have since gone viral" (Hanne et al., 2016).

4.3 Acculturation to Minority Needs: Cross-context Comparison

In comparing the field dynamics across contexts, three important differences emerge. First, the dynamics between the mainstream fashion field and the modest fashion subfield evolve differently. As Figure 2 shows, in the UK context a range of actors (mainstream brands and designers, consultancies, minority designers and influencers) serve to legitimize modest fashion as a marketer and a consumption practice. The societal practice, absent from media discourse, is taken for granted. Minority consumers are framed as empowered and driving the change. The institutional work carried out resonates with the institutional arrangements of the neoliberal, multiculturalist acculturation ideology conceptualized by Veresiu and Giesler (2018), where market researchers (consultancies) 'exemplify' the concrete role of a minority's identity and marketers equip the marketplace with suitable market offerings. However, whereas Veresiu and Giesler's (2018) theorization of a multicultural acculturation ideology suggests that both mainstream and minority consumers embody the cultural identities defined by marketers, the UK data in our study show no evidence of mainstream consumers demonstrating their cultural competence by adopting modest fashion. While UK press reports mention one celebrity (Nigella Lawson) who endorsed a piece of modest fashion in the past, they present no evidence of the fashion being adopted beyond minority consumers. Hence, if modest fashion enables minority consumers to be inserted into the consumptionscape as a new segment, it does not provide the main consumption sphere with a new form of embodiment. Veresiu and Giesler's (2018) model also includes an 'envisioning', political sphere. Political actors remain absent from the debate in the UK press; they are potentially behaving as an 'invisible hand' behind the market development.

INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

The French context shows a widely different picture in terms of the field's shaping. Modest fashion is stigmatized as both a societal and a marketer practice by the incumbent field, giving rise to resistance and reflexivity by other actors. Altogether, a broader range of actors engage in the process. As Figure 2 shows, the political sphere is very present in the French context, with several leading government figures and a number of mayors working to stigmatize modest fashion, framing it as the strawman that either reduces women to being men's objects

or turns them into enemies of the universalist ideology. Minority consumers are framed as being either under Islamic influence or dominated by males and there is no attempt at 'exemplifying' the role of the minority's identity from the market research sphere. Incumbent marketers engage in a strong moralization of those who are tempted to attend to the needs of the minority; the minority is denied its consumption needs. Instead of being 'exoticized' (Veresiu and Giesler 2018) as in the UK context, the minority consumers in the French context are obliterated as a segment and excluded from the main consumptionscape.

A second difference between contexts pertains to the relationships between mainstream and minority actors. In the UK, relationships are consensual: actors from both mainstream and minority groups network and form a coalition towards the legitimization of modest fashion. In France, relationships between coalitions are conflictual. A first coalition takes the 'universalist' view of denying the needs of particular groups; a second coalition takes the defense of the minority group to oppose its stigmatization. In this respect, relationships between actors involved in the institutional work in both contexts mirror the predicted relationships between mainstream and minority groups proposed in our initial conceptualization presented in Figure 1.

Third, the relational acculturation movements in societal, marketer and consumption practices differ between contexts, as Table 3 shows. In the UK context, most of the institutional work tends towards the legitimization of the marketer and consumption practices; the societal practice is not involved in this work. It involves a network of mainly business actors, both mainstream and minority, who have framed the emergence of modest fashion as the natural consequence of the emergence of a new segment with particular needs. Minority consumers become 'comfortable collaborators' (Scaraboto and Fischer 2013), i.e. consumers who gain greater legitimacy in the market and are better served by mainstream marketers. The field is presented as evolving from the bottom up. The claims underline the actors' responsibility towards the market in integrating minority needs within the global consumptionscape. Mainstream marketers acculturate to the emerging minority needs by integrating them in their offerings. However, mainstream consumers' consumption practice

remains separate from the minority practice. Hence the acculturation process only happens at the level of the marketer practice.

INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

In contrast, in the French context, the institutional work mobilizes a broader range of actors, who form two opposing coalitions. In the first coalition, a predominance of political and cultural actors aims to stigmatize the societal practice (incorporating religious guidance in dress) and the marketing practice (creating modest fashion offerings). The second coalition mobilizes a network of other actors, including associations and non-government organizations (NGOs), some media, and minority consumers, who are 'stigmatized seekers' (Scaraboto and Fischer, 2013) because they have less legitimacy. Their institutional work opposes the stigmatization of the societal practice and aims to assert the legitimacy of the consumption practice. In this second coalition, business actors and institutional work around the marketer practice are absent.

The discourse between the two coalitions is conflictual, and in both coalitions, the field is shaped top down: the societal practice drives the claims, which focus around the responsibility of the market (and marketers in particular) in reinforcing the tenets of French society. The claims underline actors' responsibility towards society and its assimilation ideology, which aims to be undifferentiating between citizens, thus requiring individual differentiated needs that are cultural in origin to be subjugated to the mainstream ones, deemed to be universal and 'culture-free'. These principles translate into ignoring or denying any differentiated needs that are perceived as culturally-grounded. There is no acculturation, at the level of any of the three practices. The societal practice is stigmatized; none of the modest fashion ranges are launched in France and no mainstream marketer integrates the minority needs in their offerings; minority consumers cannot satisfy their needs within the main consumptionscape.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

Our research intersects institutional and acculturation theory to shed light on why, using the case of modest fashion, we do not see greater convergence of mainstream/minority needs in multicultural societies. The findings reveal that in both UK and French contexts, the large-

scale institution of acculturation ideologies drives divergent institutional dynamics, resulting in different acculturation outcomes. This explains some of the striking differences in how the fashion fields in the UK and in France dealt with the emergence of the modest fashion trend. In the UK, the minority group's needs are integrated within a common, global consumptionscape and are legitimized: both mainstream and minority groups are provided with an opportunity to purchase products around modest fashion. In contrast, in France, the minority group's needs are not recognized by the mainstream consumptionscape, as the products are not available for purchase in general retail stores.

The study contributes to extant marketing literature using NIT by showing, via a cross-context comparison, the importance of taking account of large-scale institutions – in this case national acculturation ideologies – when considering to what extent markets can develop, and how they can evolve (Hampel et al. 2017). The results show that the potential of modest fashion in each context is shaped more by national acculturation ideologies and policies (Berry, 2008; Bourhis et al., 1997) beyond any essential differences such as those suggested by seminal culture frameworks (e.g., Hofstede, 2001; Schwartz, 1992) between the contexts' mainstream cultures.

Our findings also highlight the importance that national context plays in the acceptance of products by consumers at a granular level, contributing to extant works in the field by moving beyond the firm-consumer dyad. Exploring the role of a broader range of actors (e.g., the professions, political actors, the media, activists), we show how large-scale institutions determine what institutional work is possible around the legitimization and stigmatization of the emergent practices dealing with diversity needs in multicultural marketplaces.

Importantly, intersecting NIT with acculturation theory provides a novel platform for exploring the connections between societal, industry and consumption levels, and exploring how these connections are 'facilitated' by the heterogeneous networks of actors involved in the shaping of the field. It permits an exploration of actor dynamics across levels through an examination of the institutional work they carry out across practices (consumption, marketer and societal). In this respect, our work continues endeavors to contextualize actor agency within the broader structure of institutions (Veresiu 2018; Veresiu and Giesler 2018) and

contributes a multi-level understanding of acculturation patterns to relational acculturation literature (e.g., Veresiu 2018; Veresiu and Giesler 2008; Luedicke 2015; Bourhis et al. 1997; Berry 2008).

Marketing literature mainly brings attention on how markets emerge (e.g., Gollnhofer and Kuruoglu, 2018; Kates, 2004; Martin and Schouten, 2013; Scaraboto and Fischer, 2012) rather than how they are prevented from emerging. As a counterpoint, our French context results provide insights into how an emerging market can be obliterated when it is seen as threatening a large-scale institution, even though marketers have developed offerings of appeal to a substantial minority. The practices of wearing dress that integrates religious reference to modesty in fashion (societal practice), launching modest fashion lines (marketer practice) and dressing modestly and fashionably (consumption practice) are all stigmatized. While the avowed aim of France's acculturation ideology is assimilation, i.e. the subsuming of all residents' diverse identities under a 'universal' one, paradoxically the market-level result is the exclusion from the consumptionscape of a minority that wants to assert a cultural identity perceived to be in contradiction with the tenet of universalism. The resulting market void leads women who wish to dress modestly to withdraw from the main consumptionscape and seek offers in separate, ghettoized, consumptionscapes (online or in Middle Eastern or Asian countries that have a modest fashion market). The study's theoretical and managerial implications are further discussed next.

5.1 Mainstream Marketer Acculturation vs. Stigmatization

Our research makes contributions to literature by bridging work on marketer acculturation (Peñaloza and Gilly, 1999) and marketer stigmatization (Hudson and Okhuysen, 2009). It shows that legitimization/stigmatization dynamics similar to those that have been theorized at the consumer level (e.g., Scaraboto and Fischer, 2013) also affect marketers, designers and brands. In the UK context, the press shows the legitimization of marketers' approach, arguing the economic and cultural sense of their endeavors to acculturate to minority needs. They become 'comfortable collaborators' (Scaraboto and Fischer, 2013) with minority actors. In the French context, the involvement of global designers and brands with modest fashion is stigmatized by French designers with the support of other actors (government ministers, some

feminists). The mainstream marketers who attempt to integrate the subfield of modest fashion can be described as 'stigmatized providers', mirroring Scaraboto and Fischer's (2013) consumer categorization.

Our study evidences that the stigmatization of emerging marketer practices can be context specific. Although ripe in organizational studies (e.g., Hudson and Okhuysen, 2009; Maguire and Hardy, 2009), the study of marketer stigmatization, recognized as an important area for marketing scholarship (Scaraboto and Fischer 2013), remains under-researched, potentially as a result of publication bias towards cases of successful insurgence leading to the emergence of subfields, rather than their obliteration.

5.2 Fields Are Formed, Maintained, Obliterated by Coalitions of Heterogeneous Actors

Similarly to Scaraboto and Fischer's (2013) study of how some consumers become 'de-stigmatized' by acquiring agency through institutional work, we study greater choice in diverse markets. By broadening the focus of our study beyond consumers, we are able to examine the interplay between practices occurring at different levels (macro, meso and micro) and the institutional work of a broader range of heterogeneous actors. Thus, we bring to light how the large-scale institution of national acculturation ideologies structures the divergent institutional dynamics across the two contexts. In the UK context, mainstream designers and brands associate with minority consultancies, designers, bloggers and influencers in one main coalition. The purpose of their institutional work is market change. In the French context, two opposing coalitions form, both involving a highly heterogeneous range of actors ranging from political and cultural figures, or human rights associations, to marketers and consumers, along national/mainstream vs. global/minority lines. The purpose of the coalitions is societal maintenance vs. societal change, rather than market change.

While our study concerns the emergence of a market trend (modest fashion), our research design, with the use of media articles as data, extends existing works in the field as it enables a contextualization of the institutional dynamics mobilizing actors beyond those traditionally involved with the marketplace. Mainstream media select the institutional actors they wish to mobilize in their presentation of topical issues (Humphreys 2010; Humphreys and LaTour 2013). In view of their enduring superiority over other media in legitimizing the

claims they present (Humphreys and Thompson, 2014; Weber and Monge, 2011), they permit a closer understanding of the various coalitions of actors weighing in on topical issues. Such an approach enables the discovery of how actors from vastly different institutional arenas support one another in the building of legitimacy or stigmatization claims. This is a step in the direction of research called for by Hampel et al. (2017), focusing on how heterogeneous groups of actors work with large-scale institutions.

In considering the various actors mobilized by the media, we note the relative absence of consumers. However, the UK press showcases the most active of those consumers as true institutional actors gaining agency as influencers or emerging designers, who act towards the legitimization of modest fashion as a consumer and a marketer practice, in similar ways to those presented in Scaraboto and Fischer's (2013) and Dolbec and Fischer's (2015) studies. The French press, on the other hand, does not directly present consumers as institutional actors until they become directly affected by the ban of modest wear on French beaches in the latter period covered by our study, when they are the focal actors of a number of press articles and their voices are heard for the first time in the study period. From this standpoint, we acknowledge the limitation of studying a market phenomenon by drawing our data from media articles rather than directly from consumer participants. Media introduce bias, in particular through selection, by deciding which actors to mention (Humphreys, 2010), and therefore limit our understanding of the micro-level consumption practice. Nevertheless, our study provides a useful counterpoint by enabling a contextualization of consumer agency called for in recent work (Askegaard and Linnet, 2011; Demangeot et al., 2015; Karababa and Ger, 2011; Veresiu and Giesler, 2018). Future research could combine consumer interview data with contextual data, to better understand how consumption practices interact with large-scale institutions.

5.3. Managerial Implications

From a managerial standpoint, our study constitutes a vivid illustration of the adage that marketers need to consider their approach of different markets carefully in terms of the cultural conceptions present in different countries. Taking consumer well-being into account, our findings in the French context confirm that where cultural elements are at odds with the

acculturation ideology, culturally-based targeting can be taboo as well as dangerous (Johnson et al., 2015; Kipnis et al., 2013), by stigmatizing marketers and their potential customers, with consequences for well-being.

In an increasingly polarized world, marketer stigma is likely to become more prevalent, as attested by recent, politically- or religiously-inspired social media attacks against brands such as Nike or Hallmark that take an inclusive stance on societal issues (Butson, 2018; Duffy and Judge, 2019). To avoid the risk of themselves and their potential consumers being stigmatized, some marketers may decide not to use visible signals such as specific ranges or collections to address the needs of emerging minorities. Instead, they may choose to meet these needs more subtly. For instance they may include items or elements that address minority needs within existing mainstream ranges. However, attending to minority needs in an 'invisible' manner may not satisfy the desire of some consumers among those minorities to gain representation (Demangeot et al., 2019).

An alternative, long-term strategy is for marketers or brands to 'take a stand' through strategies that seek to create greater opportunities for consumer inclusion as opposed to marginalization in the sectors they serve. Such strategies would, in effect, constitute a form of institutional work aiming at changing large-scale institutions (Kipnis et al., 2021). We anticipate that such strategies will become more common, as expectations grow of marketers being 'responsible corporate citizens' in the face of the injustices that result from how large-scale institutions structure society. Such expectations, for instance, acquire particular salience during the Covid-19 health crisis and the mobilization of minorities across several national contexts against unfair systemic treatment, as in the case of the Black Lives Matter movement since 2020. The decision for marketers to take a stand in order to be 'on the right side of history' would depend on brand and/or company values and personality, the makeup of their global consumer base, their competence and resources to cope with and respond to the backlash, and their ability to work away at the large-scale institutions. Future research on marketer stigmatization will also help businesses address unmet needs and be prepared to respond to potential backlash.

The increasing porosity between contexts that are shaped by divergent large-scale institutions is problematic for marketers, since their actions within one market and set of institutions are also being interpreted in the light of other markets and sets of institutions. There is no easy solution to the quandary of addressing minority needs in a consistent manner across markets structured by divergent large-scale institutions. Nevertheless, our findings reinforce the need for marketers and businesses as a whole to acquire a broad reading of the large-scale institutions that may interfere with their field in different contexts, so that they can anticipate the likely outcomes of different actions.

Essentially, the study emphasizes the importance of taking the broad view of markets afforded by neo-institutional theory. It provides evidence of how marketers form alliances with other groups of actors to weigh in on processes of importance to their firm and shows how large-scale institutions such as national ideologies constrain their actions. Over time however, coalitions of actors do change and shape large-scale institutions (Humphreys, 2010; Hampel et al., 2017). Such a perspective is particularly relevant considering the current trend increasingly calling on marketers to 'step up' and assume social leadership (Vredenburg et al., 2020; Kipnis et al., 2021); merely gathering societal insights, as the intelligence gathering function usually suggests, will not suffice.

Given the high mobility trends that characterize Europe and the increasing need to ensure cross-cultural understanding between minority and mainstream groups (Demangeot et al., 2019; Grier et al., 2006; Luedicke, 2015; Ouellet, 2007; Zapata-Barrero, 2015), our research provides important insights. As populations in many markets become increasingly diverse and geopolitical re-compositions such as Brexit raise national integration questions, the manner in which countries manage the integration of different cultural groups will matter more for inter-group dynamics than the actual cultural traits of those groups (Bourhis et al., 1997; Dovidio et al., 2008; Luedicke, 2015). This further emphasizes the importance of taking the broad view of markets afforded by NIT. We cannot stress enough the importance for marketers of paying close attention to the large-scale institutions these emerging needs might challenge and to the involvement and positioning of all actors in relation to these large-scale institutions.

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Table 1. Sample description

Focal event	Date range	UK press	French press
Modest fashion launches in the UK	Mar-Apr 2016	17 articles	21 articles
Attempted bans of modest wear from some French beaches	Aug-Sep 2016	19 articles	69 articles
TOTAL		**36 articles**	**90 articles**

Table 2: Cross-context comparison of the main forms of institutional work and actors involved in that work

	Types of institutional work relayed media by various actors		
	UK context	**Types of inst. work (definitions)**	**French context**
Aim of institutional work: Establishing the subfield of modest fashion	• Designers associate desire to dress modestly with search for comfort, across groups • Media support the 'common' nature of the practice with evidence of a celebrity (N. Lawson) wearing the burkini	**MIMICRY** (Associating new practices with existing sets of taken-for-granted practices, technologies and rules in order to ease adoption: Hargadon and Douglas, 2001)	[not observed in this context]
	• Consultancies define modest fashion as alternative to 'hypersexualised' fashion • Media, consultancies and designers present modest fashion as market response to a bottom-up movement • UK media frame modest fashion as a reflection of the multicultural character of the UK	**THEORIZING** (Developing and specifying abstract categories and elaborating chains of cause and effect: Kitchener, 2002)	[not observed in this context]
	• UK media present Muslim women as gaining agency by taking part in the global fashion sphere to assert their distinct post-9/11 identity • Designers stress aim of satisfying all segments of the population	**CONSTRUCTING IDENTITIES** (Defining the relationship between an actor and the field in which that actor operates: Lounsbury, 2001)	[not observed in this context]
	• Media, designers and global consultancies frame modest fashion as means of inclusion and representation for Muslim women • Global consultancies, media actors and academics frame modest fashion as integration of religion-inspired dress with global fashion • Media isolate French mayors' attempt at banning modest wear from beaches as French idiosyncrasy	**CHANGING NORMATIVE ASSOCIATIONS** (Re-making connections between sets of practices and their moral and cultural foundations: Townley, 1997)	• Some intellectuals and academics present modest fashion as a means for women to dress both modestly and fashionably
	• Brands partner with modest fashion bloggers to develop new offerings	**CONSTRUCTING NORMATIVE NETWORKS** (Constructing inter-organizational connections that form peer groups in which practices become normatively sanctioned and for compliance, monitoring and evaluation: Lawrence et al., 2002)	[not observed in this context]
	• Media frame emergence of modest fashion as logical considering the rising needs, power and profitability of the Muslim segment • Global consultancies, brands frame need to address modesty needs as a necessity for western designers to remain competitive globally	**RATIONALISING** (Providing reasons that justify actions as logical)	• Academics, activists, some media present modest fashion as any form of dress, corresponding to the needs of part of the population

Aim of institutional work: Maintaining the incumbent field against the emerging subfield of	[not observed in this context]	**VALORIZING AND DEMONIZING** (Providing positive and negative examples that illustrate the normative foundations of an institution: Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006)	• *Minister attacks concept of modest fashion for suggesting other forms of fashion would be 'immodest'* • *Political figures and intellectuals frame modest fashion as hiding the body of women → a form of disempowerment → an unacceptable practice for brands that consumers should boycott*
	[not observed in this context]	**MYTHOLOGIZING** (Preserving the normative underpinnings of an institution by creating and sustaining myths regarding its history: Angus 1993)	• *A minister, a cultural icon, some feminist activists argue fashion designers' role is to 'show' women; that engaging in modest fashion is 'socially irresponsible' and renouncing one's values*
	• French President frames modest fashion as a practice that cannot be banned for fear it would add to public strife	**DETERRING** (Establishing coercive barriers to institutional change: Townley, 2002)	• *Some major political figures, local mayors and judicial actors advocate legislating against modest fashion because it signifies allegiance to terrorist movements* • *French mayors present modest fashion as liable to trouble public order in the wake of terrorist attacks*
(*Defending against*) the main fashion field's disruption of the subfield of modest fashion	• *Some UK media point to the hostile reactions to modest dress in France and invite debate within UK society about the societal practice of incorporating religious guidance in fashion*	**DISASSOCIATING MORAL FOUNDATIONS** (Disassociating the practice from its moral foundation as appropriate in a given cultural context: Ahmedjian and Robinson, 2001)	• Some international actors, some media, Muslim women, human rights organizations frame modest fashion as a human right and a practice whose attempts at banning stigmatize Muslim women
	[not observed in this context]	**UNDERMINING ASSUMPTIONS AND BELIEFS** (Decreasing perceived innovation and differentiation risk perceptions by undermining core assumptions and beliefs: Leblebici et al., 1991)	• *Some feminists, political figures, designers and some Muslim women argue against a trivialization of the religion-inspired dress into the public space* • *Some feminists, political figures, designers and some Muslim women frame modest fashion as an instrument of political Islam to overthrow secularism* • Some French media reflectively report the questioning of world media about aberrant actions (police fining women on beaches) carried out in the name of French secularism
	[not observed in this context]	**DISCONNECTING SANCTIONS** (Working through state apparatus to disconnect rewards and sanctions from some set of practices: Chaney and Ben Slimane, 2014)	• Human rights associations, some political actors frame modest fashion as an individual right whose attempts at legislating against go against human rights.

Notes: 1. Legitimization work is in plain, *stigmatization work is in italics.* 2. Areas are greyed out when there is no evidence in a context of a type of institutional work.

Table 3: Relational Acculturation Movements in Societal, Marketer, and Consumption Practices

	UK context	**French context**
Acculturation ideology	*Civil ideology*	*Assimilation ideology*
Societal acculturation	Mainstream (tacit) acceptance of different co-existing needs.	Incumbent coalition's denial of legitimacy of minority's cultural needs under universalist principle. Emerging coalition decries stigmatization. Conflict is exacerbated.
Marketer acculturation	Integration via collaboration: Mainstream marketers collaborate with minority influencers and integrate minority needs to develop modest fashion offerings/representations.	Exclusion: Mainstream marketers stigmatize the possibility of collaborating with minority influencers or integrating minority needs. No modest fashion is offered in the French market.
Consumer acculturation	Minority consumers integrate western fashion and modesty through modest fashion offerings. Non-integration of minority-inspired offerings by mainstream consumers.	Stigma is attached to practice of dressing both modestly and fashionably (being submissive to male-imposed norms or being an Islamic militant). Minority consumers can either assimilate mainstream consumptionscape by wearing western (mainstream) fashion or separate from it by joining separate consumptions-capes to attend to modesty needs through offerings by non-mainstream or overseas marketers. Mainstream consumers continue to consume western fashion separately and exclusively.

Bottom-up shaping of the field

Top-down shaping of the field

Figure 1: Acculturation Ideologies (UK and France) (Adapted from Bourhis et al. 1997)

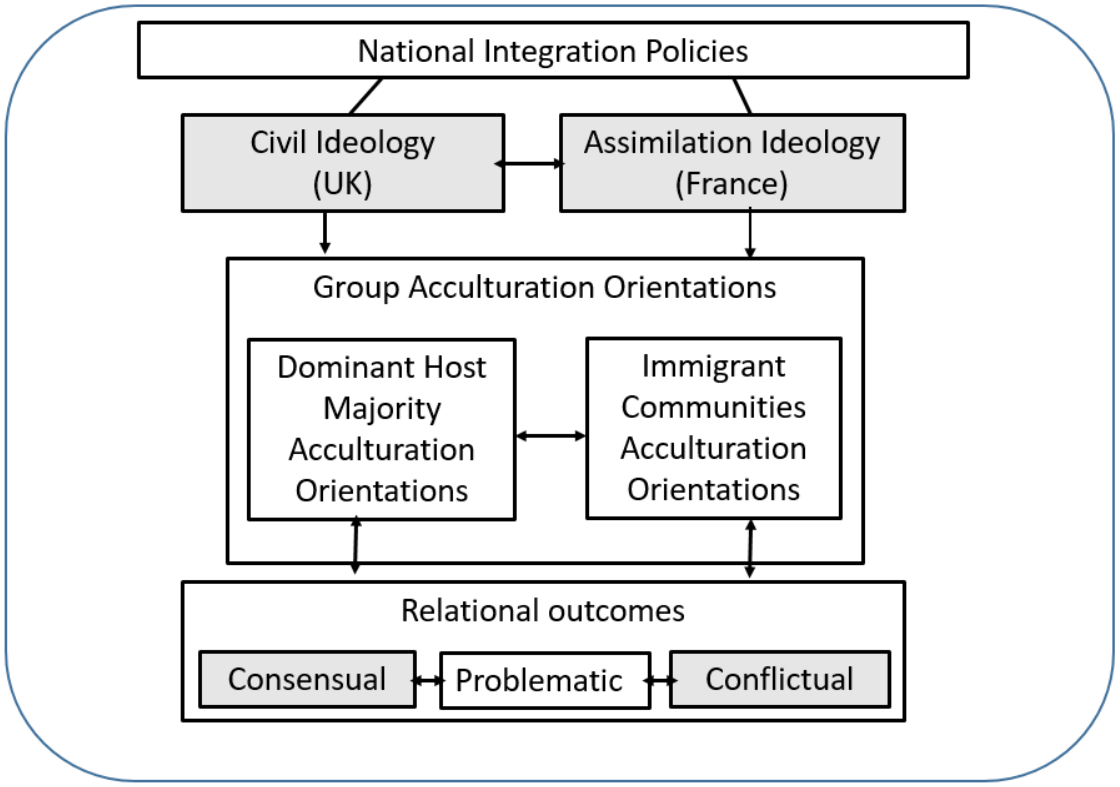

Figure 1: Framework to show how state integration ideologies between the UK and France differ and how this informs acculturation ideology and relational outcomes across context. Adapted from Bourhis *et al*, (1997)
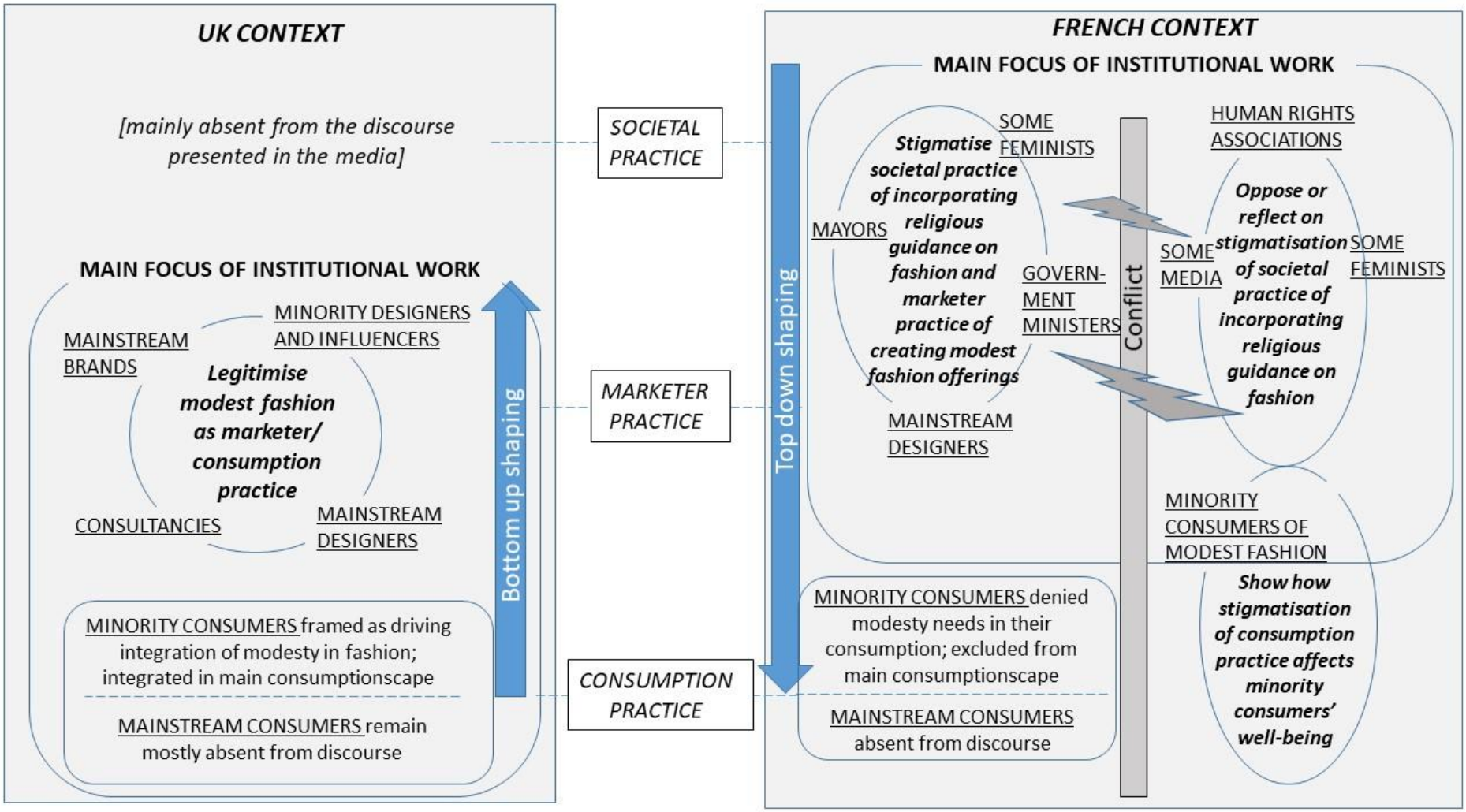
Figure 2: Cross-context Comparison of Field Dynamics